

YOUNG WOMEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Brethren and Radio Listeners:

Much is said these days about winning a lasting peace following the terrible and fearfully destructive global war now raging. Various plans are proposed for attaining this greatly and widely desired objective. But we know that this can be achieved only if certain conditions are met among which are fair, right, and just provisions made for all nations, defeated as well as victorious. But in the few minutes allotted to me I desire to talk about some conditions on the home front that affect peace.

THE APPLICATION OF THE GOLDEN RULE

The reply of Jesus to the lawyer who asked "which is the great commandment in the law" was as follows:

... 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 neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
 (Matt. 22:37-40.)

Since we are all children of our Father in heaven, the term "neighbor" as used by Jesus means our fellow men. Now, as an evidence that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we must treat them in all respects in our relations with them as we would like to be treated were the circumstances reversed—we in their shoes, and they in ours. In other words, we must live the golden rule. And because we do not live the golden rule there is more or less severe and tragic trouble all the time within the borders of our country, all of which would disappear if we kept the second great commandment.

Yet none of us fully keeps this commandment. Why? One reason is we are all too selfish, not some of us only, but all of us. Let me particularize by citing a few cases.

First, let us begin with a corporation having assets worth millions of dollars. Its money has come from thousands of stock-

holders and the sale of bonds. The stockholders elect directors who in turn appoint officers and other employees and fix their salaries. Some of these salaries are likely large—very large. The greater the assets the greater the salaries are likely to be. They really far exceed the needs of the recipients to maintain a decent standard of living. Commonly, also, these salaries have no relation to the ability of the corporation to pay dividends. Hence some stockholders feel aggrieved, thinking they are not fairly treated. Further, these big salaries incite workers to demand higher pay and create prejudice in the minds of the public against the corporation. Is any thought given by the directors to the golden rule when they fix compensations for themselves and the high-ranking officers? And does the company management always treat its employees as brothers, as neighbors, entitled to be dealt with according to the requirements of the golden rule? A few of these employees may even be more indispensable to the success of the company than the officers themselves, but in comparison they are underpaid. I have reference to inventors and others endowed with special gifts the products of whose ingenuity make it possible for the company to have a prosperous business. Our marvelous mechanical civilization is based upon research and invention. Managers are often ordinary men, given opportunity. Inventors are always men with extraordinary endowments.

Another illustration, seldom given: A highly respected and necessary profession has allowed itself to be maneuvered into a position where it absolutely controls one phase of the well-being of the public. There is no closed shop labor union of which I have heard that so completely controls its field as does this profession. It limits the number permitted to qualify for the profession, thus preventing any overcrowding in the field of service, and so practically insuring full employment to entrants. The standard of fees is so high that multitudes in the middle classes are hardly able to afford necessary service. The income of successful practitioners is far above that of most other people of equal or greater ability but engaged in other essential vocational fields. The situation appears to be entirely out of harmony with the requirements of the golden rule.

THE PRESENT STATE OF POLITICS

Let us glance at the political field. Though the need for statesmen was perhaps never greater in the history of the country, the supply, perhaps, was never proportionately less. Certainly the supply of politicians, even demagogues, was never greater. I use the term "politician" in the sense of a holder or seeker of political office who regards getting and holding the office as the all-important thing and who schemes, bargains, and promises in order that he may get support and votes. His principles are often tenuous and easily changeable to suit the needs of the hour. The demagogue is an unprincipled politician.

The statesman is a man who would "rather be right than be

president." He is an able man of principles and of character who avoids compromising with his principles and disdains buying support by making promises to people who seek wholly selfish ends, for this is akin to the crime of bribery.

But it is probably true that the people themselves are responsible for the paucity of statesmen and the abundance of politicians and demagogues. Many years ago I sat one evening in the park with an elderly man, manager of the apartment house in which I lived. He said that for thirty years he was a member of the Illinois state legislature and related many interesting experiences. But I shall never forget one remark he made which was "every man has his price; some votes can be obtained for \$50, others for \$500, and occasionally \$50,000 is the price." Unsophisticated as I was, this statement was hard for me to believe, but I had no reason then or now to doubt its truth.

