

Friday, April 4

First Day

operators of the radio and television stations for their cooperation in making possible such an extensive coverage of the proceedings of this conference.

We should like to express our appreciation for the lovely flowers which decorate the rostrum. For the beautiful white calla lilies we are indebted to the Oakland-Berkeley Stake high priests quorum, and to Brother Irvin T. Nelson and his associates for handling and arranging these flowers, and also the beautiful floral display at the rear entrance of this building.

We are pleased to welcome this morning these young students from the Ogden Institute of Religion, Ogden, Utah. They will furnish the music for this session of conference.

We are grateful for their presence, and for their willingness to come and add their youthful, exhilarating spirit and influence to this meeting. We want you young people to know that President McKay and all of us appreciate you and your conductor, Brother Ladd R. Cropper. He will conduct the chorus, and Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

We shall begin this session by the chorus rendering, "God of Comfort, God of Courage," following which the

invocation will be offered by President Alma P. Burton of the Sharon Stake.

The Ogden Institute of Religion Chorus sang the number, "God of Comfort, God of Courage."

Elder Alma P. Burton, president of the Sharon Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President Hugh B. Brown

This wonderful chorus from the Ogden Institute of Religion will now sing, "I Need Thee Every Hour."

The Ogden Institute of Religion Chorus sang the hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour."

President Hugh B. Brown

President David O. McKay has prepared a message and an address for the conference, but being unable to be present has asked his son, Robert, if he will read that message now, please.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

(Read by his son Robert R. McKay)

My beloved brethren and sisters: My soul is deeply stirred this morning, due, I am sure, to a combination of circumstances and experiences. Never have I been so thankful for the blessings of the Lord, and for the faith and prayers of the membership of the Church. I am thankful for the restoration of the gospel and for the glorious message to all the world that accompanied that restoration: that God lives and that his Beloved Son Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Savior of the world, that we are his children, and that he has given us a plan by which we may return to his presence as resurrected, immortal beings.

Progress of the Church

I am grateful for the outstanding progress the Church has made during the past year; for the united and unstinted support given by the General Authorities and general officers of the Church; for the loyalty, faith, and devotion of the general auxiliary boards, of the officers in stakes, quorums, wards, missions, and of the Church membership in general. Most of all, I am grateful for the assurance we have of the Lord's guidance and overruling power.

I extend to all present in this historic Tabernacle—our special visitors, gov-

ernmental and educational leaders, Regional Representatives, our stake, ward, and auxiliary officers and teachers from far and near—and to friends and members tuned in by radio and television my heartfelt greetings and welcome to this one hundred thirty-ninth conference of the Church.

Mankind's welfare

During the past months I have been most apprehensive of mankind's welfare in a world of tribulation and of false ideals. With the increase in crime, the disrespect for law and order, the ever-increasing divorce rate, resulting in broken homes; the immorality, with all its attendant evils; the precious principles associated with man's freedom threatened with repudiation, if not abandonment, it is time that men and women the world over should become more thoughtful, more prayerful, more earnest than ever before in seeking the causes of this world's disaster, and bravely and heroically choose a better course of life.

This is a time when mankind should turn their thoughts to the teachings of Christ, our Lord and Savior, and in larger numbers than the world has heretofore witnessed conform thereto their attitudes and actions. Unless multitudes of men and women so change their hearts and lives, the world will continue to be in turmoil, and our present civilization be threatened with disintegration.

Need for more godliness

It is a deplorable but recognizable fact that men's hearts all too generally are turned from and not toward God. Self-promotion, not God's glorification, is the motivating factor in most people's lives. Irreverence is all too manifest.

The world needs more godliness and less godlessness; more self-discipline, less self-indulgence; more power to say with Christ, "Father . . . not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42.) Christ came to bring peace. Rejection of his way of life has made strife and contention rampant. Man, not the Lord, has brought deadly conflicts and subsequent misery. Wars spring from

wickedness of unrighteous leaders. Not until freedom triumphs and a just peace comes may we hope for the end of wars and for goodwill among men.

