

out of the darkness of the world into the marvelous light of the Lord Jesus Christ through missionaries. Men and women today are accepting the truth and becoming members of his Church. There is no other Church in the world where individuals have as great responsibilities, particularly those who hold the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods.

I humbly pray that we shall be worthy to follow in his footsteps and be inspired by the statement of the Christ 2,000 years ago when he said,

. . . wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just concluded speaking. Elder Richard L. Evans, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will now address us. Elder Milton R. Hunter will follow Elder Evans.

## ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

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

President McKay and my brethren and sisters, I acknowledge my need for help in this humbling position and would wish to go back, in these few moments which I have, to the theme set by President McKay yesterday morning and recall as a text and a title:

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6.)

I cannot think of a greater blessing nor anything more earnestly to be sought after than life and peace.

As I have heard the words of life and peace spoken in this conference these past two days, as I have contemplated the ways of life and peace, I have thought inevitably of some voices and faces of the past mingled with those of the present. Those three who most recently have left us have been mentioned a number of times in this conference. I have counted others, especially during the late hours of last night and the early hours of this morning, and have written down some nineteen or twenty names of beloved Brethren with whom I have here sat during some nineteen and a half years, and who have since left this life.

I would read the list, but am afraid I might miss some; but I should like to recall from some of those voices of the past some things that they have said, that they may mingle again with us in the present. (One thing that their having gone impresses upon us is how swiftly the days of life move and how

choice must be the company on the other side where all of us hope eventually to find ourselves in the kingdom of our Father.)

Melvin J. Ballard is one. A printed card which has crossed the desk of some of us these past few days gives these sentences of a paragraph by Brother Ballard:

Man is a child of God, therefore he partakes of the divine nature of his Father. Within him lie germs of infinite development. Potentially he is a godlike being. Therefore he may rise eternally towards the likeness of his Father in heaven. Upward, divine, unending is man's destiny.

I thought of Brother Albert E. Bowen, a choice spirit with a profound mind, and from the last talk he gave at a general conference, I have taken these sentences:

Our religion comprehends more than just the ethical code. It contains a body of principles, through the observance of which we are promised the great reward of eternal life and salvation in the kingdom of God. . . . It all centers in Jesus the Christ. . . . Our religion comprises the teachings and life and actions of Jesus of Nazareth. That constitutes our religion.

I have thought of Brother Matthew Cowley and the last talk he gave here, as I recall, a beautiful talk on prayer:

Some people think it is a sign of weakness to get upon one's knees and pray to our Heavenly Father. It's the greatest sign of strength that exists. No men are greater

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than when they are upon their knees in communion with God and having a sacred interview with him.

The voice of Thomas E. McKay, you will remember it, pleading for love at home. I think it was the last talk he gave here:

I never heard my father, and nobody else did, speak an unkind word to my mother, so it has not been difficult for me to say kind words.

You will remember those two phrases recalled by Brother Hanks at the funeral service of Brother Oscar Kirkham:

"Your name is safe in our home"—and "What will it do to the man?"

And many other voices come to mind. Dr. Adam S. Bennion—this bench this day is a lonelier place without his sitting beside us. To say that he is much missed would be an acute understatement. You may recall his most outstanding University baccalaureate address in the stadium under the starlight, some six or seven years ago, with the hills to the east in their beauty catching the last tints of the sunset:

Here in the shadow of these everlasting hills I bring you no argument—I bring you a conviction. A conviction that we and the world in which we live are the product not of chance—not of the mere interplay of lines of force—but the master work of a great Creator. A conviction that we are the children of our Father in heaven, who created the universe and all of us, and that He still guides our destinies. Hence the title, "Candle of the Lord." Or, if you prefer the whole text: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." (Proverbs 20:27.)

There is a light that lights all of us who come into the world. We have the assurance of John for this:

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:4, 9.)

I think that one of the worst things we could say of any man is that there is not light in him. And in thinking of the candle of the Lord, I am thinking of the candle of conscience, and of much else, also.

I could not think of the voices and faces of the past without thinking of my

beloved friend who (with Dr. James E. Talmage) was my mission president, Dr. John A. Widtsoe. I can hear him say, many times: "I would rather go through life trusting my fellow men, and have a few of them disappoint me, than to go through life mistrusting everyone."

