

Monday, April 5, 1965

Second Day

producing the natural heat that saved him from death.

Through our world of opposites, we are also running for our lives, and Jesus has indicated what the amount of our effort should be when he said, "O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day." (D&C 4:2.)

May God help us to keep all of his commandments, that in its best meaning we may have life and have it more abundantly. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

We have just listened to Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. We shall now hear from Marion D. Hanks of the Seventies.

ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I suppose I could not possibly fail to tell you now what happened to me in Twin Falls some years ago in the home of the stake president's counselor, when two little girls engaged in conversation about the visitor to the stake conference the coming weekend. The smallest had been influenced by the full-time missionaries, who had impressed her greatly. She could hardly wait to grow up to be a missionary; she wanted to be an elder. Her older sister assured her that she couldn't possibly be an elder, that only men could be elders, and she said, "Oh, no. Daddy told me that Marion D. Hanks is coming to our conference, and she's an elder."

There are some things we live with gratefully, if sometimes patiently.

There is a poem which I believe was written for President McKay, though I am not sure the author knew he wrote it for him, and I would like to take this chance to quote it. It is short and impressive. Will you get the words—it says,

"'Tis human fortune's happiest height
to be
A spirit melodious, lucid, poised, and
whole;
Second in order of felicity
To walk with such a soul."
(Quoted in O. C. Tanner, *Christ's
Ideals for Living*, p. v.)

I am sure I express your gratitude for the privilege of the walk with such a soul.

To me one of the most impressive sights in this world is the group at which I now look and what it repre-

sents. Interspersed among you men are many choice youngsters. I had a chance to shake hands with some a few minutes ago. And though I don't intend to talk only to them or especially to them in the few minutes I stand here, I would like to be able to feel that they understand what I am saying, and I am going to try to do that. If they do, I think the rest of us will.

"How Lucky Can You Be!"

Brother Hinckley gave us a wonderful sermon this afternoon. I'm hopeful that all will have a chance to read it. It revolved around an experience with mature, successful, effective, intelligent men in varying degrees of involvement or noninvolvement with tobacco. As he spoke the words of them, which he applied to himself, I applied them to myself; and you who are here were doing likewise, I feel sure: "How lucky can you be."

I thought of an experience that occurred on these grounds a few years ago when an internationally known nutritionist and research scientist, who had flown here from Stockholm for the express purpose of looking at us and getting something of our story, sat across the desk with a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants opened to section 89, of which and from which we have been speaking tonight. I had asked him a question, and I was very much interested in his answer. He had been a bit combative, or at least defensive along the route. I said to him, "Dr. Waerland, what would you think

of a young man, 27 years of age, who wrote that document more than 120 years ago?"

He said, "I would say that he was 120 years ahead of his time." He then talked of some of the nutritional, affirmative aspects of the Word of Wisdom. He talked of the discoveries of science and of his own researches, and said that every suggestion of the Word of Wisdom was affirmative and valid.

I said again, "What would you think of a prophet who knew all that long ago, without any special preparation or training in the sense you have had it?"

And he said again, "I am not a religious man, and I know little of prophets, but whoever wrote that document was 120 years ahead of his time."

Investment in Health

How fortunate can we be? Many of us are not acquainted with the facts, though many of us are, that in this world there are many choice forces seeking the same ends we are when we teach this great principle of health. One who represented an interesting viewpoint was Thomas A. Edison, thought by many to be the greatest creative genius this world has known. In his diary he wrote these words, and I would hope that every young Latter-day Saint who sometimes feels uneasy in the peculiarities or uniqueness of his own health viewpoints would remember them or have access to them. Edison is talking about ways of living and thinking and working. He says, "The useful man never leads the easy, sheltered, knockless, unshocked life. At 36 he ought to be prepared to deal with realities, and after about that period in his life, until he is 60, he should be able to handle them with a steadily increasing efficiency. Subsequently, if he has not injured his body by excess indulgence in any of the narcotics (and by this term I mean liquor, tobacco, tea, and coffee), and if he has not eaten to excess, he very likely may continue to be achievingly efficient up to his 80th birthday, and in exceptional cases until 90."

The Nature of Alcohol

Now, I interpolated no words, all of those are his. He identifies narcotics specifically and interestingly as substances with which we as a Church have been at odds since God spoke to a boy-prophet a long time ago.

I cannot forget an occasion when Dr. John A. Widtsoe, whom you will remember as a great scientist as well as a great Latter-day Saint leader, was one of a group of panelists at a university. Two others, also representing religious points of view, preceded him. One attempted to make an accommodation to work out an acceptable approach to moderation in drink. The next was a fine young minister of the gospel, and he with measured but very emphatic phrases objected to all that his predecessor had said, and added, "As a people, and particularly as a group of young leaders in my church, we believe alcohol to be a tool of the devil, and we are against it." Dr. Widtsoe stood and very quietly and graciously said, "We link arms with this choice young man and those who walk with him because his view I accept and believe to be our own." And then, he said, "Because I have a little time allotted and because my background happens to be chemistry and its research, let me talk to you of the nature of alcohol." I understood that he was linking arms with other good people of honest intent who were seeking to teach the truth about substances that are not good for the human body.

