

obligation as parents is to our boys, and it is to us as parents to whom our boys should first look for help. That is fundamental. The family first, then the quorum, then other agencies if these fail, but my obligation first, above all, is to help my boy to readjust when he comes home, to help him to find employment, to get him back on the farm, or in the business that I may be interested in. That is primarily an obligation with us as parents, and if we will keep that in mind, we will not go off in byways that might lead to disaster, not become complacent and feel that someone else should shoulder this responsibility.

My time is up. May the Lord impress upon us the absolute necessity of following the concepts that are a part of this Church. By arising and raising our hands we have indicated our willingness to sustain those who direct us. May we sustain them in the counsel that they give in these important matters, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

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

There is perhaps nothing so important to the individual as what he believes nor nothing so important to communities and nations as what their peoples in the aggregate believe. I mean really believe. And there is often a wide distinction between what men say they believe—the professions they make—and the reality of their convictions. I want to talk a little today about the significance of belief.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BELIEF

Jesus seems to have attached supreme importance to it. His concern was that men should believe him, accept his message. Conscious that this shaping of thought and establishment of conviction would be a slow process, extending far out beyond the span of his earth life, he spent a good portion of the years of his ministry in training a few disciples, whom he had gathered about him, to carry on after he himself should be gone.

He had no temporary or ephemeral communication to impart; it was a world-shaking doctrine and was intended for perpetuity. Neither was it provincial in its scope. Though his whole life had been spent in a small subject province, apparently more tempestuous and troublesome than important, his vision ranged out over the whole earth wherever men are. Accordingly, he gave those disciples he had taught, a commission accompanied by a promise. The commission was to go into all the world and teach his message to every creature. The promise is: "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) Thus is belief made the starting point of all progress. It is true that certain other things were required to be done as a condition to the fulfilment of the promise, but these of necessity must come as a consequence of belief. Without that there is no chance that compliance with

requirements would follow. There is no promise except to him who believes. Belief here signifies a complete acceptance which in its turn compels conformance to the teaching espoused. The condition is not satisfied by a mere lip service. Professions of belief, no matter how vehemently protested, amount to nothing unless they eventuate in conforming deeds.

Jesus had ample demonstration of this during his own ministry. The multitudes followed so long as they were recipients of his material benefactions. It is said that his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought their sick, and he healed them. They came from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan. They sat at his feet on the mountainside where he fed them because whereof they would forcibly have crowned him king, but he escaped from them and went by night to the other side of the lake where the crowds next day clamorously sought him out. Then when he began to unfold to them the personal requirements devolving upon recipients of his teaching they melted rapidly away, and the record says, "They walked no more with him." They had no belief. They were seekers after personal gain without appetite for reformation from practices which centered in themselves.

Contrast with that his belief in his own message. It cost him his life, but he carried through. And what about those disciples he had picked and taught? The message was just as unwelcome coming from them as it had been coming from their master. They too were hounded and scourged and hunted down. As believers multiplied, persecution intensified until finally extermination was decreed. Then came the supreme test of their sincerity of belief. Believers were ferreted out, confined to dungeons, and condemned to die. They were thrown to wild beasts for the entertainment of the populace at the arena. They suffered themselves to be torn limb from limb because their belief had settled into convictions so deep seated that they would die rather than recant. They did not have to die. They could have saved themselves by a very simple act. They had only to renounce and they could have gone free but that was not their kind of belief. It was more precious to them than life itself. It was the kind of which Jesus spoke when he promised that "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." That is to say, a saving belief must be one that persists in all extremities. Where is it to be found in the earth today? It does not deal in expediences. It does not inquire about the trend of popular favor. With principle-sacrificing compromises it has no commerce.

#### LIVING FAITH INVINCIBLE \*

It may be thought or said that this quality of faith is exemplified in the armed conflict just closed. Our soldiers and sailors and airmen sacrificed their lives for a cause. That, however, was in resistance to a physical assault. It was meeting physical force with physical force. We believed that we were in danger of physical subjugation with con-

