

Thursday, April 6

First Day

pray his blessings on its annual Conference, and upon you and Sister McKay for continued health and strength. President and Sister John E. Carr of the New England Mission."

From Brother Tuttle: "South American mission presidents and 700 missionaries send love and greetings. We pledge greater devotion and effort in the cause of truth among the people of South America. Elder A. Theodore Tuttle."

From Sweden: "Greetings from the missionaries and Saints of the Swedish Mission. Making progress. President and Sister A. Gideon Omer."

To the large audience in the Tabernacle, to the great audience and members and friends who are listening in by radio and television, we extend a hearty welcome this beautiful morning. We welcome and express appreciation for the presence of the stake presidencies, temple presidencies, some of whom are from far-off countries, to bishops and to high councilmen, General Auxiliary organizations of the Church, and other General Officers of the Church.

We are very pleased to see, sitting in reserved seats, the following general representatives in the nation, state, and from our educational institutions: Senator Wallace F. Bennett, Senator Frank E. Moss, United States Senators; Honorable David S. King, U. S. House of Representatives; Governor George Dewey Clyde; Secretary of State Lamont Toronto. From the educational institutions: President A. Ray Olpin of the University of Utah; President Ernest L. Wilkinson of the Brigham Young University; President John L. Clarke of Ricks College; Dr. William Miller, president of the Weber College, Dr. A.

Sherman Christenson, Associate Judge of the Federal Court, and perhaps others whom we have not seen from the rostrum. We are glad to welcome you here and hope you enjoy the services that will now follow. I think that J. L. Nelson, president of Salt Lake City Trade Technical School, is here also, and Dr. John T. Wahlquist of the San Jose State College, and Dr. Wilson W. Sorensen of the Vocational School at Provo.

As already announced, the singing for this morning's session will be furnished by the Primary Teachers Chorus of 19 stakes of Utah County, with Sister Lue Groesbeck conducting, and Brother Roy M. Darley at the organ. We shall begin this session by the Primary Teachers Chorus singing, "The Morning Breaks, The Shadows Flee." The invocation will be offered by Elder Frank B. Bowers, president of the Bonneville Stake.

The Primary Teachers Chorus sang, "The Morning Breaks, The Shadows Flee."

Elder Frank B. Bowers, president of the Bonneville Stake, offered the invocation.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation just offered was by Elder Frank B. Bowers, president of the Bonneville Stake. The Primary Teachers Chorus will now sing, "Christ And His Little Ones," with a solo by Ronnie Clark, "When He Comes Again," Sister Lue Groesbeck conducting.

The Primary Teachers Chorus sang: "Christ And His Little Ones," solo by Ronnie Clark.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccl. 11:9.)

These words were written by The Preacher, son of David of old, approximately nine hundred and seventy-seven years before Christ—admonitions to youth as applicable in this year 1961 after Christ as they were nearly three thousand years ago! "... but know thou,

that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Every sixth day of April, General Authorities, officers, and members of the Church meet in general conference to hear reports of the progress of the Church, sustain officers, consider matters pertaining to the restored gospel, and take such action as the official representatives of the Church may deem necessary and helpful.

If the question were asked this morning, "In what respect during the last year has the Church made the most commendable progress?" I would not answer: "*In financial matters*," although it is a fact that perhaps never before have the financial interests of the Church been more prosperous.

I would not say: "*In the increase of the number of new houses of worship*," although members of the Church have put forth more effort and built and paid for more chapels than in any other similar period of the past; for example, I find that during the year 1960 there were 111 Church buildings dedicated; fifty other buildings are ready to be dedicated. There are completed, but not dedicated because they are not entirely paid for, 233 buildings, or a total of Church buildings constructed and dedicated in 1960 of 394. We have no information compiled for the first three months of 1961, but it is estimated that buildings in the planning stage and under construction would exceed the 900 mark.

If we were to ask for the most commendable progress, I would not answer: "*In the increased membership*," although in the last thirteen months the growth of the Church in numbers in the stakes and in the missions has been most encouraging. There has been an increase of a figure approaching the 100,000 mark. This afternoon we shall find the total membership given in the statistics.*

I would not answer that the most commendable progress has been *in better understanding among the leaders of municipalities, newspaper editors, and well-informed people generally regarding the purposes, organization, and contributions of the Church toward peace and the ultimate destiny of the world.*

I would answer that *the most encouraging progress of the Church during the last year is seen in the increased number of young people participating in Church activity.* We hear much about the delinquency and incorrigibility of youth. I desire to say a word this morning about their *corrigibility*, as we have seen it and noticed it in visiting in different parts of the Church.

For example, on Sunday, March 26, 1961, I attended the dedicatory services of the Bountiful South Stake Center and Bountiful Eighth Ward Church edifice. There were in attendance over 1,700 people, the majority of whom impressed me as being young members of the Primary Association and teenagers. That same evening I attended the Sacrament meeting of the Garden Heights Ward, Canyon Rim Stake. Here again a large proportion of the congregation was made up of young people.

