

circumstances may be, we all have the same starting point as of right now. And that starting point is *now*. I have always appreciated the words that are contained in our Latter-day Saint song "Improve the Shining Moments."

*Time flies on wings of lightning;
We cannot call it back;
It comes, then passes forward
Along its onward track;
And if we are not mindful,
The chance will fade away;
For life is quick in passing,
'Tis as a single day.*

Hymns, no. 73

President Joseph Fielding Smith, in his April 1969 conference message, said that procrastination as applied to gospel principles is the thief of eternal life.

Do we want to gain eternal life, my brothers and sisters? To be exalted in the highest degree in the celestial kingdom? If so, are we willing to pay the price? And what is the price? Elder McConkie covered that beautifully in his wonderful presentation here today. We must keep all the laws, all the commandments. I want to emphasize that, because I feel it is important, my brothers and sisters, that each of us have a personal interview with ourselves periodically and check up on ourselves and get back on course.

Rededicating ourselves

As I have visited the stakes and toured some of the missions, I have noted some danger signals which indi-

cate to me that we have many people in the Church, and perhaps most of us would be in this category at least to some extent, who are not doing as well as they could do, should do, and must do if they and their loved ones are to gain eternal life.

I testify to you that the things we have heard in this conference, including the things that I have said, are true. The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It is to be lived. It is my humble prayer that all of us will rededicate ourselves to doing the kind of job we are capable of doing in attaining the joy and happiness in eternity that are there for us if we will just do our part. And this I do in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder William H. Bennett has just spoken to us. The congregation and Choir will join in singing, "O How Lovely Was The Morning." After the singing, Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

The congregation and Choir sang the number, "O How Lovely Was The Morning."

President Romney

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the privilege of attending this inspirational conference, and I am confident that the answers to many of today's pressing problems are to be

found in the messages being given by our leaders.

Christian world's Easter

A week ago the Christian world

was celebrating Easter, commemorating the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, one of the most important events that has ever taken place on this earth.

Easter time is indeed a forceful reminder that the human spirit cannot be confined. It does not deny the reality of death, but it offers us an assurance that God has preserved life beyond the grave.

It is interesting to note, however, that the restored gospel as taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints encompasses the belief of a literal resurrection, which is radically different from the concept taught by most Christian churches and other faiths.

Literal resurrection

President Grant often told how several hundred ministers were asked, "Do you believe that after you die you will live again as a conscious entity, knowing and being known as you are?" No doubt all of these ministers had conducted Easter services, but in answering, none actually believed in a literal resurrection as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches.

It seems to be the nature of mankind not to accept things they cannot explain, and no man can explain the resurrection. But neither can man explain how life came to be; but who denies that we live? If we gave up everything we cannot explain, we would have to give up life.

But He who has given us life has assured us of life hereafter. Which is more difficult, to be born or to rise again? That we should live forever is no greater miracle than that we should live at all.

Throughout the centuries, philosophies and theories have been advanced by men relative to the resurrection, but none have seemed to satisfy the hearts and minds of honest searchers of truth.

Our pre-existence

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ explains that we existed as spirit entities before being born into this sphere of activity—yes, spirit children of our Father in heaven. We came to this earth for our spirits to receive bodies of flesh and bones and to receive experiences, to see if we would do all things whatsoever the Lord should command us.

And birth and death in this world are steps in eternal life, birth being a transition from our preexistent state to this earth life and death being a transition into the next sphere of activity. At death the spirit leaves our earthly body until the morning of the resurrection.

Soul of man

Through modern revelation we learn that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man.

"And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.

"And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things." (D&C 88:15-17.)

Meaning of the Fall

As a result of the Fall, Adam and Eve suffered the penalty of spiritual and physical death. But as Adam said:

"Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

"And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient." (Moses 5:10-11.)

The Fall thus provided a means whereby mankind can choose between good and evil and thus prepare for life after death. What we do here, then, determines to a considerable extent what we will be doing in the life after death.

Our intelligence rises with us.

The Lord has told us that "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (D&C 130:18-19.)

Christ redeemed mankind

And, "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." (Third Article of Faith.)

It was Christ's right to be the Redeemer of mankind, and though it required sacrifice beyond our comprehension, he made the sacrifice voluntarily. He said:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18.)

Many resurrected with Christ

The Savior had a consuming desire to do his Father's will and a great love for his Father's children, whose Redeemer he became. Thus Jesus not only atoned for Adam's transgression but for the sins of all mankind. However, we must remember that redemption from individual sins depends upon individual effort.

Matthew relates that "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his [the Savior's] resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matt. 27:52-53.)

Christ appeared in latter days

Today the resurrection is real to us for similar reasons—Christ and some of the ancient saints have appeared in this dispensation as resurrected beings.

From a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith we learn that "there are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones—

"For instance, Jesus said: *Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

"Secondly: the spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not [yet] resurrected, but inherit the same glory." (D&C 129:1-3.)

That Christ's resurrection was truly a reality was clearly demonstrated in this dispensation in Joseph Smith's first vision when he said, "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

This testimony is again given by the Prophet Joseph Smith in a vision to him and Sidney Rigdon wherein the Prophet relates:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God." (D&C 76:22-24.)

The Savior appeared to Joseph Smith as he did to the apostles in the upper room when he invited them to handle him and see, lest they think him to be a spirit. He said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39.)

Righteous shall have eternal life

Yes, the message of Easter time is that Christ is alive today, that many of the saints have been resurrected, and that all men will enjoy a literal resurrection of the earthly body with the spirit.

Ancient and modern scriptures make it clear that all men will be resurrected, but only those who accept Jesus Christ and his gospel and keep his commandments will receive the greater blessings of eternal salvation.

The Savior has indicated that "the dead [shall] awake, for their graves shall be opened, and they shall come forth—yea, even all.

"And the righteous shall be gathered on my right hand unto eternal life; and the wicked on my left hand will I be ashamed to own before the Father." (D&C 29:26-27.)

One can see the significance and purpose of this life with the perspective the gospel plan gives.

The restored gospel gives us an understanding of where we came from; of the importance of birth, death, and a literal resurrection of our earthly body; and of where we will go after this life.

Testimony that God lives

By the power of the Holy Ghost I bear you my witness that I know that

God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ live.

And I know that Joseph Smith was the instrument in the hands of the Lord in restoring the gospel in its fulness. And it was through the Prophet Joseph Smith that the power to act in the name of God was restored to this earth by resurrected beings.

I also testify that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God, acting under divine guidance in administering the affairs of the kingdom of God on this earth.

The Lord has said that it is his "work . . . and glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) And he has said, "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.)

With the understanding of the gospel which we have, may we all work for eternal life, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

Of the First Council of the Seventy

One of the first public meetings that I was privileged to attend following my recuperation from open-heart surgery was an open house sponsored by a seventies quorum, where they invited nonmember friends to listen to the doctrines of the kingdom. They selected as their theme that night, "Open Up Your Hearts." When it came my turn to speak, I said, "I am a little sensitive on that subject," but I want President Kim-

ball and his counselors and all my brethren to know that I have listened in this conference with an open heart. I have been sensitive to their counsel and will recommit myself to the great work ahead.

Signs of spring

The weather is glorious here by the Wasatch Range and throughout many