

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Since nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus came to bring peace on earth, uttered these inspired words and gave the world these teachings, and further since at this very moment all the nations of the world are preparing for war or for defense at a previously unheard of cost and rate, and further since a number of the great nations of the world are actually at war and are carrying on a conflict in accordance with the methods of the savage and the barbarian, rather than to be settling their differences and their grievances by those methods of arbitration and mutual understanding, which civilized people these days are trying to learn and to apply,—I say because of all these conditions, there is, I think, no topic more deserving of special attention, consideration and understanding, during these terrible days of strife and warfare, than a study of the scriptures and in particular that portion of holy writ which has to do with the life and labors and teachings and example of Him who is called the Prince of Peace, of Him who is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

#### LOVE NECESSARY TO WORLD PEACE

And now let me conclude with emphasis on the importance of understanding and applying these words:

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And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

With love of this kind in all human hearts such destructive forces as hate and prejudice, poverty and beggary, crime and war, would be everywhere greatly diminished if not completely eliminated from the world. Love for our Heavenly Father and for one another, as stated in the words of the Master himself, is the greatest and most fundamental element of religion.

May the day be hastened when all will aim to read, understand and live in conformity with the mighty and important elements of religion as these are presented in the sacred scriptures, so that love and peace, charity and good will, may be found everywhere in the world, I humbly pray.

#### ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

*First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

It goes without saying that I am always concerned about the supply of virtues that I may have wrapped up in myself, but I assure you that I have one virtue at this particular moment. I am sure I am filled to the saturation point with humility. I trust that for the few minutes I stand

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before you whatever timidity I have may leave so that I can, with some regard to my responsibility, say those things that I should like to. I trust that I may not only have an ambition to tickle your ears, but say exactly what I think.

#### A TRIBUTE TO PEOPLE IN FAR-AWAY STAKES

First I want to express my appreciation for the integrity of the people that I am continually contacting, by virtue of my position in the Presiding Bishopric, in visiting the different stakes. About two weeks ago it was my pleasure to visit southern Utah and down as far as Nevada, and I am filled with appreciation of meeting men and women of the caliber that are in this Church. One night I know one bishop came as far as 165 miles to attend that meeting. Multiplying that by two makes 330 miles that he traveled. Whether he took back with him what he ought to have taken, what he would like to have taken, I do not know. Perhaps that was partly my responsibility. But I do feel to honor men filled with such integrity.

I want to say this: In visiting that part of the Church I am very much impressed with the character of those people. We sometimes wonder why Brigham Young sent some of those people down there on their pilgrimages to go through what they did, but surely he was right. I sometimes think there is a civilization down there that has been brought out of the rocks and the caves, so to speak, that some time will surprise this world. A civilization cultured and safeguarded by the sacrifices those people have made. Some time it will awaken all of us.

I caught this in going through a book the other night, and I have been impressed with it:

Character is that which you have left after they have taken away from you all they possibly can.

You can substitute the word "faith" if you wish. I am impressed with the character of these people and what they have gone through. They are dynamiting, and have been dynamiting for years, the rocks to bring the water where they determined it should come. They were willing to make these sacrifices. I honor those people and, so to speak, I take my hat off to their integrity. I believe sincerely that in contacting these men—and I am not forgetting the women, by any means—it makes me bigger and broader, and it helps me to fill the position that I have been called to in a more substantial way.

#### PRESENT PROBLEMS TO BE FACED

Someone has said that whenever the past looks glorious, look out. I am wondering sometimes if it is not just as well to be frank with one another and face things exactly as they are. Things are not all rosy in this Church. There are conditions that should concern us. In my judgment there never were so many great problems before us. I am

not unmindful, by any means, of what we are accomplishing. This beautiful music back of us is an index of what our young people are doing. I honor the bishops and the presidents of stakes who are really progressive and doing the things that are expected of them. I am not unmindful of these things. I glory in our seminaries and what they are doing. In my judgment there is no one element in the Church that is shaping character more than our seminaries, and I honor those men at the head of them, and in particular the way they are hand-picking the teachers whose responsibility is to contact our young people.

#### SELF-EXAMINATION URGED

I am mindful, however, of some other things in our Church. I worry sometimes about people getting sour. People do get sour. With some people, if their nest is well feathered, the Gospel is true. If their nest is not feathered, the Gospel is not true. Do you ever look into yourself and say: Why is the Gospel true? Is it because you have faith, or is it because everything is all right with you? We are not so kind as we ought to be, I appreciate that; but sometimes we let circumstances sour us. We know that old story of Job where the Lord said to Satan something like this: "You see that man?" "Yes, I do see him, but you take away his blessings and then see how he reacts." Now, it is not necessary to go into the details, but Job took it, and the more trouble he got, the more of a character he proved to be. Is not that a lesson to us? If we are out of employment, if things do not go the way they ought to, does it make us sour? We ought to be on our guard.