Two weeks ago today in our regular weekly meeting, one of the brethren of the General Authorities, I think it was Brother Mark E. Petersen, reported that he learned recently while attending the Bear River Stake conference that four wards in that stake had a Sacrament meeting attendance for one month of above fifty percent of the entire membership of the ward, and two of these four wards were in the sixty percent bracket. The Oneida Stake had a year-long average high in the forties, and some wards had sixty percent, and even seventy percent in attendance. In each case the young people were a conspicuous part of the audience.

For this increased attendance of young people much credit is due to the Presiding Bishopric, who have put forth special effort to have the deacons, teachers, and priests attend Sacrament meetings. And right here I would like to say to this vast congregation that it is a significant fact in Church organization that the bishop of the ward is not only ordained to preside over his particular ecclesiastical group but is also set apart by divine appointment as president of the priests' quorum, made up of 18, 19, and 20-year-old young men who, with young women of corresponding age, literally carve the moral atmosphere of the community.

Thursday, April 6

First Day

Much of this activity of the young is due to the Mutual Improvement Associations, who have placed special emphasis upon the attendance of members of the MIA at Sacrament meetings. The Primary general presidency and board and stake and ward workers merit great credit also.

But I know and you know that mere attendance at Church and other acts of piety signify little if the person does not conform his acts and his speech to the principles of the gospel. Into three principal environments the child is daily thrown, which direct his actions, inspire his behavior in all his contacts with his fellow beings, enable him to control himself or to become a slave to his appetites, his passions, and desires.

These three environments are: the home, the school, the church.

Beaconsfield wisely wrote: "I have always felt that the best security for civilization is the dwelling, and that upon properly appointed and becoming dwellings depends more than anything else the improvement of mankind. Such dwellings are the nursery of all domestic virtues, and without a becoming home, the exercise of those virtues is impossible."

It is not generally conceded by educators nor by parents that the real education of a child begins early in home life. One of our best modern philosophers, referring to the value of education in childhood, says this:

"Time does not have the same value in childhood as in later years. A year is much longer, physiologically and psychologically, for a child than for a man. One year for a child of ten corresponds to two years for a man of twenty. When the child is younger, the discrepancy is still greater. The time elapsed between the third and seventh year probably represents a duration equivalent to fifteen or twenty years for a grown man.

"Now, it is precisely at this age that a child builds up the framework into which all the events of his future life will fit, and in particular his moral code. This explains the considerable amount of knowledge a child can accumulate during his first years. It would be highly desirable for parents

and educators to take this fact into consideration.

"The moral education of a child is different from that given to a man. Indeed, for the very young it is important not to judge the gravity of a fault by its consequences. For a child a fault is serious in itself—absolutely and not relatively—because it has been decreed that it is grave. Only the absolute character of a fault can impart to the child a true moral discipline without which progress is impossible.

"It is impossible to model a child morally if this principle is not followed, for the faults are almost always venial by their consequences. It is only during the most tender age that the character can be formed." (From *Human Destiny* by Lecomte du Nouy, pp. 208-209.)

Parents dress their children in the best clothes when children go out in "company." They cannot so change their characters. What traits of character the child develops in the home, he takes with him into society. The selfish, morose nature, or his cheerful, kind, radiant soul developing in home environment goes with him when he joins the social group. If you want your child to be courteous in society, teach him to be courteous in the home. "If you please," "thank you," "pardon me," are terms of culture more applicable and more educative in the home than in social circles. Into our schools and churches come too many children from homes where the fundamental virtues of true manhood and beautiful womanhood are seldom taught and more infrequently practised.

In schools, in this Christian land, the teaching of Church dogma is forbidden, but the teaching of true citizenship—honesty, loyalty, the keeping of a promise, and other virtues that contribute to the dignity of man—is not banned.

Students reflecting these high ideals, recently made a trip to California. The *Deseret News* made the following comments about them: "Vigorous, ambitious, carefree youth bears slightly more than its share of the criticism folks pass on to each other in these critical times, but when youth acquires itself in such a way as to win the admiration and praise of many observers, the occasion should not be permitted to pass unnoticed.

"Such a favorable impression was left with our California friends when the chosen music students of the Salt Lake area junior and senior high schools so becomingly upheld the loftly idealism of their schools, their homes, and their city when they participated recently in the Musical Educators National Convention at Santa Monica, California. Choral and orchestral groups made up the Salt Lake entourage to the conclave.

"Typical of the impression our youngsters left with their hosts is this tribute by the associate manager of the hotel where the students of the Granite District were housed: 'It is seldom that a hotel has an opportunity to have its house occupied with such delightful, well-mannered, clean-cut children as the MENC group that Mr. Moroni L. Jensen brought to Santa Monica. . . . We are writing this letter to let you know what a wonderful impression the children of Salt Lake City and Mr. Jensen made.'

If they had been delinquents, boisterous, unladylike, ungentlemanlike, the papers would have told us about it. We thank these hotel people for paying this tribute to our boys and girls, who are truly representative children of good homes.

