

There are present on the stand this afternoon all the General Authorities of the Church as sustained this morning, except President Grant, who is resting at home and who has a direct wire leading from the Assembly Hall to his home so that he is able to listen in on the services.

The proceedings of this session will be broadcast over KSL at Salt Lake City, and KSUB at Cedar City.

We will begin the services by the congregation singing: "Come Ye Children of the Lord," Song Folder No. 15, L.D.S. Hymns, No. 238. Our Conductor this afternoon is Elder Richard P. Condie; our organist, Elder Frank W. Asper.

The opening prayer will be offered by President James M. Smith of the St. Joseph Stake.

The congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

Elder James M. Smith, President of the St. Joseph Stake, offered the invocation.

Singing by the congregation, "O Say, What Is Truth?" L.D.S. Hymns No. 191, Hymn Book No. 59.

ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

PORTRAYAL OF HOME CONDITIONS RELATED IN MAGAZINE ARTICLE

A few years ago I read an article in a national magazine written by an obviously well informed and high principled woman. Apparently she had never married and after many years of separation made a visit to an intimate friend of her college days who had by then two well grown children, a boy and a girl. Her story is mainly about the shock she experienced from the conduct of these two children. She noted that their mother, her old friend, had substantially no influence with them. The daughter's bearing towards her mother was condescending. Her mother's exhortations and protests were received with a patronizing air of wearied tolerance as if to say that this superior young lady would have to bear with what resignation she could the hopelessly old-fashioned, outmoded and impossible notions of her matured mother.

The visitor heard the worried mother protest the indelicate indiscretions of the girl in her behavior with young men without even the precaution of privacy and heard the daughter's mockery of her mother's prudery and lack of sophistication.

The boy of the household went and came pretty much as he pleased with no questions asked or answered. Home to him was a place to sleep and have meals, if convenient.

Exhibitions of this kind were a source of deep wonder and un-

easy concern, as well as of embarrassment, to the guest in the house. But the climax came as the period of her visit was drawing to its close. She was awakened in the night by a disturbance in the house and was the unwilling ear witness of a family scene. The girl it seems had come home from a late party pretty thoroughly intoxicated and was leading her escort, in like condition, to her room when they were detected and intercepted by her aroused parents. There was a noisy scene before the boy was finally sent off home and the girl put to bed.

The girl made no pretense of concealing from her mother her habit of flouting the conventions so far as modesty and maidenly purity were concerned. So the author ended her visit and went home to clear her head and do some thinking. The result was the article mentioned.

Apparently she had a quite thorough-going acquaintance with the ideas and attitudes of the youth of the day, and she undertook a searching analysis of conditions as she knew them to be and as pointedly focused upon her attention by her recent visit. Her whole sense of propriety and even decency was outraged by what she had seen at her friend's home.

That friend, in the days of their girlhood association, had spontaneously, and as a matter of habit and acceptance, observed the conventions and proprieties. She had been a girl of robust health and exuberance, happy, wholesome, a delightful companion of high ethical and moral standards. She had a wholesome zest for life and enjoyed living. How to account for her children!

EXAMINATION INTO CAUSE OF DELINQUENCY

The author examined her own life and the atmosphere in which she had been reared as well as the lives of the youth of her time including the friend she had just visited. They recognized certain self-restraints which were expected of girls of good upbringing and conformed to established standards of decorum and good breeding. They still did, now that they were come to maturity of life, and were pained by the departures of today. This naturally led back into an examination of the influences that had gone into the shaping of their characters. And that carried the examination inevitably back to the homes in which they had been reared.

The religious note was strong in those homes. The Bible was read and believed in. Families prayed there. Daily on their knees they talked to God who was revered and was a reality. They were church-going people and set apart one day a week as a holy day to hold sacred and on which to do reverence to the Author of life. The majestic hymns they sang carried messages to their expanding souls. They heard the simple, direct, soulful, and convincing words of the gospels whose grandeur somehow silently carried over into their hearts and furnished the ideals for their living. Those ideals through

practice were silently woven into the pattern of their lives, and they came out with established characters, and stable guides to conduct, which made them secure against the waves of laxity which washed about them with the changes of time.

Then the author did what to me seemed a most astonishing thing. She proceeded to explain that, of course, she and her friend and their associates had in their college years given up the simple faith of their youth, had ceased to give credence to the beliefs which had sustained them, had given up their Bible reading and their church-going and their Sabbath observance and their prayers. They found that these artificial props were not necessary to their living of the good life. They didn't need the church—group practice of religion—they had their own religion which was quite sufficient, though really it was only a certain code of ethics originally rooted in their religion but now cut loose from its roots and dying because no longer nourished from the roots. With an amazingly artless simplicity, she deplored and was baffled by the barbarity of her friend's children without apparent consciousness of her own incredible failure to recognize the relations of cause and effect. Her friend's attitude toward religion and religious practices was similar to her own. Yet here she was mystified by the moral bankruptcy of her friend's children who had been deprived of the very character-forming influences upon which the strength of her own character and of her friend's character, and the characters of their generation had depended for formation and growth.

