

Monday, April 5, 1965

Second Day

if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them." (Ether 12:27.)

There are men and women everywhere who would be made better by our helping hand. They may be our neighbors, our friends, our business associates. All are our brothers and sisters.

The prayer of my heart is that such persons everywhere will respond to the kind invitation and gentle touch of the Master's hand and faithfully serve our Lord and our Savior, who so willingly died that we might forever live, hopefully having eyes that really see, ears that truly hear, and responsive hearts that know and feel, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BISHOP JOHN H. VANDENBERG

Presiding Bishop of the Church

A historian informs us that about 100 years BC a new milling apparatus had been invented by a master craftsman in the hills of the Fertile Crescent. With this new contrivance the grain was ground into flour by a swift-moving stream turning a paddle wheel rather than by the laborious method of rotating the millstone by hand. Thus the power of a stream of water was put to work. (Life Science Library [Machines], p. 12.)

The poet Longfellow referred to a far greater power and a more significant milling process when he wrote: "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small; though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all." (Longfellow, *Poetic Aphorisms: Retribution*.) By this we are reminded that humankind is the grain being milled, and the individual is a kernel of grain working between the opposing forces of life. It is through the mill or experiences of life that man is to learn and develop. Here he attains a certain degree of knowledge or skill, but it is through discipline and self-control that he is refined.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us. Before hearing from Bishop Vandenberg, the chorus and congregation will join in singing, "Come, Come Ye Saints," conducted by Maughan McMurdie.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," with Maughan McMurdie conducting.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We shall now hear from Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, and he will be followed by S. Dilworth Young, First Council of Seventy.

The Power of Words and Acts

Today I want to talk particularly about the harnessing of power in connection with this mill of life—the power of words and acts. It was the words of the Prophet Jonah that saved the great city Nineveh from destruction. The power of words has changed the course of history many times for good and many times for bad. In words and acts men influence one another. It is said that we are individually responsible for our own actions and will receive the just reward for our deeds. "Every man will be judged according to his works" (see Mosiah 3:24) is the scriptural warning. Yet no man stands alone; one man's words and acts may influence another man's deeds.

"Opposition in all things"

The Prophet Lehi explains that there is an opposition in all things—light and darkness, good and evil, joy and misery. (See 2 Nephi 2:11.) Emerson said that a dualism bisects nature. It can be seen in night and day, or in a magnet with north and south poles. One attracts; the other repels. Our

society, therefore, may be considered dualistic also. At the top is the light of our age. At the bottom is a creeping, crawling, cancerous disease of crime, filth, and darkness. With unlimited goods, seemingly our every want and need provided for, our continuing mastery over disease, our ever enlarging system of education and higher learning—with all this and more we seem to be so independent that we are confident that all is right. Yet lurking beside us, apparent to the one who will intelligently observe, is a monster as described by Alexander Pope:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace." (*Essay on Man*.)

The ratio to which people are subjected to evil influences versus good influences is high in favor of the evil. Satan will use his agents in every way that he can cunningly to lure individuals into his web. His agents are represented by people. And people influence the lives of other people.

Risks of Disaster

It is estimated that by 1967 over fifty percent of the population of the United States will be those twenty-five years of age and younger. The worrisome thing is the exposure of this young group to the evil forces of illicit love, drunkenness, crime, violence, unwholesome movies, dishonesty, risqué literature, and all means of vulgarity. One is faced with the question in the Old Testament: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27.) There are many who cast all common sense to the wind and try to tell us that we can. There are those who may think they can sit apathetically by and not be a part of the "era of advancement or the cellar of crime."

Offences of Vice

I would like to point to the Savior's warning: "... whose shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and

that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:6. Italics added.) This doctrine states it is better to lose your life than willfully to offend.

The word "offend" as used by the Master means "to cause to sin or fall." This definition is now almost lost in our modern-day language, but the word was used with this meaning in the days of Christ and even up until a century or two ago.

Jesus also said: "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (*Ibid.*, 18:7.)

Wilful wrong teaching, wrong example, wrong utterance, wrong action by those of influence are offenses to any youth, and the retribution follows as night the day that "no man ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a greater to himself." (Henry Home, "Injury," *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*.)

Truth of God vs. Philosophy of Men

Many college students, as well as high school students, become confused when some of their professors, in their important positions of influence, try to indoctrinate them with philosophies of men with atheistic ideas. Such teachers may be described as wells without water. They are very forceful in their distorted view and in their criticisms of those who possess faith in God. I would remind young people to remember that God is the author of all truth and to disregard any teaching that conflicts with the word of God.

Universities and other centers of learning are set up by inspiration for the betterment of mankind. But the "dualism" spoken of by Emerson exists at all levels. When you have questions as to religious matters, go to your parents or the bishop who have a knowledge of and authority from God. Ask them to help you consider such philosophies as you may hear in the light of the true principles and help you to keep and develop your faith in God. Be alert and do not let men confuse you into thinking that they know more about man's existence than God's authorized representatives.

The Lord speaks through his proph-

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ets, and his commandments so revealed are taught by his authorized agents. History will bear out that when evil principles are taught and faith in God is destroyed, the people go down to oblivion; but when faith in God is established in the hearts of men, the people flourish.

