

## SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES

May the Lord bless the missionaries, you folk, you parents. I'd like to say to you folk that most of the boys and girls who go on missions come from homes where parents can't afford financially to send their children, but they send them. There are many men here in this audience, I take it, and all over the Church for that matter, who have never been on missions, never had opportunity to go. I'll tell you how you can go. If you can find the way to do it, send a boy and enjoy vicariously that mission as you never had hoped you could enjoy one. Couples having no children, who oftentimes are both working, can go to a widow and say, "You have a boy; let us send him on a mission," and you'll be blessed for it.

The New England Mission has approximately one hundred twenty missionaries. Five hundred would not be nearly enough to touch the hearts of the ten million people of that area, and ten thousand would not be enough to take care of all the people over the world who need the gospel. We can send more than five thousand if we buckle down to it. I pray that we may do so, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

If I can manage it, I should like today to make a little comparison. Something more than nineteen hundred years ago, twelve obscure men with conviction and a message entered upon an undertaking which turned the world over and shaped the course of history.

## COMMISSION OF THE LORD

They were acting under a commission given them by the risen Lord as the final injunction of his early ministry. Coming to them at an appointed place on the occasion of his last appearance, he made this epoch marking announcement, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) That was a monumental assertion of authority. It was the premise upon which he based his solemn charge:

Go ye therefore, and 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. (*Ibid.*, 28:19-20.)

As Mark narrates the incident, the commission was accompanied by a promise of equally positive and sobering import: "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) To be sure, certain requirements were enjoined upon believers as a condition to the fulfillment of the promise, but they would follow as a consequence of genuine, sincere belief—the kind of belief that Jesus was talking about. A tremendously arresting quality of this whole matter is the tone of finality of it all. There is no uncertainty, no qualification, no

temporizing. It is the voice of complete assurance, supreme confidence, final authority such as is not to be matched in the words of any other man who has lived in mortality. It is in keeping with the character of one who had declared himself to be the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

During the period of his mortal ministry, the crowd had perceived this quality in his utterances and said in wonderment one to another that "he taught them as one having authority." (Matt. 7:29.) Neither does one get the sense that there is any bombast or vanity or pretentious arrogation of power. Straight and clear in the calm authoritative tones of one who had conquered death and thus redeemed the race from its power came the words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (*Ibid.*, 28:18.) It is the bedrock upon which the foundation of all his teachings rests. No one else in all the world has ever spoken like that, and no one can disprove the assertion. On the contrary, there have been and are vast multitudes who for nearly two thousand years have proclaimed and now proclaim assurance of its truth.

#### AWESOME ASSIGNMENT

It would be difficult to conceive of an assignment more awesome than that one just referred to as being given by the Lord to his chosen disciples. Consider for a moment their station. They were humble men—fishermen and peasants—without wealth or social position or high-placed friends. They had neither political prestige nor armed might. They lived in a remote province of the haughtiest and mightiest empire of the earth, whose proud legions had carried its banners to remote corners. Members of a turbulent, troublesome, and therefore unpopular race, they were directed to carry an unknown and hitherto unheard-of message to all the world, calling upon its inhabitants to observe all things whatsoever the crucified Lord had commanded, promising salvation to all who believed and complied. Before the magnitude of that task, the stoutest heart might well have quailed.

What their personal feelings were we are not told. The record is silent. We are left to inference from what they did about it. They seem not to have been overwhelmed or weighted down with apprehension. Perhaps they were not too much startled because they had previously been sent out as emissaries under the personal direction of the Master and had had personal experience of his sustaining power. During the period of his mortal ministry they had been under his personal tutelage and had heard him with unwavering assurance declare:

... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (John 11:25.)

And again:

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth

the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:38, 40.)

With like definiteness they had heard him declare:

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

... This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:9, 17, 18.)

They had seen him crucified and, in fulfilment of his words, rise from the dead. All this must have given them an immensely fortifying trust in his promise. At any rate they went unhesitatingly to their work.

#### FAITH PUT TO TEST

The quality of their faith and their courage was soon enough put to the test. When Peter and John, going up to the temple, healed the crippled man, they got themselves hailed before the rulers who demanded of them by what power or by what name they had done this thing. Peter boldly answered.

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. (Acts 4:10.)

They were forbidden further to teach in that name, and ignoring the warning, were thrown into prison. Being liberated, they continued their teachings and were beaten and enjoined from teaching; but still they persisted, saying,

... Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. (*Ibid.*, 4:19-20.)

