

will now render Handel's "Sing Unto God." Following the singing the invocation will be offered by Elder M. Elmer Christensen, former president of the Switzerland Mission.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Sing Unto God."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder M. Elmer Christensen, former president of the Switzerland Mission.

The Choir sang "Lead Kindly Light" without announcement.

President Lee

President N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will be our first speaker.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The other day, as I overheard one neighbor criticizing another, I was reminded of these lines:

"Wouldn't this old world be better
If the folks we meet would say:
'I know something good about you,'
And then treat us that way?"

Then I thought of the words of one of our hymns:

"Let each man learn to know himself;
To gain that knowledge let him labor,
Improve those failings in himself
Which he condemns so in his neighbor.
How lenient our own faults we view,
And conscience's voice adeptly
smother;
Yet, oh, how harshly we review
The selfsame failings in another! . . .
So first improve yourself today
And then improve your friends
tomorrow."

—*Hymns*, no. 91

Judging others

It seems common practice for people to talk about their friends and neighbors and to criticize their seeming peculiarities and weaknesses. In fact, it is so general that one would think that gossiping about and judging others was the thing to do. How often have we heard of young men who were criticized, judged, and ridiculed because of

their peculiarities and yet who eventually became leaders in their different fields of endeavor.

Unjust criticism

Let me give you one or two examples of unjust criticism and judging without the facts.

There is a little story about Sister McKay, the wife of President David O. McKay, when she began teaching school. As the principal introduced her to the class, he pointed to a certain boy and said he was a troublemaker. She sensed the boy's embarrassment and feared he would live up to his reputation, so she wrote a note and slipped it to him as she passed his desk. It said, "Earl, I think the principal was mistaken about your being a bad boy. I trust you, and know that you are going to help me make this room the best in the school." Earl not only became a paragon of scholastic virtue but also one of the town's most important people.

I should like to give you another example. One of our most respected community-minded citizens began to act as though his feelings had been hurt and to stay away from socials where, in the past, he had gone and taken a most active part. People started accusing him

of being a sorehead, a poor sport, anti-social, etc., and even evaded him whenever possible. Later, a medical diagnosis showed he was suffering from a brain tumor, which had been the cause of his lack of interest in activities that he had previously attended and even sponsored.

Prejudgment

Let me give you another example or two of what I would call unrighteous judgment. First, a bishop who needs additional officers sees a member of his ward who, though not active, seems to have ability, but he says to himself, "Oh, he wouldn't be interested. He wouldn't want to accept a position." So he does not approach him, and the man remains inactive for years.

A new bishop is called to the ward, asks the man if he would be willing to accept a position, and finds that he is really ready and anxious to work.

Don't prejudge, but give the person an opportunity. Let him decide for himself to accept or decline.

On the other hand, we hear a man say to his family and to others, "I don't see why the bishop does this or that. You would think he would know better." Here he is judging the bishop without the facts, which, if known to him, would be full justification for the action taken. The man's judgment was not only unrighteous, but it had probably prejudiced his children and caused them to lose respect for the bishop and had weakened their faith.

"Judge not . . ."

These examples show how important it is that we do not judge, but encourage rather than denounce. Jesus Christ, some 2,000 years ago, realizing man's tendency to make unrighteous judgment, said:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. 7:1-5.)

Samuel's experience

It seems he is saying that unless we are without fault, we are not qualified to judge. By referring to Samuel's experience while choosing a king, we may get a better understanding of the fact that man is not qualified to judge. The Lord had rejected Saul as king of Israel and instructed the prophet Samuel to choose a new king. He told him to go to the house of Jesse, who had eight sons, and that while there the anointed one would pass before him and Samuel would know who was to be chosen. When the first son, Eliab, came before him, Samuel thought he was the chosen one, but the Lord refused him and then gave the prophet Samuel the key as to how to judge:

"Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.)

Each of the seven sons then passed before Samuel and was rejected. Then David, the youngest, was sent for and was approved by the Lord.

Judging fairly

The reason, therefore, that we cannot judge is obvious. We cannot see what is in the heart. We do not know motives, although we impute motives to every action we see. They may be pure while we think they are improper.

It is not possible to judge another

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fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. Because of a different environment, unequal opportunity, and many other things, people are not in the same position. One may start at the top and the other at the bottom, and they may meet as they are going in opposite directions. Someone has said that it is not where you are but the direction in which you are going that counts; not how close you are to failure or success but which way you are headed. How can we, with all our weaknesses and frailties, dare to arrogate to ourselves the position of a judge? At best, man can judge only what he sees; he cannot judge the heart or the intention, or begin to judge the potential of his neighbor.

