

The reward for keeping the commandments of the Lord is happiness.

Happiness certainly does not come from just idle goodness. The Savior said, "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 23:11.) He could have said, "He that is happiest among you shall be your servant." Active service to others is serving God. That missionary is happiest who is truly seeking to serve his fellow man by declaring to him the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Active members of the Church everywhere experience the same happiness. Nor does happiness stop with this life. For those who keep the commandments of the Lord to the full, and enter into the new and everlasting covenant, and are sealed together as husband and wife for time and all eternity, shall enjoy the greatest degree of happiness.

Thus, as Moses declared: "The source of happiness for all mankind," in this life and the life to come throughout all eternity, "is the favour of God."

May the Lord help us to obtain it, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and congregation sang the hymn: "High On the Mountain Top," Elder Richard P. Condie conducting.

### ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

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

I would like to introduce the few remarks that I shall make by recalling a few scriptures, one of which has been repeated by two previous speakers today.

The Lord declared:

All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. (D. & C. 93:30.)

#### FREEDOM OF CHOICE

And the other, quoted by Elder Romney as one of the great teachings from the Book of Mormon, was Father Lehi's explanation of this same great principle to his son Jacob:

And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.

Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other. (II Nephi 2:15-16.)

There were those who seemingly, as evidenced by their conduct, think of this principle of free agency as a matter of license to do what they please to do. But again Father Lehi explains this matter to his son:

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things shall be given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. (*Idem* 27.)

We must teach men everywhere that liberty and freedom are to be obtained only by yielding obedience to truth. We must teach Latter-day Saints the meaning of the words of the Savior:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  
(John 8:32.)

Anyone who looks about him and thinks about this matter will see great evidence of the power of evil enticing men to do evil. It must be understood by us as a Church that if we are to build a force that will nullify the power of evil, we must develop the God-given agencies placed in his Church to entice men to seek the paths that lead to eternal life.

#### GENERAL SERVICEMEN'S COMMITTEE

I have recalled these scriptures I have quoted many times during the last few years because of the feeling and weight of responsibility that has rested upon me in the assignment of the First Presidency as a member of the general servicemen's committee directing the work of the Church among our Latter-day Saint boys in military service and as a member of the general priesthood committee. It was with a prayer of relief that we thanked the Lord that we had come through the war with as few casualties, spiritually speaking, as we did, but it was with considerable anxiety that we again saw marshaled into the ranks of the military, our young, untrained boys, many of them without experience and with not too much faith developed, in a so-called peacetime draft. We came soon to see and learn, to our dismay, that the moral hazards in such a situation were even greater than during the fighting part of the war. Then there was something of a moral discipline that boys had when ahead of them there was the prospect of imminent death.

It is true today that the draft situation has eased somewhat, but we view with fear and anxiety the forces that are at work which would have a universal military draft of all able-bodied young men in this country, which will come except God in his mercy shall deliver us therefrom. It is because of that anxiety and that possibility and the fact that we still have many of our young men in service that have caused me to think of these matters which the Lord has called to our attention.

#### VIEWS OF CHAPLAIN

With respect to the matter of war and the processes of war, a chaplain who served in two wars and longer, writes this:

War (and by inference the training for it) makes for few conversions. War only makes people more strongly what they were when the struggle began. If they were intemperate when they went into uniform, they will usually have become much harder drinkers by the time they come back home. If they were careless in sex morality, they are almost sure to have become more slimy in that respect. If they were noisy braggarts, you may expect them to return intolerable boasters. If they were selfish, their selfishness will have increased. If they were honest, decent, modest men, the war will usually have improved those qualities. If they despised God, they will have come out more sure in scorn; if they loved God a little, they will have learned to love him a lot. But there will be no more conversions than in peacetime, rather less. All history shows it true that no religious revival ever began or was fostered by battle.

What is said here by this chaplain about those away from their homes in military service might in part be said about all who are away from their homes and away from the influence of the Church.

As we scan the priesthood reports from quarter to quarter, there is evidence that there are many of our priesthood members not in military service but likewise away from home and away from the ties and influences of the Church. There are also reports of many girls who are away from their homes at school and at work and, therefore, shorn of the influences that otherwise would tie them close to the influence of the Church.

#### PLACE OF REFUGE

When the Lord revealed the name by which his Church was to be called, he gave some other instructions as to what that Church was to do. He said:

And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth. (D. & C. 115:6.)

As I have thought of that refuge which the Lord designed his organization to be, I have thought of those agencies within it, one of which Elder Benson spoke so eloquently about in his Church of the Air address this morning, the home. He quoted the scripture which we have had repeated time and time again as a quotation from the revelation of the Lord. After the Lord had declared it a sin upon the heads of the parents if they failed to teach the law of repentance and have their children baptized when eight years of age, he said:

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And the inhabitants of Zion also shall remember their labors, inasmuch as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord. (D. & C. 68:28-30.)

