

## ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren and sisters: We welcome with all our hearts Brother Harold B. Lee and the other brethren who have been called to new service in the Church and Kingdom of God.

This has been a profitable and inspiring Conference. The sweet spirit of the Lord has brooded over the sessions of the Conference, from the first when President Grant delivered his remarkably impressive opening address.

I desire to speak to a simple and well worn subject, one which has been touched upon by every speaker at this splendid Conference, and which of necessity is approached in every Stake or Ward Conference. Yet, it bears repetition.

## TOLERANCE FOR THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS

I have chosen a theme which seems vital in the lives of Latter-day Saints.

Among the principles of beauty and power which make up the Gospel, none is more conducive to peace than the Mormon doctrine of tolerance. We are taught to give due respect to the opinions and mode of life of our fellow beings. This accepted principle was formulated concisely by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may. (11th Article of Faith.)

That is, men may believe and act as seems to them good so long as they do not infringe upon our rights or transgress the law. They may cherish false beliefs, yet we mingle with them in friendliness. Thereby the association of mankind is made tolerable.

## THE CHURCH HAS SUFFERED FROM INTOLERANCE

We of this Church have reason to be tolerant; for we know the lawless cruelty of intolerance. For over a century we suffered a religious persecution of Satanic fury, unparalleled in modern times, and seldom if ever surpassed in former days. Often helpless in the face of intolerant fury, the Latter-day Saints have only been able to say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the Lord had not been our captain, and truth our chart, men would long since have destroyed the Church. We know that tolerance is of God; intolerance of the devil. We are and must remain a tolerant people.

## TRUE MEANING OF TOLERANCE

However, the true meaning of tolerance is often misunderstood. Tolerance has its distinct limits. To allow our neighbors the privilege

to believe and live as they choose, under the law, does not mean that to keep peace we must live as they do.

Tolerance is not conformity to the world's view and practices. We must not surrender our beliefs to get along with people, however beloved or influential they may be. Too high a price may be paid for social standing or even for harmony. Appeasement was recently tried in the world, and the most hideous war of history is the result. The Gospel rests upon eternal truth; and truth can never be deserted safely. Allegiance to truth, as well as tolerance, is of the Lord.

True, there are matters of minor importance to which all may wisely conform. Such are the constantly changing conventions or fashions in dress, speech and etiquette. Whether a woman wears her hair long or short, or a man a soft or a starched collar, are not vital matters. They do not violate the law of God, and no one takes them seriously. Wisdom dictates to all in the words of Pope:

Be not the first on whom the new is tried  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

#### DANGER IN NOT LIVING UP TO STANDARDS

But, deviations, however slight, from the straight Gospel path, become major matters in life. Whatever is contrary to the doctrine or regulations of the Church or in violation of our covenants with the Lord, in baptism, in the Temple, or elsewhere, is of evil and therefore should be spurned. It is dangerous to play fast and loose with truth and our sacred covenants. Spiritual and moral disintegration begins when we sacrifice truth to conform with the way of the crowd. The creeping evil that then sets in begets indifference and often ends in apostasy. It leads to certain unhappiness.

Clearly, in a world of many men of many minds, it requires at times some courage to be true to our convictions. The non-smoker, or non-drinker, or non-card player, may feel alone in a smoking company, or in a cocktail or card or gambling party. The coward within us always shrinks from being a target for observation or criticism. In fact, however, the person who stands by his honest convictions wins the respect of all decent people. Honest courage is always admired. On the contrary, he who is untrue to his professions, to win the favor of the crowd, is held in contempt, often unspoken but equally real, by his associates. Smoking or drinking young men of Latter-day Saint parentage are seldom welcomed by smoking and drinking employers. He who is untrue to his convictions may fail in his business integrity. So reasons the wise man of the world.

#### THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST FOUNDED IN TRUTH

Latter-day Saints have no reason to forsake their beliefs for the plaudits of the crowd. Rather, there should be a vast gratitude in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints. The Gospel is founded in unshakeable truth; it sheds light upon that which is dark; it is unsurpassed for answering the deep questions of the human soul; its authority to

act, the Priesthood, sets this people apart from all others in their power to perform work for private and public good. Every principle is divinely devised for human good. Experience has shown that men are better off for keeping the Word of Wisdom, or paying tithes to the Lord, or complying with any other Gospel practice. In the midst of the world's philosophies, the Gospel of Jesus Christ stands unconquered. We should be so proud of our membership in the Church of Christ, that we would refuse, with disdain, to disobey, for public acclaim or personal appetite, any principle of action within the Church.

#### THOSE VALIANT FOR TRUTH ARE CONQUERORS

Latter-day Saints should be thoroughly loyal to the course of life laid out in the Gospel plan. A milk-and-water allegiance kills; while a passionate devotion gives life and soul to any cause and its adherents. The troubles of the world may largely be laid at the doors of those who are neither hot nor cold; who always follow the line of least resistance; whose timid hearts flutter at taking sides for truth. As in the great Council in the heavens, so in the Church of Christ on earth, there can be no neutrality. We are, or we are not, on the side of the Lord. An unrelenting faith, contemptuous of all compromise, will lead the Church and every member of it, to triumph and the achievement of our high destiny.

