

vice to keep away from his territory; and "enter ye in at the strait gate." (Matthew 7:13.) Overcome evil with good, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Our Father in heaven, brothers and sisters, is our Father. He loves us and because he loves us he has given us the gospel, every principle and commandment of which is for our happiness in this life. Honoring parents, keeping the Sabbath day holy, refraining from taking the name of the Lord in vain, attendance at our sacrament and priesthood meetings, remaining honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, keeping the Word of Wisdom, paying tithing and our fast offerings—all these are given to us that we might have joy in this life.

FAST OFFERING PLAN RECOMMENDED

When I mention fast offerings, my heart goes out to our brothers and sisters in Europe and to the starving millions in the war-torn countries. I wish we could do more to establish fast offerings in the world. I hope I am not speaking out of line, but I would like to see this great gathering endorse a resolution to the United Nations recommending as a means of helping the starving millions in the war-torn countries the adoption of the fast offering plan of the Church.

May we have a greater desire, greater faith, greater will power to live in accordance with the great gospel plan of life and salvation, as revealed in our day by the Prophet Joseph Smith, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn: "For the Strength of the Hills We Bless Thee"—(Stephens). L.D.S. Hymns No. 118.

ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

We gather periodically in the conferences of the Church, or listen over the radio to the proceedings as a part of our worship, in order that we may be refreshed in our faith and edified in our concepts and duties. I am sure that the sessions of the present conference have served us well in these respects. It is my earnest desire that I may contribute a little to the stimulation and encouragement we are receiving.

BEARERS OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

I know of few things more stirring to our faith and devotion in this noble cause with which we have the honor to be identified than a clear realization of its lofty purposes among the children of men. Perhaps it is not given to many of us to see the over-all picture in its perfection. We can only try with the equipment at our command to make the world understand the importance and

vitality of the message we bear. After we have done our best in thought, word, and action, we can but pray that the Lord will add his blessing.

We want the world to understand the position of this Church. We are propagandists for its doctrines and principles. Unfortunately, that word has come to have a rather unsavory connotation, for, in its correct meaning, it describes us. We are converted bearers of a message which we are charged to give to the world. We cannot shrink from that obligation and be loyal to the cause. We bear this message to our fellow men, not only because we are commanded so to do but also because we have in our hearts a deep regard for the welfare of men and a Christian desire to help them. We are fully convinced that the message we have for them is the greatest boon which can come into their lives.

Now, what is this message which this Church carries to mankind? Naturally, within the limitations of these brief remarks, I cannot attempt to present more than aspects of it and that merely in outline. If I can do that in the common language we speak today with any measure of clarity, I shall be very grateful.

MESSAGE DEFINES RELIGION

This message defines religion. It interprets all phases of a man's existence in terms of religion. There is no part of living not influenced by it. Our thoughts, our environment, our education, our companionships and associations, our health, our concepts of wealth, government, and society in the scope of this message are all religious considerations. Religion therefore becomes not a philosophy apart from life to be held up for scrutiny, criticism, and debate. Rather, it is an integrated way of life, a system and program of individual and community living under eternal law which man did not make and cannot change.

Elder Albert E. Bowen the other day told us so impressively how it cannot be compromised. When a man comes to know and feel such an interpretation of religion, it completely dominates his appraisals, his choices, and his judgment. Many would characterize such a man as a fanatic, and he would be a fanatic if his religion were not true and the divine source of wisdom.

RELIGION A MOTIVATING FORCE

Have the critics of such an exact religion ever set out the merits of religion in moderation? I thank Brother Richard L. Evans for defining that word for me in his remarks of the broadcast this morning. Sunday religion, it is sometimes called, the kind men carry in their wives' names. How do they justify a partial acceptance of divine law and principle? Surely consistency would demand that if the source of religion is accredited, the application must be universal and unvaried. I can understand how many men have not accepted interpretations of divine law and religion, how many have

rebelled against the practices of religionists, but if religion is accepted at all, I cannot see how logical, clear-thinking minds can take it for any less than what it really is—the motivating, all-controlling force in the life of man and the organization of the universe.

I wonder if we are able to appreciate what such an interpretation of religion if widely accepted would do for the world today? Here are a few of the things I feel it would accomplish. It would remove uncertainty and doubt as to the principles and standards which should be observed in reaching decisions on all matters, personal, social, national, and international. What a tremendous gain it would be if the answer to the age-old question, "What is right?" could be found by most men to be in the acceptance of the divine source of right. Here again appears the inconsistency and futility of the position of the so-called partial religionists. Pretty generally throughout the world recognition is given to the divine laws against killing, adultery, stealing, and lying, and little question is raised regarding the source and perpetuity of these regulations of human conduct. Where is the justification for discrimination against the other laws exacting worship and obedience to the God of the universe and proscribing idolatry, blasphemy, and desecration of the Lord's holy day? The laws commanding worship and reverence for our divine and earthly parents constitute one-half of the Decalogue, and remember they come first. In the interpretation of religion we give to the world they are first, in practice as well as in theology.