## PURPOSES OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Apostle Paul has defined another one of the purposes of the Church organization in his writings to the Ephesians. He declared that the Lord gave this organization ". . . to edify the body of the church," (or, in other words to educate the members of the Church until they would) "all come unto a unity of faith." (See Ephesians 4:12-13.)

Clearly the Apostle Paul saw the importance of the teacher and those who would instruct our members in the doctrines of the Church as another of those divine agencies in the Church to entice against the power of evil. It would be well if all the teachers would understand what the Apostle Paul meant when he said to the Corinthians:

And I . . . came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Cor. 2:1-2.)

## OBJECTIVE OF TEACHERS

That should be the only objective of instructors and teachers in this Church to teach "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." We need not the "excellency of speech nor of wisdom," but we need the testimony of God, as Paul said. And then this warning came in his later writings:

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (*Ibid.*, 14:8.)

President Joseph F. Smith, in commenting about this and decrying the fact that there were some apparently trying to confuse our people and lead them away by destroying faith rather than by building a testimony of God, said:

Among the Latter-day Saints the preaching of false doctrine disguised as truths of the gospel may be expected from people of two classes and practically from these only; they are: First, the hopelessly ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth, who make but feeble effort, if indeed any at all, to better themselves, by reading and study; those who are afflicted with a dread disease that may develop into an incurable malady—laziness.

Second, the proud and self-vaunting ones, who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; who have become a law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings, more dangerously ignorant than the first.

Beware of the lazy and the proud; their infection in each case is contagious; better for them and for all when they are compelled to display the yellow flag of warning, that the clean and uninfected may be protected.

I wish that we could have in all our classes and meetings the spirit which characterized one of our missionary meetings down at

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Ventura, California, where I visited recently with President Oscar W. McConkie, of the California Mission, when a woman who had sat in one of our Latter-day Saint meetings for the first time in her life made this comment at the close of the meeting:

I have studied the scriptures all my life, but today the words of the scriptures have been made to live.

So can be all the instructions of inspired teachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### DUTIES OF THE PRIESTHOOD

And now there is a third agency in the Church to entice men away from evil.

The Lord has set up the priesthood, and to them he gave the injunction to elders, priests, teachers, deacons, that they were to "watch over the Church"—and in more detailed explanation to the teachers—"to see that there is no iniquity, no evil speaking, and that all Church members do their duty." (See D. & C. 20:54.)

But, even after instructions have gone out from the General Authorities, concerning the servicemen, to our bishops and stake presidents as how the boys away from home may be contacted and directed; and after our instructions have gone out about the girls who likewise are away from home, and how we ought to shepherd them and keep in touch with them; and how the quorums should look after their absent members, we regret to say our reports indicate that sometimes quorum leaders take too lightly the exercise of those agencies which our Heavenly Father has caused to be set up here for the enticement to do good of those who otherwise are being enticed by evil.

At the beginning of the war there was an interesting newspaper account of a boy flying in from a training trip over the air field who suddenly shouted through his radio device to the man in the control tower below: "I can't see. I've lost my eyesight."

And the man in the control tower said: "Now, Son, you get a grip on yourself, and I will tell you what to do."

Quietly the man in the control tower guided him and had him circle the field many times, losing altitude by manipulating the controls, and finally the pilot rolled to a stop safely in front of the control tower on the ground.

It is that kind of calm wisdom and counsel that we need so much today. I would like to illustrate what I mean by bringing you parts of two letters from two of our boys who came through a period of spiritual "blindness" because of the steadying influence of wise counselors in the Church. One of these boys wrote a letter just recently and began his letter by saying:

## EXPERIENCE OF SERVICEMAN

"My bishop is the best bishop in this Church." He then explained that when he became a priest, his bishop taught him, among the first things, that God answered prayer. So the bishop instructed him before he went away into military service, and he went away strengthened by these teachings, but when he got out there, he learned to his dismay that some of those who claim membership in the Church did not act as the servants of the Lord should. They were rowdy. There was irreverence. And he got to thinking, "Could it be the Church of Jesus Christ if they don't reverence his name and are irreverent in his house?" He went to visit other churches and found a spirit of worship that sometimes was not to be found in his own. In his own way he formed the conclusion that therefore the Church must be wrong. He wrote home to his bishop and said: "Bishop, I have decided to join another church. I feel that this must be wrong or our people would be more reverent in their meetings."

His bishop wrote back and said: "Well, my boy, do not act too hastily. You study about this matter, and think about it. You pray to your Heavenly Father, and everything will be all right."

