

Saturday, April 5

Second Day

**President N. Eldon Tanner**

President Alvin R. Dyer of the First Presidency has just spoken to us, and he was followed by the singing of "God So Loved The World" by the Tabernacle Choir.

Following a brief organ interlude the Choir and congregation will join in singing "God of Our Fathers Whose Almighty Hand."

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After an organ interlude of music, the congregation sang the hymn, "God

of Our Fathers Whose Almighty Hand."

**President N. Eldon Tanner**

For the benefit of those of the television and radio audiences who have just tuned in, we again announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the third session of the 139th Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

**ELDER GORDON B. HINCKLEY****Of the Council of the Twelve**

My dear brethren and sisters, I am acutely aware of the vast congregation to whom I speak this glorious Easter time. Humbly I seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Memorial service for  
Dwight D. Eisenhower**

With millions of others around the world, I watched last Monday the funeral service of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

I observed the pageantry of it—the solemn pallbearers, young men in military uniform representing their legions of comrades in arms.

I listened to the roar of the guns—a final salute to a dedicated soldier, commander of the mightiest military machine ever assembled.

I noted the heads of state, men who had gathered from the far reaches of the earth to honor a former president of the United States.

All of this was proper, and befitting so great a man. But as I looked into the faces of those who mourned, I saw in my mind's eye, through and above and beyond all of this, the matchless wonder of the Son of God.

Here was a memorial service for one of the leaders of the earth, an honored chief of state and a respected military commander. For those who mourned there was satisfaction in the assurance of a great life, well lived.

But comfort—that comfort all seek on such occasions—came only from the quiet words, the example of the simple life, and the testimony of the resurrection of the Man of Peace, he who never lifted the sword of war, who never ruled as head of state, who walked among the poor, who died on the cross and was buried in a borrowed tomb.

We were told that General Eisenhower some years earlier, in approving the plans for his funeral, had requested that the music and sermons be on a triumphant note.

That wish was fulfilled.

The choir in the great cathedral sang the stirring words of Luther's moving hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." They repeated the peaceful assurance of the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord Is My Shepherd." They gave voice to the battle hymn of the faithful, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." They reverently sang the prayer of John Henry Newman, "Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom; Lead thou me on!"

The sermon included the majestic declaration of Jesus: ". . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26.)

The prayer, spoken in concert by the congregation, was the prayer of the

Lord: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:9-10.)

### Preeminence of Jesus of Nazareth

While watching that service, I reached for a book and read this statement from Bruce Barton:

"I talked one day," said Mr. Barton, "with H. G. Wells after his *Outline of History* had appeared. I said:

"You have stood upon a mountain and viewed the whole panorama of human progress. You have seen the captains and the kings, the princes and the prophets, the millionaires and the dreamers—all the billions of human atoms that have lived and loved and struggled for their little hour upon the earth. In this vast army what heads arise above the common level? Among all those who have fought for fame, who have actually achieved it? What half dozen men among them all deserve to be called great?"

"He turned the question over in his mind for a day or two, and then gave me a list of six names. . . ."

Jesus of Nazareth led that list.

Mr. Barton then goes on to say:

"Think of the thousands of emperors who have battled for fame, who have decreed themselves immortal, and fashioned their immortality into monuments of brick and stone. . . . Think of the hosts who have struggled for wealth, fretting over figures, denying their generous instincts, cheating and grasping and worrying." (*The Man Nobody Knows*, pp. 174-75.)

And then, I should like to add, think of Jesus, who walked the dusty roads of a conquered, vassal state; whose only army was a following of the sick and the poor and the outcast; who was dishonored and abused by the rulers and the princes; who himself carried the cross to which he was nailed; for whose burial there was no procession, but only a hurrying in the night to a borrowed tomb.

### The hope of immortality

Men are born, they live for an hour of glory, and die. Most throughout their lives are teased by various hopes;

and among all the hopes of men in all ages of time, none is so great as the hope of immortality.

The empty tomb that first Easter morning brought the most comforting assurance that can come into man's heart. This was the affirmative answer to the ageless question raised by Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14.)

### Relevance of Jesus' teachings

While seated in front of my television screen watching the funeral of General Eisenhower, I reflected on the wonder of the quiet man of Galilee, whose life and teachings have ever-increasing relevance in our time—as great a relevance, I would like to say, as in the day that he walked the earth.

In response to such a statement as this on another occasion, a straggly haired young intellectual asked, "What relevance? Just what relevance has Jesus for us? Why, he's as out-of-date as the Roman legions who occupied Jerusalem when he was there."

