

has always had its critics both within and without its membership. Now the Church has a major obligation that it can never escape—that of preaching the Gospel of Christ, of doing missionary work. Whether we will or not, we are our brother's keeper. We must be active in the work of saving human souls, the most precious entities in the universe.

The use of liquor and tobacco handicaps human beings, physically, mentally and spiritually. Knowing this we cannot escape the obligation, divinely given, of working for the non-use of these poisons. But I repeat, let us be careful of our methods, else our labors may do more harm than good. Let love permeate all our acts and wisdom characterize all our efforts.

I have asked before and I ask again—is not the cigarette the greatest faith-killer in the Church today? When we are free of its use we shall be free of other evils also. Faith will then be more abundant and its fruits much more plentiful.

Let us unite in prayer and good works to make ourselves more worthy of a greater amount of God's help in overcoming evil and building up his kingdom, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I want to talk to you today about a very old subject. It is about there being inherent in religion, principles, through the general adoption of which, men could live together in the world in peace and order.

BELIEF IN GOD THE BASIS OF RELIGION

Among them I must give first place to belief in a higher power for that is the basis upon which all religion rests. At any rate that is true of our own.

The first statement in our declaration of principles is, "We believe in God the Eternal Father." That belief is the root from which all our other tenets spring and draw their nourishment. It is the life-giving element of our religion. In it all the precepts of the Church, which give to man the assurance of a high destiny and help to steady his faltering steps as he journeys over life's troubled way, find their sanction.

From it all Christian faith must draw its sustenance, for it is at the heart of all that Jesus taught. In plain words he declared that he came from the Father and would go again to the Father; that the only purpose of his coming was to do the Father's will. It was to those who believe in the Father who had sent him that he promised everlasting life. His disciples were commissioned to baptize believers in the name of the Father, whose will he declared it to be that he should lose nothing of all that was given him but that all should be raised up at the last day. He said that he was come in the Father's name, and because he told the rulers that he was the Son of God, they sought to take his life. He

purported to do only that which he had seen his Father do. In the supreme undertakings of his life he sought the Father as the source of power, and when he succeeded he "lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." He specifically taught men to pray to the Father, and the last words to issue from his lips as he expired upon the cross were: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." There can be no doubt that he made the reality and the directive authority of God the Father the central theme of his teaching. For Christians, purporting as they do to be disciples of Christ, there is no escape; they must believe in God who is the Eternal Father, for to deny him is to cast out Jesus whom they profess to follow.

ANOTHER BASIC PRINCIPLE

We come then to our second basic principle, namely, belief in Jesus as the Son of God, which flows of necessity out of belief in his teachings about the Father. There are, to be sure, many who recognize a great value in his moral teachings, the acceptance of which as ideals of conduct, they say, constitutes them believers in and followers of him and therefore Christians, without accepting his claims to Messiahship or ascribing to him the attributes of divinity. I presume most such would also exclude his teachings about God from their system of faith. For them the life and teachings of Jesus exemplify the finest qualities and the highest ideals of conduct yet discovered to man. These they do not want to give up but would preserve as affording the safest guides to that kind of individual and collective conduct upon which the future well-being of the race depends.

Civilized beings, for instance, do not want to relinquish the distinctly Christian concept of the brotherhood of man for they know that in the development and expansion of that ideal lies the hope of humanity for an ordered world. But this at once involves difficulty again, for the brotherhood of man implies the fatherhood of God. Thus his very doctrine which by universal consent has in it the power to save our human society derives out of his teachings about God as the Eternal Father.

After that the great theme of his message to man is immortality and the coming of the Kingdom of God, which are the next basic tenets to which I refer. All the rest consists in laying out the body of principles by the adoption of which man may fit himself to live eternally in that Kingdom. The record says that he "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom * * *." And when they would have detained him in Capernaum, he reminded them that he "must preach the Kingdom of God in other cities also." He commissioned his disciples "and sent them to preach the Kingdom of God," of which he declared "there shall be no end."

Strip his words of all declarations and assumptions about the Father and his own Sonship, and about immortality and the Kingdom of God, and you have robbed them of their vitalizing force; they lose at once most of their influence over the lives of men. It becomes apparent

that it is not easy to deny God and at the same time to cling to Jesus for any purpose, for it is the majesty of divine authority with which he invested them that imparts to his moral teachings their singular power. There is no other explanation of his so good as the one he gives of himself.

The present day test of the validity of any claim is, "does it work?" That is but the modern equivalent of the test to which Jesus submitted his teaching. "If any man," said he, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

There is much testimonial evidence that the teaching stands the test.

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS A STABILIZING FORCE

I name these great foundation principles of religious faith as among the forces that could bring order and tranquility into the collective life of mankind, because they are the greatest stabilizing forces known to human experience. And stability, enduring steadfastness, assurance that the foundation will always be there, are indispensable to the orderly existence of the human family in its manifold relations.

From man's belief in God and in his own immortal life and in the Kingdom of God has come his greatest hope. Out of it has sprung his highest aspirations. Above all else it has sustained him in his often times disheartening struggle to give righteousness supremacy over evil in the world. Its widespread decline has ever been the precursor of spiritual decay and moral degeneracy—the sure heralds of national disaster. Acceptance, on the other hand, of the teachings of Jesus about divinity, his Sonship with God and his brotherhood with man gives to human life its largest value, clothes man with his highest dignity and provides him his most powerful stimulus to noble living.