sequent penalties. Our countrymen went out to repel that danger and keep us free from physical domination with a consequent train of other ills. The test comes now. Have we a set of principles believed by us to be right which we are willing to preserve at any sacrifice and at any cost—principles affecting our internal integrity founded in righteous law and justice? That question is not answered yet. So far as the signs indicate, the outlook is not promising. The indications seem to point to the rule of expediency and bartering with evil for the best bargain we can get. But I do not now want to talk about that. Was the course taken by the early Christians justified? Might there not have been some other way, some expedient, some give-and-take accommodation to reconcile antagonisms without going to the extremity of death? Was it prudent to flout the power of the great Roman empire and persist in a course which it condemned? It would seem indeed presumptuous that a little handful of despised people, destitute of wealth or influence, should resist the edicts of the greatest secular power of the world. But such is the force of doctrine, the power of unwavering belief, the strength of sincere men with resolute conviction that their teachings flourished in the face of the direst persecution. The might of the empire could not crush that kind of faith living in the human heart. It did not extinguish Christianity. And to that circumstance is owed the perpetuation of Christian teaching in the world. If we want to know how great that debt is, we have only to ask what kind of void would be left if the effect of nearly two thousand years of that teaching were blotted out. We should lose substantially all that distinguishes the Christian nations from the non-Christian nations. We should lose the sense of distinction which has led us in this day so heartily to condemn barbarities which have shocked humanity. The very freedom of which the western world boasts, reaching its greatest perfection in the United States of America, owes its existence to the Christian teaching about human brotherhood and the worth and dignity of the human soul. These are fruits of that message which Jesus commissioned his disciples to bear to all the world. The very progress of invention and scientific discovery itself, which has done so much for the material emancipation of man, is born of that freedom, as comparison with the backward nations of the world will disclose. It is to Christ's message—not to scholastic research—that we turn for what we know about the meaning and purpose of life and the controlling power of spiritual and moral law. No one may conceive the degree in which the world would be impoverished if that little band of disciples had not devoutly believed and through their belief perpetuated the teaching.

#### THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST A STANDARD FOR ALL AGES

Its doctrine has been so thoroughly absorbed into the life of Christian nations, particularly our own, that quite unconsciously men resort to it as furnishing the standard for measuring the validity of

the acts of their fellows. When we call some things good and others bad, some courses right and others wrong, we are evaluating them by comparison with the standards set in the teachings of the Master. When the politician condemns the practices of his adversary in matters of human behavior, he resorts to Christ's teachings, perhaps unknowingly, for the ideal by comparison with which the criticized acts are revealed as wrong. His own promises of betterment likewise are in the pattern of ideals drawn from the same source. All that we have that is best in our individual lives and in our national life we draw from what was preserved to the world by those sacrificing early Christians who through suffering and death perpetuated the teachings that had been committed to them. It is fresh in the memory of all of us, growing out of recent and earlier example, that tyrants seeking to impose their evil despotisms have to begin by a crusade intended to root out and destroy the doctrines ingrained in their peoples through centuries of absorption of Christian thought. In these considerations lies the answer to the question whether the sacrifices made were justified and whether by compromise, accommodation, and the practice of expediency those early sufferers might have avoided persecution and conflict with the empire. Over and beyond all these, those doctrines taught the achievement of immortality through the Lord's death and the plan for achieving eternal life, which is exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God.

#### CONVICTION MAKES A PEOPLE STRONG UNDER TRIAL

Let us take another example out of our own history. Our people began the building of their city at Nauvoo stripped bare. They had been pillaged, despoiled, and driven. In a scant six years they had established a flourishing city. Many of their houses still stand, respectable dwellings in this modern day. They were driven out in winter. From the Iowa shores of the river they could see the lights in their comfortable homes while babes were born in wind and sleet with no other protection than that afforded by their canvas-covered wagons. From there they made their weary journey across prairies, through rivers, and over mountains to these desolate valleys. The line of their march was marked by the graves of their dead. Here they endured privation, hardship, hunger. They didn't have to do any of that. They would have had only to renounce their belief to be let alone where they were. This is demonstrated by the fact that some did just that and remained unmolested. They chose rather to endure the want and misery and suffering that became their portion because they believed. That is the quality of belief that saves. There is no lip service in that. It transcends the bounds of pretense and sham and self-seeking, and anchors itself in unyielding conviction.

