

ELDER CHARLES A. CALLIS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Behind the powerful and faith-promoting testimony of our beloved President, Heber J. Grant, is a power more than man's.

PEACE A BLESSING

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

When the Son of Man was betrayed, Peter drew his sword and struck the servant of the High Priest. But Jesus said: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

This was an ominous and prophetic declaration concerning the Jewish and the Roman states. These nations lifted up their swords against Jesus Christ and both nations perished by the sword. The man who takes the sword of animosity and hate with evil intent to injure his neighbor and besmirch his character shall himself fall a sacrifice to the weapons he has used. For they who sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

THE STORY OF NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE

By command of the Lord, Jonah went to the great city of Nineveh. He walked up and down a whole day, crying out, "In forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed." Humbled by God's awful message the Ninevites appointed a public fast. They were on the verge of destruction. They had almost filled up the measure of their guilt, and they were ripe for judgment. The people from the meanest to the greatest followed the example of their king and covered themselves with sackcloth.

God was moved with compassion by the depth and sincerity of their repentance; therefore he did not execute the sentence he had pronounced upon them. I think it was Victor Hugo who, speaking of the Deity, said: "Of all thy names, Compassion is the most beautiful."

God spared that city of one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants. But this displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was very angry. He was vexed that his prediction was not going to be fulfilled. He appeared to care little whether innocent children and defenseless women would fall victims in that great judgment. But the Lord stayed the execution of that sentence. He said to Jonah:

And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

Even the dumb beasts are objects of his compassion.

There was a reason in this stay of execution—if I may be permitted to use that phrase.

To men and likewise to nations the promises and threatenings of God are always conditional. In the wisdom and goodness of God good behavior, sorrowful repentance and conversion can stay the approach of judgment, or at least secure a respite. People are given time by the Almighty to return to him through repentance. There is forgiveness with Him. Thus the Lord turns aside his judgments for a while at least. Nineveh's people were rescued. They were granted an extension of time. Judgments are conditional. The people themselves are responsible for the calamities that befall them, but when they repent and turn unto the Lord, he hears their prayers.

RESPIRE THROUGH PRAYER

A few days ago the world beheld a majestic spectacle. Millions of people entreated the Lord in humble prayer; they knelt in cottages and palaces, in mines and on farms, in workshops and in churches and pleaded with the Almighty to avert what seemed to be a certain terrible war. The people appealed from earthly rulers to the Lord Jesus Christ, and their appeal was heard and granted. A putting off was secured. God grant that the nations may lengthen out by righteousness that respite unto an endless state and come unto Him, the Prince of Peace.

PROPHETIC WORDS

In that historic dream, the dream of the ages, which God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, a dream divinely given and divinely interpreted, the Lord showed unto that great statesman, that mighty king, "what shall be in the latter days." He revealed unto him the kingdoms that would exist in our day. There were a few words spoken by Daniel when he interpreted that dream which makes it clear that kings and rulers should rise, but no king or ruler should ever establish a universal empire in Europe. These are the words—referring to the nations—"They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." They are the words of God.

Hosea said: "And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved."

JOSEPH SMITH'S STATESMANLIKE WORD

It is part of a prophet's work not only to foretell and warn of impending conflicts and calamities, but also to show the means of escape. Joseph Smith was a prophet-statesman. He predicted the war which would terminate in the death and the misery of many souls; but this great prophet had a peace offering to give to the people. He told them of ways and means to avoid war. Unlike Jonah, he had rather have his prediction, mighty and certain as it was, lie dormant if the people would turn unto God.

In 1844 the Prophet Joseph Smith gave the following counsel with

respect to a coming event which was soon to cast its black shadow over the land, and which was of great and general concern. "Pray Congress to pay every man a reasonable price for his slaves out of the surplus revenue arising from the sale of public lands, and from deduction of pay from the members of Congress, break off the shackles from the poor black man, and hire him to labor like other human beings, for an hour of virtuous liberty on earth is worth a whole eternity of bondage." The Prophet continued, "The southern people are hospitable and noble. They will help to rid so free a country of every vestige of slavery whenever they are assured of an equivalent for their property." And, by the way, in the same declaration the Prophet Joseph makes the recommendation, which is applicable to nations and states today, that more economy be practiced in the national and state governments.