Peter told his inquisitors to their teeth:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. (*Ibid.* 5:30-31.)

That was the power of their message, and the basis of their strength.

#### PERSECUTIONS

Their numbers multiplied with amazing rapidity, and so did the persecution. They were hunted down, driven into hiding, beaten, and stoned. From the account of Saul of Tarsus something of the bitterness of their suffering may be learned, but still they pressed on, their multiplied number spreading throughout the empire and to the very capital itself. An edict of extermination was decreed against the

sect. They were driven into hiding, cruelly tortured, thrown to the beasts in the circus for the amusement of the populace, where they were torn limb from limb. But still the work spread, a triumph of fidelity to a cause and sincerity in its advocacy.

These men believed. Men do not endure that kind of persecution without deep conviction. Here was no lip-service or sham or apologetics or denaturing to suit the doctrines to the tastes or practice of listeners. That is the kind of belief and these were the kind of men who perpetuated the teachings of Jesus in the earth, rescued them from fading into forgetfulness, and carried the Christian faith triumphantly to its establishment as the worship of the majority of the people of the empire which once had proscribed it and decreed the extermination of its adherents. That is the kind of belief of which Jesus spoke when he said, "He that believeth shall be saved."

### THE SON OF GOD

In the execution of their commission, the disciples clearly perceived that it was their first task to get him accepted, to get men to believe that he was the Son of God, the resurrected Lord who had redeemed the race from the bondage of death. All their teaching accordingly revolved around that central theme. Without that, there could be no hope of inducing the world to accept his moral and religious doctrines.

The pattern of their discourse was foreshadowed by Peter's bold declaration to the rulers: "Be it known to you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." That is what gave authoritative sanction to their teachings about the way of life which Jesus taught, and which so profoundly influenced the whole world.

### INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

It was clearly the intent and purpose of the Savior that men and peoples and nations should come to order their lives on the basis of principles he laid down, and it is something to marvel at how deep those teachings finally penetrated into those nations that espoused the Christian faith and furnished the standards of values and judgments to which they profess to cling. The nations formed from the breakup of the Roman Empire, as well as new nations which sprang or were peopled from them, in general fell under the influence of the Christian teachings and were called the Christian nations. The very frameworks of their governments were colored and shaped by these principles, and their Christian convictions have made these nations dominant in the world for fifteen hundred years.

Various Greek philosophies, and Roman too, taught rules of life, but such of them as have survived have done so by penetrating into the Christian faith which overshadowed them as the dominant spiritual power of the western world. In the Christian nations when

men have judged conduct or the validity of principles, they have evaluated them as good or bad according to their conformance or nonconformance to the standards laid down in the Christian code. Before Mussolini and Hitler could corrupt the youth of their countries they had to undermine and break down and destroy belief in the principles taught by Christ which for centuries their countries had been taught to revere as ideals, howsoever short they may have fallen in practice. While the Christian church compromised many of its vital principles and in that degree weakened itself and subverted its initial purpose, it nevertheless still gave lip-service to the Christ and a certain veneration for him and his precepts, which gave controlling color to the institutions and practices of the Christian world .

#### DISQUIETING SIGNS

But something ominous is happening now. There are disquieting signs that all over Christendom the underpinnings of the Christian faith are being knocked down. The crumbling of the Christian pattern is of grave portent. Ancient supports may be torn away, but what shall buttress us then? It begins to look as though the world is slipping back to the position it held when the Lord commissioned his disciples to carry his message to all the nations. The task again seems to be to get men to believe in him—to get him accepted. There is something highly suggestive about the fact that the upheavals which are threatening the destruction of the civilized world follow so closely on the heels of open denial by professed Christians of belief in Christ as the Son of God and of the divinity of his teachings.

I suppose it has always been true that individual persons have disavowed belief in Jesus as the Messiah, but generally this has not been true on a mass scale. Where such unbelief has been declared, it has generally been professed that nevertheless the moral and ethical teachings of Christ were still recognized as of the highest value and valid without acceptance of the claim of his Messiahship or his resurrection. But repudiation cannot go halfway and stop. Denial of his divinity is only the first step in the process of complete denial to which the logic of the position inevitably drives. And now we seem to be experiencing on a scale never before thought of the disavowal of any superior validity to the whole Christian creed. In other words, we are now driven by the logic of events to recognize that you can't have Christianity without Christ, and those who have decided to get along without him are driven to choose whether to compromise on their principles, too. This is of almost worldwide consequence because Christianity has penetrated into non-Christian nations far more than their creeds have penetrated into the Christian world.