JESUS AS A TEACHER

It was about these beliefs as a framework that Jesus wove the whole fabric of his moral teachings. He unfolded them in the form of lessons, here a little and there a little, as called forth during the years of his ministry among men. They are rules of behavior. He called them commandments and he said that they came from God.

While he dealt with an unseen spiritual world, where he said his kingdom is, yet his teachings are for men in this world. According to them life here is not and cannot be separated by any wide or deep chasm from eternal life, for the life of the individual is only one life—a unit—in which mortality and immortality are but stages in a continuous course of progress. The experiences, the masteries, the attainments, the manner of dealing with the hard facts of existence as they are met on the way accompany life from stage to stage, make it what it is, give it its quality and tone, determine at every stage the degree of its perfection, and its capacity for entering finally into the life of the Kingdom.

A GUIDE TO LIFE

Certain things man has to do. Not much stress is laid upon knowl-

edge but much upon understanding and habits of virtue and the cultivation of a brotherly good will towards all mankind. He is taught that as in dealing with his fellowmen he extends kindness, shows mercy, observes justice, practices self-denial, curbs ambition, denies greed, bestows love, banishes hate, gives succor, lives humbly, reveres right and respects the sacredness of human beings, he is contributing to the establishment of peace and good order and happiness in the world and is cultivating in himself those qualities of virtue which will raise him toward the level of his high destiny.

These conceptions have tremendous power to stabilize a life that is guided by them. They also are among the principles of religion which I referred to as laying down the conditions of living, the adoption of which would bring order out of the chaos which now threatens to engulf the nations. I venture the assertion that harmony among men will not come, except as, and to the degree in which, they individually and collectively exemplify these principles in their lives.

The qualities named, it is to be observed, are not physical in the sense that they admit of capture and dissection. They may not be segregated and looked at or weighed or measured. They are, however, none the less realities, as much so as the solidest objects of the physical world. Their existence may be as unerringly discerned. They shine forth in the deeds of those who possess them. They and others akin to them are the emanations of the spirit and are the most powerful forces in the universe.

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION WILL COME THROUGH FAITH

This mankind is beginning to sense. Now as never before in our time comes the call for spiritual regeneration. The very existence of our most cherished institutions is dependent upon it. In default of it the world is like to lose the gains of centuries of painful struggle upward out of the mist and to sink down again into the dark night of barbarism. The call is for those principles of religion enunciated by Jesus as the means of bringing back sanity to a world gone mad. No thoughtful man can be deaf to the cry of despair that is heard in the land. Let me cite you one from among many available illustrations.

On Armistice Day of last year a group from among the most eminent statesmen of England issued an address to the people of the realm in which, among other things they said:

Moral rearmament must be the foundation of national life as it must be of any world settlement. The miracle of God's living spirit can break the power of pride and selfishness; of lust, fear and hatred, for spiritual power is the greatest force in the world.

There are among all peoples today hidden resources of heart, mind and spirit waiting to be called out by common obedience to the supreme plan. Only in the fulfilment of this supreme plan can the true interests of all classes, races and states be secured.

Throughout her long history this country never failed, and has not failed now to meet recurrent crises with the courage which each demanded but a spiritual crisis remains and calls for action. The nation and the

empire must stand or fall by our response to that call. The choice is moral rearmament or national decay. That choice will decide whether ours is ultimately to go the way of the other dead kingdoms or whether our commonwealth led by God may become a leader of the world towards sanity and peace.

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT

Cloudy as the skies may be, I am not one of those who despair for I believe in the triumph of right. In its consummation a leading role must be played by the Church, one of whose prime functions it is to transmute religious truths into living practices. The teachings of those truths and habits of practice becomes then the highest and most solemn duty of every person in the Church, and above all, of all those to whom the responsibility of leadership, in whatever capacity, has come, for therein lies not only the hope for eternity, but the hope of the world for stability and safety, here and now.

This pronouncement comes from men of high intelligence and wide learning and deep penetration and ripe experience in the affairs of men and of nations. They have read the lesson of history and know that the decline of great nations has generally followed and been primarily due to moral disintegration.

As Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg called upon his countrymen to resolve that this nation under God should have a new birth of freedom, so these spokesmen of the British Empire have sounded a clarion call for spiritual and moral regeneration as the only means by which under God it can be saved from the limbo of dead kingdoms. That call is not for Britain alone but is for all nations and all people who love justice and desire to see her enthroned.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I don't think ever before have I envied the presidents of the missions until this Conference. If you have noticed, yesterday and today, most of them had ten minutes notice before they were called on. This suspense sometimes is terrible.

I heard of a good old lady once who was waiting for some news, either good or bad, she didn't know which, and when it finally came she said: "I do hate to be held in suspension." I want you to know that this good old lady had no monopoly on the feelings that come from one being held in "suspension."

If ever I feel the sacredness of an opening prayer, praying for those who would be called upon to speak, it is on these occasions, and I certainly trust that the prayer offered today may reach the realms on high and be effective in my behalf.

AN EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

I, for one, right here, lest I forget, want to follow the suggestion of Bishop Wirthlin—I do want to express my appreciation for my affilia-