

did not like him. It was a breakdown of communication.

But now the son was home from the army, and things were different. The father and son began to establish a whole new relationship. The high point of the play came when the boy said to his father something like this:

"Dad, I always resented you when I was younger because you never told me that you loved me, but then I realized that I had never told you that I loved you either. Well, Dad, I'm telling you now: I love you."

For one electrifying moment the father and son embraced each other as the pent-up love and appreciation of years came flooding out. This probably would never have happened had the

son not realized that he was as guilty of lack of expression as his parents.

Love in the home

So young people can make a difference. They can contribute to the love in their own home by expressing their love for parents and in supporting the family. May the Lord bless us to know that it is not our material heritage that can meet and defeat this problem of drug abuse, but our spiritual heritage as expressed in the sanctity of the home and the strength of the family. May our homes be havens of spiritual strength and may we constantly bear witness to our children in word and deed of those truths that make a difference.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I have two commitments today that I should like to fulfill. One I undertook upon reading a letter yesterday from one of our choice chaplains serving a second tour of duty in Vietnam, once again moving among those engaged in the most serious of the fighting. His letter asks, "Will you ask the brethren specifically to mention the wives and the children of the servicemen over here from time to time. They have it harder than we do."

I pledge, and ask you to join me, that I will remember and seek to put actively into effect my interest in the wives and children and parents of those who are far away, giving what has to be given to preserve the high ideals of this land, and thus to express to all mankind their own concern for the well-being of those who are not able to take care of themselves.

The second commitment I carry out for a young Scotsman who a few days ago in Britain at a meeting of students expressed his love for President McKay, and then said, "President McKay, will you nae come back again?"

If the Lord will bless me in these few moments I would like to talk about the meaning of this day that we cele-

brate with all Christians everywhere, a day signal and significant, a day pivotal in the whole history of mankind.

Convictions of early Christians

Perhaps I can do that best by reading a few words that came to my mind as I stood not long ago in the catacombs outside Rome on the Appian Way, where multitudes of Christians gave their lives rather than relinquish their convictions or their faith. This is one of the things I remembered and was pleased to look up and read again on my return. It is a letter written by Cyprian, a martyr in the third century, to his friend Donatus. He wrote from Carthage:

"This seems a cheerful world, Donatus, when I view it from this fair garden under the shadow of these vines. But if I climbed some great mountain and looked out over the wide lands, you know very well what I would see—brigands on the high roads, pirates on the seas, in the amphitheaters men murdered to please applauding crowds; under all roofs misery and selfishness. It is really a bad world, yet in the midst of it I have found a quiet and

holy people. They have discovered a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of this sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians and I am one of them."

And then in a magazine some years ago I read and was deeply moved by another account. It had come freshly to view after centuries of being hidden.

On May 13, 303 A.D., in the Algerian city of Cirta (now Constantine), one Munatus Felix, high priest of the emperor, personally led a raid on a Christian worship service. He took with him a stenographer, whose report, taken in shorthand, sounds disconcertingly familiar to modern ears.

"Bring out whatever scriptures you have got," commanded Felix, after his men had collected all the evidence they could find. A subdeacon brought only one large book, explaining that the lectors kept the rest. Felix said to them: "Identify the lectors." They said: "We are not informers. Here we stand. Command us to be executed." Felix said, "Put them under arrest."

And the editorialist noted, "No one knows how many thousands were rounded up in such raids and executed. They could easily have saved their skins by staying home and saying their prayers in comfortable privacy. But they insisted on the right to come together [in the name of Christ]."

Reasons for total commitment

Easter is a time when those who believe in and accept his name gratefully worship the risen Redeemer. Men of goodwill everywhere join in the solemn celebration. What was so important about him? Why the total commitment of Cyprian and the saints at Cirta? In these few brief moments, in outline form, let me offer an answer.

His was a redemptive story.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

He was a God, a member of the godly council, the Son delegated by his

Father for a holy mission. He was a God who came to earth and walked among men and suffered more than any man could suffer, because this was his mission, and in him was the love which made it possible for him to do what he had to do.

He was a creator, indeed the creator of this world, under the direction of his Father.

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell." (Abr. 3:24.)

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth." (Col. 1:16.)

"God . . . Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. 1:1-2.)

Firstborn and Only Begotten

He was the Firstborn in the spirit.

" . . . I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn." (D&C 93:21.)

His mission was prophesied long before he was born into the world.

" . . . Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14.)

He was the Only Begotten in the flesh, on this earth the only one begotten of a divine Father and an earthly mother.

" . . . I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father. . . ." (D&C 93:11.)

He was alone without blemish, and yet he learned.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8.)

His temptation

He was tempted, but would not yield. It isn't so hard for us to identify, is it, with one who was tempted, even as we are tempted?

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.)

After Christ had fasted for 40 days and nights, he was invited to use his marvelous powers to serve himself, to satisfy himself, to save his own life, to turn stones into bread, and he would not.

The tempter said to him, in effect, "Win the plaudits of the crowd; it will be easy for you. Please them, gain their acceptance. Cast yourself down. Then they will listen to your important message." But he would not.

He was offered power and glory in exchange for his soul, and he would not.

We have similar temptations in our own time, and so we can identify.

The servant of all

He was the servant of all. One of his last earthly acts was to wash the feet of his disciples.

He suffered both body and spirit.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent." (D&C 19:16.)

He died willingly, alone, for this was how it must be. There had to be a propitiation, by one of his unique qualifications, for the sins of men—our sins—payment for which, through the love of God and the love of his Son, was made on Calvary's hill.

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

"But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26:53-54.)

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46.)

Commitment to Christ

I bear testimony and thank God for this Good Friday, tragic as are the events which it commemorates, and for what it means to me and to all men, for what it lays before men of a future, for this day had to happen in order that Easter and its glorious events could come to pass.

The pure in heart shall see God. Those who become the manner of man he was, who walk in the Spirit, will see him, and will be his.

I pray God to bless us, that all the good and wholesome and sweet feelings of the Christian world at this sacred season may motivate us and all who worship his name and seek to do his will to the kind of commitment spoken by Cyprian, to the kind of courage and devotion known by those who died in the catacombs so long ago—they who loved him well and paid whatever price was necessary to demonstrate that.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

Will you kindly heed the following announcement:

The semi-annual conference of the Deseret Sunday School Union will be held this evening (Friday) at 7:30 in this Tabernacle. This is a change from the traditional Sunday evening session which will not be held. All Sunday School workers will wish to be in attendance. The public is also cordially invited.

Sunday School superintendents and Junior Sunday School coordinators will meet in the Federal Heights Ward at 4:30 today. Sunday School assistant superintendents and secretaries will meet in the 17th Ward at 4:30 today.

We wish again to express our appreciation to this wonderful chorus who have added so much to the spirit of this occasion. We congratulate them and their conductor, and ask God's blessings upon all of them. They will now sing for us, "Almighty God of Our Fathers," conducted by Ladd R. Cropper, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder James Saville McCloy, president of the South Cottonwood Stake, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Ogden Institute of Religion Chorus sang "Almighty God of Our Fathers," after which the closing prayer was given by President James Saville McCloy of the South Cottonwood Stake.

The conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p.m.