What right have parents or others to complain that children's standards are not up to their own when they have deprived those children of the very faith and practices upon which their standards have been established? By her own confession the author whose analysis we are considering and likewise the mother of the children whose conduct had provoked her study had been themselves living on the early-gathered fruits of a now discarded faith.

That might suffice to carry them through from the force of established habit. But with that faith discarded there was nothing to bear new fruit for the nourishment of the next generation. She and her friends had been living upon and had consumed their spiritual capital, and there was no inheritance left for the children.

It seems incredible that this highly intellectual woman whose penetrating insight had so unerringly led her to put her finger on the factors most powerful in the stabilization of herself and friends could have been so wholly oblivious to the need of those same influences in the lives of new generations.

Because she and her friends had been able to maintain integrity of life after they had discarded their early beliefs, she apparently thought that such beliefs and the practices to which they led were not necessary to stability, failing to discern that ethical principles lose their convincing, motivating power when divorced from the religious faith which gave them birth. It is a common error. We all,

I am sure, can call to mind friends of the highest standards of character who have drifted away from the religious convictions in which they were reared and have been pained to see that their children's characters have so sadly deteriorated. It is hard for character patterns to carry over for more than one generation beyond the one which witnessed the forsaking of the faith in which those patterns were fashioned.

The lady we are speaking of deplored the degeneracy she was compelled to admit, but never once did she even so much as hint that the remedy lay in the revival in the homes of the land of the influences under which she herself had grown strong.

CHRISTIAN FAITH THE ROOT OF CIVILIZATION

Now, if religion goes into decay in enough homes, it will fade out in the nation, which after all is but the aggregate of the individual home units. That would be a change of fundamental and of far-reaching consequences. For the truth is that the whole western civilization was built upon the basis of the Christian religion. Terminology itself tells how completely this is so. Christendom is the word employed to designate that large area of the world where the Christian religion became dominant. With its establishment and acceptance in the Roman empire, it became the most powerful influence in shaping the course of the western nations where Rome had controlled and of new nations which came into being. So important was that influence that the advent of Christ was made the new base for the reckoning of time. All events in Christendom are dated as having occurred before or after that meridian. It marked the beginning of a new era which still is spoken of as the Christian era. The whole new civilization had its roots in the Christian faith. Of course its ideals of perfection could not at once be assimilated or even grasped by the peoples who received them. They made plenty of mistakes and committed many excesses and grafted on plenty of false interpretation. Nevertheless the Christian faith remained the central idea that dominated all else. It has remained so through many centuries, and you can't cut loose from it now without effecting a revolutionary change. So long as the abstract idea is adhered to as the guiding notion, no matter how imperfectly lived in practice you can always hope for improvement, a moving away from erroneous conceptions toward the ideal. But when the ideal itself as a central controlling force is gone then a basic change has come. Christian convictions made the west dominant over the centuries. A departure from them is portentous in the extreme.

NO PEACE EXCEPT UPON A SPIRITUAL BASIS

Where does the world of Christendom stand today? Right in its heart, not in some pagan land, the present cataclysmic upheaval broke out. It was freely recognized that there was irreconcilable antagonism between the old Christian basis and the ideals of the new

order. We had not only a physical war but a war of basic beliefs as well. So long as disputants profess the same basic beliefs and purposes but differ about the means of their realization you have merely a struggle for control. But when fundamental beliefs are at war, you have the inception of revolution. It is no longer a mere struggle for control but a struggle that reaches down to the spiritual depths. Any mature person who wants to take a retrospective glance must see that between 1914 and 1939 something very fundamental has happened. That first named year saw the beginning of a great war. We got into it with a fanfare of great national exhilaration. Our soldiers marched off to the blare of trumpets and the stirring strains of martial airs as the bands led them away. Everybody had unshaken faith in the soundness of our institutions and the unquestioned merits of our system. The war was but a bothersome interruption in a course of life which would pick up again when the nasty business was over. Today it is not so. There is no fanfare, no sparkling enthusiasm, but a sombre, sober resignation to an ugly, unwelcome task which must be done. I am not saying that there is less of determination or of efficiency than there was before. But the spirit of the approach is different. Neither are people so sure about what will happen afterwards nor what it is all about. There is a grave anxiety and uneasiness of feeling evidenced by the voluminous talk about the postwar world. There seem even to be some who think our system is wrong—the basic concept on which our institutions have rested—and they are willing to see it all die. Others think evils have fastened themselves like barnacles upon us, and they need to be pared away. There is contrariness of opinion as to what is worth saving and what should be consigned, without struggle or regret, to the limbo of oblivion. New conceptions are thrusting themselves forward. The strong faith of half a century ago is crumbling; we are losing our spiritual basis. Dr. Sproul of the University of California has said we are in a race with catastrophe. But people don't seem to believe it, nor to know that the spiritual problem lies at the core of our trouble and demands solution if we are to recover our national health.