I can hear him say to the discouraged, to the penitent, to those who are weighted with problems and weighted with sin: "Look up, not down. Look forward, not back."

I can hear him recall an old and ancient thought, many versions of which have been recalled and restated over the ages: "Count no man happy until he is dead"—which is another way of saying, "He that shall endure to the end shall be saved." We have to finish the race. There is a reward for consistency in life.

I can hear him say: "He giveth twice who giveth quickly."

The time when men need things is when they need them. The time when a man needs nourishment is when he is hungry. The time when youth need counsel may be a very perishable time. It may be this very night and not when it is convenient, not tomorrow, not next week. "He giveth twice who giveth quickly."

I can hear Dr. Joseph F. Merrill saying: "No one ever falls over a precipice who never goes near one."

Do not tempt temptation. None of us knows his own strength. We should not flit around the edge of anything that we should not flit around the edge of, unless we want to hazard what hanging too near the edge hazards. Do not tempt temptation.

I can hear President George Albert Smith: "Give the Lord a chance," and "Keep on the Lord's side of the line."

I can hear the voice of President Grant ringing out here, and I can almost hear him thumping the pulpit: "That which we persist in doing becomes easy to do; not that the nature of the thing has changed, but that our power to do has increased."

I have quoted many times a letter of President Grant's which his family republished parts of, with other quotations, on the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth a year ago last November, a letter he wrote from Japan as a young

man, in 1903, from which these paragraphs are taken:

We have no right to go near temptation, or in fact to do or say a thing that we cannot honestly ask the blessing of the Lord upon, neither to visit any place where we would be ashamed to take our sister or sweetheart.

The Good Spirit will not go with us on to the Devil's ground, and if we are standing alone upon the ground belonging to the adversary of men's souls, he may have the power to trip us up and destroy us. The only safe ground is so far from danger as it is possible to get. Virtue is more valuable than life—

There are some who come and say they have not been taught, that they wish they had known differently. But the commandments are pretty plain. I would not worry too much about the obscure passages of scripture. We will not be held accountable for things we do not know, but we will be for those we do know.

(I think of a sentence from Mark Twain. One would always expect a bit of humor from him, and there is something of whimsy in this sentence of his: "The scripture passages that bother me the most are the ones I understand." I think we do not need to worry too much about the ones we do not understand.)

Back to President Grant:

—Virtue is more valuable than life. Never allow yourself to go out of curiosity to see any of the "undercrust" in this world. We can't handle dirty things and keep our hands clean.

These are some of the voices of the past. They are true voices, mingled with those of the present, in counsel to this generation and to those yet in the future.

I would plead with my beloved young friends, many of whom come, some of whom are burdened with sin and sorrow, and older ones also, not to quibble about definitions, and shades of meaning and obscure passages and try to rationalize and outreason the scriptures. The commandments are basic to our very nature. They are not arbitrary. The Lord God has not just sat down and thought up a series of thou shalt nots. He knows us. He knows our na-

tures. He knows what will lead to happiness, to "life and peace," to refer back to the text of President McKay. He knows what will help us to realize our highest possibilities.

There are consequences in all things. As surely as we live the law we shall reap the rewards of living the law. As surely as we break the law we shall pay some penalties, but blessedly with that mercy of which President Clark spoke so beautifully.

I give you these voices of the past, and bring your attention, my beloved young friends, to the commandments and ask you to look beyond the sophistries of men and the rationalizing that would wave them away, and remember the strong, terse language of our Savior, who was no more sharp in his language at any time than when he was talking to hypocrites and such, when he said: "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matt. 23:24.)

Attaining "life and peace" is not a matter of quibbling. It is not a matter of obscure meanings. It is just a matter of knowing the simple commandments of God and living and keeping them.

May I bring your attention in closing to some sentences from Mr. Cecil B. DeMille in his great address to the graduates of Brigham Young University last June:

We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them—or else, by keeping them, rise through them to the fulness of freedom under God. God means us to be free. With divine daring, He gave us the power of choice.

One choice sentence from an unknown source:

Human harvests are not just gathered in the autumn of life. They are planted, cultivated, and reaped, each and every day.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

May God help us and our youth and all the generations, as we mingle the voices of the past with those of the present, to walk the ways that will lead to life and peace, I pray in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.