

sible in life here upon the earth, greater rewards and blessings have been promised and will come following the time of the resurrection, after we have left this frail existence. At that time those who have been faithful will not only be reunited with their families and loved ones of mortality, but they will also be privileged to dwell in the glorious celestial world where God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son, dwell.

Surely, this will be joy supreme. And

it is possible to every one of us if we keep the faith and endure in righteousness to the end.

For this I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve, and president of the New England Mission.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I feel subdued in spirit this afternoon, my brethren and sisters, in coming from the mission field again to general conference, to hear the testimonies of our beloved Prophet and of the brethren. Particularly was my heart touched by the message of Elder Gordon B. Hinckley as he spoke to our servicemen, for in my life that silver thread of testimony, drawn from the dark tapestry of armed conflict, has been a guiding beacon.

Call to military service

Many young men listening to the conference are serving in the armed forces, or they face a call to military service. To answer the call, one must suspend many things dear and sacred. Military service requires a severance—hopefully a temporary one—from intimate and sacred ties that bind a young man to his family and from those relationships to which young manhood is so very responsive. Interruption comes likewise to schooling, and life's work is delayed. And, as always, it carries with it the threat of jeopardy to life and limb.

It is to you, our brethren in the armed forces, that I speak. Nor is the man who serves the only one concerned. There are wives and there are parents who never, never cease to love their children or fear for them.

Repudiation of responsibilities

A man answering the call now is

not left in total comfort that all will sustain him. There have emerged in our society groups composed mostly of restless, unchallenged young people. In the name of peace and love and brotherhood, they criticize those who, obedient to the laws of the land, have answered the call to military duty. It is puzzling to see them renouncing their obligation, repudiating their citizenship responsibilities. They declare on moral grounds, as an act of virtue, that they will not serve. One can be sensitive, even sympathetic, to their feelings, for war is an ugly thing—a heinous, hideous, ugly thing! Strangely, it is a pursuit to which mankind has turned again and again and again. The wicked have generated it, and the innocent have ultimately been provoked by it.

The Lord said: "Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace. . . ." (D&C 98:16.) I would that all men would remain at peace.

"We love peace," said President David O. McKay, "but not peace at any price. There is a peace more destructive of the manhood of living man than war is destructive of the body. 'Chains are worse than bayonets.'" (*The Improvement Era*, June 1955, p. 395.)

Recently a college student about to graduate, and under notice from the selective service, came to my office. Confused and worried, he told me of the pressure from fellow students and

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from faculty members to refuse induction, to leave the country, if necessary. When the issues are so confusing—and they are confusing—what can a man do? How can he know which way to turn?

Nephites taught defense

First, the scriptures are not silent on the subject. These are not new issues; 75 years B.C., the Nephites faced such a challenge. There encircled them an ominous threat to liberty, the home, the family, and their rights of worship. While our present dilemma is not quite like theirs, all too soon the very circumstances they faced could come upon us. We would do well at least to ponder the words of their prophets: "Behold," said Moroni, "could ye suppose that ye could sit upon your thrones, and because of the exceeding goodness of God ye could do nothing and he would deliver you? Behold, if ye have supposed this ye have supposed in vain." (Al. 60:11.)

The Book of Mormon records that "the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary; yea, and they were also taught never to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives.

"And this was their faith . . . if they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger;

"And also, that God would make it known unto them whither they should go to defend themselves against their enemies and by so doing, the Lord would deliver them. . . ." (Al. 48:14-16.)

These Nephites faced not only the hostility of invading enemies, but also indifference, dissension, and corruption in their own land. But the record confirms that "they were doing that which they felt was the duty which they owed to their God; for the Lord had said unto them and also unto their fathers, that: Inasmuch as ye are not

guilty of the first offense, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hand of your enemies.

"And again, the Lord had said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion." (Al. 43:46-47.)

Message of First Presidency

More was said anciently, but we turn to modern prophets, for they have spoken and touched on the deeper issues involved. A message of the First Presidency dated April 6, 1942, states: ". . . the Church is and must be against war. . . . It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiations and adjustments.

"But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control. The Lord himself has told us to 'befriend that law which is the constitutional law of the land': . . .

". . . When, therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call. If, harkening to that call and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill. . . ."

Surely no individual will be excused for any wanton act of brutality, wickedness, or destruction. Nevertheless, this statement confirms: ". . . He will not hold the innocent instrumentalities of the war, our brethren in arms, responsible for the conflict. This is a major crisis in the world-life of man. God is at the helm."

A man does not necessarily have to volunteer. In fact, it would be hoped that young members of the Church

would have the strengthening, stabilizing development of missionary service, and perhaps some schooling, before they enter the service, if indeed they are required to do so at all. And sometimes they are required to serve. If so, the brethren have said: ". . . the members of the Church have always felt under obligation to come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made. . . ." (*The Improvement Era*, May 1942, pp. 346, 348-49.)

