

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

From among the sublime teachings of the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount I quote the following:

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

This admonition and promise I have chosen for my theme this morning because (1) it seems so aptly to epitomize generally the timely instructions given at this Conference. Then, too, it expresses the ideal to which every man who holds the Priesthood has subscribed. Again, if heeded, it will be the greatest and best safeguard to our sons who are called to serve their country. And, finally, I firmly believe that if rulers of nations followed that admonition contention and war would be banished from among men.

What the kingdom of God is, is answered by the Prophet Joseph Smith as follows:

Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles, there is the kingdom of God.

Seeking first the Kingdom means subordinating to the principles of the Gospel all other aims and pursuits.

WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IMPLIES

The term implies divine rule in the hearts and wills of men and in society. Man acknowledges a power and authority superior to his own. "It is not the arbitrary rule of a despotic Deity, but is based upon man's voluntary submission of his will to that of God's." On one occasion Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." That is true, for it is in the heart of man that membership in the outward kingdom has its origin. Devotion and loyalty that spring thus from the heart "for the common Father of all mankind is the strongest and only universal bond that can bind all men together." Only such a group looking as one mind to heaven for guidance can eventually transform human society.

The Kingdom of God implies also a universal brotherhood in which all men acknowledge God as their Supreme Ruler and cherish the desire to obey His divine will.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

The mission of the Church is to prepare the way for the final establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Its purpose is, first, to develop in men's lives Christ-like attributes; and, second, to transform society so that the world may be a better and more peaceful place in which to live.

HOW THE CHURCH CONTRIBUTES TO CHARACTER BUILDING

In the changing of men's lives the Church recognizes certain fundamental factors so essentially important that they are constantly called to

our attention, and have been impressively emphasized by the speakers in this Conference. For example, recognizing the reality of the divine edict "the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation" the Church emphasizes the necessity of moral and physical fitness for parenthood. Hence the constant plea that young men and women live clean, chaste lives prior to their assuming the responsibility of marriage, and their remaining true to that sacred covenant. Hence is constantly held before us the ideal of Temple marriage, where the sanctity of the marriage covenant is sealed and ratified by the highest divine authority given of God to man. Hence the emphasis laid upon the Word of Wisdom wherein tobacco, stimulants, and narcotics are eschewed, and temperance and obedience to the laws of health encouraged and admonished. Hence the teachings from childhood to be "honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and to do good to all men."

The Church, recognizing the potency of other influences besides the home in the growing child's life before he reaches self-determination, offers a religious environment almost from the time of birth. The Sunday School, the Primary, the Mutual Improvement Association arrange suitable instruction, entertainment, and proper guidance from the cradle roll to maturity.

FIVE FATEFUL YEARS

Says one social writer :

The most fateful years in life are the first five, and this is the time when life is subject to its environment, and before self-consciousness and self-direction are aroused. In a large sense man's life has its bent and direction, its color and tone before it has begun to reason and choose.

Believing the adage, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart therefrom," the Church fosters Quorums and Auxiliaries in which over fifty thousand officers and teachers willingly and gratuitously devote their time, ability, and means for the development of character among the children and youth of the Church. Parents who fail to encourage their boys to attend their Quorum duties, who fail to encourage their children to take advantage of the Sunday School, the Primary, and the Mutual are recreant to their duties and to their parental responsibilities.

These are but a few of the aspects of the Church devoted to the phase of character building, and to something which is even more precious—a testimony of the truth of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The first duty of the citizens of the Kingdom is to live exemplary lives.

TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

But as I have said, the betterment of the individual is only one aim of the Church. The complete ideal of Mormonism is to make upright citizens in an ideal society.

On the night of Gethsemane, in the Upper Room, before Jesus and the Apostles left for the garden, He prayed:

I am now no more in the world, but these are in the world . . . I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil.

The mission of the Church is to minimize and if possible eliminate these "evils" from the world. The need of such a unifying force is expressed by a leading writer (Samuel Z. Batten) as follows:

The world has many good people in it today, more who are ready to believe than ever before, but these people possess no unifying ideals, no organic principles, no coherent view of life, no synthetic program of action. Society is coming to self-consciousness, and is beginning to take note of its troubles and needs, but it has no clear sense of direction, no organizing impulse, no all-inclusive ideals, no mighty impulsion. . . . Is there anything by which our nature can gain its unity; our race acknowledge its brotherhood, our humanity order its affairs as a whole?

We answer, yes—such a uniting force, such an ideal is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It explains man's life and its purpose, and has within it the vital saving elements, noble ideals, and spiritual uplift for which the heart of man today is yearning.

Right thinking, upright men and women everywhere are desirous of eliminating from our communities evil elements that are constantly disintegrating society—the liquor problem with its drunkenness, poverty, and misery; immorality with all its attendant evils; war, which is literally hell on earth, and which is now devastating Europe and Asia; and threatening our own land.