Today, when these facts are so strikingly manifest, let all sincere men recognize the evil conditions that have caused wars, and resolve with God's help to banish them forever. There must come a victory of right and freedom over iniquity and oppression; I repeat, war will never be vanquished until men change their hearts and establish new ideals.

Home, the strength of a nation

An essential, fundamental element in the building and in the perpetuity of a great people is the home. The strength of a nation, especially of a republican nation, is in the intelligent and well-ordered homes of the people. In the well-ordered home we may experience on earth a taste of heaven. It is there that the babe in a mother's caress first experiences a sense of security, finds in the mother's kiss the first realization of affection, discovers in mother's sympathy and tenderness the first assurance that there is love in the world.

I remember that during World War II conditions made it necessary that I share a Pullman car with 40 soldier boys. They were gentlemen, and a credit to any nation. In the course of conversation, one of them remarked to me: "My dad's hair is white too." Then he added in a tone that expressed the depth of his feeling, "How I should like to see that old gray head this morning!" He and his companions were en route for an encampment to complete their training before embarking for duty overseas. They had enlisted to defend not only the free agency of man, but the rights and sanctity of home and loved ones. Such an affection for home and loved ones as felt by that soldier boy will make death preferable to surrender to an enemy who would destroy home and all that American soldiers hold dear.

Seeking the pleasure of conjugality without a willingness to assume the responsibilities of rearing a family is one

of the onslaughts that now batter at the structure of the American home. Intelligence and mutual consideration should be ever-present factors in determining the coming of children to the home.

Intelligent home building

It is important for young people to realize that intelligent home building begins with a young man and a young girl in their teens. Often the health of children, if a couple be blessed with such, depends upon the actions of parents before marriage. In the press, from the pulpit, and particularly in the home, there should ring more frequently the message that in their youth boys and girls are laying the foundation for their future happiness or misery. Every young man, particularly, should prepare for the responsibility of fatherhood by keeping himself physically clean, that he might enter into that responsibility not as a coward or deceiver, but as one honorable and fit to found a home. The young man who, in unfitness, takes upon himself the responsibility of fatherhood is worse than a deceiver. The future happiness of his wife and children depends upon his life in youth.

Let us also teach girls that motherhood is divine, for when we touch the creative part of life, we enter into the realm of divinity. It is important, therefore, that young womanhood realize the necessity of keeping their bodies clean and pure, that their children might enter the world unhampered by sin and disease. An unshackled birth and an inheritance of noble character are the greatest blessings of childhood. No mother has the right to shackle a child through life for what seems in youth to be a pleasant pastime or her right to indulge in harmful drugs and other sinful practices. Those who are to be the mothers of the race should at least so live as to bear children who are not burdened from birth by sickness, weakness, or deformity, because the parents, in fiery youth, as Shakespeare said, "with unbashful forehead woo the means of weakness and debility."

Unchastity a dominant evil

A dominant evil of the world today is unchastity. I repeat what appeared over the signature of President Joseph F. Smith while he was living: "No more loathsome cancer disfigures the body and soul of society today than the frightful affliction of sexual sin. It vitiates the very fountains of life, and bequeaths its foul effects to the yet unborn as a legacy of death." (*The Improvement Era*, Vol. 20, p. 739.) He who is unchaste in young manhood is untrue to a trust given him by the parents of the girl; and she who is unchaste in maidenhood is untrue to her future husband and lays the foundation of unhappiness, suspicion, and discord in the home. Do not worry about those teachers who talk about inhibitions. Just keep in mind this eternal truth that chastity is a virtue to be prized as one of life's noblest achievements. It contributes to the virility of manhood. It is the crowning virtue of womanhood, and every red-blooded man knows that is true. It is a chief factor to a happy home. There is no loss of prestige in maintaining in a dignified way the standards of the Church. You can be "in" this world and not "of the world." Keep your chastity above everything else! God has commanded that we be chaste: "Thou shalt not commit adultery!" said the Lord at Sinai. (See Exod. 20:14.)

