

stop the Communists. Our members were few in number, and the danger to freedom seemed far away. One trembles at the thought of members of the Church today in the Communist slave labor camps.

In fact, freedom-loving people have been brought under Communist bondage at the average rate of 6,000 per hour, 144,000 per day, 52 million per year since the end of World War II.

Priesthood to save freedom

But here in America, the Lord's base of operations—so designated by the Lord himself, through his holy prophets—we of the priesthood, members of his restored Church, might well provide the balance of power to save our freedom. Indeed we might, if we go forward as General Moroni of old and raise the standard of liberty throughout the land.

Today our Prophet and President has said: "No greater immediate responsibility rests upon members of the Church, upon all citizens of this Republic and of neighboring Republics than to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United

States." Is this plain enough? In view of this solemn warning, how can any member of the Church fail to act to help save our freedom? We must not be lulled away into a false security.

We have a Prophet today. What we need is a listening ear. Let us live the gospel in its fullness, and by so doing we will work unceasingly to preserve and strengthen our God-given freedom.

I bear witness that David O. McKay is a Prophet of God—I know it as I know that I live—and that through him the Lord reveals his will for each of us, our families, and the kingdom of God on earth. God grant we may heed his inspired counsel, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We have just listened to Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My beloved brethren and sisters: I concur in what has been said just now by Elder Benson, and I would like to add one other essentiality to which we must adhere and which we must follow in our lives. That is, that Jesus pointed the way through our difficulties.

During the time that Jesus was on earth, many people were curious to know whether or not he was the expected Messiah. These people were of two classes: those who *hoped* he was and those who *feared* he might be.

"If any will do His will"

Those who hoped he was and who sought to know of a certainty received positive answer in testimony through the Spirit and rejoiced because of it. It is possible that those who feared that he might be the Christ made no

serious effort to find out, and because of this lack of effort, they received no spiritual witness. They doubted the many physical evidences before their eyes, even though such evidences fulfilled scriptural declarations to the letter. They seized upon isolated statements lifted out of context in an attempt to justify their doubtings.

And it is the same today. There are those who have complete assurance of his divinity, and there are those who fear that he is divine. So, although nearly twenty centuries have rolled by and volumes have been written of him, yet these questions are still asked: "Is Jesus indeed the Redeemer of the world? And if he is, to what degree do his teachings apply to me and my generation?"

If I should ask you what you think of the policies advocated by certain

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immediately have an opinion. At least, you could declare yourself as generally "for" or "against" the philosophy and actions of such men. It is desirable to possess informed opinions of world leaders. But it is necessary—indeed, imperative—that we have not only an opinion but a conviction as to the role and the doctrines of Jesus Christ. This is so because he taught that as the Son of God, he was sent to earth by his Father to perform a mission so vital that world peace and individual salvation can never be achieved except through him.

Since Jesus declared that he is the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind, it would be foolish for anyone to ignore him, his declarations and doctrines. For each of us there is too much at stake to reject him and his gospel. But, unfortunately, many have rejected him without making an adequate test of his claims. Such a test is available; it can be made by any earnest, truth-seeking person.

The key is given in the Gospel of John:

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine. . . ." (John 7:17.)

Test easily understood

This flawless test is easily understood. But all too many people with a carpe diem philosophy, living only for today, are unwilling to make the test by doing his will. Thus, according to the Book of Mormon, the "devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them carefully down to hell." (2 Ne. 28:21.)

It was the same at the time of Christ. To lift the religious thinking of the people from their ritualistic practices of worship of that day, from the letter of the law to the spiritual concepts of worship that call for "a broken heart and a contrite spirit," was (to say the least) difficult.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., once said:

"If you want to know how far he [Jesus] had to go [to lift them] from the laws which had been given to ancient Israel, read the Sermon on the Mount, read the sermon on the Plain, read the sermon at the second Passover, and see how he had to drive, and

drive, and drive for the new law." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Behold the Lamb of God*, p. 23.)

On adultery

But to all people, Jesus has pointed the way. As an example, he said to them of old (and it applies equally today):

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27-28.)

That was the new law—a drastic step forward toward the Christ-like life. To the people it seemed revolutionary.

Jesus forgave sinners

Another notable incident is applicable to us: Before the time of Christ, it was almost inconceivable to think that God had any compassion for a sinner. The Pharisees criticized Jesus, saying: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." (Luke 15:2.)

Obviously, they failed to distinguish between *sin* and *sinner*. They hated the sinner as much as they hated the sin! Jesus taught that the sinner was greater than all his sins. While he condemned sin, he had compassion for the sinner.

They who brought to him the woman in adultery would have stoned her to death, but Jesus said to them:

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7.)

Revenge and retribution

In the day when the law demanded an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, Jesus taught the doctrine that hate, retribution, and vengeance should be supplanted by goodwill and tolerance and love. Said he:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your

enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:43-44.)

Of the countless thousands who since his time have heard his message and have accepted him, how many have really learned to love their enemies, or even to love their neighbors as themselves, and "bless them that curse you," and "do good to them which despitefully use you and persecute you"?

President Clark felt it was necessary to remind us of this principle when, during the Second World War, he said,

"This divine command of love gives the one and only remedy that will bring lasting peace out of this bloody tragedy that is now devastating the world. Hate is born of Satan. . . . It strikes the friend of today and makes the enemy of tomorrow. . . ." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Behold the Lamb of God*, p. 303.)

My brothers and sisters, only the weak become hateful and angry and unforgiving. Those who maintain composure when despitefully used and persecuted show evidences of emotional maturity. There is a need for this in each of us.

While many are striving valiantly to do the Lord's will, it is evident that many men and many nations are drifting away from him. In too many cases, leaders of nations have lost their bearings. Because of vain ambitions, pride, and self-sufficiency, their vision is blurred, and their wisdom is blunted. As a result, vague and untested theories are offered as cures for our social and economic ills.

Christ's remedy for such social evils as violence, class strife, and contention is to banish iniquity, revenge, selfishness, lawlessness, and corruption—in short, to do his will.

" . . . for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

And "saved" in this statement may be applied to social and national problems as well as to our individual salvation.

President David O. McKay, as the Prophet of God, has given warning by declaring:

"If men ever reject the fact that Christ is our Lord and Savior; . . . if the majority of nations fail to recognize him as the only 'name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12); if doubting men reject the possibility of obtaining that spiritual assurance of Christ's divinity; . . . if the acts of men generally be in accordance with such rejection rather than in accordance with their acceptance of him as the Divine One, then this world will continue to be torn by contention, made miserable by hideous warfare, and ignominiously wrecked on the shoals of materialism, selfish indulgence, and disbelief and hatred.

"Without Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified Christ, the Risen Lord, the traits of the jungle will hold the human family in bondage." (President David O. McKay, October 1965 general conference address, *The Improvement Era*, Dec. 1965, p. 1099.)

My brothers and sisters, Jesus has shown us the way. His gospel is timeless. And through one of his prophets, he has made this promise to you and me:

" . . . I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord hath spoken it." (Mosiah 2:41.)

In his gospel revealed anew, Jesus has shown us the way! May we find the way and keep it I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

The congregation and choir will now sing "How Firm a Foundation" con-