The Cleanness and Integrity of the Human Body

Now, the Lord has given us a great program of health, but not infrequently I expect some of us don't tell our young people and maybe fail to recall ourselves that this program is based on marvelous fundamental eternal principles. You will remember that in the Doctrine and Covenants in a great section received in 1832, a great revelation, the Lord says, "... the spirit and the body are the soul of man." (D&C 88:15.) A little later he revealed again the truth that the elements—that is, the elements that make up our body—

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and the spirit in us, when they are combined, permit us to have a fullness of joy. These are eternally important principles. They go hand in hand with the great truth that God lives, that he is the Father of the spirits of all mankind, that mortal life has a great meaning in the eternal journey man makes, and that one of the great purposes of mortal life is to take upon ourselves a mortal body (the elements), because in our eternal experience there will come a time of reunion of body and spirit. You see, young men, when we die, as surely we do, the body goes to the tomb. The spirit persists, it goes on, it lives. You will be you, and I will be I, each will be himself. Yes, there is a break in the eternal journey, but the break is only for the body. The spirit goes on, and then one day in God's wisdom and through his power the body will be reconstituted (in a way I do not know, and the detail is of no great consequence to me), resurrected, and the body and the spirit will recombine: "... the spirit and the body are the soul of man." (*Ibid.*, 88:15.) That's one big reason why it is very important that we understand the fundamental principles upon which this great program rests. It is vital that we do everything we can to preserve in honor and cleanliness and integrity this mortal body. It is part of our eternal soul.

I remember reading a statement by a great person who said that this is one of the paradoxes of modern Christianity. It makes the body a very useless, negative, evil thing, and yet teaches, theoretically at least, the reality of a resurrection in which this body is part of an eternal soul. There is no such difficulty in the philosophy God has permitted us to understand. The body is a nonevil component of the eternal soul. That's one big reason why we ought to be anxious to keep it clean, anxious to be interested to keep from it the substances that would harm it—and not alone it, but the rest of us. Have you ever heard these words of Goethe, the great German: "The whole purpose of the world seems to be to provide a physical basis for the growth of the spirit."

The Temple in which the Spirit Dwells

Now, in effect, and perhaps with some limitations of understanding, Goethe was talking about what Paul said. Paul said that this is a temple, this body in which the Spirit of God dwells (see 1 Cor. 3:16)—a spirit child of God. And Paul thus expressed his understanding that it is our obligation to keep it clean and pure and, so far as we are able, free from the intrusions of that which would harm it.

"A principle with a promise"

Now let me say, as I conclude, one other thing. This is a principle with a promise. For years, young and some older people have been coming to me asking me to define substances or list them which were not to be used. And I have tried to reply with the words of the Lord: This is a principle with a promise. (See D&C 89:3.) What is the principle? As I understand it, the principle is that everything that God has provided for us that is good we should use with thanksgiving, with judgment, with prudence, and not in excess. Everything that isn't good for us we should let alone. I understand that to be the heart of the principle. And the promise? The promise is that if we will obey the principle through obedience we will get better health, greater knowledge and wisdom, and wonderful spiritual blessings. There are so many examples of these great truths that I would like to tell you about, but let me mention one. As I walked to this building this very afternoon, I heard a man say to his companion (and I didn't recognize either, nor do I think they were part of the conference group, and I know nothing of the genesis of the statement or its circumstances, but I report accurately what he said): "When he gets a few drinks in him, he is really ugly and mean."

I'm not sure anybody can improve upon that description of one who makes the mistake of getting involved in a substance that dulls his judgment, that inhibits his natural anxiety to control himself, that imposes upon his will.

God bless us to have the courage of conviction to live the principle and

therefore inherit the promise, and to be courageous enough as we mingle with those who do not understand the principle, to appreciate their value and their worth, and share with them, as they will permit, the important reasons why we should be concerned to be obedient to this law of God, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

We have just listened to Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Richard P. Condie will now lead the chorus and congregation in singing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Come, Oh Thou King of Kings."

President Hugh B. Brown

President Nathan Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency will now address us.

PRESIDENT NATHAN ELDON TANNER

First Counselor in the First Presidency

It's good to be here, my brethren, and to partake of the Spirit that has been here with us this evening and to hear the admonition which is good for all of us. All I wish to say on the Word of Wisdom this evening is to tell you an experience which I told you once before. When I was driving along and had two young men with me in my car, and a young man thumbed a ride with us, I asked the boys who were with me if we should take him with us, and they said yes. I picked him up, and after we had driven along a little way he said, "Do you mind if I smoke in your car?" I said, "No, not at all if you can give me any good reason why you should smoke." And I said, "I will go farther than that." (I was stake president at this time.) "If you can give me a good reason why you should smoke, I will smoke with you."

Well, these two young men looked at me and wondered. We drove on for some distance, about twenty minutes, I think, and I turned around and said, "Aren't you going to smoke?" And he said, "No." I said, "Why not?" And he said, "I can't think of a good reason why I should."

I would like that word to go to all of our young men, and when you can think of a good reason, and only when you can, then begin to smoke.

Read the Book of Mormon Before Christmas

At the priesthood meeting in October, I reminded you that President Joseph

Fielding Smith had said a year before that we should all read the Book of Mormon. I said that I had read it, and I appealed to all under the sound of my voice to read the Book of Mormon before Christmas. I am happy to report that I received letters, telegrams, and people told me orally as they met me on the street, as they came into my office, and over the telephone, from some young boys in Montreal, Canada, to the General Authorities who said, "I read the Book of Mormon as you asked me to do, and I appreciated this challenge and have enjoyed reading the Book of Mormon."

Now I have two letters here that I should like to read to you: "Marg and I have accepted your challenge to reread the Book of Mormon and have extended it to include Steve. We have spent several pleasant evenings taking turns reading to each other and explaining passages to Steve. Though he is only eight he grasps the story very clearly. It gives him an opportunity to learn new words and meet new ideas that will be of value to him throughout his life. We are enjoying this rich experience and thank you for the challenge."

Another letter which I received:

"Dear President Tanner,

"I am the young boy, twelve years of age, you challenged to read the Book of Mormon after General Priesthood outside the temple grounds on the sidewalk by the drinking fountain.

"I want to thank you for the chal-