Look at the liberated countries of Europe. No sooner is the heel of the oppressor lifted than bitter strife embroils them anew. Self seeking, greed for power, groundworks for a new supremacy, irreconcilable differences about the spiritual basis of government, its functions and relationships to those who live under it—all clamoring for recognition and control. Unless they can be reconciled on the basis of an underlying spiritual end there can be no contentment, hence no peace.

But everybody seems still to pin faith to economic and technological reconstructions. We hear much about elevating the standard of living of peoples. But almost exclusively those improvements seem to be conceived of as providing more things—greater physical satisfactions, greater ease, more leisure, less work, more guarantees

of physical security. Long ago Jesus taught that "life consisteth not in the abundance of the things one possesseth" and that "life is more than meat and the body more than raiment." Principles are pushed aside in the interest of immediate gain. When the American colonies were having their disputes with the mother country, the latter fixed it so that they could buy their tea and pay the tax cheaper than they could smuggle the tea in without tax. It was thought this would beguile them into yielding and paying the inconsequential tax. But the colonists were standing for a principle. If they could be subjected to a small tax, they could, when the custom was firmly established, be subjected to a larger tax. They resisted and took the consequences. That is the essence of spiritual supremacy. What is needed today in Christendom is a revived faith in the spiritual basis upon which it was built rather than more machines and things. Devotion to principle rather than victims of the bribery of easy satisfaction through immediate gain!

The war is not the cause of the world's trouble; it is only the outward manifestation of an inner decay. When the war is over, the trouble will not be over, which is the reason for the great concern about the postwar world. The world will still have the spiritual sickness, which is the real cause of the war, to deal with. The moods and notions which have permeated the minds of men cannot be shot with bullets. They will still be rampant when the fighting is over. We may not flatter ourselves that they are confined to the aggressor countries. In one degree or another they have penetrated into all lands. They are doing their work of corroding, corrupting, undermining, destroying.

You can't pick up peace and put it on people; it is a state of the spirit. You can't hand over liberty or freedom as a gift to people who are not spiritually prepared to receive it. Disputes about means of accomplishing ends agreed upon are of little consequence, but when the ends themselves are in dispute you have a difference that goes right into the heart and spirit of things.

And the disputes which divide the peoples of the world today are disputes about ends, about the whole spirit that governs in human relationships. Nothing but spiritual unity will work the cure.

And that spiritual essence must rest in a power standing above all to command their allegiance. It must rest in God.

THE GOSPEL THE FOUNDATION OF PEACE

You who are gathered here may properly have keen interest in plans for the curing of the ills of the world, but you may be assured to start with that there are no values which form so safe a guide as the gospel which formed the basis upon which the nations of Christendom were founded and which attained their highest expression under the Constitution of our own land. The disintegrating forces are such that no passive piety or lip service will do. It must be an active, motivating assertive faith cultivated, and fostered, and main-

tained in the homes and among the families of the people. It calls for a revival of the worship of God in the homes, where he is believed in, revered, prayed to—where a day is given to reverence when people assemble in worship and hear again the majestic words of the Master and gain a rebirth of the spirit. Go home and teach your people that, and you will be ministering to their salvation as well as to the good of the world. That we may all do so, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

One day an ancient prophet called his son to his side and talked with him about liberty. They discussed the free agency which God has given to us all, which permits every man to choose his own course in life, whether good or bad. The father told his son that it is impossible for a man to exercise his right of choice unless alternatives are placed before him: virtue and vice, light and darkness, the bitter and the sweet. Then he said, "Man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other." Therefore, "it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things." The ancient prophet told his son that this opposition in all things had existed from the beginning of time and that even in the Garden of Eden the forbidden fruit stood in opposition to the tree of life. (See II Nephi 2:11-16.)

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE GIVEN TO MANKIND

When Jesus began his ministry, he also dealt with this opposition in all things. He recognized that evil is in the world, and he acknowledged that all men have their free agency and have the right to choose between the good and the evil. All through his ministry he taught men to choose the right and told them of the many blessings they would receive if they would do so.

Again he said that if men were to choose the evil they would be condemned; that their offences would bring sorrow, not only upon other men but upon themselves. Therefore, he said:

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. (Matt. 18:7.)

As he went about in his ministry, Jesus was met with varied reactions. There were some who gladly accepted him, followed him wherever he went and tried to live his teachings. There were some who were indifferent, and then there were others who openly opposed him. So the people of that day had before them a clear working example of the law of opposition in all things. On the one hand was Jesus preaching the way of life; on the other were the Scribes and the Pharisees who fought him at every step. Then there were the indif-