

He said: "Brother Young, I learned one thing. As I flew over Germany I felt in my heart that I was shooting down bombers and not people, that I was bombing installations, and not people. I kept that uppermost in my mind, and I believe the Lord has helped me to preserve that attitude in my military service.

He bore testimony of that in our meeting, thanking the Lord for the faith that had stood him in hand.

The gospel, my brethren, does translate itself into the lives of our people if we will permit it. It is for us. These injunctions that we have had given us in this conference, they mean for us strength and power, and they mean for us the power and ability to make our lives real, harmonizing with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and only in living it may we be able to do that.

A MISSIONARY INCIDENT

I bear you my testimony, my brethren. I am grateful for the testimony that I have of this work. I cannot with you go out and prove its divinity—no man can do that—we may offer every inducement and do everything in our power to make people feel that our message is scriptural, but when it comes to the last analysis of the thing, it is the testimony that is in the human heart that bears witness of the divinity of this work.

While laboring as a missionary in England, over thirty-eight years ago, one of our investigators, a whole family of them, in fact, the mother being the leader, said, "Brother Young, we have found that your doctrine is scriptural, we believe in that, but if you can convince us that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that he saw God and that Jesus Christ talked with him, we will be baptized."

"Sister McManus," we said to her, "we cannot do that or prove that to you, but if you would know the will of the Father, if you would know of the truthfulness of our message, you, yourself must do the will of the Father, and you shall know. 'He that will doeth the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.'"

We bore that testimony to her, and she made it a matter of prayer, and later she and her family were baptized. That is the way it works, my brethren. It is through faith in God, it is through testimony that this work will be carried forward, and it is the living of the gospel, and the testimony that will finally bring peace into the human heart, and make possible the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth. May it speedily come, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Confusion seems admittedly to be the dominant characteristic of our times. There is confusion of procedures, a baffling contrar-

ity as to what ought to be done and how to do it. There seems to be agreement about only one thing, namely, that the world's affairs are terribly messed up. But there is no agreement about the causes for the sorry condition, nor the remedy. Men confess, almost it seems with pride, that they don't know what they ought to believe. They are bewildered and overwhelmed with a sense of futility.

TESTING PRESENT CONDITIONS BY PRINCIPLE OF RIGHT OR WRONG

One thing seems clear: our perplexity grows out of a failure of vision—of penetrating insight. We get ourselves all tangled up in a maze of superficialities and mistake consequences for causes. We tell ourselves over and over again that life in this day has become very complex; that it is not simple and elementary any more as it once was; and that our outlook and approaches to the problems of the day must take on the same complexities as the intricate web of mechanisms we have woven about ourselves.

It may be granted that with our great increase in population, our shifting over from simple rural life to concentrations of great numbers in industrial centers, the consequent change from self direction to supervised direction, the increasing degree in which the free practice of individual convenience impinges upon the comfort and convenience of others; the impact upon our lives of changed conditions resulting from inventions, transportation and communication facilities—it may be granted, I say, that all these conspire to introduce an apparent complexity into our organized lives. But I wonder if, after all, the differences are not largely superficial and mechanistic rather than fundamental.

Are there not, in reality, underlying, universal principles with reference to which all issues must be resolved whether the society be simple or complex in its mechanical organization? It seems to me we could relieve ourselves of most of the bewilderment which so unsettles and distracts us by subjecting each situation to the simple test of right and wrong. Right and wrong as moral principles do not change. They are applicable and reliable determinants whether the situations with which we deal are simple or complicated. There is always a right and a wrong to every question which requires our solution. We might be saved a lot of misery and discontent and disputation in this world if we just stopped to apply the simple test, "what is the right of this thing" before we moved into action concerning it. By thus getting down to the root of the matter we should have reduced the problem to its simplest terms and it would not matter very much whether it was crusted over with a simple or a complex layer of incidental elements. They would all have to yield to the basic law of right.

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM PAUL'S MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

I think I can illustrate how basic issues are buried under a cover of superficialities by reference to an experience in the life of

Paul. In the course of his missionary journeys, he came to Ephesus where he found certain poorly instructed believers. He taught in the synagogue for three months when, because of opposition, he separated his disciples, and they went their ways teaching for a period of two years with such effect that the record says: "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ." This brought the Christian message squarely up against the idolatry of the Ephesians with the result that there was a great conversion from idolatry. Says the account in Acts 19:23-29:

And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings they were full of wrath. . . . And the whole city was filled with confusion.

Now, the fundamental issue, and the only issue, was between the teachings of Jesus and the pagan religion of the Ephesians. But that issue was completely buried under the furore engendered by a purely incidental consequence. Paul was teaching the way of life, a thing of transcendent importance to all the race of men, the future of the world. With the purely collateral consequence to the business of a few silversmiths and art craftsmen he had no concern.

