

President Clark:

Elder Harold B. Lee, of the Council of the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker. I regret very much the time is so far spent there is so little left for you, Brother Lee, but we will ask those who are listening in, and we ourselves, to listen to you tonight on the air, and regard that as a part of this Conference.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

When one is called as the last speaker at the end of the seventh session of a general conference, when thirty-three of the finest minds in the Church have spoken, he isn't concerned about what he may have planned to speak, but he is concerned only about saying in those few minutes allotted him what his Heavenly Father would like to have him say. That is my prayer in these few moments.

THE QUESTION OF A DYING WOMAN

I heard a story told from one of the war fronts where our advancing soldiers were going into the land of a people who were fleeing from the ruthless enemy. These people believed in and worshiped a pagan god. As the conquering army made up of the allied nations advanced toward the stricken town, they met long lines of refugees with few or no belongings, fleeing from the enemy. The chaplain was called to administer aid to an old lady who had fallen, unable to go farther. She was in her dying moments. He knelt at her side to administer physical and spiritual aid. He told her about the Savior of the world, how the Savior had come and died for mankind, how he came as the Prince of Peace and how he ministered among those who were sick, needy, and afflicted, how he organized a work that had become a great work. This work had gone throughout the world under the banner of Christianity. As he finished his story of comfort, as he thought, to this dying woman, she looked up at him with dying eyes and asked, "Where have you Christians been all this time?"

FACTORS IN HELPING OUR BOYS IN THE SERVICE

As I thought of that question I thought of a visit I had with two of our Latter-day Saint marines who had just come back from the terrible fighting over Tarawa and others of the islands of the Pacific. They had found themselves through all these trying times in company with twenty-five Latter-day Saint boys. One of these two boys had been set apart by Brother Brown as the M.I.A. group leader and had ministered as the leader and the father of the group. As he told me about these boys, he said, "We kept most of them clean and sweet, but there are some of them that have slipped away from

us. They have taken up habits that have not been good. I felt it was my responsibility, and I have done what I could to save some of them." Then I asked them this question, "Tell me, you two who have lived among these boys, what is the reason that some of our boys have kept themselves straight and others of our boys have slipped away from us?" Let me tell you what they said without any hesitancy: "The boys who have kept themselves clean have had regular correspondence with their wards and their priesthood quorums, and the boys who have fallen away from us are the ones who have never had a letter from their priesthood quorums or from their ward bishop." As I heard this simple testimony to the rightness of the instruction that you heard from this stand when this war had only just begun, and when I remembered that the priesthood of Almighty God was the power given by him to more than two hundred thousand of us to work and act in his name for the salvation of the souls of men—I paraphrased the words of that dying old pagan woman, "Where have the priesthood quorums been all this time?" I am hopeful that our boys won't return home without having had their quorums make some contact and some tie to which they can come when they do return.

I think if we could sum up the feelings of our boys as they return to us and have them tell us what it was that kept them firm and steadfast, they would say two things: First, that they have had an interest in life, and second, that they have believed there was someone at home who was concerned about them.

I listened to a doctor recently who said that the medical journals reported that the boys who had become mentally unbalanced in large majority, were the boys who had broken homes, whose wives or sweethearts had been unfaithful at home.

We have heard much in this conference about our boys. We have heard but little about our girls. How much preparation are you making for the girl who has changed during this trying period? How much concerned are you that she will "come home"? And I am talking to the ones that live in your homes, for they, too, during this period, have gone through a most difficult time.

WORK BEING DONE BY L.D.S. SOLDIERS

Shall I tell you what the boys have been doing among themselves to keep going and to help each other to come back to the point of sanity and rehabilitation after they have been through the struggle of war? Perhaps if I can give you three things that they have told us repeatedly maybe you bishops, you priesthood quorum presidents, you stake presidents, will take from their lessons, something to help you to build on the foundation that must be builded upon for their salvation. In the first place, we don't know how the boys are coming back, nor what they will truly need. We are sure that when they come back they will be a little bit more of that which they were

before they left. If they loved God and home and country a little before they went away, they will come back loving God still more and knowing him to be a reality, loving home more and with more faith. If they were boastful before they went into the war, they will come back unbearable braggarts. If they were inclined to immorality when they left us, they will come back slimy in their sinning, just as sure as we are here.

This is what they have done in their own little groups to try to help stabilize each other: In the first place, they have organized themselves into what they call ward teaching groups. At Fort Lowry, near Denver, down at Oak Knoll Hospital, for example, where our boys are coming back, they are sending out in pairs from their groups, those who are faithful, to visit the boys who will not come to their meetings, who have taken up habits that are keeping them out of sight. They talk to these boys and ask them, "Are you morally clean? Are you keeping the Word of Wisdom? Are you writing home to your parents? Are you true to your priesthood?" When I asked them, "Isn't that pretty plain language to talk to these boys," they replied, "But how are we going to help these boys if we don't know what is the matter with them?"

Are you as courageous, you ward teachers? Do you really want to help? Then you must do the kind of ward teaching that the Lord said we were to do, if you are to help. The next thing they do is to teach the gospel. They don't preach sermons in great generalities. They are searching into the scriptures. During these last few months, when I have had a somewhat intimate contact with the youth of the Church, I have found that they are hungry for the teachings of the gospel, and they tell me that rarely in the sacrament meetings where they attend do they hear the gospel taught to the members.

PREPARATION FOR RETURN HOME OF SOLDIERS

Now, if you want to help these boys when they come back, may I ask that you do like my little bishop friend who sits here on the front seat who came as a convert from another Church and who is now a bishop in one of our stakes? He says to speakers who come to his meetings, "We want speakers who come to our ward to preach the gospel. We would prefer you not come than to have you come and not preach the gospel to our people." May I urge that you take a leaf out of his book, and the books of our boys.

The third thing they are doing is to make sure that every boy of the group is given some responsibility in their group organization. Does that suggest anything to you? When these boys come home, will you take them to your hearts and see that they are given something to do, some activity that challenges their abilities and makes them feel they are a part of their Church community to which they want to belong, as quickly and as rapidly as possible?

God help us to understand these things and build the defense.

the refuge from the storm that the Lord said a stake of Zion was expected to be, where before his judgments would descend in their mighty power, this people might build a protection from those storms of adversity.

May the Lord help us so to do I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

We will now close what I am sure all of us will agree has been one of our great conferences, great in the teachings that have come to us and great in the high spirituality which has characterized it. We have heard much that we should remember and that if remembered and put into practice will make of us the people whom God designed that we should be.

I will close with reading the passage read by Brother Mark E. Petersen from Joshua:

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

God Grant that that may be the determination not only of us who are here but of every member of the Church. We send our greetings to President Grant and ask God to bless him with his choicest blessings.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Come, O Thou King of Kings," L.D.S. Hymns No. 158, Hymn Book No. 192.

The benediction was pronounced by President Thomas O. Smith of the North Weber Stake.

Conference adjourned sine die.

The congregational singing was directed by J. Spencer Cornwall, Conductor, and Richard P. Condie, Assistant Conductor, of the Tabernacle Choir.

The Tabernacle Choir was in attendance at the Sunday morning meeting and presented musical numbers. The Tabernacle Choir Male Chorus, under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall, rendered musical numbers at the Saturday evening meeting.

The music of the *Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast* and the *Church of the Air Broadcast* was directed by J. Spencer Cornwall; organ presentations and organ accompaniments for these broadcasts were played by Alexander Schreiner; The Spoken Word was by Richard L. Evans.