Degenerating forces in the world are rampant, but they can be resisted if youth will cherish right thoughts and aspire to high ideals. The age-old conflict between truth and error is being waged with accelerating fury, and at the present hour error seems to be gaining the upper hand. Increasing moral turpitude and widespread disregard for the principles of honor and integrity are undermining influences in social, political, and business life.

Marriage ordained of God

The exalted view of marriage as held by the Church is given expressively in five words found in the forty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "marriage is ordained of God." (D&C

49:15.) That revelation was given in 1831 when Joseph Smith was only 25 years of age. Considering the circumstances under which it was given, we find in it another example among hundreds of others corroborative of the fact that he was inspired of the Lord. Before us are assembled thousands of presiding officers in stakes, wards, quorums, and auxiliaries, to whom we say, it is your duty and mine to uphold the lofty conception of marriage as given in this revelation, and to guard against encroaching dangers that threaten to lower the standard of the ideal home.

It is said that the best and noblest lives are those which are set toward high ideals. Truly no higher ideal regarding marriage can be cherished by young people than to look upon it as a divine institution. In the minds of the young, such a standard is a protection to them in courtship, an ever-present influence inducing them to refrain from doing anything that may prevent their going to the temple to have their love made perfect in an enduring and eternal union. It will lead them to seek divine guidance in the selection of their companions, upon the wise choice of whom their life's happiness here and hereafter is largely dependent. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts them up to their Father in heaven. Such joys are within the reach of most men and women if high ideals of marriage and home be properly fostered and cherished.

Sacredness of marriage covenant threatened

The signs of the times definitely indicate that the sacredness of the marriage covenant is dangerously threatened. There are places where the marriage ceremony may be performed at any hour of the day or night without any previous arrangement. The license is issued and the ceremony performed while the couple wait. Many couples who have been entrapped by such enticements have had their marriages end in disappointment and sorrow. In some instances these places are nothing more than opportunities for legalized immorality. Oh, how far they fall below the true ideal! As far as lies

within our power, we must warn young couples against secret and hasty marriages.

It is vital also to counteract the insidious influences of printed literature that speaks of the "bankruptcy of marriage," that advocates trial marriages, and that places extramarital relations on a par with extramarital friendships.

Responsibility of parenthood

Parenthood, and particularly motherhood, should be held as a sacred obligation. There is something in the depths of the human soul which revolts against neglectful parenthood. God has implanted deep in the souls of parents the truth that they cannot with impunity shirk the responsibility to protect childhood and youth.

There seems to be a growing tendency to shift this responsibility from the home to outside influences, such as the school and the church. Important as these outward influences are, they never can take the place of the influence of the mother and the father. Constant training, constant vigilance, companionship, being watchmen of our own children are necessary in order to keep our homes intact.

The character of the child is formed largely during the first 12 years of his life. During that period he spends 16 times as many waking hours in the home as in school, and 126 times as many hours in the home as in the church. Children go out with the stamp of these homes upon them, and only as these homes are what they should be will children be what they should be. Luther Burbank, the great plant wizard and scientist, most impressively emphasizes the need for constant attention in the training of a child. He says:

"Teach the child self-respect. Train it in self-respect just as you train a plant in better ways. No self-respecting man was ever a grafter. Above all, bear in mind repetition—the use of an influence over and over again, keeping everlastingly at it. This is what fixes traits in plants, the constant repetition of an influence until at last it is irrevocably fixed and will not change. You cannot afford to get discouraged. You

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are dealing with something far more precious than any plant—the precious soul of a child!”