Man should so conduct himself as to merit the trust of his fellows. "There is a unanimity of thought in this," writes a wise philosopher, "which is to be found nowhere else except on the subject of the ten commandments, but the effort made to impress this idea indelibly on the minds of children in the shape of automatic conditioned reflexes is so slight that one is aghast. The equilibrium of the whole world, not only peace, but justice, commerce, industry, science, rests on the confidence in the integrity and in the word of men, and all the moral teaching given to youth in the course of ten or fifteen years of education and instruction certainly does not represent more than a few hours, in certain cases a few days. The young are stuffed with many useless details and the essential is passed over in silence." (The "essential" meaning moral training, teaching them the dignity of true manhood.)

"Farmers might as well be taught

to grow flowers in borders without learning how to cultivate a field; or young girls be taught the art of make-up without learning how to wash. Examinations deal with a quantity of facts destined to be forgotten in three months, or which are purely technical; children are trained to behave decently in public, but nobody dreams of making them repeat daily, as a prayer: 'Every promise is sacred. No one is obliged to give a pledge, but he who breaks his given word is dishonored. He commits an unpardonable crime against his dignity; he betrays; he covers himself with shame; he excludes himself from human society.'

"If this is not in reality a prayer it is a creed which, by expressing faith in the dignity of Man addresses itself, beyond him, to God from whom we have received it."

He who is purported to have been the wisest American wrote years ago: "Character is higher than intellect. A great soul will be fit to live as well as to think." (Emerson.)

In the Church, increased participation in church activity indicates a desire to be a partaker of spirituality, the highest acquisition of the soul, and young people desire it. I know there are many who haven't that feeling, many who do not come, but you know, fellow workers, that the young people like that which is good and true.

I am grateful for the sweet assurance that God is my Father, and I should like to have the youth of Israel feel so close to him that they will approach him daily in secret prayer. I would have them have the trust in him which the little blind girl had in her father. One day she was sitting on his lap in the train, and a friend sitting by said, "Let me rest you," and he reached over and took the little child on his lap. The father said to her, "Do you know who is holding you?" "No," she replied, "but you do."

Just so real should be the trust which our boys and girls have in their Father in heaven. If our young people will have this faith, and so approach the Lord, there are at least four great blessings which will come to them here and now.

Thursday, April 6

First Day

The first is *Gratitude*. Their souls will be filled with thanksgiving for what God has done for them. They will find themselves rich in favors bestowed. The young man who closes the door behind him, who draws the curtains, and there in silence pleads with God for help, should first pour out his soul in gratitude for health, for friends, for loved ones, for the gospel, for the manifestations of God's existence. He should first count his many blessings and name them one by one.

The second blessing of prayer is *Guidance*. I cannot conceive of a young man's going astray who will kneel down by his bedside in the morning and pray to God to help him keep himself unspotted from the sins of the world. I think that a young girl will not go far wrong who will kneel down in the morning and pray that she might be kept pure and spotless during the coming day. I cannot think that a Latter-day Saint will hold enmity in his heart if he will sincerely, in secret, pray God to remove from his heart all feelings of envy and malice toward any of his fellow men. Guidance? Yes, God will be there to guide and direct him who will seek him in faith with all his might and with all his soul.

The third blessing is *Confidence*. All over this land there are thousands and tens of thousands of students who are struggling to get an education. In the Church, let us teach these students that if they want to succeed in their lessons, they should seek their God; that the greatest Teacher known to the world stands near to guide them. Once the student feels that he can approach the Lord through prayer, he will receive confidence that he can get his lessons, that he can write his speech, that he can stand up before his fellow students and deliver his message without fear of failure. Confidence comes through sincere prayer.

Finally, he will get *Inspiration*. It is not imagination, if we approach God sincerely seeking light and guidance from him, our minds will be enlightened and our souls thrilled by his Spirit. Washington sought it; Lincoln received

it; Joseph Smith knew it; and the testimony, the evidence of the Prophet Joseph's inspiration is manifest to all who will but open their eyes to see and their hearts to understand.

Heaven guide you, our Youth, wherever you are. As long as you will keep yourselves pure and spotless and prayerfully and earnestly keep close to your Father in heaven, his Spirit will guide you, magnify you in your youth, and make you a power on the earth for good. Your Father in heaven is ever ready to give you help in time of need and give you comfort and strength if you will approach him in purity, simplicity, and faith.

In his poem, "Anchored to the Infinite," Edwin Markham says:

"The builder who first bridged Niagara's
gorge,
Before he swung his cable, shore to
shore,
Sent out across the gulf his venturing
kite
Bearing a slender cord for unseen hands
To grasp upon the further cliff, and draw
A greater cord, and a greater yet;
'Til at the last across the chasm swung
The cable—then a mighty bridge in air!
So we may send our little timid thought
Across the void, out to God's reaching
hands—
Send out our love and faith to thread
the deep,
Thought after thought until the little
cord
Has greated to a chain no chance can
break,
And—we are anchored to the Infinite!"

I repeat, God bless you, our Youth, that you may send out your thoughts in prayer and faith and receive the assurance that you are anchored to the Infinite, in God our Father and his Holy Son, the Redeemer of the world, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. Bishop Wirthlin will be our next speaker.