Means of Knowing Good from Evil

Man himself must learn to reason and to discern good from evil. Recently, I heard a man in the process of reasoning as he contemplated the movie advertising "for adults only." He posed several questions to himself, some of which were: Why adults only? Should adults see things which are prohibited to children? If it is good for adults, why not for the children? If bad for the children, why not bad for the adults? If unlawful for children to see, why not for adults? He finally reasoned if it were not good for his children, it was not good for him as a parent. Such advertisements are cunning lures of Satan as he attempts to influence and destroy ethical and moral values.

I read in the news recently of the wisdom a judge used in Iowa as he sentenced two juveniles on auto theft charges. I was thrilled that this judge took the time to give the following advice. His example may serve as a challenge to all civil judges or judges in Israel who are called to give advice.

Penalties of a Prison Record

"Now you have been convicted of a felony," he said. "A felony is a crime for which you might be sent to the penitentiary. In this case I do not have to send you to the penitentiary. . . . I am permitted to give you a parole.

"But if you never see the inside of a penitentiary or the jail you will not have escaped from the penalties of your crime.

". . . The record of your conviction will be here as long as the courthouse stands. . . . Next year, or ten years from now, or when you are old men, if you are ever called to be witnesses in any court of law, some lawyer will point his finger at you and ask this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?'

"And you will hang your head and admit that you have. . . .

"It may be that some day . . . you will apply for a passport. . . . No country will allow you to become a resident. . . .

"Some day you may seek a position in the civil service of your state or of your nation. On the application blank you will find this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?' Your truthful answer will bar you from examination; an untruthful answer will be detected because appointments are made only after investigation. . . .

"Some day you may want to take a position of trust, where a surety bond is required. On the application for the bond will appear this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?'

"And while you are going from one bonding company to another trying to find one willing to take a chance on you, the position will be filled by some applicant who has not been convicted of a felony.

"In a few years you will be 21 and others of your age will have the right to vote, but you will not. . . .

"You will be a citizen of your state and country, but you will have no voice in public affairs. . . .

"Your country is calling men to the colors. . . . But the Army will never accept you, nor will the Navy. Military men are proud of the service; they will not permit it to be debased by the enlistments of convicted felons.

"I am granting you a parole. A parole is in no sense a pardon. You will report to the men who have accepted your parole as often as they may ask. Your convenience is not a matter of importance. . . .

"Should the slightest complaint of your conduct reach this court your parole will be revoked immediately, and you will begin serving your sentence. You will not be brought back here for questioning or explanations. You will be picked up and taken to prison without notice to you and without delay." (*Deseret News*, February 23, 1965, p. A15.)

A lesson well taught is a lesson well remembered. I wonder what the two boys might have done had they had the influence of the judge's counsel

before the theft, rather than the influence that promoted the felony.

Exemplify Righteousness

Parents, church leaders, and all who aspire to positions of influence, teach the youth the proper way to live; help them to develop faith in God and a good, strong character; help them to follow the right influence, that they may retain faith in God. Guide them as Susanna Wesley, the wise and devoted mother of John Wesley, counseled her son: "Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a pleasure, take this rule: Whatever impairs in tenderness your conscience, weakens your reason, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind—that thing to you is sin."

Influences Elevate or Deteriorate

Remember that the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small. In every segment of society, there are those influences which elevate and those which deteriorate the human soul.

The Savior miraculously fed the four thousand. Then he crossed the Sea of Galilee and came into the coasts of Magdala. There the materialistic, self-centered, and egotistical Pharisees and Sadducees came, tempting him to show them a sign from heaven. He observed that they could determine the weather, but they could not discern the signs of the times. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; . . ." (Matt. 12:39) warned Jesus. Today we have some Pharisees and Sadducees in our society, cloaked in the disguise and the influence of "professionalism," urging youth not to believe unless such can be measured in terms of materialistic values. In this mill of life we should heed the counsel that Jesus gave to his disciples: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (*Ibid.*, 16:6.)

This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us.

ELDER S. DILWORTH YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Records on Metal Plates

One looks with awe as he contemplates the history of the Book of Mormon. Today the account of how it was written is entirely plausible to most men. Because of archeological research it is now known that writing on metal plates was common in the time of Lehi. Men have written on plates many times. Prophets have sung their prophecies and recorded them, kings have told of their conquests, and ministers of state have described their relations with other nations. Even the common accounts of common people have been inscribed. Written on metal plates, leather, or papyrus, in languages strange to us today, all of these have come to our attention.

Men have gone to great lengths to certify their discoveries. "At this cer-

tain place we dug," they would write. And there were present others to verify discovery and to help interpret its place in history.

This was not so in 1829. At that time books written on metal plates were known to but few men.

Unique Aspects of the Miracle of Translation

But nowhere in recorded history has a sacred book been buried in the earth and then been brought forth by a miracle such as this one in which an angel of God visited a young man and pointed the way to the hiding place and then withheld the record until the man was prepared to receive it. The prophecies said that the latter-day work would be marvelous and wonderful. Seldom before has a single act