

Sunday, April 4, 1965

First Day

which President Nathan Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the

Twelve.

We will hear from the Choir.

Singing by the Choir, "His Yoke Is Easy."

PRESIDENT NATHAN ELDON TANNER

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

It was a great blessing indeed to have our beloved leader and prophet, President David O. McKay, with us this morning and to be inspired by his message so beautifully read by his son Robert. His spirit and blessings are with us this afternoon. He is presiding. This conference is being conducted under his direction, as he watches our proceedings over television at home. Our hearts go out to him, and we pray that God's choicest blessings may attend him always.

Brethren and sisters, it is with a deep feeling of humility and heavy responsibility that I stand before you this afternoon, and I sincerely pray that the Spirit and blessings of the Lord will attend and direct our thinking at this time.

I wish to congratulate the choir on their lovely singing and to express my appreciation for the beautiful prayers and the inspiring talks given by the brethren during the first session of our conference this morning.

On behalf of the First Presidency I bring greetings and blessings to all assembled in this historic Tabernacle this afternoon and to our radio and television audiences everywhere.

Gratitude for Many Blessings

My heart is full of gratitude for the many blessings I enjoy. I am grateful that I live in this land of peace and plenty, opportunity and freedom; for my membership in this Church; for the knowledge I have, a knowledge beyond doubt or question, that God is a personal God, that he lives, and that he so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son for you and me, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Yes, I know as I know I

live, and as Peter also knew when he answered Jesus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.)

I am so thankful for my wife and family, for my progenitors, for my grandchildren, my friends and associates, for the health and strength that my family and I and all of us enjoy; also, that my family and I can kneel down and pray to a personal God who we know is interested in us, who will hear and answer our prayers, who has given us the gospel which, if lived, will lead to immortality and eternal life. What a strength it is to know that we are God's spirit children, that we are made in his image, and that we can go with our problems to him as our Father in heaven.

Many times have I expressed my gratitude to my Heavenly Father that my forefathers had such a belief in God and such a determination to worship and serve him according to the dictates of their own conscience and without restrictions that they were prepared to give up everything they had and leave their native land and come with the Pilgrims in the *Mayflower* to this great land where they could enjoy that freedom of worship. Though they suffered many hardships, the rigors of cold and starvation and influenza from which more than half of them lost their lives, the survivors thanked God for the privilege of religious freedom, which to them was sufficient reward for all the untold suffering through which they had come.

Let us never forget that these freedoms which we enjoy, the blessings and comforts and ideals which are ours, as well as the progress which has been made in every field of endeavor, have been gained by the sacri-

face, the pain, tears, and agony of some souls who had every reason to be discouraged but who had faith in God and fought on to victory.

Gratitude for Faith and Courage of Ancestors

Again here and now I wish to express my appreciation to my Heavenly Father for the fact that my great-great-grandfather, John Tanner, and his son, Nathan, and their families had the faith and courage to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shortly after it was organized, and when it was so unpopular.

The records which we have tell us that they were honest, honorable, upright, and God-fearing men; that they were good citizens; that they were interested in their community; and that they believed in and served God as they understood. Though they had read and studied the Bible and believed that it was the word of God, they were confused because of the teaching of the different churches that God was an incorporeal being with no material body, parts, or passions. In fact, as Paul told the Athenians, many were then, as they are today, ignorantly worshipping an unknown God, or denying him entirely. (See Acts 17:23ff.)

However, when he heard the message of two Mormon missionaries that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ were living personages and that they had appeared to the young boy Joseph Smith when he went into the grove to pray, as Christ had appeared to Paul, John Tanner believed them. And when he was told of the restoration of the priesthood and that God had spoken to man again and had chosen an individual, Joseph Smith, as a prophet, seer, revelator, and translator by whom the Book of Mormon had been translated, he knew that this was true. It brought joy and satisfaction to his soul and brought renewed faith and hope when he realized that the true and everlasting gospel in its fulness had been restored to the world.

How grateful I am that his faith in God and his understanding of the gospel and his desire to serve God and

keep his commandments were so great that he and his family did not hesitate to join the Church and go through all the persecutions that the Saints endured at that time. They, with thousands of others, were driven out of their homes and, leaving everything they had, were driven west across the plains to the Rocky Mountains to this the Great Salt Lake Valley, where they could enjoy freedom of worship for which they had sacrificed so much.