SOCIAL ATTITUDE

What should be our attitude towards these social conditions? First, see to it that as individuals we do not by our acts contribute to their existence, and, second, put forth every righteous effort to eradicate them from our communities.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is seeking through its Welfare Plan, through increased Quorum consciousness and responsibility, to make both home and community environment better and brighter.

Cooperation and mutual helpfulness are virtues characteristic of the Church of Christ. Its watchwords are unity, efficiency, brotherhood—a brotherhood in which justice and mercy prompt the actions of all men.

President Young once said:

Whoever lives to see the Kingdom of God fully established upon the earth, will see a Government that will protect every person in his rights.

And again:

If the Kingdom of God were established on earth. . . . one community would not be permitted to array itself in opposition to another to coerce them to their standard. One denomination would not be suffered to persecute another because they differed in religious belief and mode of worship. Everyone would be fully protected in the

enjoyment of all religious and social rights, and no State, no Government, no community, no person would have the privilege of infringing on the rights of another.

HONEST LABOR ENCOURAGED

The arrogance of wealth, and the bitterness of soul that springs from poverty would find no place in a society made up of men and women who truly believed and put forth sincere effort to live in accordance with the Gospel.

The present strife between capital and labor, which in its enmity threatens to undermine the very foundation of the Government, would cease, for the spirit and actions of coercion, intimidation, and violence are contrary to the teachings of Jesus and by Him would be most vehemently denounced. Intimidation and dictatorship are elements foreign to the spirit and government of the Church. The Church encourages and recognizes honest labor whenever and wherever it presents itself, but it must condemn the spirit of oppression, of compulsion, of intimidation wherever it rears its head.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood only by persuasion, by long suffering, by meekness, and by love unfeigned.

Says Beverley Nichols:

Economic problems, racial problems, sexual problems, unemployment problems, war problems, are myths, ugly phantoms created by minds that are not washed with the Spirit of Christ, absurd chimeræ that could only flourish in deserts across which the shadow of the cross has never fallen. I know that our lives have no "problems" as long as we trust in Christ, and the fact that my own life is full of problems at the moment is only a proof of the distance that I still have to travel before reaching perfection.

There are those in the world who say that jealousy, enmity, selfishness in men's hearts will always preclude the establishing of the ideal society known as the Kingdom of God. No matter what doubters and scoffers say, the mission of the Church of Christ is to eliminate sin and wickedness from the hearts of men, and so to transform society that peace and good-will will prevail on this earth.

The whole purpose of Christ's existence on this earth was to change human nature. And if you deny the possibility, you are saying to him, by implication, "Go back . . . we don't want you . . . you're attempting the impossible." Some brave men have said this, but it was the grey uniform of the atheist that they were wearing, and not the shining robes of the servant of Christ.

HUMAN NATURE

You CAN change human nature. No man who has felt in him the spirit of Christ, even for half a minute, can deny this truth, the one great truth in a world of little lies. You DO change human nature, your own human nature, if you surrender it to Him. To deny this is to proclaim yourself as an uneducated fool.

Human nature CAN be changed, here and now.

Human nature HAS been changed, in the past.

Human nature MUST be changed, on an enormous scale, in the future, unless the world is to be drowned in its own blood.

And only Christ can change it. . . .

Twelve men did a lot to change the world, nineteen hundred years ago. Twelve simple men, with only the wind to bear them over the seas, with only a few pence in their pockets, and a shining faith in their hearts. They fell far short of their ideal, their words were twisted and mocked, and false temples were built over their bones, in praise of a Christ they would have rejected. And yet, by the light of their inspiration many of the world's loveliest things were created and many of the world's finest minds inspired.

If twelve men did that, nineteen hundred years ago, what might not twelve men do today? For God has now given us the power of whispering across space, or transmitting our thoughts from one end of the earth to another. What shall we whisper—what shall we think? That is the question?

Every true Latter-day Saint will not only whisper but proclaim that "a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men." I most sincerely bear witness that the Church of Jesus Christ is that marvelous work.

PRESS EVER ONWARD

Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

With faith, charity and love in our hearts let us press ever onward inspired by the hope and assurance that—

There shall come a time when brotherhood shows stronger
Than the narrow bonds which now distract the world,
When cannons roar and trumpets blare no longer,
And the ironclad rusts, and battle flags are furled;
When the bars of creed and speech and race, which sever
Shall be fused in one humanity forever.

That God may give everyone a desire to help hasten that day by example as well as by precept, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

We are honored this morning by the presence of Dr. James E. West, celebrating his thirtieth year as Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. In his time nine and a half millions of boys have been members; now one and a half million Boy Scouts are enrolled. We have in the L. D. S. Church 25,000 Scouts. Tomorrow at the Hotel Utah there will be a conference of Utah Scout leaders.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy"—Evan Stephens.

The benediction was offered by Elder Archie R. Boyack, President of the Big Horn Stake.

Conference adjourned until 2 p. m.