The scholarly Josiah Quincy writing about the message Joseph Smith delivered to the nation, says:

It may be worthwhile to remark that Smith's plan was publicly advocated eleven years later, by one who has mixed so much practical shrewdness with his lofty philosophy. In 1885, when men's minds had been moved to their depths on the question of slavery, Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson declared that it should be met in accordance with the interest of the South and with the settled conscience of the North. It is not really a great task, a great fight for this country to accomplish, to buy that property of the planter, as the British Nation bought the West Indian slaves. . . . We, who can look back upon the terrible cost of the fratricidal war which put an end to slavery, now say that such a solution of the difficulty would have been worthy a Christian statesman. But if the retired scholar was in advance of his time when he advocated this disposition of the public property in 1855, what shall I say of the political and religious leader who had committed himself, in print, as well as in conversation, to the same course in 1844? If the atmosphere of men's opinions was stirred by such a proposition when war clouds were discernible in the sky, was it not a statesmanlike word eleven years earlier, when the heavens looked tranquil and beneficent? (Figures of the Past, by Josiah Quincy, p. 335.)

LINCOLN'S PLAN TO END WAR

Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, probably knew Joseph Smith very well. During a political campaign he wrote a letter in which "he gives a long list of names to which he wants documents to be sent," and in the same letter he tells a candidate "that Joseph Smith is an admirer of his, and that a few documents had better be mailed to the Mormon people." Abraham Lincoln was familiar with the prophetic message that Joseph Smith delivered and the means of escape that the Prophet opened up to the nation to save the people from the dreadful calamity which bathed the land in the blood of human beings.

Just two months before the war closed the famous Hampton Roads Conference was held. Lincoln appealed to Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Southern Confederacy. "Stephens," said he, "Let me write the word 'Union' at the top of this page, and you may put under it what you please, for," continued President Lincoln, "there are men in the North, the mention of whose names would surprise you, who are

in favor of paying for the slaves. I, too," he said, "am in favor of giving the southerners a fair equivalent for the loss of their property."

When he returned to Washington, Lincoln wrote, in his own hand, the joint resolution to be presented to Congress, providing an appropriation of \$400,000,000 to be paid to the owners of the slaves if war should cease immediately. He laid this proposition before his cabinet, but it was unanimously disapproved. The great and lonely Lincoln, the best friend the South had, turned away sadly. "I see," he said, "you are all against me. The war is costing us \$3,000,000 a day, and think of the lives being lost." (Abraham Lincoln, a History, by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Volume 10, Chapter 7, pages 132-139.)

Oh, if the words of Joseph Smith, the prophet-statesman, had been heeded, what an effusion of blood would have been prevented! Those young men buried in soldiers' graves would have walked the earth in the full vigor of youth and splendid manhood if the nation had accepted the means of escape which Joseph Smith pointed out to them. Among the noblest words that General Grant ever uttered were these: "Let us have peace."

In faith we'll rely on the arm of Jehovah
To guide through these last days of trouble and gloom,
And after the scourges and harvest are over,
We'll rise with the just when the Savior doth come.

Then all that was promised the Saints will be given,
And they will be crowned as the angels of heaven,
And earth will appear as the garden of Eden,
And Jesus will say to all Israel, Come home.

May Christ come quickly. In the words of John the Revelator, "Even so, blessed Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Six months ago I was deprived of the opportunity of being here with you. I had been called, with President Rufus K. Hardy of the First Council of Seventy, to visit the missions in the South Seas and to divide with our brothers and sisters down there, and with those who are not members of the Church, some of the glorious truths that our Heavenly Father has given to us.

OUR EARLY HYMN BOOKS

This morning when we were singing the hymn "High On the Mountain Top" I turned to the flyleaf of the hymn book as it was first published and found this introduction:

The saints in this country have been very desirous for a hymn book adapted to their faith and worship, that they might sing the truth with