Needs of children

There are three fundamental things to which every child is entitled: (1) a respected name, (2) a sense of security, (3) opportunities for development. The family gives to the child his name and standing in the community. A child wants his family to be as good as those families of his friends. He wants to be able to point with pride to his father, and to feel an inspiration always as he thinks of his mother. It is a mother's duty to so live that her children will associate with her everything that is beautiful, sweet, and pure. And the father should so live that the child, emulating his example, will be a good citizen and, in the Church, a true follower of the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need.

He needs parents who are happy in their adjustment to each other, who are working hopefully toward the fulfillment of an ideal of living, who love their children with a sincere and unselfish love—in short, parents who are well-balanced individuals, gifted with a certain amount of insight, who are able to provide the child with a wholesome emotional background that will contribute more to his development than material advantages.

Evils of divorce

Divorce almost invariably deprives children of these advantages. Just recently I received a heartbreaking letter from a boy nearly eight years of age whose parents are divorced, from which I quote: “Dear David O. McKay: I am having a problem and it is about Mom and Dad. They are divorced and we [meaning his brother and sister] want to be back together. Can you solve my problem? I love you.” What a tragedy for that child, and what un-

happiness this separation has caused the children.

The increasing divorce rate in the United States today is a threatening menace to this nation's greatness. The increase throughout the United States, and in our own state, in the percentage of divorces is alarming.

In the light of scripture, ancient and modern, we are justified in concluding that Christ's ideal pertaining to marriage is the unbroken home, and conditions that cause divorce are violations of his divine teachings. Except in cases of infidelity or other extreme conditions, the Church frowns upon divorce, and authorities look with apprehension upon the increasing number of divorces among members of the Church.

A man who has entered into sacred covenants in the house of the Lord to remain true to the marriage vow is a traitor to that covenant if he separates himself from his wife and family just because he has permitted himself to become infatuated with a pretty face and comely form of some young girl who flattered him with a smile. Even though a loose interpretation of the law of the land would grant such a man a bill of divorcement, I think he is unworthy of a recommend to have his second marriage solemnized in the temple. And any woman who will break up her home because of some selfish desire, or who has been untrue to her husband, is also untrue to the covenants she has made in the house of the Lord. When we refer to the breaking of the marriage tie, we touch upon one of the saddest experiences of life. For a couple who have basked in the sunshine of each other's love to stand by and see the clouds of misunderstanding and discord obscure the love-light of their lives is tragedy indeed. In the darkness that follows, the love sparkle in each other's eyes is obscured, and to try to restore it is fruitless.

Marriage a sacred obligation

To look upon marriage as a mere contract that may be entered into at pleasure in response to a romantic whim, or for selfish purposes, and severed at the first difficulty or misunderstanding that may arise, is an

evil meriting severe condemnation, especially in cases wherein children are made to suffer because of such separation. Marriage is a sacred relationship entered into for purposes that are well recognized—primarily for the rearing of a family. A flippant attitude toward marriage, the ill-advised suggestion of “companionate marriage,” the base, diabolical theory of “free sex experiment,” and the ready-made divorce courts are dangerous reefs upon which many a family bark is wrecked.

In order to lessen the breaking up of homes, the present tendency toward a low view of marriage should be substituted by the lofty view of marriage that Jesus the Christ gives it. Let us look upon marriage as a sacred obligation and a covenant that is eternal, or that may be made eternal.

Teach the young of both sexes in the responsibilities and ideals of marriage so that they may realize that marriage involves obligation and is not an arrangement to be terminated at pleasure. Teach them that pure love between the sexes is one of the noblest things on earth, and the bearing and rearing of children the highest of all human duties. In this regard it is the duty of parents to set an example in the home that children may see and absorb, as it were, the sacredness of family life and the responsibilities associated therewith.

The number of broken marriages can be reduced if couples realize even before they approach the altar that marriage is a state of mutual service, a state of giving as well as of receiving, and that each must give of himself or herself to the utmost. Harriet Beecher Stowe wisely writes: “No man or woman can create a true home who is not willing in the outset to embrace life heroically, to encounter labor and sacrifice. Only to such can this divinest power be given to create on earth that which is the nearest image of heaven.”