Testimony of Truth

As a result I have been taught since my youth to have complete faith in God the Eternal Father and in his Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost and to realize that Christ gave his life for us and was resurrected, literally resurrected, and through his atonement we will all be resurrected, and that all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

I wish to bear my testimony, too, that I know that God speaks to his people today through a prophet as he has done in the different dispensations of which the Bible and the Book of Mormon bear witness so clearly. I cannot express in words my deep appreciation for the privilege I have of associating so closely with his Prophet David O. McKay who leads the Church today under divine guidance.

It is a great opportunity, privilege, and blessing to be able to dedicate my time and efforts entirely to sustaining him as a prophet of God in the service of our Maker and of our fellow men and of working so closely with these devoted General Authorities to whom you have listened and to whom you will listen in this conference.

Prayer for Wisdom and Guidance

I pray that God will give us wisdom and direct our efforts as we endeavor to lead the people in the paths of truth and righteousness. We are greatly concerned about conditions in the world today, particularly the evils and temptations facing our youth. We realize that the great threat of the future today is the decay of spiritual, moral, and family life.

Sunday, April 4, 1965

First Day

Awful Specter of Crime

It is alarming to see how crime is increasing throughout the whole of the United States and, for that matter, throughout the world. In the USA there was an increase in 1964 over 1963 of 250,000 serious crimes that were reported by the agencies. And the statistics as issued by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, show that in a city the size of Salt Lake City the increase in crime was up from 12 to 17 percent. There was 17 percent more murder, 14 percent more forcible rape, and 17 percent more robbery in 1964 than in 1963.

Appalling World Conditions

Conditions in the world are appalling. We have men who from the pulpit are questioning the divinity of Jesus Christ. They do not understand the kind of God they worship, and people everywhere have lost their faith and don't know where to turn. Also it is shocking indeed to read the articles appearing in the magazines and papers today on the question of morality. One can hardly believe what he reads.

In order to make clear and to leave no doubt as to what I mean I shall refer to statements that have appeared in books and magazines and have been attributed to university professors, chaplains, and psychiatrists, many of which seem to challenge Christianity's basic teachings against fornication and adultery.

A new morality is being advocated which proposes an ethic based on love rather than law in which the ultimate criterion for right and wrong is not divine command but the individual's subjective perception of what is good for himself and his neighbor in each given situation.

Some maintain no sexual relationship should be absolutely condemned by the church. Others claim that moral conduct is the sole concern and responsibility of the individual. Some argue that man is free to change occupations, homes, states, or countries and ask why he should not be free to change married partners.

We all realize and are most thankful that these views are not generally accepted and, in fact, are strongly opposed by most people. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale in commenting on the alarming new line on morals says: "For my part, I have had too much experience with raw human nature to believe you can scale down moral standards in any area and not reap a whirlwind of broken lives." ("The Alarming New Line on Morals," *Deseret News*, February 26, 1965. Permission granted by Norman Vincent Peale.)

And as Paul admonished the Galatians: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8.)

Dr. Peale goes on to say, "The sophisticated-intellectual hue and cry that we must get rid of the old sense of guilt is less than impressive. Guilt can be a pretty healthy deterrent that puts the fear of God into people, stiffening their moral sense and motivating them to live right." (Peale, *op. cit.*)

He then asks the question: "Should the church still teach a high standard of personal morals?" and answers, "It may shock you even to have the question raised, but unfortunately a few ministers are verging toward a permissiveness that disturbs a lot of thoughtful people. The effort seemingly is to keep the church somewhat in line with paganistic viewpoints in an effort, I suppose, to maintain an influential rapport with these elements. *The policy seems to equate Christian morality with worldly morality rather than the maintenance of a system of moral absolutes.* In effect, the new permissive policy seems to reduce Christianity to the world rather than to employ the tougher and more skillful strategy of bringing the world up to Christianity." (*Idem.* Italics added.)

World Perishing by Reason of Folly and Defiance of God's Laws

Imagine young people in our schools and our universities who have not been

taught in their homes or in their churches an unwavering faith in God and the importance of good, clean, moral living having to face this kind of thinking and temptations and evil that is found throughout the world today. This must be shocking to the parents who realize that such things are going on. There is a very serious and great danger, however, and that is that many, many of our parents do not realize, nor will they believe, that these are the conditions in the world today and therefore seem to be prepared to let nature take its course.

Where are we going? What is the matter with the world? How different are we from, and how rapidly are we approaching, the pattern of life which caused the downfall of Rome? This was forcibly brought to the attention of me and all who listened to Dr. Charles Habib Malik of Lebanon, professor of philosophy at the American University of Beirut. He was president of the United Nations General Assembly in 1958-59. In his message he said to all Americans:

"The world is turning its back on you because you are turning your back on yourself. Do not turn from the basics that have made America great—an abiding faith in God and in the dignity of man, created in the image of God." (Cited by Wendell J. Ashton, "Weakness through Strength," back page, *The Instructor*, January 1965.) He appealed to America and the world not to let the power of material wealth and learning corrode because of a diminishing faith in God. Imagine this having to come from a man from Lebanon or from any other country!