RELIGION NEEDED IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Do you think that if such an interpretation of religion were widespread, even among the Christian nations of the earth we could have any such spectacle of discord and intrigue as the nations of the world have recently presented to disgusted and discouraged people all over the earth? Have you ever heard of a voice being raised in any of the sessions of the United Nations since its inception more than two years ago protesting the infractions of God's laws or importuning his help in achieving the purposes of that organization? I think you have not, unless perhaps in some innocuous way, because I suspect that it is tacitly agreed that God and religion shall be shut out of the proceedings. Well, my friends, it is a part of the message that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bears to the world that God and religion cannot be shut out from the consideration of world affairs without mortal hazard to the cause of goodness and peace.

INALIENABLE RIGHTS

I have read and heard a good many statements by eminent writers and speakers to the effect that our liberty of which we are justly proud is an achievement and not a gift. In the sense that it had to be worked for, fought for, and preserved with vigilance these statements

are true. But let it never be forgotten that our concept of liberty is a gift. No human is the author of that concept. Many great men have so recognized it as did Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence and declared that "men are endowed with certain inalienable rights." Why are these rights inalienable? Because men did not create the right to liberty! In the exercise of his free agency he may surrender his privileges, and his property, and he may become the slave of others or of the state, but his free agency is as native to him as the air he breathes. It is part and parcel of his eternal constitution, and Jefferson was "righter than I think he himself knew when he declared it an endowment which cannot be alienated.

The message which we bear affirms that God is the Author of our inalienable liberty; that men, all men are of noble lineage, sons and daughters of the Eternal Father; and that liberty is their birth-right. I think that prior to the advent of the restored gospel a little over a century ago there was no such understanding of the precious gift of liberty as there is today. In his latter-day revelations the Lord has set forth much concerning it, but I thank God that before these revelations came, noble men were blessed with this lofty concept of man's inherent right to liberty and that they were prompted to incorporate these divine principles in the organic law and history of our favored land.

NEED FOR DIVINE AID

Now I know that there are many in Christian nations and many in prominent places who accede to this taboo on religion in the consideration of national and world affairs. They seem to think that they can fight aggressive, atheistic communism without uttering a word in defense and exposition of divinely-given concepts, and without even seeking divine aid in the preservation of divine principles for the race. I do not pretend to qualify or speak as an expert on international affairs, but I am sure that I voice the sentiment and feeling of millions of God-loving people over the world when I assert that the sooner the issues now confronting the nations are recognized as a moral conflict between right and wrong, between truth and error, between Christ and anti-Christ, the sooner will come the solution and peace. I know that this is and has always been the position of this Church. There are prophecies, ancient and modern, statements and declarations, and experience to support this position.

PROGRAM TO MEET WORLD CRISIS

I am aware of what some may say, even though they may not be unsympathetic with the views I have expressed. They ask: Even though the time has come for a "showdown" between the forces of good and the forces of evil, what justifies your Church with its relatively small numbers, short history, and inconspicuous place in the

world of religions in assuming to prescribe a program of religious concepts and action to meet the world crisis today? Why not let the great religions of the earth take the burden of the battle and you trail along? Well, I hesitate a little to give my answer to that question. Not because I am not sure of the answer, but because I am fearful about hurting feelings. I give my answer in three parts:

FAILURE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

First, in the centuries during which the numerically great religious denominations of the world have dominated the religious concepts and actions of their peoples there has been failure, signal failure to uphold divine standards of righteousness, brotherly love, and peace. These great religions, however good the intentions, have proved impotent to forestall wars and to prevent barbarism, brutality, and atrocities such as the world has seldom known even in its darkest ages and this, too among peoples where substantially the whole populace professed one creed. Of course, it is idle to conjecture what the world might have been without these creeds. No one with historical knowledge will fail to acknowledge their contribution to the enlightenment and culture of the race, but as a source of motivation in the control of men's greeds and passions the known results are certainly not encouraging.

ANSWERS TO LIFE'S QUESTIONS

Second, the ever-growing quest for knowledge among the enlightened people of the earth demands answers, reliable information on questions vital to life and its meaning. In many cases science has accentuated the importance of these questions and has done much to clarify thinking about them, but science has seldom given the answers, especially in the fields of human behavior and relationships. It seems indelicate, I know, to many not of my faith for me to assert that we have the answers. I mean, of course, about the source, the meaning, and purpose of life and the government of man. We do not know and cannot say just why the Lord did not commit these answers which are the essence of the holy gospel to the keeping of many men in many nations, but we do know that he committed them to the custody of this Church through those whom he chose to initiate his work in the latter-days. For this conviction we have substantial proof, evidence, admissible and competent evidence, not gathered from the debatable sources of antiquity but from witnesses and experiences within recent generations of men, attested and recorded to meet all reasonable demands. Here is God's truth and his latest word for the direction of the human family. In application it has been successful and not a failure.