"Relevance?" I replied. "Ask my friends who tearfully watched the body of a beloved child lowered into the grave. Ask my neighbor who lost her husband in an accident. Ask the fathers and mothers of the thousands of good young men who have died in the steaming jungles of Vietnam. He—the risen Lord Jesus Christ—is their only comfort. There is nothing more relevant to the cold, stark fact of death than the assurance of eternal life."

### Testimony of infantryman

I am reminded of the young infantryman we met in Vietnam. He was to return the next day to the battle line along the DMZ. He knew what he would face on that dreaded tomorrow. He said quietly, "I guess it really doesn't matter whether I live or die. Sure, I love life, but I believe the life ahead will be as real and a lot better than the life here." He continued, "I hope and pray that I will live to return home; but if it should be otherwise, I know my father and mother will understand. You see, they know that God lives. They know that Jesus is the

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Christ. They know that life is eternal, as do I."

Such the testimony of a sensitive young man of faith who walked with death. Such the hope of his comrades in their brooding hours of quiet thought.

### Faith of mother

I walked one day through the great military cemetery on the outskirts of Manila in the Philippines. There, standing row on row in perfect symmetry, are marble crosses marking the graves of more than 17,000 who gave their lives to the cause of liberty. Surrounding that hallowed ground are two great marble colonnades on which are inscribed the names of more than 35,000 others who were lost in combat and whose remains were never found. I read the words chiseled in stone, "Comrades in arms whose resting place is known only to God."

I walked the quiet corridor and saw among the multitude of names that of a boy who grew up not far from me. He had played ball and laughed and danced and studied. He had gone off to war. His plane was last seen falling in flames somewhere in the vast area of the South Pacific. His mother wept in sorrow. Her hair turned to gray and then to white. But radiant through all her tragedy has been a sublime and quiet faith that she shall meet and know and love her son again.

As I stood before that name engraved in marble, there came into my mind these great words of the Lord:

"Thou shalt live together in love, inasmuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die. . . .

". . . [but] those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them." (D&C 42:45-46.)

### The master of life

This, my brethren and sisters, is the assurance of Easter. This is the promise of the risen Lord. This is the relevance of Jesus to a world in which all must die. But there is further and more immediate relevance. As he is the conqueror of death, so also is he the master

of life. His way is the answer to the troubles of the world in which we live.

I return to my reflections while witnessing President Eisenhower's funeral. On that occasion I reached for another book, a book written by the general himself. I read a statement he made in 1953 concerning the future of our troubled world. Said he: "The worst to be feared and the best to be expected can be simply stated:

"The worst is atomic war.

"The best would be this: A life of perpetual fear and tension; a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all people; a wasting of strength that defies . . . any system to achieve true abundance and happiness for the peoples of this earth. . . .

"It calls upon them to answer the question that stirs the hearts of all sane men: Is there no other way the world may live? . . ." (From the jacket of *Mandate for Change*.)

There is a way, if men will subdue their hearts to seek it.

### Example of miraculous contrast

The simple answer—the only answer—is found in the words and life of the immortal Son of God. I thought of the power of that teaching on a December day in 1956 when tanks were rolling down the streets of Budapest and students were being slaughtered with machine-gun fire. I was in Switzerland at the time. I stood that December day in the railroad station in Bern. At eleven o'clock in the morning every church bell in Switzerland began to ring, and at the conclusion of that ringing every vehicle stopped—every car on the highway, every bus, every railroad train. That great, cavernous station became deathly still. I looked out the door across the plaza. Men working on the hotel on the other side of the street stood on the scaffolding with bared heads. Every bicycle stopped, and every man and woman and child dismounted and stood, hatless and bowed. Then, after three minutes of reverent pause, trucks, great convoys of them, began to roll from Geneva, across Austria to the Hungarian border, laden with supplies—

food, clothing, and medicine. The gates of Switzerland were thrown open to refugees. As I stood there that December morning, I could not help marveling at the miraculous contrast—the devilish oppressive power of those who were snuffing out the sparks of freedom on the streets of Budapest, in contrast with the spirit of the Christian people of Switzerland who bowed their heads in reverence and then rolled up their sleeves to provide succor and refuge.

Thanks be to God for the relevance of Jesus to the problems of our time.

### Way to improve world

It has been said that history is only the story of private lives. If we would improve the world in which we live, we must first improve the lives of the people. Conversion is never a mass process. It is an individual thing. The behavior of the masses is the behavior of individuals.

