

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:37-39.)

APPRECIATION OF UTAH CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Before commenting on the thought expressed in this scripture, may I take one moment, in behalf of the Utah Centennial Commission, and so far as I may, the governor and other state officials who have sustained the commission, to express to the people of Utah heartfelt commendation for their cooperation and united effort during this centennial year.

I wish to name especially the county committees, the public school teachers, President Olpin and the University of Utah, President McDonald and the Brigham Young University, President Harris and the Utah State Agricultural College, President Dixon and the Weber College, and the Utah State Teachers' Association—these must be added to the director and to the scores of committees heretofore publicly recognized, to whose united and devoted effort is due all credit for whatever success has been achieved during the 1947 celebration.

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS

Meeting with you this morning in this great conference, I am deeply grateful for my knowledge of the existence of God, our loving Father, and of his Beloved Son, our Savior in very deed. I am grateful for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the depths of my soul I know it is true.

I am happy in my love for my immediate associates, President George Albert Smith and President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., and for these noble men of the Council of the Twelve, the Assistants to the Council of the Twelve, the Council of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, the Patriarch. I find it a joy to work with you loyal men who preside in stakes and wards and branches. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to labor with you, to recognize your unselfish devotion to the Church.

Life, though freighted with great responsibilities and a consciousness of my inability, and regrets for failures, is still wholesome and sweet.

The world is full of honorable men and women who, as those men who accosted Peter on the day of Pentecost, desire to know what to do—what to believe.

A man who has reached the four score mark in years hailed me yesterday morning with the comment: "The world is in a terrible condition, isn't it?"

I replied: "It certainly is and greatly in need of wise, steady guidance."

EPOCH-MAKING PERIOD

Brethren and sisters, we are living in what may be the most epoch-making period of all time. Scientific discoveries and inventions, the breaking down of heretofore approved social and moral standards, the uprooting of old religious moorings all give evidence that we are witnessing one of those tidal waves of human thought which periodically sweep over the world and change the destiny of the human race. I call attention to world conditions because the mission of the Church of Christ is worldwide. Its responsibility and commission is to

... teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. (Matt. 28:19, 20.)

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

Last September 23, Colonel James M. Gillespie, commander of the robot C54 Skymaster, made a flight of twenty-four hundred miles from Newfoundland to Brise, Norton Airfield, England, demonstrating that a pilotless plane can be sent three thousand miles from the United States and back again from one radio station.

Fourteen men crossed the ocean without touching a button or a wheel!

Imagine what could happen if, instead of fourteen passengers, that robot plane carried two thousand five hundred pounds of atom bombs. Then imagine not only one such plane, but fifty, all bent on destruction, and guided accurately by mechanical brains!

A more recent dispatch from Washington (September 30, Associated Press) says that "robot warfare between continents is definitely possible." It states further that "the methods and equipment needed to make missiles capable of carrying a five thousand-pound war head at six hundred miles an hour for four thousand miles are already well known in this country."

On August 11, 1947, William P. Odom, twenty-seven-year-old airplane pilot, completed a world record by flying around the globe in seventy-three hours, five minutes and eleven seconds, at a speed of 310 miles an hour.

On August 26, 1947, a navy plane, piloted by Major Marion E. Carl, thirty-one years of age, broke the air speed record by flying at the rate of 650 miles an hour.

What modern science is doing in other fields is even more astounding.

In a current magazine for this month, the thought is advanced as a possible accomplishment that man may succeed in turning night into day, not by candles, lanterns, or electric lights, but by "doing away with the earth's darkness entirely." One of the experiments now being carried on has to do with forms of electrons that "rush through ninety million miles of space between the sun and the earth and crash into the atmosphere."

When the electrons hit a molecule or atom of one of the atmospheric gases, the molecule or atom is ionized, and the gas glows just as it does in a fluorescent light bulb. There you have the germ of the idea that may prove to be one of the great scientific developments of our time.

RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL DISCOVERIES

I refer to these marvels, which are merely illustrative of many others, to emphasize the fact—if anything so obvious needs emphasis—that we are living in an age of scientific discovery and invention unequalled by any previous period in the world's history—discoveries latent with such potent powers either for the blessing or the destruction of human beings as to make man's responsibility in controlling them the most gigantic ever placed in human hands.