We have men who delight in being knockers. One man said that knocking in a person is exactly the same as knocking in an automobile. It is always a sign that there is not very much power there. I think that is pretty well said. A man we sometimes read about, who was quoted today, who made a reputation for splitting logs, compared some people we are talking about to a little boat that used to go up and down the Mississippi River. It had a big boiler, and it had almost as big a whistle, and every time it whistled it took all of the energy out of the boiler, and the boat had to stop every time it whistled. Now, there are people just that way. When you contact them they are sour, but when they open the throttle to make a noise, you can bet your life everything stops.

#### FOLLOWING A LEADER

Some people pick out a certain individual and say, "What an ideal man!" And they will wrap themselves and they will wrap their destiny around him. I do not care whether he is a bishop, or a Sunday School teacher, or who he is, before you wrap yourselves around, or hang your destiny on a man, be sure you know where he is going. If you will pardon me—there was a good woman. She knew she was going to die, and she had written on her tombstone, so her husband would be sure to

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indelibly get it: "Follow me." He wrote below it: "To follow thee I'm not content, until I know which way you went." My boy, who was on a mission, wrote this little circumstance home to us, and I give it to you for what it is worth. It is a very insignificant story, but it has some value to it. They were going on a trip from London to Liverpool. It being holiday time, they decided to spend a couple of days on such a journey. A fog came up and it was just as thick as a fog can be in old England—and you people who have been there know what I am talking about. Well, they borrowed a little Ford or some kind of a machine to go, but after they had started, this fog came up and they were in peril; they were up against it. The only way they could make any progress was to wait until a car came along that had a fairly good tail-light, then follow the red light accordingly. Well, they did not make much progress. They stopped and listened and did the best they could. Finally a big truck came along, with a great big tail-light, and it made the boys so happy. It stopped and went on, stopped and went on, but they thought, of course, the man was getting his bearings, and they knew that as long as they followed that tail-light they were making fine progress. They followed it and rejoiced because soon they would be in Liverpool. They followed that tail-light for about two hours, stopping and going on. Finally the fellow who drove the truck stopped, came back to the boys, and said: "Boys, I am awfully sorry, but this is as far as I go. I have been all through the village and I have delivered all the milk."

Now, "To follow thee I'm not content, until I know which way you went."

#### RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

I am concerned over the things before us. I have mentioned this before and I want to be pardoned. I think Brother Clark, in his talk on the Christ in the series of lectures he is giving, made the observation that even Christ repeated for the sake of emphasis. There are some things, I think, we can repeat and keep repeating. I am speaking about the conditions in some of our wards. I am not forgetting, by any means, our dilapidated buildings. I am not forgetting our meeting houses. We have a responsibility there we just cannot neglect.

We have a problem with our young people. They are going a little faster than we think they ought to go, but part of the responsibility is ours, because some of us who have responsibilities are on dead center, if you will pardon that expression. We are not satisfied with the way they are going, but just what are we doing about it? In some localities there is so much static that nothing is done about it. We have a responsibility. In our meeting with the Relief Society the day before yesterday this thought was brought out: Sometimes we think more of the glory that comes to us because of the badge of responsibility we wear than we think of what we ought to be doing about it.

Now, I am satisfied sometimes we glory to ourselves too much what

the past is, and sit down idly and twiddle our thumbs and think, "All is well in Zion." All is not well in Zion unless we use initiative and wake up and do the things we ought to do. "The glory of God is intelligence," and sometimes we do not use as much intelligence as we ought to use. I appreciate that when we are put under six feet of ground, there will be a lot of things in the world that are yet to be done. I am not unmindful of that, by any means. But I do think that we have responsibilities that we ought to appreciate. There are probably only 750,000 of us in the Church, but if we were just united, the way we ought to be, we could surprise the whole world. I am not forgetting a couple of hundred boys who came from Sparta. When they were told that the enemy was so thick that their arrows darkened the sun, one lad spoke up and said: "So much the better. We will fight in the shade."

Now, we have something ahead of us. Let us have the courage, and I believe we have the courage that we ought to, and we will get somewhere.

#### THE DRINK EVIL POINTS A DOWNWARD COURSE

The drink proposition is about as serious as it can get, and we all know it. We ought to do something to meet it fairly and squarely, in a way that will help the young people to seek the proper avenues, rather than to go where they are going. I am firmly of this opinion, that in the face of all of our civilization, and the steps we are making, we are like the cow that gives a pail of fine milk and then kicks it over. Now, we are just doing that, whether we own up to it or not.

A dear Scotch friend of mind told me this story before he died, and I will never forget it. He said a fellow had a beautiful heifer. He loved it. She was a thoroughbred. He put her into a pasture so she would have the best grass up to her knees. In the face of everything, that cow got thinner and thinner. He walked around the pasture. What was the trouble? He could not find it. As she got still thinner he made up his mind he was going to search every nook and corner, and he went into the field, and examined every bush. Finally up in one corner where he noticed the cow frequently stood, there was an old weed. It kept pulling her down. Drink is doing exactly the same to our civilization, whether we own up to it or not, and in a constructive way we have got to meet it.

May the Lord bless us. Amen.

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"Inflammatus," (Rossini) was sung by the *Branch Agricultural College Chorus*, Annette Betensen soloist.

Elder Colen H. Sweeten, President of the Curlew Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.