The boy then wrote this:

"On Thanksgiving night, I was very tired as I had just come off a watch at night, and when I had gone to bed, all I wanted to do was sleep. That night God answered my prayer. It was late, and what to me was a vision and to the common people would be a dream came to me. I saw a beautiful garden, and in the middle of this garden was a golden path. Coming down the path was my grandfather who had died in 1937. On the other side was my uncle who had died on a mission in 1939.

"Now I had gone to bed very tired, and I had never thought of my uncle or my grandfather as they had died when I was still under ten years of age.

"But that was not all. In the middle of them was Joseph Smith. They all talked to me, and the final thing that I can remember distinctly as being said was Joseph Smith telling me to stick to the truth, no matter what the other people said or did and to listen to the truth even though others did not listen to it.

"Then he said that there was still work to be done there as I had work to do here, and they faded away, and it seemed that I was in the garden alone until the garden began to fade, and I seemed to fall.

"When I awoke, it was still the middle of the night, and it was also cold, yet I had a feeling of warmth within me, and I knew that God had answered my prayers. I finished the night in restful sleep.

"Now you may think I was dreaming, too, but I still feel and know that I had an answer to my prayer."

I recalled that boy's letter when we heard a group of missionaries down in the California Mission say: "When we get discouraged

and downcast and blue, we have made a practice to go away fasting into the mountains before daylight and stay there all day and return after dark at night, and we have never failed to come from that experience strengthened by the power of God."

### WOUNDED MAN REMEMBERED

Another of our men coming back from combat service overseas was thrown into the middle of the ocean when his ship was torpedoed. He was seriously burned and was sent to a sanitarium, with his mind greatly disturbed and upset. He writes this testimony:

"While in the hospital, word came to me that my son had been gravely wounded in the South Pacific. I could not go to him. My world had collapsed. No, again, it is not the usual story. I did not remain steadfast in the faith. I became rebellious. I blamed my Heavenly Father for all of the misery and distress which was mine. I concluded that he had let me down. I turned away from him. I even got to the point where I could no longer pray. It seemed as if my line of communication had been broken, and I had lost all contact with God. That was the depth of human misery. Utter futility and resentment were mine. There is no destitution like that of being out of contact with our Heavenly Father. It is like receiving a busy signal when you call your doctor in an emergency.

"But then a miracle happened! My friends in the Church had not forgotten me! They prayed with faith for my recovery. My name was placed in the temples of our Lord where prayer was said in my behalf. My children continued to pray even as I had taught them to do. My parents prayed with an unwavering faith.

"The elders of the Church sought me out and gave me a blessing. I had little faith in them, but God had not forgotten me. He heard those prayers, and he turned not away. And health soon returned to my body."

I ask you members and leaders of the Church: Suppose that the bishop had been too busy to write to his boy who was disturbed by the irreverence of many who attended meetings where he had been. Suppose that he had not been taught as a priest the things which the bishop had taught him about prayer and how he could get an answer to his problems. Suppose that this other man's elders' quorum had failed, and they had forgotten to pray back home. I ask you to consider the seriousness of our responsibility in these matters.

### DAY OF DECEPTION

Today is a day of clever deception, a day when the Master declared one of the signs of his coming should be that even the very elect, according to the covenant, would be deceived.

One of our boys now studying in a large university on the coast

declared that the "thing that had kept him from losing faith in the Bible which the higher critics have decimated almost to a point of non-recognition," he said, "the thing that has kept my faith is that I know the Book of Mormon is true, and because of that testimony I know that what they are saying about the Bible is false and not the truth."

The Lord has given us a sure guide as to how we might discern truth from error. He said:

And that which doth not edify is not of God, . . .

That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day. (D. & C. 50:22-24.)

### KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

I wish we could take a lesson from the testimony of a man in this city who conducts a business here, who wrote and told me about a little experience he had when during the so-called depression of the past years, he thought he was going to lose everything that he had, and so he fasted and prayed that the Lord would show him how to save his business, and he said: "One morning just as it was breaking daylight I felt the still small voice which said to me: 'If you will only but keep God's commandments, you will be given all the wisdom necessary to save your business.'"

Simple, but a great powerful truth—if we will only keep God's commandments, the wisdom sufficient to our needs will be given us!

In the words of one, may we not forget the great truth which he has put in these words:

Isn't it strange that princes and kings  
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings  
And just plain folks like you and me  
Are builders for eternity?

To each is given a bag of tools,  
A shapeless mass and a book of rules,  
And each must build ere life has flown,  
A stumbling-block or a steppingstone.  
(*"Stumbling-Block or Stepping  
Stone,"* by R. L. Sharpe.)

God grant us strength. May we rise to our responsibilities, to do our job, to entice the membership of this Church and the world to seek the things that bring eternal life and happiness here and in the world to come, I pray humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.