Yes, the people themselves help to make politicians by offering them tempting inducements. The desire to serve the public is commendable, particularly when it is coupled with pure motives. But the itch for office and the emoluments thereof, sometimes affects otherwise good men so deeply that they yield to all sorts of temptations in their efforts to obtain or retain office.

Our primary election system is bad in at least one respect—it helps to make politicians and demagogues. The short time allotted me will not permit of showing why, but supporting reasons will occur to my listeners. It requires a strong man of firm resolve to go into a hotly contested primary for a high office and come through un tarnished. In the primary he is on his own, not governed by the platform and backed by the resources of his party. He is likely to be contacted by many groups, actuated by wholly selfish motives and offered assistance of money and votes if——. A statesman is not purchasable; a politician may have his price. Even highly respectable groups may forget themselves and make offers and considerations, as has previously been done right here in our own state, so rumor says. Shame upon them wherever and whenever their motives are selfish and not clearly in the interests of the public good! In such cases, in principle at least, are they not offering bribes. Good laws should be made and enforced that would protect the public and public officials from all forms of bribery and near bribery.

In passing, may I say frankly that I believe a return to the convention system, where to a large degree candidates were "called," would be a factor in saving nominees for election from some of the temptations they now face in the primaries.

SELFISHNESS A DOMINATING FACTOR

We know that a dangerous doctrine has been fostered by some selfish groups and accepted by some politicians to the effect that the world owes everybody a living, irrespective of one's worthiness. Of course no living soul, unable to help himself, should be allowed to

suffer for the necessities of life, if it is possible to prevent it. We are all fully committed to this Christian truth. But, unfortunately there are people who are indolent, thriftless, selfish, and sinful. Yet, they are voters and thus they have influence with politicians. But they are also human beings and therefore our brothers. They need to be helped to reform and helped to opportunities where they can work for what they get and thus become self-respecting. But is it not demoralizing to them to agree with the idea that the world owes them a living, irrespective of their worthiness? As a matter of fact should not worthiness always be a prime factor in determining the rewards given to anyone? Is not this what our religion teaches us? Could divine justice be otherwise based? Eternal progress, a beautiful doctrine, is based on worthiness.

Let us refer to another phase of our theme—that of selfishness as seen exhibited by some officials and members of organized labor. I think it very unfortunate for all concerned—union members and the public—that these organizations and groups have been pampered by selfish politicians and others until they have become a dominating factor in the politics of this country. Now, I believe wholeheartedly in labor unions and in collective bargaining. But the idea of "the closed shop," as we commonly understand the expression, is very repugnant to me. As I see it, "the closed shop" is based upon selfishness run riot. It ignores the basic principles that all men are equal before the law and no one should be deprived of his right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This is the very foundation upon which this republic was founded. To weaken or destroy the foundation is to endanger the very existence of our republic. We frequently use the expression "our American way of life," unmindful of the fact that the true American way of life is based upon our divinely inspired Constitution, as it was interpreted by the ablest legal minds in this country during the first century and a quarter of our national history.

But now—is it due to the emergencies of war?—bureaucrats have taken over. Personal liberties have been severely restricted and in order to serve his country in a war-service or war-production plant, or in some other plants, a man must join a union, so it is said, and pay initiation fees, sometimes high, as well as dues, as required by closed-shop agreements. Recently I was told a plant needed a skilled worker. One was obtained through the employment agency. He was a drinker. At length he was discharged after twelve days of bungling work, because of being continually under the influence of liquor. The plant had been operating open shop, though the employees had a union of their own. The drunkard appealed to his union with the result that the company was ordered by a bureaucratic agency to bring him back, to pay him the high wages for lost time, and to make a closed-shop agreement with the drunkard's union without an election being held to determine who were entitled to bargaining rights. All the company workers, not members of the

drinker's union, and largely in the majority, I was informed, were thus forced to join a union they did not prefer. But no appeal to the courts was permitted. Was this procedure in harmony with the requirements of the golden rule and of the Constitution?