This responsibility and its possible results prompted one man (Hayden) to write:

Today, as seldom if ever before, human society is threatened with disintegration, if not complete chaos. All the ancient evils of human relationships, injustice, selfishness, abuse of strength, become sinister and terrible when reinforced by the vast increase of material power. The soul of man cowers, starved and fearful, in the midst of a civilization grown too complex for any mind to visualize or to control.

NEED FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

Throughout the world generally today there is a spirit of unrest, a grasping for untried ideologies, (and our community is not an exception), and, what is worst of all, a tendency toward moral abandonment. It is all too apparent that "our spiritual culture lags far behind our material culture in its development."

Now is a time when peoples in all the world should pause and in all earnestness repeat the Pentecostal question propounded to Peter and other apostles:

Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Representatives of fifty nations are now assembled trying to find an answer. Communist nations, however, are clashing with Christian groups, and it looks as though the proverbial dove of peace if not killed might again be seriously crippled.

At the final plenary session of the United Nations Conference when the charter was about to be signed, five great leaders invoked the Lord's aid to the end that the cause of peace would not fail.

Said Mr. Edward Stettinius:

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To the governments and peoples of the fifty nations here represented, this charter is now committed, and may Almighty God from this day on and in the months and years to come sustain us in the unalterable purpose that its promise may be fulfilled.

The Earl of Halifax, chairman of the delegation of the United Kingdom, said:

Let us also, mindful alike of the world's need and of our own weakness, pray that, under God's guidance, what we have done here in these few weeks will be found worthy of the faith which gave it birth, and of the human suffering which has been its price.

His Royal Highness, Amir Faisal Ibin Abdiel Aziz, chairman of the delegation of Saudi Arabia, stated:

As long as we are united together in a spirit of cooperation, the hands of Almighty God will lead us. We shall always have his aid so long as we help one another.

And Field Marshall Jan Christiaan Smuts of South Africa, said:

May heaven's blessings rest on it.

And the President of our own United States prayed that under God's guidance the cause would succeed.

Unless such appeals were mere empty phrases, these leaders indicate the only safe and sure way wars may be averted, and peace among nations established. Not through communistic theories, not by the manifestations of mistrust, suspicion, and hatred will the turbulence of national ills be quieted. Unless the spirit of Christianity permeate the deliberations of the United Nations, dire tragedies await humanity.

OPPORTUNITY FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT

On the other hand never since the beginning of history has there been such an opportunity for the nations to utilize inventions and scientific discoveries to the blessing and peace of human beings.

Dr. Charles A. Elwood truly says:

Our material culture has advanced by leaps and bounds until we find almost unlimited physical power in our hands; but our spiritual culture has lagged, and we find many of the traditions of barbarism still strong among us, especially the traditions of war and self-indulgence at the expense of others. These traditions, along with the ignorance and paganism of the masses of mankind, make our world, we must acknowledge, a veritable powder house at the present time. Almost any powerful group foolish enough to do so could explode it. If western civilization emerges from this situation safely, it will only be through a deeper appreciation of the social ethics of Jesus than it has yet shown.

O, shall we never learn
The truth all time has taught—
That without God as architect
Our building comes to naught?

The following remarks made by United States congressmen in

the House of Representatives sound a true note of warning to the world:

The nations and peoples of the earth must go back to God the Father no matter how hard, how long, or how bloody the road. The conflict in which we are now and will be engaged during the coming years will determine the destiny and type of government for mankind for the next thousand years. By our courageous faith, by our patient sacrifice, and by our loyal obedience to God, we shall build a permanent, new-world social order, founded upon the enduring and eternal principles of Christian truth and justice. This will be the grand climax of mankind's age-long endeavor and imminent struggle to conquer the chaos of evil forces and achieve and establish the divine order of the ages—peace, plenty, and prosperity for all nations and all mankind.

REPENTANCE NEEDED

Infidelity and sexual immorality are two principal evils that threaten to weaken and to wreck present-day civilization. Unfortunately, the trends of modern life are tending to disintegrate the very foundation of the Christian home. Sexual laxity among young people, birth control, and intemperance are its insidious and vicious enemies. When family life disintegrates, the foundation and bulwark of human society is undermined.

Men and brethren, what shall we do?

The answer today is the same as it was two thousand years ago, the same as it will ever be throughout time.

