

## ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My prayer is that what I say in these next few moments may not be out of harmony with what has seemed to be the theme of this great conference, which has, among other things, impressed upon us the vital importance of keeping the commandments of God as an effective hedge against the evils of our day. Many questions are asked today as the disturbed conditions in the world become more confusing and appalling to our people and to others who are shocked by the continuance of undeclared wars and by the spectacle of government affairs and some private and public businesses being dominated, in many instances, by official mandate rather than by due legislative processes. We see rebellion against the law, which approaches anarchy when leaders openly incite riots against law and order; we are witnessing the constant parading of ugly and soul-destroying, lewd, and provocative literature, theatricals, and radio and television shows. We hear vicious attacks on public officials without the opportunity being given to them to make a defense or a rebuttal to the evil diatribes and character assassinations that tend to discourage worthy men from accepting appointments to public offices. These are but a few of the ills that afflict us in our so-called modern age.

In the midst of all this, we hear our faithful people asking these questions over and over again: Are we living in the last days? Is there a sure way we can know the false from the true? Does the Church take any position in these matters? Is the devil on the loose? Has the Church a defense against these terrifying circumstances?

**Sure guides to truth**

To all of these questions, the answers are unwavering: Yes, we are living in the last days. There are sure guides to truth if church members will use them. The Church is a continuing revolution against any and all norms

of society that fall below the gospel standards. Within the gospel of Jesus Christ may be found the solution to every problem confronting us that will enable us to find happiness here and eternal life in the world to come. Yes, the devil is certainly on the loose. The Church indeed has within itself the most effective possible defense against these ungodly and terrifying conditions.

**The conflict with evil**

My text for this brief address sets out in clearness the eternal contest with the evil forces among us. The Apostle Paul admonished the Saints of Ephesus:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:11-12.)

**Love and obedience**

This profound admonition was preceded by pertinent instructions that impress the very present needs of today. There must be the love of a husband for his wife and the love of a wife for her husband, and children must be obedient to parents. The Apostle Paul drew a parallel between the reverence for and love of parents and children in the home to the love of the Master for his Church, and then concluded with these words: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10.)

All with righteous desires are opposed to sin. Some years ago I participated in a panel discussion at the University of Utah with public officials, businessmen, and a district judge, as well as professional men of the university. The district judge made a profound statement when he declared

that the great need in the fight against lawlessness, against immorality, against atheism, socialism, Communism, or other related ills is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our city attorney had accompanied me, I being a city official at the time. To him the comment of the judge about faith as a weapon against sin was sheer stupidity and a pompous display of religious bigotry. As I have thought about the statement of the judge, I have recalled a wise observation by one of my esteemed colleagues: "Beautiful roses," he said, "do not grow unless the roots of the parent bush are planted in rich, fertile soil—watered and cultivated and carefully nurtured by the hand of a master gardener. Likewise, beautiful flowers of virtue, honesty, integrity, or sobriety do not blossom in a human soul unless his feet are firmly planted on a testimony of the divine mission of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (Charles A. Callis, formerly of the Council of the Twelve.)

### Knowledge of God's word

Despite the sarcasm of my nonmember attorney friend, the judge in the panel discussion was right. My knowledge of the Lord's word concerning sin and my experience in dealing with human problems have taught me that the judge was close to the mark. We must know the truth, for the truth only will make us free from the pitfalls of evil. Knowledge of and love for the Son of God as a perfected being will bring heaven close when temptations are near.

The Apostle Paul closed his sermon to the Ephesians with these meaningful words: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness:

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. . . ." (Eph. 6:14-18.)

To the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul set forth in plainness that his teachings would not be from his learning in secular fields in which he was a recognized scholar. His pledge to them as a preacher of righteousness and truth was significant:

"And I, brethren, when 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. . . .

### Faith in the wisdom of God

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:1-3, 5.) I would that all who are called to high places in the Church would determine, as did the Apostle to the Gentiles, to know and to preach nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

We are told plainly in the revelations that the fruits of the true gospel of Jesus Christ are unity and harmony. The following from a revelation while the Church was young and the leaders inexperienced plainly declares that the gospel in its fullness was given to overcome contention. Listen to his words:

"Yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel . . . and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me.

"And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them." (D&C 10:62-63.)

Then the Lord has declared something more, which all of us as leaders and teachers should heed:

"Behold, this is my doctrine—who-

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soever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.

"Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.

"And now, behold, whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

"And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God." (D&C 10:67-70.)

"I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine." (D&C 38:27.)

### Harmony evidence of oneness

The absolute test of the divinity of the calling of any officer in the Church is this: Is he in harmony with the brethren of that body to which he belongs? When we are out of harmony, we should look to ourselves first to find the way to unity. A wise man has given us the key to his development in his unforgettable statement; here are his wise words: "If there was any 'key' to this process of growing up, it lay in the systematic effort I made to subject myself to critical self-appraisal. As I came to know myself, I acquired a better understanding of other people." (Bernard Baruch.)