Looking for weaknesses

When we try to judge people, which we should not do, we have a great tendency to look for and take pride in finding weaknesses and faults, such as vanity, dishonesty, immorality, and intrigue. As a result, we see only the worst side of those being judged.

Our news media today also seem to be interested mainly in controversial subjects or someone who is being attacked; and regardless of the ninety-nine good things one may do, it is the one weakness or error that alone is emphasized and heralded to the world.

We are too prone to listen to, accept, and repeat such adverse criticism, such maliciously spoken or printed words, without stopping to realize the harm we may be doing to some noble person; and, as is done so often, we excuse and justify ourselves by saying, "Well, where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire," whereas in reality we are adding to the smoke, when the fire referred to may be only the fire of malice started by some envious person.

Sometimes even when our friends are accused of wrongdoing or gossip is started about them, we disloyally accept and repeat what we hear without knowing all the facts. It is sad indeed that

sometimes friendships are destroyed and enmity created on the basis of misinformation.

Suspending judgment

If there be one place in life where the attitude of the agnostic is acceptable, it is in this matter of judging. It is the courage to say, "I don't know. I am waiting for further evidence. I must hear both sides of the question."

Only by suspending judgment do we exhibit real charity. It is hard to understand why we are ready to condemn our neighbors and our friends on circumstantial evidence while we are all so determined to see that every criminal has a fair and open trial. Surely we can try to eliminate pride, passion, personal feeling, prejudice, and pettiness from our minds, and show charity to those around us.

Let us look for the good rather than try to discover any hidden evil. We can easily find fault in others if that is what we are looking for. Even in families, divorce has resulted and families have been broken up because the husband or wife was looking for and emphasizing the faults rather than loving and extolling the virtues of the other.

Improving ourselves

Let us remember too that the further out of line or out of tune we ourselves are, the more we are inclined to look for error or weaknesses in others and to try to rationalize and justify our own faults rather than to try to improve ourselves. Almost invariably, we find that the greatest criticism of Church leaders and doctrine comes from those who are not doing their full duty, following the leaders, or living according to the teachings of the gospel.

An outstanding example of this can be found in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain neglected his own stewardship and became so bitter over Abel's righteousness and favor in the eyes of the Lord that his insane jealousy caused him to murder his brother. How much better would his situation have been had he

congratulated and honored his brother and set about to improve himself and correct his own failings.

Let us examine our own lives and actions, bring ourselves in tune with righteous principles, and never attack or spread misinformation about others.

Gossip

Gossip is the worst form of judging. The tongue is the most dangerous, destructive, and deadly weapon available to man. A vicious tongue can ruin the reputation and even the future of the one attacked. Insidious attacks against one's reputation, loathsome innuendoes, half-lies about an individual are as deadly as those insect parasites that kill the heart and life of a mighty oak. They are so stealthy and cowardly that one cannot guard against them. As someone has said, "It is easier to dodge an elephant than a microbe."

The golden rule

What a different world it would be if we would put into practice what we have all heard so many times: ". . . whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12.) Instead, we are all so inclined to judge others by a standard different from the one by which we would wish or be willing to be judged.

When the woman accused of adultery was brought before Christ, he was indignant because of the accusers' injustice. They were wanting the woman to be judged on the basis of standards different from those by which they were willing to be judged and on a matter of which some were guilty.

He said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then, after stooping and writing in the sand, he looked up and said, ". . . where are those thine accusers?" (John 8:7, 10.)

If Jesus were to stand by and be asked to judge those whom we accuse and should say to us, "He that is

without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," and then should stoop and write in the sand, how many of us would feel to steal away ashamed, convicted in our own conscience? How sound is his counsel!

Forgiving one another

If we could accept and practice the second great commandment, "Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:39), and really learn to love our neighbors, there would be no vicious gossip or bearing false witness. In the Lord's prayer, we have these words: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and then he says: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:12, 14-15.)

Christ is our greatest example of forgiveness. To the woman brought before him accused of adultery, he said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11.)

Then on the cross he prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

Regardless of our ego, our pride, or our feeling of insecurity, our lives would be happier, we would be contributing more to social welfare and the happiness of others, if we would love one another, forgive one another, repent of our wrongdoings, and judge not.

