

God's will, if necessary by the things which we suffer. One of the things that characterizes us as Saints, as King Benjamin told us, was to be "submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father." (Mosiah 3:19.)

There have been signs that have been given by which we shall know when the coming of the Lord shall be; and the Lord has given us two or three warning words to remember:

". . . I say unto all men; watch, therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord doth come. . . .

"Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." (Joseph Smith 1:46, 48.)

"But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die." (D&C 45:32.)

". . . and he that watches not for me shall be cut off." (*Ibid.*, 45:44.)

### Stand in Holy Places

These are words to be remembered. Watch! Be ye therefore ready! Stand

in holy places and be not moved! Be still and know that I am God!

I bear witness that until a person has been willing to sacrifice all he possesses in the world, not even withholding his own life if it were necessary for the upbuilding of the kingdom, then only can he claim kinship to Him who gave his life that men might be. God make us worthy, willing to accept whatever he sees fit to inflict upon us, as a little child to its father.

I bear you my solemn witness as to the divine mission of the Lord and to the responsibility we must bear as his Church and his people and his priesthood, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve.

Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will be our next speaker, and he will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

## BISHOP JOHN H. VANDENBERG

### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

It has been said: "The great [question] of the twentieth century is, 'How can I acquire wealth?' No question occupies a larger place in the minds and . . . hearts of . . . people today than this. Millions . . . in our land worship at the shrine of mammon. The twentieth century is money mad. This is true of men in every station and in every walk of life." (Morris Chalfant, "The Sin of the Church," *Wesleyan Methodist*.)

Avarice and selfishness mastermind all sin and crime. The Lord has repeatedly warned against the disastrous consequence to the soul of one having his heart so set upon the things

of this world as to neglect the real purpose and meaning of life.

### The Happy Life

For instance, a certain young man made this inquiry of the Savior: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

"And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

"He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt

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not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

"Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." (Matt. 19:16-22.)

Jesus touches upon a subject here which is essential to a successful and happy life. Had the young man been able to follow the Savior's counsel, he no doubt would have experienced great joy; certainly he would not have gone away sorrowful. It is interesting to note that the young man had qualified himself as far as keeping the carnal commandments was concerned. There was no serious transgression, but it was the follow-through—"if thou wilt be perfect"—that was the stumbling block. The requirement to use his worldly goods to benefit others proved to be his great test, a test that made him sad, as it does many today.

Immediately following this episode the Savior addressed his disciples and said: "Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Even his disciples seemed taken aback by this statement, for they asked: "Who then can be saved?" Jesus answered them: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." (*Ibid.*, 19:23, 25-26.)

### Divine Power Released by Obedience

Here then is the key—by the power of our Father in heaven man is saved. And this power of God is exercised through the action of his laws. His laws are given for the benefit of his children—to help them properly take command of their lives concerning worldly goods.

Christ taught: ". . . seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

"For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

"But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Luke 12:29-31.) There are many men who can testify to this truth.

Neither wealth nor the material things of the world in and of themselves are evil; it is the love of possessing them above all else that is evil.

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith: ". . . that which cometh of the earth is ordained for the use of man for food and for raiment, and that he might have in abundance.

"But it is not given that one man should possess that which is *above another*, wherefore the world lieth in sin." (D&C 49:19-20. Italics added.)

Many of the problems of society develop because of man's vain ambition to get gain and power "above another." Such desires follow the natural course in the heart of man. ". . . the natural man," said King Benjamin, "is an enemy to God. . . ." (Mosiah 3:19.) One should cultivate thoughts of love for God and fellowmen and strive to serve one another.

### Trust in God's Promises

"When Matthias Baldwin, who built the first American locomotive, had made good and had accumulated a fortune, he was wont to distribute liberal gifts freely among those who had been less prosperous than he. So generous, indeed, was he that when he had not the cash by him he would give personal notes instead. 'Nobody hesitates to sign promises to pay in the future in order to get capital for business,' he would say. 'Are we to trust the Lord to take care of our affairs, and not His own?' Sometimes, it is said, this practice would get Mr. Baldwin into small difficulties; but on the other hand it often helped him when he needed business notes for himself. Said one bank president to another,

once, "You refuse to help him because he does not know what to do with his money. We will stand by him because he is determined to do good with his money. His collaterals are God's promises." (Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, *What Jesus Taught*, p. 175.)

Mr. Baldwin may have been acquainted with Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6:17-19.)

Mr. Baldwin personally said, "I feel more thankful for the disposition to give largely than for the ability to give largely; for I know that immense wealth can be acquired a great deal easier than the heart to use it well. My money without a new heart would have been a curse to me." (Widtsoe, *op. cit.*, p. 180.)

### Gain in Spiritual Wealth

A few days ago the *Deseret News* carried an article about Mr. J. C. Penney. In part it said: "One night, for example, at age 56, I [Mr. Penney] was broke, discouraged, ill in a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. I felt that I would never see the dawn of another day," said Mr. Penney. "I got up and wrote farewell letters to my wife and to my oldest son. I sealed the letters. If I did sleep, it was not a sound sleep. I rose early, went down to the mezzanine floor, and found the dining room was not open.

"Suddenly, over in one corner of the mezzanine, I heard the singing of gospel hymns. The song was the old favorite, 'God Will Take Care of You.' You can imagine how heavy my heart was when I went in. Yet, I came out of that room that morning a changed man. Within just a few moments my life was transformed. It was almost as if I had had a new birth. God did take

care of me. . . . And ever since, I have been trying to fill that obligation

"When I finally got back on firm ground, I had much less in a material sense than I enjoyed before. But I had gained immeasurably in spiritual wealth, for I had learned to turn to God for guidance in all the acts and decisions of my life.

"All spiritual awakening requires this realization: material arrogance and pride build up a sense of power that separates man more and more from God. Then when some desperate crisis brings this realization, the change appears almost a miracle.

"But that miracle is ever within a hand's reach of all of us. That is the wonderful thing about it. We have only to reach out and touch God, to take His hand and ask Him to lead us." (*Deseret News*, September 16, 1965, p. A9.)

### Beware the Snare of Selfishness

America as a whole is today economically prosperous; and unless we turn to God, grave consequences may result. Members of the Church are taken up in this surge of prosperity, and we should be alert to the words of Paul: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6:9-10.)

Avarice and selfishness seem to be the greatest sin and lead to many crimes. Robberies, burglaries, assaults, murders are committed because of the selfish attitude "I want it."

### Law of Tithing the Liberator

The Lord, therefore, has given his children guiding principles to assist them to overcome such inclinations as they may have. The Church will help a man to eradicate selfishness from his mind if he will but follow the laws of the gospel. For example, the law of tithing is for man's benefit. As a man

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voluntarily begins to pay an honest tithing, his interests and desires are focused toward God.

No one who is selfish can gain a righteous state. The principle of tithing will help one overcome this enslaving power, for at the very base of this principle lies the means of subduing and conquering selfishness. Hence, it is a great blessing to the individual who will honestly live the law.

President Brigham Young once said: "The law of tithing is an eternal law. The Lord Almighty never had his Kingdom on the earth without the law of tithing being in the midst of his people, and he never will. It is an eternal law that God has instituted for the benefit of the human family, for their salvation and exaltation." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 1943 ed., p. 177.)

In 1831 the Lord, in a revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith, said: "And if ye seek the riches which it is the will of the Father to give unto you, ye shall be the richest of all people for ye shall have the riches of eternity; and it must needs be that the riches of the earth are mine to give; but beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old." (D&C 38:39.) You will recall the Nephite nation was destroyed because the people sought to gratify their own pride and vain ambitions. They were unable to resist the appeal of wealth and the things it could buy, loving power and gain more than God.

President McKay has counseled: "Tithing should not be given with a selfish end in view. A man who pays tithing just to keep his name on the record will receive his reward, of course; he will have his name on the record. 'Verily, he hath his reward,'

as the man who prayed to be seen and heard of men. But he who gives because he loves to help others and to further the cause of righteousness, who gives cheerfully with thanksgiving in his heart, also has his reward; for in giving he is really obtaining. In losing his life for Christ's sake, he finds it.

"If all would thus lose themselves unselfishly in the law of tithing, there would be sufficient in the Lord's storehouse to insure the comfort and education of every person in need in the Church. The Church would thus become the best, the safest insurance society in the world. The time will come when tithing as a sufficient means of protection will be even more fully understood than it is today. . . ." (David O. McKay, *Treasures of Life*, pp. 284-285.)

May God bless us that we may catch the vision and the spirit of the Savior's admonition: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

May this be our lot, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

The Presiding Bishop, John H. Vandenberg, has just spoken to us.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.

### ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has said, ". . . if you keep my commandments and endure to the end

you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.)