Martin Harris, you remember, was warned particularly to repent of his sins, for he sought the praise of the world. (D&C 58:39.) I suppose the love of praise and adulation of the world is the beginning of the downfall of many men. Alma, a prophet of the Book of Mormon, seemed to make it clear that the sowing of the seeds of hatred, suspicion, and contention in any organization is destructive of the purpose of life and unbecoming to the children of God.

This is a part of a great sermon delivered by this ancient prophet: "And he commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.

"Yea, even he commanded them that they should preach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord, who had redeemed his people.

"And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.

"And thus he commanded them to preach. And thus they became the children of God." (Mosiah 18:19-22.)

### Power of the works of God

A few years ago while touring the missions of South America, I heard President William Grant Bangerter of the Brazilian Mission make some interesting comments. He reported that there had been a wave of incidents in which evil spirits were afflicting the missionaries and the Saints. At every conference the missionaries were relating experiences they were having with evil spirits. The intensity of their influence was frightening. The mission president admonished them to cease talking about the works of the devil in the future and instead teach with power the works of the Lord and bear testimony of his works among them. There was an almost immediate cessation of the power of the evil spirits when the people confined their testimonies to the works of the Lord rather than of Satan, the mission president told me.

We should all learn that the fundamentals of gospel teachings are the Lord's weapons against evil and sins of all kind, whether they be political dangers, immorality, threatened family disasters, or any other sinister afflictions among us.

One wise teacher, the superintendent of California schools, has said: You don't train a boy to refrain from burglary by teaching him how to manipulate the tumblers of a safe in the dark; neither do you teach him to avoid immorality by teaching him all about sex in the school room. (Dr. Max Rafferty, in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 1964.) By the same token,

you don't teach people to avoid Communism by telling them all about Communism or to avoid murderous acts of violence by constantly telling horror stories.

### Freedom and obedience

President David O. McKay has said it better than I can. "In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving people's greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness.*" (President David O. McKay, *The Improvement Era*, Dec. 1962, p. 903.)

I should like to read that again because it is the key to what I am trying to say: "In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving people's greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness.*"

### Man's relationship to Deity

The conclusions we must reach are inescapable as we ponder these profound declarations. One who has an abiding conviction concerning God, who has faith in his relationship to Deity and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who believes in and has a love for the Son of God, and who has a feeling of certainty as to the immortality of the soul can successfully combat sin and unrighteousness in any guise.

Ours, then, must be a positive rather than a negative approach, as indicated by these divine instructions. The Lord has explained this in his preface to his revelations in our day, as he tells us the value of the scriptures and why the fullness of gospel teachings was given to us today. He said:

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called

upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

"And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world; and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets—

"The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh—

"But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;

"That faith also might increase in the earth;

"That mine everlasting covenant might be established;

"That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.

"Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.

"And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known;

"And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed;

"And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent;

"And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time." (D&C 1:17-28.)

### Beware false leaders

How much clearer can the Lord tell us the value of the gospel in keeping us from following false leaders up blind alleys?

The Lord has sounded a warning to all of us who hold responsible places in his kingdom in this day.

Said he:

"But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

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"Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation;

"Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also." (D&C 20:32-34.) The sanctified, as defined, are those who have a holiness of life and character—those who may have titles of high places in the Church.

A President of the Church has told us where we may expect to find false leaders:

"First," he said, "The hopelessly ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth. . . .

"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." (President Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, twelfth ed., p. 373.)

### Allegiance to God

Ours is the great responsibility to become fully involved in the great drive going forward in the Church today: to impress parents with their responsibility to teach their own families in their homes and to have a completely correlated course of gospel teachings in church auxiliaries and priesthood quorums for the children, the youth, and the adults—all to the end that we might develop a gospel scholarship in the individual that will withstand in this evil day the forces that, without this abiding testimony of the gospel, would make us and our children prey to all the vices and false ideologies in the world.

May the Lord continue to pour out his knowledge upon his Church and give to all who are members, and indeed to all the honorable of the earth, attentive minds and obedient hearts, that he may indeed be an ensign to the world as prophesied when "many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. . . ." (Isa. 2:3.)

For that I pray humbly for all of us as individuals and for the Church collectively.

The Master closed his last recorded sermon prior to his crucifixion with the words: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.)

I humbly bear solemn witness to the life and mission of our Lord and Master, the Prince of Peace, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Hugh B. Brown:

The stirring address to which you have just listened was given by Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve.

This memorable session of a great conference was highlighted today by an inspired and inspiring address by the President of the Church, President David O. McKay.

We wish to express our gratitude to the managers and operators and networks over 200 television and radio stations in offering their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to millions throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa and many other areas of the world. We appreciate the attendance here of educators, government officials, Church officials, and all visitors who have made this service so memorable.

We shall conclude this session of the conference by the Choir singing: "Lord Who Has Made Us For Thine Own." Following the singing the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Rodney A. Hansen, president of the Minidoka, Idaho Stake, and this conference will then be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

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The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir sang "Lord, Who Has Made Us For Thine Own."

Elder Rodney A. Hansen, president of Minidoka Stake, pronounced the benediction.