DIVINE COMMISSION TO ACT

Third, I think that nearly everyone will agree that to sustain effectively a cause one must have the authority to represent it. He

must be a part of it, on the inside and not on the outside. He must be authorized to speak for it. I know that I broach a controversial question in speaking of the authority to represent God and Christ in the earth. Must we not discuss the great issues of the world because they are controversial, out of fear of treading on someone's sentimental toes? I believe that thinking, honest, inquisitive people the world over want the truth about authority, the divine commission to set up the Lord's work in the earth to administer the ordinances of the holy gospel and to interpret his word and will for the guidance of mankind. Now, there is much incontrovertible evidence that I might review here today in support of the claims to divine authority which this Church makes. I am not going to present this evidence; time will not permit; and many of you who listen know of it. I will confine my comment to one phase of this subject of authority of which I think our friends of the world have a very inadequate conception.

Is it not logical to assume that God, who is the Father of all men and who has endowed all men with liberty and equality of opportunity, does not "play favorites"? If it be regarded as a blessing and an honor to represent him, is there any good reason why that blessing and dignity should not be conferred on all of his sons who are worthy? Do you know of any warrant, scriptural or otherwise, for the creation and maintenance of special groups of spiritual experts to hold the authority of the Lord to the exclusion of other good men? What justification is there for differentiation among loyal and true sons of God by the clothes they wear? Does the apparel bring authority or is it essential to the recognition of a good life devoted to the Lord? And does it not seem reasonable that if the worthy sons of God are to enjoy his companionship in the world to come as a reward for their faithful labors here in this life that they should all bear a portion of his power and be endowed with a part of his spiritual intelligence which constitute the essence of divine authority and priesthood? What a boon it would be to the world if all men understood the nature and permanence of the Holy Priesthood and its indispensable part in the exaltation of a man and his family. Well, unfortunately, but few understand it, and the world goes along century after century following in the pattern of form and tradition, and influenced more by the display of pomp and pageantry than by a sound theology manifest in practical, living religion. That constitutes my answer to those who ask why we cannot trail along in the wake of the so-called great religions in defense of the Christ and his way of life in the crucial contest of the present day.

CHURCH TO TAKE THE LEAD

It then follows, as I see it, that we are to take the lead. There is no one to follow except him who is and always has been at our head. With his approval leaders have been selected for us. They hold no more or any different kind of priesthood from the humblest

good man in the kingdom, but they have a special commission to guide and direct our efforts in establishing the kingdom and prosecuting its work in the world. And to one is given the keys of the kingdom. We will follow their leadership, and they will not lead us astray, for they are unselfishly devoted to our interests and their wisdom is inspired.

There is a hungry world about us, my dear brethren and sisters, a challenging, hungry world. People need food for the body, food for the soul. We haven't the millions necessary to build and clothe their bodies. If we had, I think we would do it so that no one would suffer. We do what we can. We do have in our possession, however, what stricken humanity needs to satisfy its hungry soul and revive hope and confidence for peace and security. The message we bear is one of enlightenment to the statesman as well as the pauper. It teaches that enduring happiness is to be found only in goodness and that the highest tribute to the Christ is the tribute of a good life. It teaches that strength, the strength of the nation as so well portrayed by Brother Mark E. Petersen in his Church of the Air address this morning, is the product of that goodness. This message defines God, not as an intangible principle in the universe, but a personality with such inexpressibly beautiful, admirable, and potent attributes as to claim the everlasting love, confidence, reverence, and adulation of every living soul who comes to know the truth about him. It sets forth a brotherhood which in spirit and application transcends any definition of that relationship the world has known, at least in modern times. It brings comfort to the sorrowing. It rebukes avarice and places the world of business on the high plane of stewardship and trusteeship in the acquisition and distribution of the wealth of the world. It brings contentment and peace of mind. It gives unfailing purpose to life. It accentuates personality in every man, woman, and child. Indeed, it makes all things—government and even the Church itself—subservient to the eternal welfare of man.

If I could have my wish today, it would be that everyone of God's children could hear this glorious message and earnestly give consideration to it. I am sure that thereby there would come into countless hearts through the whisperings of the spirit that joy and happiness which attend our own testimonies of the truth. Through our missionary system we have made a tremendous contribution to this end, but it is not enough. We must find new ways to inform and persuade the world, and if we are faithful and truly devoted, God will open the way. That is my conviction.

I know as I know that I live that this is his kingdom. He will never desert it. God help all of us never to desert him, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.