#### CRITICISM OF CHRISTIANITY

It is only two or three years ago that the president of a worshipping body in our country, which formerly was assumed to call itself Christian, said:

Christianity has been guilty of spiritual arrogance on a world-wide scale, labeling all other religions false, and asserting that only when all mankind accepts the one true religion will there be any hope for world-wide cooperation and peace. That amounts to spiritual imperialism and is as out of date in our world today as any other form of imperialism.

In a recent writing, an ordained minister who had held many pastorates proposes and argues the necessity for a new religion for a new age. He begins by demolishing the Christian God, and tearing to bits the Christian church, Protestant and Catholic alike. He tells us that Christianity is a minority group even in America, and ridicules the idea that the great majority are going to surrender their own beliefs to accept "the Christian God."

But that is precisely what Christ directed his disciples to teach the world to do. Moreover, that is what the great body of the Roman world professedly did in its conversion from paganism to Christianity.

The writer of the article dogmatically asserts, "God doesn't talk to you." All forms of religion as known today, he says, and all ideas of God are man-made. They are not eternal; they grew out of the feeling of man that he was impotent to achieve his ideals and turned the job of carrying through to a supernatural power. He proposes as a religion for the modern age one that is secular, presided over not by a ministry or a clergy or anyone acting under an ordination but managed by professional and businessmen and workers and artists. He depicts the organization of a brave new world where every man who has a talent will be expected to use it. It will be noted on careful perusal that in this scheme of things there is no place for God. The writer makes it abundantly clear that He does not exist, nor is there any future estate for man. It would appear that man himself, and certainly religion, is to be but a tool of the state.

#### ALTERNATE PROPOSALS

It is possible to agree with much of what the writer says about the failure of the Christian Church to bring about the desired condition of peace and good order in the world and harmonious living among men. He points to war and frustration and the disappointments of human hopes through lapses in human behavior. But in all the principles and practices which he sets forth as those to be embodied in his new religion, there is not one that is not already laid down in the teachings of Jesus Christ. He proposes no new virtues. Just how the ideal of the good life for all is to be implemented by supplanting the gospel taught by Jesus with a secular-political-economic-sociological regime is not made clear, though there is some indication that this is to be managed through the authoritarian powers of an omnipotent state, which is a concept in direct variance from what Jesus taught. Right here I should like to interpolate without using more words the stirring discourse we have just listened to from President [David O.] McKay relating to human dignity and the right of all men to be free.

## A REVELATION OF GOD

So we come at the end to the simple question whether religion is a revelation of God with enduring validity in all times, and through the practice of which man may work his way up to perfection, or is it a human creation with no higher sanction than the wisdom of man and subject to change with the passing moods of changing times? The one gives stability and constancy and purpose to life, the reason for being, with freedom to choose one's course; the other sets man adrift with nothing enduring to hold on to and little hope to inspire noble living.

In the brief time at my disposal, I have known that I could not make a complete portrayal of the idea that is lying in the back of my mind. I had dared hope that I might advance something suggestive enough to set your minds working on the idea sufficiently so that you might fill in what of necessity I have left incomplete.

I have had more particularly in mind those who by their daily pursuits or association or environmental influence might be confused or even disturbed by the godless humanism that is so prevalent in the thought of the day. If you want to meet scholasticism with scholasticism to bolster up your trust in the teachings and promises of the Master, you may take comfort in the knowledge that many of the profoundest scholars of this and of other times still place trust in God, who may be communed with through prayer.

I recall here the words of Henry George, the economist and political scientist, many of whose political and economic and sociological views are in greater favor today than when he first propounded them: "Political economy and social science," George said, "cannot teach any lessons that are not embraced in the simple truths that were taught to poor fishermen and Jewish peasants by one who 1800 years ago was crucified."

May all men learn to revere the teachings of the Lord and Savior. May they come to know that in them is saving power and that outside of them within the realm of human wisdom there is nothing that can save, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:**

The Brigham Young University Choir will now sing "Glorious Is Thy Name."

The closing prayer will be offered by President Thaddeus M. Evans of the East Riverside Stake, Salt Lake City, Utah, after which this conference will stand adjourned until 10:00 o'clock Saturday morning. The proceedings of that session will be broadcast over KSL, Salt Lake City, Utah, and by arrangement through KSL, over the other stations to which you are now listening, and will be televised over the KSL television station, channel 5.

At 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning, a meeting will be held in the Temple. Those invited should assemble in the Tabernacle not