It is possible to say that they were wrong—mistaken in their belief. It is possible to say that they were imprudent and unwise. But it is not possible to deny the depth of their conviction nor the integrity

of their manhood. Neither may the power of their belief be gainsaid. Their achievement stands revealed to the world. Men do not gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. Those who do not accept their beliefs may feel themselves justified. But we who profess their faith may not escape its high demands. Are we willing to endure what they endured for our beliefs? Do those beliefs mean so much to us? Are they that important in our appraisals? Either those beliefs are founded in truth or they are not. If not, then the system reared upon them should in the nature of things have fallen apart long ago. If they are so founded, then those who profess them may not temporize. We today may not meet the same tests they did, but we shall have to face tests just as searching and perhaps harder to be borne.

We still have to carry the banner. The doctrines by which they lived still require to be perpetuated and spread. Their perpetuation exacts of us the same unwavering steadfastness of conviction as actuated those who established us here. We may not be dispossessed, or driven out, or find a wilderness to reclaim. But we shall be engaged by counter influences perhaps more insidious and therefore more difficult to discern, less easy to understand or to sense the danger of, for we live in a world seething in a welter of confusion.

#### BELIEF IN AND PRACTICE OF TRUE RELIGION THE SAFETY OF THE WORLD

Whether we recognize it or not, it is beliefs—the beliefs that get themselves accepted—that rule the world. Those beliefs may exalt a nation or drag it down to degeneracy and degradation depending upon their inherent quality. Ships and tanks and airplanes and guns, while necessary implements for waging physical warfare, are not the real source of a nation's strength. Its strength lies in the basic integrity of its people and that depends upon the beliefs they cherish which fashion their lives. The shooting war is over, but peace in its accurate sense is not here. It will not be until it is set up in the hearts of men. The war of ideas is still raging in the world. Opposing beliefs are contending for supremacy. All are clamorously recruiting converts. The business of shaping thought, establishing beliefs, getting ideas accepted, is the most important as well as the most active and flourishing business in the world today.

It is with ideas, beliefs, that we are concerned, for the very safety of the world and of mankind depends upon the nature of the beliefs that get themselves adopted. Our message is the same message Jesus gave to his disciples, namely that men should believe in him, a belief with a conviction that eventuates in living his doctrines. The commission to spread it in the world still stands. The means remains the same, teaching by those who believe. It cannot be done by unbelievers. The doctrines still possess saving power. "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." But there can be no compromise of principles.

There will be scoffers and deriders. Can we stand derision and

still stand unmoved? There will be those in and out of our own membership who will deplore as trivial the differences of belief which set us apart by ourselves, who will recommend that for the sake of easy fraternization we relax in our distinguishing doctrines enough to extinguish apparent differences. It is so much easier and more comfortable to conform to the customs and ideas about us. A little dilution of our beliefs, it will be said, can do no harm.

Probably the disciples of Jesus could have escaped persecution if they had been willing to yield a little and had contended themselves with proclaiming him as a great teacher. If they had just refrained from declaring that he was the Son of God, they probably would have had little difficulty. That would have made their teaching palatable and improved the social and fraternal relations between them and their neighbors. But his Messiahship was the essence of his message. It is the thing that gave it authority. It was that which gave it saving power. Delete that, for purposes of courting favor and being agreeable, and you have robbed it of its whole value. It is to his doctrines, including his achieving for us immortality, that we must turn for understanding of the meaning and purpose of life out of which understanding must ultimately come the peace for which the world longs. Those doctrines embrace a whole course of living as a preparation for eternity of life in God's kingdom. And if political persuasions or economic prejudices or social theories or fraternal felicity collide with those teachings, the teachings must still stand. Unfortunate indeed is any man who has exalted any of these above or on a plane of equality with the teachings of his religious faith.

If we really believe in our souls in the doctrines of our faith, then they must take precedence over all other philosophies or enticements. They cannot take second place to any persuasion.

I am sure that no one will suppose that I am advocating aloofness or presuming to suggest that we regard ourselves as being above or better than others. I do not wish to incite any antagonisms nor to invite unfriendliness of intercourse. I am only trying to say that having as we profess God-given, saving principles, we must hold them sacred, for on them the hope of eternal happiness as well as earthly peace hangs. We should poorly serve humanity if for convenience we gave them a stone when their crying need is for bread.

May God give us the sincerity of conviction to meet every test, I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### ELDER JAMES L. BARKER

*Former President of the Argentine Mission*

The nineteen-year-old Argentine Mission is a mission of great promise. For some fourteen years it rarely had more than a half dozen missionaries. For one year only the mission counted seventy-five missionaries, but in the following three years they dwindled until