World Can Save Itself by Honoring God's Laws

It is true that all through history the ignoring of the laws of God leads to the ignoring and defying of all law. The scriptures and history teach us that man cannot continue to deny God and ignore his laws and expect to prosper. And as William Penn so aptly said: "Those who are not governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." No one can deny that the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, and all of

the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ offer a better way of life and if lived, bring greater joy, success, love, prosperity, and peace to all and lead to immortality and eternal life.

Gratitude for Allies of God. Their Devotion and Dedication

We greatly appreciate and wish to express our wholehearted support to all who are engaged in the fight against evil, and we want you to know that the Church of Jesus Christ is determined to do all in its power through its auxiliary organizations, its priesthood quorums, its missionary program, and through the families of the Church to uphold righteousness and live and teach the fundamental principles of the gospel, which is the plan of life and salvation.

We greatly appreciate the thousands and thousands of individuals throughout the Church who are prepared to accept office and responsibility in the Church and faithfully live the gospel and teach it to all who will listen, and also to the hundreds of thousands of parents everywhere who are endeavoring to live and teach a faith in God and the principles of right living to their families.

Fortify Solidarity of Families with Home Evening Programs

My wife and I have been thrilled during the last month or so to receive letters from two of our daughters and a phone call from another saying how pleased they are and thankful for the program which helps them in teaching the gospel and right living in their Family Home Evening once every week. Here they gather their children around them and teach them the plan of life and salvation, realizing that parents having children in Zion are commanded to teach them to understand the doctrines of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the Living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Also, it gives them an opportunity to get better acquainted with their children, to know what they are thinking, and to let the children know what the parents are thinking, what they believe, and what is right. And the children

Sunday, April 4, 1965

First Day

really enjoy it. They are taught that we are the children of God and that as his children we have that spark of divinity in us which makes it possible for us to reach immortal heights by living according to the teachings of the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ.

It is encouraging to know that my grandchildren, twenty-four of them, are being taught to pray to God and thank him for his many blessings and ask for his guidance and strength from day to day, to have faith in him, to realize that they have a purpose in life, and that the principles taught by Jesus Christ are the principles by which we must govern our lives. Where can you find a lovelier sight than a family kneeling together in prayer to their

Father in heaven in the full knowledge that he can and will hear and answer their prayers?

Families throughout the Church are being taught these things, and they are taught to be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and to do good to all men. They are also taught that if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, to seek after these things and that to meet the evils and temptations in the world today we must have faith in God and live according to the principles of the gospel as taught by Jesus Christ.

May we all have the vision, the faith, and the courage to so order our lives, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters and friends, and this includes the unseen listening audience hearing this service this afternoon, I wish to express a few thoughts which to me appear timely and important. I am deeply concerned with the unmoral and unethical trends in our society and the American way of life established by the founding fathers of our beloved country. The very foundations of moral and ethical behavior are crumbling about us. This President David O. McKay pointed out so poignantly and eloquently to us this morning. Satan seems to have power over his dominions.

Beware the Forces of Destruction

There are many-headed serpents at work in the world, and often unknowingly, or unwittingly, but certainly unwisely, some folk play into the hands of wicked, designing men and endorse and promote their crafty schemes and plans which are evil and harmful to the society of decent men and women. These evil influences which are insidiously creeping in among us paint an alarming view for the future if we do not awaken and take proper action to reverse these undesirable trends.

"Monster of frightful mien"

The issues may not appear to be too significant when each promotion is quietly initiated, but with an apathetic populace and the sympathetic support of misguided prominent men and women, both in and out of public office, they are coming with more regularity and frequency as power of position increases. Too many of us are naive, undiscerning, and unsuspecting in these matters. We do not acquaint ourselves sufficiently with vital issues which should concern us, nor do we always determine the motives behind them; therefore, by our complacency and the subtle claims of value by the promoters, we seem to be unaware of the seriousness these issues present.

Only with knowledge of the affairs and happenings of national, state, and community interest, with eternal and watchful vigilance, can the honest in heart be safeguarded against designing men and the underworld element of iniquity, who want to set up for financial gain many forms of vice and harmful substances detrimental and degrading to the physical, moral, and spiritual well-being of young and old alike.