It is said, however, the closed-shop is necessary for the success of the union movement. If so, let the union movement fail. We must not deny any man his free agency or take from him his right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The right to work is absolutely fundamental. I repeat, I am in hearty sympathy with the organization of labor and with collective bargaining, that is, with the plan of a committee of employees meeting regularly with employers to consider all matters of mutual concern. But in my feelings I am strongly opposed to the "closed shop," as the term is commonly understood. And I do not believe the "closed shop" is essential to the success of labor unions, operated on principles of right, fairness, liberty, and justice. Did not Samuel Gompers also have this view? Further, should any organization, operated on principles antagonistic to these, be tolerated in America? Would it be tolerable for the Church to say to its people living in Logan, or Provo, where we are in the majority, you must not permit non-tithepayers to live among you? Certainly not. Yes, the right of every American citizen to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" should be protected, be he Mormon, Jew, Gentile, infidel, or pagan, white, yellow or black, union member or independent. Every American citizen should be free to do as he pleases so long as he does not infringe on the rights of others.

Right now there is a pressure movement on to raise wages of workers in war industries. Do those sponsoring this movement recognize that there are millions of workers in America, engaged in essential industries, whose incomes did not increase during the last three years in anything like the proportion to those of workers in war industries? In fact, because of the rise in the cost of living, the net income of multitudes of Americans is less today than it was three years ago. Can this be said of any worker in war industries? Figures say not. If another raise in wages of these war workers should now be made, would there not be a still greater discrimination against these multitudes? The situation is extremely complex. But is there any fair-minded citizen, be he a union or a nonunion American, who wants to profit at the expense of his neighbors? Let us hope not.

My time is up, so I must close. Of course a multitude of illustrations could be given of the fact that few, if any, of us fully keep the second great commandment. We are all in need of repentance. Let each of us search his own heart and make sure that it beats in harmony with the divine will and then act accordingly. In my humble judgment, lasting peace—certainly worth the price—in our beloved America, as in the world at large, must be based upon living acceptably before God the second great commandment. Brotherly love must prevail. Liberty and freedom under wise and righteous laws,

administered in harmony with the provisions of our divinely inspired Constitution must be preserved. Selfishness and greed must be subdued and righteousness exalted. The Lord help each of us to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Dear Brethren: I am very happy to be with you in our conference, and I trust that I may contribute to the spirituality of our meetings held during the days of this conference.

FAITH AND WORKS CONSISTENT WITH RIGHTEOUS LIFE

We as a people are trying to correlate, and with considerable success, our faith and works, knowing that this type of combination will bring to us the best in life and a better reward in the future life.

It has always seemed strange to me that so many of our friends expect us to live more consistently according to our faith than they expect other people to live their faith. Perhaps it is because they are acquainted with our teachings and know that we emphasize the fact that our salvation is so dependent upon how righteously we live here upon the earth. That well-known saying of the Apostle James, ". . . shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18), is consistent, practical, and efficient.

In talking to a visitor one time on Temple Block, he inquired about our religion and asked for an explanation about our faith and our Church. As usual, I commenced immediately to quote from the Articles of Faith and explained about the establishment of the Church. In a short time he made this remark:

I am not concerned particularly with what you believe or have written; I am more concerned as to how efficiently you carry out the things that you believe and have written.

A similar thought was expressed by a musician who had been brought here from the east by the M.I.A. to judge some of our contests at a June conference. On a Friday evening we were at Saltair where the dance festival was being held. The dancers had been well-trained and were so efficient that they could execute the different intricate steps and formation with considerable skill, and because of the precision and order it was very beautiful. In order to see better, the man from the east and some of the rest of us stood on the band stand and watched the demonstration on the dancing floor.

A while later, he made this comment:

The thing I am wondering about is, after seeing all these young people on the floor so perfect in their deportment and their culture, just what will happen when they finish this demonstration and commence to dance the regular dances and act, so to speak, as they please. If I go into your wards