All men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name and endure in faith on his name to the end or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

Said the Savior:

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt. 11:29, 30.)

As the honest people of the world wonder in vain, and cry out in uncertainty, what shall we do? members of the Church of Christ who feel secure in the knowledge of the restored gospel should say, "Men and brethren, what *can* we do?"

PLAN OF ACTION SUGGESTED

Some specific things which the priesthood and their families can and should do are these:

First—We can set an example of uprightness; be honest in all our dealings; avoid vulgarity and profanity; demonstrate to our neighbors and to all whom we meet that we live clean, honorable lives.

Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16.)

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Second—Let us strive for peace and harmony in the home. If we cannot keep quarreling, bickering, and selfishness out of our home, how can we even hope to banish these evils from society?

A true Mormon home is one in which if Christ should chance to enter, he would be pleased to linger and to rest.

Third—Having at least striven for a good character, having a home environment that is creditable, we may then consistently discharge our duty as authorized representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ to declare to the world that the conditions that will bring peace and comfort to the individual, to the family, and to the nation, are found in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. These can be named and understood and as easily practised with resultant contentment and peace as are the evils and vices that bring tribulation.

Summarized these fundamentals are: An acceptance of Christ as Savior and Redeemer; a moving, soul-consciousness of the existence of God, and that he is our Father in Heaven; a daily life consistent with such a knowledge; a love for one's fellow men.

In other words, as the Savior summarized the law and the prophets:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . and thy neighbor as thyself. (Mark 12:31, 32.)

WORLD NEEDS SPIRITUALITY

I realize, as I have said elsewhere, that skeptics, and pessimists say that these principles are too idealistic, that mankind is too near the beasts of creation, struggling to eke out an existence, even to attempt to apply them in daily life. In reply, I say men and women have practised them and have been happy, and have made the world better in so doing. Christ's disciples did it in Jesus' day, (as impressively stated yesterday by Elder Albert E. Bowen), and they have influenced millions of lives since. There have been thousands since their day, some heralded on the pages of history, and others of whom the world has never heard who, through love of God, truth, and of fellow men, have "never yielded to the pressure of circumstances," and who, though they faced persecution and even death, could say in their hearts as the Prophet Joseph Smith declared as he turned into the path that led to his martyrdom: "If my life is of no value to my friends, it is of no value to me."

The world needs millions more whose influence will counteract the evil spread by the multi-millions who grope in selfishness, sordidness, suspicion, hatred, and crimes of varying degree.

After all, the spiritual life is the true life of man. It is what distinguishes him from the beasts of the forests. It lifts him above the physical, yet he is still susceptible to all the natural contributions that life can give him that are needful for his happiness or contributive to his advancement. Though "in the world, he is not of the world."

Jesus taught that men and women fail to live truly, unless they have spirituality. In the *Life and Teachings of Jesus*, we read that the spiritual force underlies everything, and without it nothing worth while can be accomplished. "Spiritual needs can be met only by spiritual means. All government, laws, methods, and organizations are of no value unless men and women are filled with truth, righteousness, and mercy. Material things have no power to raise the sunken spirit. Gravitation, electricity, and steam are great forces, but they are all powerless to change the motives of men and women." Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

GOSPEL OFFERS SOLUTION

Men of the priesthood, we must continue to declare that the gospel, the Glad Tidings of Great Joy, is the true guide to mankind; and that men and women are happiest and most content who live nearest to its teachings.

The voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days. (D. & C. 1:2, 4.)

What the sun in the heavenly blue is to the earth struggling to get free from winter's grip, so the gospel is to sorrowing souls yearning for something higher and better than mankind has yet found.

If men and nations will hold their belief in God, and accept the teachings of Jesus Christ, pilotless planes and other argosies of the air encircling the globe in a nightless world will carry not bombs of merciless destruction, but gifts and blessings to what is now a groping, benighted world.

All the world is in the Valley of Decision
And out of it there is but one sure road;
Eyes unsealed can still foresee the mighty vision
Of a world in travail turning unto God.

May heaven help all members of the Church of Christ to live and labor for the spreading throughout the world of the gospel of light and truth and peace, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Facing this magnificent congregation of Latter-day Saints I deeply realize the great responsibility that rests upon me and hence I crave an interest in your faith and prayers.

The ancient writer of Proverbs declared:

Where no counsel is the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14.)