But the incident was not decided on the merits of the respective doctrines concerning the souls and destiny of men. So far as immediate results were concerned a superficial materialism completely smothered and took out of the reckoning the fundamental moral and spiritual issue involved. For Paul's companions were taken into custody, and when he would have gone publicly to their defense, he was restrained by friends but for which restraint his life likely would have been taken.

APPLICATION TO PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS

In one way or another the process illustrated in this incident has been repeating itself throughout history. Every would-be world conquerer from Alexander on down and almost every empire builder, too, for that matter, has pursued his course in total disregard of the question of what is right. They find it easy to obscure the moral issue by burying it deep under an overburden of casuistries. It is easy for the powerful aggressor to say that his country is denied access to raw materials; that it is overcrowded and must have *Lebensraum*, an outlet for its over-congested population; free and open lanes of commerce, and to give these and a

thousand other specious reasons for his course. These are made to justify the ruthless overpowering and destruction of weak neighboring states if perchance they fail to bow to the conqueror's will or permit themselves to be absorbed into his ambitious design. A color of righteousness may be given the whole monstrous scheme by pointing out the virtue of the ultimate objective—to bring a larger good to his people and perchance also alleged benefits to his conquered and plundered neighbors, just as Demetrius could justify his inciting the mob against Paul by pointing to the threat of his teachings to their accustomed means of making a livelihood.

However impressive the array of justifying reasons may be, when they are brushed away the simple question left is whether the powerful have a right to crush the weak even to bring added benefits to them. To this the conscience of humanity must answer with a resounding "no!" If aggressors were willing to let the right of the thing be the final determiner there would be no wars.

EMPLOYMENT OF EVIL MEANS INCONSISTENT

There is likewise a companion evil to the one just spoken of, just as reprehensible, though perhaps not quite so clearly recognized. It is the case of a powerful state, apprehending attack from another one, casting about for defensive means. It conceives that its security would be best promoted if it possessed a strategic point owned by another state. In the interest of its security it takes by force what it wants from its unwilling but powerless neighbor though the latter has to be mercilessly crushed in the process. The conqueror justifies itself and is justified by its apologists upon the plea of its own necessity. The basic immorality of the matter is conveniently ignored. It is as if a man about to be killed by a thug perceives that by liquidating his defenseless but innocent neighbor he can save his own skin. So far as the morality of the thing is concerned, he would be as fully justified as would the overpowering state.

In defense of such courses it is sometimes argued that where the objective is good, the end to be achieved worthy, the means employed to attain it are justified, however bad in themselves they may be. The idea is crystallized in the saying: "The end justifies the means." It is a monstrously false doctrine. If this is a moral universe, as I believe it to be, no methods for effecting change, however desirable the end sought, can properly be resorted to which are not in themselves consistent with that end. To employ violence, oppressive coercion, cruelty, injustice for the accomplishment of desired ends is to set loose forces of evil which must inevitably weaken and, to a degree at least, nullify those ends. In the process of achievement they lose their moral power. We see this truth exemplified almost every day. The employment of evil means to

achieve allegedly worthy ends threatens to destroy the efforts for lasting peace which are so much in the public notice today.

A PLAN TO BRING PEACE

As nations indulge in such immoral practices as we have been talking about, so do individuals and groups and organized bodies in their relations between and among themselves, and with consequent disorders. If individuals in their dealings with each other subjected them to the test of what is right and abided the result, there would be little opportunity for ill will or strife. If groups or organizations seeking advantage to themselves against other groups or organizations would sit down together each willing to subordinate self-interest in the search for the right, and be controlled by it when found, there would be no warfare between or among them. Men submit their differences to the judgment and decision of a court merely because they are too childish and immature to sit down together and agree on what is right. They are in far better position to arrive at the right than any court is because they know all the facts, whereas the court never can have that complete knowledge. The judge is limited by the information which a trial brings to him. If men earnestly wanted their differences settled on the moral basis of right, there would be little work for courts.

Submission of differences, however, to the judgment of some disinterested body, such as a court, is, of course, a long advance over the stage when men settled their private differences by fighting it out—a resort to physical force. Any semblance of orderly society could not exist on the basis of private redress of grievances. The state accordingly long ago took that over so that if a dispute arises one doesn't kill the other party to the disagreement but calls upon the machinery of the state to settle the matter. That marked a long step forward. But nations still fight it out, which is a barbarous way of settling differences. It is not far removed, however, from some of the means resorted to now for the settlement of class or group differences. In many ways we are retrograding to the primitive status where disputants take settlement into their own hands. We cannot well lay claim to being a grown-up, mature, civilized people until we have come to the point where morality is the determinant, and we ask simply what is, in good conscience, right. The conclusion seems inescapable that the confusion and distraction and conflicts and antagonisms and uncertainties and bewilderment which plague the world today present mankind with what is at bottom a purely moral issue—the issue between right and wrong. That, then, should be the final test of the propriety of all courses of action.

But there are difficulties thrown in the way of getting that simple test adopted. One is that there is current in the world today a school of thought which asserts that there is no such thing

as universal principles of right as opposed to wrong. They say that for the individual, growth is a continuing "ongoing process" without direction. That is, that we are continually changing, growing but not toward any ultimate purpose. There are accordingly no fixed principles by reference to which we may determine what we ought to do. If confronted with a situation, all we can do is to experiment—try out the course we want to take, and if it works out to the advantage of the experimenter, then for him it is right. Each one finds out for himself according to his own interest. Of course this must inevitably result in confusion, and ultimate chaos.

This is a deadly paralyzing notion to plant in the minds of people and particularly the youthful and immature. It strikes down belief that man is a moral being with a purpose and a destiny and commensurate responsibilities. It releases one who accepts it from all restraints of conscience. It provides him with an allegedly scientific but basely false assurance that he is in no wise responsible for his actions however vile they may be since they are after all but in the course of nature. Let such a notion as that gain general currency and you have dealt a devastating blow to all organized society. A free government could no longer exist, for its perpetuity must depend upon the moral integrity of its citizens. Only an absolute, iron-bound despotism could deal with a situation like that.

THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS TREND

One of the most deep-seated issues of this world in our day is the issue between the concept of man as a son of God possessed of an immortal soul with a God-given destiny and a guiding purpose in life and the concept of man dispossessed of individual rights which must lie universally respected, reduced to the status of a mere tool of an omnipotent state, the end in itself to which man's life is subordinated.

The first of these is the foundation principle upon which our nation is founded. It is our heritage from the fathers. It derives out of the teachings of the Master; it is an integral part of our religious faith.

But it is fashionable to decry the teachings of religion upon the supposed ground that it is authoritarian and by its pronouncements presumes to lay down for man rules of conduct and observances which he should follow. Not believing in the omnipotence and infinite wisdom and power of God, the objector views the directives of religion as an attempt on the part of some man to settle forever all truths with which man is concerned and to deprive him of the freedom of his own judgment. This, of course, entirely misconceives the claims and mission and purposes of organized religion. If it is meant to assert that man out of his own

finite limitations is able, unguided by the voice of authoritative wisdom, to create for himself an adequate guide for living, then the answer is that experience, the history of the race, does not support the assumption.

It is not my purpose to conduct an argument about the contentions of the opponents of authoritative religion or of the pragmatists. It is sufficient to say that wherever religion has been discarded confusion and moral anarchy have followed. And that is one of the reasons for the confusion in the political world today. Mr. C. E. M. Joad, an eminent English philosopher, an atheist driven by events to reconsider his opinions, writes:

Where there is a large measure of general agreement in regard to ultimate ends, political doctrines can be represented as means to their realization. Where, however, there are no common ends to which the generality of men subscribe, political programs assume the status of ends in themselves. In the nineteenth century there was a general agreement among thinking people as to the nature and end of the individual. His nature was that of an immortal soul; his end was to achieve eternal salvation. Thus, when men differed about politics—even when they differed about ethics—their differences related to the best method of realizing the individual's nature and achieving the individual's end. Moreover, there was, broadly speaking, a general agreement, at least in the western democracies, as to the kind of society which it was desirable to establish. Owing to the decline of traditional religion these agreements no longer obtain, precisely because there is today no general acceptance of the view of the individual as an immortal soul and no general reliance upon the hope of eternal salvation. Consequently, political doctrines such as Fascism and Communism assume for the twentieth century the status which religious doctrines possessed in the nineteenth; they are not, that is to say, doctrines in regard to means to an agreed end, but doctrines in regard to ends about which there is no agreement.

Thus is clearly brought into focus the danger of shifting away from old moorings. When foundation principles are discarded, then shifting, vagrant, opportunistic substitutes for principles take control and precisely because they are opportunistic they must shift with the vagaries of changing popular moods. Stability—a steady march forward toward a fixed goal—no longer is found.

It is for us to stand by the tried and proved principles of religion and the tried and proved governmental principles which have so blessed our land.

That we may have the discerning wisdom and vision to do it and, at least among ourselves, resolve all our differences on the basis of right, I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

We are all thankful that Brother Rufus K. Hardy has sufficiently recovered from a recent illness to be in attendance at this conference. It has been deemed inadvisable, however, for him to assume the