

Thursday, April 6

If love and loyalty and faith be found  
across those sills—

A stricken nation can recover from its  
gravest ills.

"So long as there are homes where  
fires burn and there is bread [I think  
that means homemade bread];

So long as there are homes where lamps  
are lit and prayers are said;

Although a people falter through the  
dark—and nations grope,

With God Himself back of these little  
homes, we have sure hope."

To this I testify in the name of Jesus  
Christ, the Lord. Amen. □

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder ElRay Christiansen, Assistant  
to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder James A. Cullimore, Assis-  
tant to the Twelve, will now address  
us, and he will be followed by Elder  
Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of  
the Twelve, who will be our conclud-  
ing speaker.

## Elder James A. Cullimore

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

I have been greatly impressed, my  
brethren and sisters, at the strength of  
the testimonies that have been borne  
this afternoon and this morning in  
these conference sessions. I thought the  
testimony of President Smith was so  
firm, so strong, so certain. How can  
anyone doubt! And then to have it  
followed by Brother [Mark E.] Peter-  
sen in his masterful way, and so sincere.  
The testimonies of the other  
brethren, Bishop Featherstone and  
Bishop Peterson, so humble and so  
certain, a testimony in their lives,  
and the testimony of others that have  
been given. Brother Kimball, always  
so sweet and so sincere. These are  
the things that are important to us  
in our lives.

### A valued possession

A testimony of the gospel is one of  
the most valued possessions of a mem-  
ber of the Church. The strength and  
unity of the Church depend upon each  
member so living that he comes to  
know for himself that the gospel is  
true.

The spiritual condition of the  
membership of the Church is deter-  
mined by the degree to which the mem-  
bers live the gospel and are worthy of

the companionship of the Holy Spirit  
in giving witness of the truth of this  
great work. It would follow that the  
prosperity of the Church is also  
measured to a great extent by the  
strength of testimonies of its members  
as demonstrated by their worthiness  
and righteous living.

### Peter's testimony

One of the great testimonies of the  
scriptures is that given by Peter as he  
was brought before the judges after  
having healed the lame man at the  
temple gate.

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy  
Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of  
the people, and elders of Israel,

"If we this day be examined of the  
good deed done to the impotent man,  
by what means he is made whole;

"Be it known unto you all, and to  
all the people of Israel, that by the  
name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom  
ye crucified, whom God raised from  
the dead, even by him doth this man  
stand here before you whole.

"This is the stone which was set  
at nought of you builders, which is  
become the head of the corner.

"Neither is there salvation in any  
other: for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12.)

### Testimony of Christ

A second great testimony was given by Peter of Christ.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:13-19.)

### Secret of growth

In a day when churches are generally losing members and declining in popularity, many wonder what the secret is in the growth and stability of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President McKay answered it: "The secret lies in the testimony, possessed by each individual who is faithful in the Church, that the Gospel consists of correct principles. . . .

"This testimony has been revealed to every sincere man and woman who has conformed to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who has obeyed

the ordinances, and has become entitled to and has received the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, to guide him." (*Pathways to Happiness* [Bookcraft, 1957], pp. 314-15.)

### Influence of Holy Spirit

In an editorial in the *Impact* magazine, Brother William E. Berrett expressed well the great influence of the Holy Spirit in guiding and uniting the Church today:

"The great miracle of our day is that Spirit which unites the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with those multitudinous authorities appointed to lead them. For those appointed thus to lead speak a diversity of tongues, belong to a variety of races and cultures, and live in many different lands. Yet there is a unity which manifests itself in the obedience to Church calls, in the acceptance of basic doctrines, and in the belief that we are led by a living prophet of God.

"This unity is baffling to the world generally and is not understood by many whose names grace the Church rolls. The unifying influence is none other than the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon men by the authority of God, through his holy priesthood. Through the work of the Holy Ghost, men may come to know the truth, as it springs forth from the printed pages of scripture or from the lips of our living prophets. In the words of Brigham Young, 'the eloquence of angels never can convince any person that God lives, and makes truth the habitation of his throne, independent of that eloquence being clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost; in the absence of this, it would be a combination of useless sounds. What is it that convinces man? It is the influence of the Almighty, enlightening his mind, giving instruction to the understanding.'" (*Impact*, Spring 1970, p. 2.)

Thursday, April 6

## Companionship of Holy Ghost

Every member of the Church is entitled to the companionship of the Holy Ghost. At the time of baptism, hands were placed upon our heads and it was said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." Based upon our worthiness, this gives us the right to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost in which we can receive its revelations.

The blessings to those who have lived worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost were revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon:

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

"And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

"Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

"And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

"For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man." (D&C 76:5-10.)

And again the Lord told the Prophet:

"And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man

through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit." (D&C 84:46.)

## Special witnesses

The Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of the Savior. I don't know how many of them have actually seen a personage. They don't talk about it. But they don't have to, to receive their special witness that can come by the Holy Ghost.

President Harold B. Lee said to a group of young people, "Not many have seen the Savior face to face here in mortality, but there is no one of you who has been blessed to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism but that may have a perfect assurance of his existence as though you had seen." (*Youth and the Church* [Deseret Book, 1970], p. 51.)

## President Smith's statement

The impact of the witness of the Spirit in our lives has been made clear by President Joseph Fielding Smith when he said:

"... the Lord has taught that there is a stronger witness than seeing a personage, even of the Son of God, in a vision. . . . The Savior said:

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, . . . neither in the world to come." [Matt. 12:31-32.]

"Therefore the seeing, even the Savior, does not leave as deep an impression in the mind as does the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the spirit. Both Peter and Paul understood this. Here are the words of Paul:

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

"And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

"If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." [Heb. 6:4-6.]

President Smith concludes: ". . . the impressions on the soul that come from the Holy Ghost are far more significant than a vision. It is where Spirit speaks to spirit, and the imprint upon the soul is far more difficult to erase. Every member of the Church should have the impressions on his soul made by the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Son of God indelibly pictured so that they cannot be forgotten." (*Seek Ye Earnestly* [Deseret Book, 1970], pp. 213-14.)

### The spirit of revelation

In our search for truth and in our pursuit of eternal life, the Lord has not left us without guidance. He said:

"Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive. . . .

"Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

"Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation." (D&C 8:1-3.)

### Companionship of Spirit

We need the companionship of the Spirit in our lives to continually confirm to us the divinity of the gospel plan. Two things are vital to the assurance of the companionship of the Spirit:

1. Our lives must be in conformity to the gospel standards. ". . . the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples." (Hel. 4:24.)

2. We must be engaged in the work. As the Pharisees listened to the bold teachings of the Savior, they said: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He answered them: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:15, 17.)

The Lord plainly told the Prophet Joseph Smith how one might obtain a witness of him:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;

"And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (D&C 93:1-2.)

### Experience of Oliver Cowdery

Too often we ask the Lord for the direction of his Spirit before we've done all we can. The Lord gave Oliver Cowdery the key here when he attempted to translate and failed. He said: "But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (D&C 9:8.)

After we have done all we can, having studied it out and determined how best to solve our problems, then we take our decisions to the Lord; and if they are right, our bosoms will burn within us and we will have spiritual confirmation as to what to do.

### Alma's testimony

The prophet Alma spoke regarding his testimony of certain gospel teachings. He said:

"And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof

Thursday, April 6

I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me." (Al. 5:45-46.)

Yes, "the Spirit enlighteneth every man that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit."

I bear testimony that by the witness of the Spirit one can come to know of

the divinity of this great work, that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was divinely called, that President Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God, and that this gospel is the great plan of life and salvation as instituted of the Lord. This is my personal testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, and I leave it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder James A. Cullimore, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us. Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

## Elder Ezra Taft Benson

*Of the Council of the Twelve*

My beloved brothers and sisters, seen and unseen—and we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father in the spirit—humbly and gratefully I stand before you on this anniversary date of the organization of the restored church of Jesus Christ, 142 years ago. I love a general conference of the Church, except this particular part, and yet I rejoice in the opportunity to bear testimony to this the greatest work in all the world.

### Persian anniversary

Last fall I was invited by Baron von Blomberg, president of the United Religions Organization, to represent the Church as a guest of the king of Persia at the twenty-five hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. Advised by the First Presidency to accept the invitation, I left immediately following the October conference to join with representatives of twenty-seven world religions, some fifty monarchs, and other notables at this historic celebration in Iran.

### King Cyrus

King Cyrus lived more than five hundred years before Christ and figured in prophecies of the Old Testament mentioned in 2 Chronicles and the book of Ezra, and by the prophets Ezekial, Isaiah, and Daniel. The Bible states how "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia." (2 Chron. 36:22.) Cyrus restored certain political and social rights to the captive Hebrews, gave them permission to return to Jerusalem, and directed that Jehovah's temple should be rebuilt.

Parley P. Pratt, in describing the Prophet Joseph Smith, said that he had "the boldness, courage, temperance, perseverance and generosity of a Cyrus." (*Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* [Deseret Book Company, 1938], p. 46.)

President Wilford Woodruff said: "Now I have thought many times that some of those ancient kings that were raised up, had in some respects more regard for the carrying out of some of these principles and laws, than even the Latter-day Saints have in