Temple marriage

Another condition that contributes to the permanence of the marriage covenant is marriage in the temple. Before such a marriage is performed,

it is necessary for the young man and young woman first to obtain a recommendation from the bishop. They should go to him in person, and the bishop who does his duty will instruct the couple regarding the sacredness of the obligation that they as young people are going to assume, emphasizing all the safeguards that have been named before. There, in the presence of the priesthood, before taking upon themselves the obligation of marriage, the young people receive instructions upon the sacredness of the duty that is before them; and, furthermore, they determine whether or not they are prepared to go in holiness and purity to the altar of God and there seal their vows and love.

Standard of purity

Finally, there is one principle that seems to me to strike right at the base of the happiness of the marriage relation, and that is the standard of purity taught and practiced among true members of the Church. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there is but one standard of morality. No young man has any more right to be unchaste than has a young girl. That young man who asks for a recommendation to take a pure girl to the altar is expected to give the same purity that he expects to receive.

For the proper solution of this great problem of the mounting divorce rate, we may turn with safety to Jesus as our guide. He declared that the marriage relation is of divine origin, that “marriage is ordained of God” (D&C 49:15), that only under the most exceptional conditions should it be set aside. In the teaching of the Church of Christ, the family assumes supreme importance in the development of the individual and of the society. “Happy and thrice happy are they who enjoy an uninterrupted union, and whose love, unbroken by any complaint, shall not dissolve.” The marriage ceremony when sealed by the authority of the Holy Priesthood endures, as do family relationships, throughout time and all eternity. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Mark 10:9.)

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God bless us to look more earnestly, prayerfully, and sincerely upon the sacredness of the home and the marriage covenant, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

I am sure we have all been impressed and inspired by this great message from our beloved President, so impressively read by his son Robert.

The Ogden Institute of Religion Chorus will now sing appropriately, "We Ever Pray for Thee," after which Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The Ogden Institute of Religion Chorus sang the song, "We Ever Pray for Thee, Our Prophet Dear."

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve

Thank God for that timely and inspiring message from our beloved leader, President David O. McKay.

My remarks today are directed to the humble followers of Christ. I pray that what I have to say will be of help to them.

One of the grand promises which the Lord made when he restored his Church in these latter days was that the Church should never again be taken from the earth nor given to another people. This is reassuring, for no matter how much individual apostasy we may see occur among Church members, the Church itself shall endure and remain intact. Our task, then, is to see that we personally endure to the end in faithful fellowship with the Church.

The Lord distinguishes between the Church and its members. He said he was well pleased with the restored Church, speaking collectively, but not individually. (D&C 1:30.) During his ministry on earth, the Lord spoke of the gospel net drawing in fish. The good fish, he said, were gathered into vessels, while the bad were cast away.

It is important to realize that while the Church is made up of mortals, no mortal is the Church. Judas, for a period of time, was a member of the Church—in fact, one of its apostles—but the Church was not Judas.

Disharmony of some members

Sometimes we hear someone refer to a division in the Church. In reality,

the Church is not divided. It simply means that there are some who, for the time being at least, are members of the Church but not in harmony with it. These people have a temporary membership and influence in the Church; but unless they repent, they will be missing when the final membership records are recorded.

It is well that our people understand this principle, so they will not be misled by those apostates within the Church who have not yet repented or been cut off. But there is a cleansing coming. The Lord says that his vengeance shall be poured out "upon the inhabitants of the earth. . . . And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me. . . ." (D&C 112:24-26.) I look forward to that cleansing; its need within the Church is becoming increasingly apparent.

The Lord strengthened the faith of the early apostles by pointing out Judas as a traitor, even before this apostle had completed his iniquitous work. So also in our day the Lord has told us of the tares within the wheat that will eventually be hewn down when they are fully ripe. But until they are hewn down, they will be with us, amongst us. The hymn entitled "Though in the Outward Church Below" contains this thought: