

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 5, 1980. President Spencer W. Kimball presided at and conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the choir sang the hymn "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing" without announcement.

President Kimball then made the following remarks:

President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth general session of the 150th Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and John H. Groberg preside.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and officers

and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in the conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing" and will now sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer," following which Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

The choir rendered the hymn "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee" without announcement.

President Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "The Morning Breaks; the Shadows Flee."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney

"The elders . . . of this church" said the Lord, "shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon" (D&C 41:12). Pursuant to this commandment, I shall make a few remarks concerning repentance, upon which much emphasis is placed in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

True repentance

True repentance, followed by baptism and the *laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost*, brings forgiveness. Such repentance is impossible without faith in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This great truth is clearly and beautifully taught in the Book of

Mormon. Alma, crying unto his people pursuant to the directions of an angel, said:

"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand;

"And not many days hence the Son of God. . . .

"... cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name." (Al. 9:25-27.)

Alma did not say that Jesus would redeem everybody. The promise was restricted to those who, because of their faith in Christ, would repent and be baptized.

Amulek, Alma's missionary companion, testified to the same limitation. "I . . . know," said he, "that Christ shall come among . . . men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.

"And . . . he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; . . . the intent of [this] . . . sacrifice [being] to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about *means unto men* that they may have faith unto repentance." (Al. 34:8, 15; italics added.)

In this way mercy satisfies "the demands of justice, and encircles them [that is, those who have faith unto repentance] in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore *only unto him that has faith unto repentance* is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption" (Al. 34:16; italics added).

Jesus, speaking to his Nephite disciples, said:

"No unclean thing can enter into his [speaking of his Father's] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the

repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

"Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me." (3 Ne. 27:19-20.)

It is this repentance, based upon faith in Jesus and "hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal" of which I speak today (see Moro. 7:41). This is the repentance which would lead men to a solution of all their problems, individual and collective. This is the repentance to which Jesus Christ, our Lord, calls us.

Commanded to repent

To one of his modern disciples he said:

"I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, [I'm still quoting the Redeemer] I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—"

He continues, "Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:15-19.)

That is, Jesus endured the suffering required to satisfy the demands of justice, thereby making it possible for men, through faith and repentance, to be cleansed from their sins.

"Wherefore," he continued, "I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power;

and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken" (D&C 19:20).

Foremost among men's sins are the refusal to accept Jesus Christ for what he is and the rejection of his gospel as the true way of life.

"In nothing doth man offend God," said the Lord, "or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:21).

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall" (D&C 1:16).

As to the nature of repentance, the Lord has said, "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

Forsake and confess

There doesn't seem to be much uncertainty about the meaning of *forsake*. However, the requirement to *confess* is not so universally understood. As a matter of fact, there is considerable confusion in the world about the confessing of sins, and a lot of false doctrine. By way of an assist in clearing up the confusion, I repeat some comments heretofore made on this subject.

We are to confess all our sins to the Lord. For transgressions which are wholly personal, affecting none but ourselves and the Lord, confession to ourselves and him would seem to be sufficient.

As a matter of fact, no good can come from confessing to anyone else. President Brigham Young once said, "Keep your follies that do not concern others to yourselves, and keep your private wickedness as still

as possible; hide it from the eyes of the public gaze as far as you can" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 158).

For misconduct which affects another, confession should also be made to the offended one and his forgiveness sought.

Finally, where one's transgressions are of such a nature as would, unrepented of, put in jeopardy his right to membership or fellowship in the Church of Christ, full and effective confession requires confession by the repentant sinner to his bishop or other proper presiding Church officer—not that the Church officer could forgive him the sin (for this power rests in the Lord himself and those only to whom he specifically delegates the power), but rather that the Church, acting through its duly appointed officers (the power is not in the officer but in the Church), might with full knowledge of the facts take such action with respect to Church discipline as the circumstances require and merit.

One having forsaken his sins and, by proper confession, cleared his conduct with the Lord, with the people he has offended, and with the Church of Jesus Christ, where necessary, may with full confidence seek the Lord's forgiveness and go forth in newness of life, relying upon the merits of Christ.

The Lord has said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

Examples of forgiveness

As examples of how people feel who—through faith in Jesus and repentance—obtain forgiveness, I cite the following examples from the Book of Mormon.

First, from Enos, who wrote:

"I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I

received a remission of my sins.

"Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

"And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

"And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

"And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

"And I said: Lord, how is it done?

"And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole.

"Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words," says Enos, "I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them." (Enos 2-9.)

Love and concern for the welfare of one's fellows always fills the heart of the redeemed, and peace comes into his heart, as the following incident illustrates.

At the conclusion of King Benjamin's powerful farewell address, "he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

"And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may

receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

"And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them." (Mosiah 4:1-3.)

This joy and peace of conscience which comes to one who has received a remission of his sins is graphically portrayed in the account Alma gives to his son, Helaman, of his conversion.

Alma said: "I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop [me on] the way.

"And behold, he spake unto [me], as [if] it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath [my] feet; and [I] fell to the earth, for the fear of the Lord came upon [me].

"But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

"And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God."

And Alma says, "And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of three days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

"And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great