It was said of old that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) The wonderful miracle of our day, as of all time, is the fact that men, when properly motivated, can and do change their lives.

It is reported that when Clinton T. Duffey became the warden at the San Quentin Prison and initiated reform procedures, he was chided by a radio commentator who said, "Mr. Duffey, you should know that leopards don't change their spots." Duffey replied, "You should know I don't work with leopards. I work with men, and men change every day."

President David O. McKay has said that the purpose of the gospel is to make evil-minded men good and good men better.

One of the complaints of the young pot smokers and drug takers who are seeking escape from reality is that the world has become intolerably impersonal. If this be the problem, the answer is not the kind of escape in which they waste their lives. The solution lies in implementing the transcendent teachings of the Son of God, who more than any other that ever walked the earth gave dignity and worth to the individual. He declared us each to be

a child of the living God, endowed with a divine birthright, capable of eternal achievement. Who, I ask, possessed of such conviction, would seek relief in the euphoria of debilitating drugs? There is a better way to improve the world, to ease suffering, to enhance the quality of man's life.

### Power of example

A wise man once declared that every great institution is but the lengthened shadow of a great man or woman.

As an instance, who can discount the tremendous good accomplished by the Red Cross? Behind this vast international organization stands the frail figure of the Christ-inspired English girl, Florence Nightingale, who walked among the death-haunted hospital wards of the Crimea bringing cleanliness, comfort, and hope and cheer to thousands of suffering men?

Is there relevancy in Jesus for our time? The world never needed more urgently the power of his example; the world never needed more desperately the vitality of his teachings.

Our young friends of the psychedelic crowd clamor for love as the solution to the world's problems. Their expression may sound genuine, but their coin is counterfeit. Too often the love of which they speak is at best only hollow mummery; at worst it deteriorates into a lascivious eroticism. On the other hand, the love of Jesus was a thing of courage so much needed in our time. It was the love that embraced all men as the children of God; it was the love that turned the other cheek; it was the love spoken from the cross in undying words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

### The hope of mankind

This is Easter. This is the season when we commemorate the most important event in human history. Millions upon millions through the ages have testified through the goodness of their lives and the strength of their courage of the reality of that event.

To these testimonies we add our witness that we know that he was the Son

of God, born in Bethlehem of Judea, who walked the earth as the promised Messiah, who was lifted up upon the cross, who gave his life as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind, our Savior, our Redeemer, the one sure hope of mankind, the Resurrection and the Life.

God bless us with increased faith in these great truths, I humbly pray in his holy name, even the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing "Sleepers, Wake, for Night Is Flying," following which there will be a brief organ interlude.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "Sleepers, Wake, for Night Is Flying," following which there was an organ interlude.

The Choir then sang "We Bow Our Head in Reverence," and "More Holiness Give Me."

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#### President N. Eldon Tanner

We welcome those of the television and radio audiences who have just joined us in the proceedings of this conference.

Our concluding speaker will be Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve.

### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve

We Latter-day Saints believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us all and was raised the third day afterward, in a physical, bodily resurrection. We believe that he has given us a way of life that will bring joy and happiness to all who truly follow him.

But without obedience to his laws, we cannot hope to receive his blessings.

#### The law of chastity

I wish at this time to refer to one of his divine statutes, which is binding upon all mankind, but which is widely disregarded. It is that pertaining to our moral conduct.

Humanity will rise or fall through its attitude toward the law of chastity. If the world will honor virtue, it can expect to receive God's blessings; but if it persists in the practice of sodomy, adultery, and other perversions, it can expect only destruction, for the wage of sin is death.

It is this awesome fact that should frighten at least the Christian world into a realization that we are being hurled into an abyss of moral degradation.

The so-called sex revolution is destroying us.

In a recent edition of the *Sacramento Union*, an editorial warned that the stench of moral decay has become intolerable. It called for a reestablishment of the divine code of chastity before everything is lost.

The *Chicago Tribune* recently reported that venereal infection is now the nation's leading communicable disease, which is another index to the extent of our moral breakdown. Three thousand new cases of this dreadful plague are contracted in America every day, more than half of them among teenagers.

#### Standards of right and wrong

As people change their standards of right and wrong, they begin to suppose that what was sin a generation ago is no longer so, that standards are relative things that may be altered at will through usage and desire, and that old-fashioned goodness now has turned into priggishness.

Many actually seem to think that the popular trend is what determines