Citizenship responsibility

Though all the issues of the conflict are anything but clear, the matter of citizenship responsibility is perfectly clear. Our brethren, we know something of what you face and sense, something of what you feel.

I have worn the uniform of my native land in the time of total conflict. I have smelled the stench of human dead and wept tears for slaughtered comrades. I have climbed amid the rubble of ravaged cities and contemplated in horror the ashes of a civilization sacrificed to Moloch; yet knowing this, with the issues as they are, were I called again to military service, I could not conscientiously object!

To you who have answered that call, we say: Serve honorably and well. Keep your faith, your character, your virtue.

Exemplars of righteousness

While war permits stomping out of a man's heart the reverent and tender virtues that exemplify true manhood, military services does not require it. You can serve and yet be exemplars of righteousness.

"It is a disgraceful thought," said President Joseph F. Smith, "that a man to become a soldier should become a rake and abandon himself to crime and wickedness. Let the soldiers that go out . . . be and remain men of honor. And when they are called, obey the call, and manfully meet the duty, the dangers, or the labor, that may be required of them, or that they may be set to do; but do it with an eye single to the accomplishment of the good that is aimed to be accom-

plished, and not with the blood-thirsty desire to kill and to destroy." (*Conference Report*, April 1917, p. 4.)

Righteous not lost

In armed conflicts there are casualties. Sometimes clean, worthy men, innocent of any desire to kill, devoid of any aggressive will to own that which belongs to someone else, fall victims of the confused, wicked ugliness of war.

"For," the prophet Moroni said, "the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore, ye need not suppose that the righteous will be lost because they are slain; but behold they do enter into the rest of their God." (Al. 60:13.) There are homes among us now where this heartbreak is known.

I read somewhere some simple lines of verse about a mother—and a telegram. Deep within lies a seed of strength and consolation—understood, perhaps, only by those who have faith. I can read but a few lines.

"Killed in action . . . in the line of duty."

Blind went her eyes with pain. . . .
A moan of mortal agony,
Then all became still again.

"Oh God! . . . my God! . . . where were you

When my son was being slain?
And the scalding tears of bitterness
Drenched her cheeks like the summer rain.

"But a soft voice seemed to whisper
In the twilight's afterglow,
'I had a son . . . at Calvary . . .
Two thousand years ago.'"

Stay close to Church

God bless you, our brethren. We love you. We sustain you. There is no dishonor in your service.

Stay close to the Church, to the branches and wards near your post, to our chaplains and servicemen's groups. Carry your servicemen's kit; read from it. Live worthily.

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We pray God that he will protect you—that you will not fall a mortal nor a moral casualty of war. I testify to you that “this is a major crisis in the world-life of man. God is at the helm.” (*The Improvement Era*, May 1942, p. 349.)

I bear witness that he lives and that he guides the destiny of man and of this Church, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve.

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing: “O Say, What Is Truth?”, after which Elder James A. Cullimore, Assistant to the Twelve, will speak to us.

The congregation and the Combined Chorus joined in singing the hymn, “O Say, What Is Truth?”.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder James A. Cullimore, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder James A. Cullimore

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Since next Sunday is Easter Sunday, I want to direct my remarks to this important day and the circumstances surrounding it.

There are two great festal days in the Christian year: one is Christmas and the other is Easter. The first is in honor of the Lord's coming into the world. It is a glorious occasion. Wherever there are a home and children, in every quarter of the world, there is joy on this great occasion. Old grudges disappear, feuds are forgotten, and love flows from heart to heart at Christmastime.

The Lord is risen

Yet Christmas is less a day of victory than Easter, for the story that begins then is incomplete until it is crowned by the announcement, “The Lord is risen.” Someone has so beautifully said: “If the Savior, having breathed his last on the cross, had never come back to the world in life as he promised, then the Star of Bethlehem might as well never have flamed, the angels as well never have sung ‘Glory to God in the Highest’ in the midnight sky, and the wise men from the east need not have taken their journey to find the babe in the manger. We might have wept over our crucified king if he had never risen from the

dead, but we sound his praises now because he lives and reigns forever and ever.” (Author unknown.)

The story is told of a man walking down a street in Chicago who came to a store window where there was displayed a beautiful picture of the crucifixion. As he stood gazing spell-bound at the vivid picture story, he suddenly became conscious that at his side stood a little boy. The boy too was gazing at the picture, and his tense expression made the man know that the crucifixion had really gripped the eager little soul. Touching the boy on the shoulder, the man said, “Sonny, what does it mean?”

“Don’cha know?” he answered, his face full of the marvel of the man’s ignorance. “That there man is Jesus, and them others is Roman soldiers, and the woman crying is his mother, and,” he added, “they killed him.”

The man was loath to leave the window, but he could not tarry always at the tragic scene, so he turned away and walked down the street. In a few moments he heard pattering footsteps, and there came rushing toward him the little boy.

“Say, mister!” he exclaimed breathlessly. “I forgot to tell you, but he rose again!”