It is true that we must have appointed judges to deal with the laws of the land and judges in the Church to deal with its members; and they are given the heavy duty and responsibility of judging, which they must not neglect, but they must give righteous judgment according to the law of the land and of the Church.

Political campaigns

This being election year, there will be much campaigning; we will hear and

argue the pros and cons of many questions; we will have strong opposing views. Each must try to understand the questions and then stand firm by his convictions. But let us determine now that in the heat of the campaign we will not indulge in the vituperative talk of personalities that we so often hear. We must not rail against our brother and accuse him of lying and cheating or being dishonest or immoral.

Let us stand on principle—high principle. Also, it is most important that all of us, including our politicians, strive to live so that our actions will be above reproach and criticism.

We never gain anything or improve our own character by trying to tear down another. We have seen close friendships destroyed through words spoken and accusations made in the heat of a campaign. Tirades against men in office or against one's opponent tend to cause our youth and others to lose faith in the individual and others in government and often even our form of government itself.

Influence of the home

As parents, we have the responsibility in our homes to guard against any of these things. Also, we must realize that every word and every act influences the thinking and attitude of the child. It is in the family that the child picks up the elementary lessons in getting along with people and the virtues of love, compassion, and concern. These lessons will have been well taught if parents can bring up their children without prejudicing them by precept or example against any other children on the grounds of color, race, religion, social status, or intellectual capacity, and if they teach them to love the Lord. I am so thankful that my parents, through their tolerance, were able to accomplish this with their children.

May I humbly say in all sincerity that I love the Lord with all my heart and that I love my fellowmen. I hold

no hard feelings of any kind toward any man, and I sincerely pray for forgiveness wherein I have offended anyone. I realize, as the Savior said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.)

A witness and a challenge

To all the world, and especially to those who do not understand but who ridicule the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I wish to bear my witness and issue a challenge that you judge not until you know and understand those teachings which are contained in the restored gospel. We believe, with you, that God lives and that Jesus Christ is his Only, but truly, Begotten Son in the flesh, who came and gave his life and was resurrected so that all mankind might enjoy immortality.

He said, ". . . this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), and he gave us the gospel plan by which we can prepare ourselves to go back into his presence and enjoy eternal life.

Yes, the gospel in its fullness is restored and is here upon the earth today. I bear witness that the Bible is the word of God, given to us through his prophets, and also that the Book of Mormon is the word of God and is a translated and true record of God's dealings with the ancient American people, containing the gospel in its fullness. It was written by way of commandment and also by the spirit of prophecy and by revelation, to the convincing of the Jew and the gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.

A prophet of God

I also wish to bear testimony that I know that Joseph Fielding Smith, the President of the Church, is a prophet of God through whom the Lord speaks, and I express my sincere and deep ap-

preciation for the opportunity I have of working so closely with him.

These things I know, and I humbly bear my testimony that they are true; and I invite and encourage each and every one of you to investigate and to read the Book of Mormon, to test and enjoy the promise contained therein, which is:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moro. 10:4-5.)

This promise, and my testimony, I leave with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

The Choir sang "Come O Thou King of Kings" without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined with us, we are gathered in the historic Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the third session of the 142nd Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, has just spoken to us. We might say as the Master said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." President Tanner practices as he preaches.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

Following the singing, Elder Marvin J. Ashton, newly sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve, will speak to us.

The Choir sang "Arise, Shine, Thy Light Is Come."

President Lee

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Of the Council of the Twelve

A few weeks ago while in England, I had the opportunity to do some traveling by train. Weather and time schedules indicated this to be the most satisfactory method of transportation.

What is your destination?

One day as the train rolled from Manchester to Leicester, after about an hour and a half of reading, I put down my books, looked out the window, and wondered if we were getting close to the station. A few minutes later the door to the compartment opened and the conductor entered. He greeted me with, "What is your destination?"

Inasmuch as I had been giving some

thought to arrivals, departures, and stops, I answered, "I have an appointment in Leicester."

To this he responded with, "We shall be at your destination in ten minutes." He punched my ticket and made his way to check others.

After he left, I pondered his comments, "What is your destination?" and "We shall be at your destination in ten minutes." He seemed convinced that every time the train stopped and dozens or hundreds of people got off, they had arrived at their destinations. Apparently he has been announcing this to his passengers for years.