The final conquerors of the world will be the men and women, few or many matters not, who fearlessly and unflinchingly cling to truth, who are able to say no, as well as yes, on whose lofty banner is inscribed: No compromise with error. At the present moment it is a flaming faith in liberty, a phase of truth, that enables England to withstand her enemies despite the rain of powder and steel.

#### THE SPIRIT OF EVIL RAMPANT

Our world is sick. Millions of men have surrendered or have been made to surrender to an evil spirit—the spirit of Satan. Those who are attacked with the malady foam with a brutal, snarling ferocity. They have forgotten the kingship of man; they have descended below the beasts. They invoke and use the law of the jungle. The prince of darkness has world-girdling ambitions. The leaders of the nations, stupefied by the incredible prostration of our hard-won civilization, stand helplessly among their bombs, airships and submarines. They know that the issue is not material, but spiritual. They know that the changed heart alone can restore peace to earth. In their inmost selves they are calling for men of truth, who will not sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, who do not know the meaning of compromise. And all the world, the hosts of common men, beckon for such leadership. Humanity does not care to live in, and bring children into, a world ruled by ignorance, hate, perfidy and blasphemy.

#### BELIEVERS IN CHRIST THE ULTIMATE LEADERS IN THE WORLD

That leadership, the world's prime need, must come, as we know,

from those who accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and who, courageously and without apology, cling to its truth and practice. They will be the leaven in the lump; they will be the world's wonder workers; they will be the ultimate conquerors, though they may be but a handful in numbers. Goliath's man-made sword was no match for David's faith-directed pebble.

This places a heavy burden upon us, members of the restored Church of Christ; the authorized holders of the Priesthood; the light-bearers and truth-givers of the world. To assume leadership in pointing the way to peace has always been the high commission, perhaps the highest, of the Church of Christ. In the end, the world's peace depends on us. This seems a stupendous claim; we make it humbly; but, the word of the Lord does not fail. Out of Zion shall issue the power that will change swords into plowshares, and make the earth a happy dwelling place for men.

We, the members of the Church, now far-flung over the earth, must make and keep ourselves fit by obedience for the mission assigned us—the regeneration of the world. It is a call to every member of the Church. As we obey the commandments, so will the strength of the Church be. As we fearlessly live the law, the influence of the Church will cover the earth and prepare it for peace. Delay and vexation, sorrow and bloodshed, will overtake us if we surrender our convictions, and enter into compromise with the world. It is better to observe the law, even in its lesser details. Then we shall have the greater claim for personal satisfaction in the days of our years.

All this was said by our Lord, the Redeemer of mankind. Shortly before His sacrificial death He prayed to His Father for those who should remain after Him, to carry on the work which He had established. The burden of that immortal prayer was, that His disciples should not be taken out of the world, for their message was to the world, but that though they were *in* the world, they should not be *of* the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (John 17:15, 16.)

That is the problem of every Latter-day Saint, especially as we spread over the earth, and as mankind calls for help: To be in the world, but not of the world! To be ever a unique people, a peculiar people, in the observance of righteousness. They who fail to do so, will suffer cankered souls, will question the value of life, and eventually will face spiritual death.

We all look with trepidation into the future. No land is wholly safe. Disaster may overtake any or all. It is folly to trade the permanent joys of the Gospel for man-made, transient, unsatisfying and often injurious offerings. Israel would show the higher wisdom if all of us laid away the things that are not in harmony with Gospel law, that distract us, take our time, and leave us empty when the day is done; if every man of us would set his house in order until he could say with Joshua of old, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Today, as perhaps never before, the battle-cry of modern Israel, the people of the Lord, must be, with respect to the truths of the Gospel: "No Compromise."

May the Lord bless us and give us faith, courage, clearness of vision, and strength of will to live His law, to keep our covenants, and to be wholly acceptable servants in His great cause, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

#### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

All of the brethren who have spoken have indicated there are two terrors which we up here suffer. One is the anxiety which runs along until we are called, and the other is the fear which we have when we are called. We cannot relieve Brother Lee of the first, but we will relieve him of the second by calling him now, following Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Council of the Twelve who has just spoken.

Our next speaker will be Elder Harold B. Lee whom we sustained this morning as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

### ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

This morning before I came to the meeting I wound my watch, and when the meeting closed I took it out to look at the time. I discovered that it had stopped at twenty minutes after ten. I was numb and dumb. I am not sure, when I finish here, that I shall not find my watch completely put out of commission.

#### THOUGHTS STIRRED BY NEW ASSIGNMENT

Since nine o'clock last night I have lived an entire lifetime in retrospect and in prospect. I spent a sleepless night. I never closed my eyes one moment, and neither would you if you had been in my place. Throughout the night, as I thought of this most appalling and soul-stirring assignment, there kept coming to me the words of the Apostle Paul, that he spoke in explanation of the human qualities that were to be found in the Lord and Savior:

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

One could not have listened to the soul-stirring testimony of President Grant, in bearing testimony as to his feelings when he was called to the apostleship, or his experiences in calling others to similar positions, without realizing that he has been close to his Heavenly Father in this experience. Therefore I shall take the word of the Apostle