

personal ministry. "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.) In other words, those who are willing to make the search, apply themselves, and do God's will, will have the knowledge come to them of the reality of God.

### A divine plan

When a man has found God and understands his ways, he learns that nothing in the universe came by chance, but all things resulted from a divinely prearranged plan. What a rich meaning comes into his life! Understanding which surpasses worldly learning is his. The beauties of the world become more beautiful, the order of the universe becomes more meaningful, and all of God's creations are more understandable as he witnesses God's days come and go and the seasons follow each in their order. If all men could find God and follow his ways, the hearts of men would be turned in love toward their brothers, and nations would be at peace.

I bear my witness that God lives, that he is our eternal Heavenly Father. I know that Jesus is the Christ, his Son, and Savior of the world. I know too that God reveals his will to his prophets today as he did in the dispensations of the past. May we seek God with a true desire to know him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

## Elder Franklin D. Richards

### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

● My dear brothers and sisters, I appreciate the opportunity of speaking to you and approach the responsibility with a humble heart, praying that the Lord will direct me in the things that I say.

I rejoice with you in the wonderful spirit of this conference and the in-

Following Elder Hunter's address, the Tabernacle Choir in a musical interlude sang the following two numbers: "I Will Give Thanks" and "We'll Sing All Hail to Jesus' Name."

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### President Harold B. Lee

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. He was followed by the singing of the Tabernacle Choir, "I Will Give Thanks," and "We'll Sing All Hail to Jesus' Name."

Following a brief organ interlude the congregation will join with the choir in singing "Come O Thou King of Kings."

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The congregation and the choir sang the hymn, "Come O Thou King of Kings."

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### President Lee:

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we again announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the first session of the 140th Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

spirational music and messages to which we have been listening.

### A remarkable age

We are living in a remarkable age—the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fullness.

We are living in a new era of growth and development—an era when the Spirit of the Lord is working in the minds and hearts of men.

We are living in an age when prophecy is being fulfilled.

Despite the fact that we are living in a marvelous age, we are living in a troubled world. The powers of evil are visible in false doctrines, corrupt morals, strife, contention, and persecution. Fear abounds in the hearts of many.

### Overcoming obstacles

However, one of the great purposes of life is to overcome fear and learn to successfully meet challenges and obstacles of every kind. Meeting obstacles and overcoming them give us experience, and each experience should build our faith and confidence and be for our good.

As we study history, we find peculiar situations, obstacles, and problems in each era.

I am certain that those who lived in these various periods felt that the problems of their time were most difficult, and I have no doubt that they were.

Each period had its own tests, and as they were successfully met, a broad and solid foundation was laid for us to build upon.

### A plan to bring peace

We are living in a period of social adjustments and constant changes and a time of unprecedented growth and development: the age of the jet airplane, the computer, and the communications satellite.

As we look at the world situation today, I feel that a large percentage of the people are seeking a plan of life that will bring them peace, relief from inner tensions, happiness, and growth and development.

Our message is that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fullness, that the principles of the gospel are eternal, and that as we apply them in our lives, they bring us peace, happiness, and eternal life.

I would like to refer to three of these

gospel principles that I feel are particularly applicable today: justice, mercy, and humility.

### Principle of mercy

In the beautiful Sermon on the Mount, the Savior referred to the principle of mercy when he said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7.)

And, a great Nephite prophet asked: ". . . do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so God would cease to be God." (Al. 42:25.)

In the scriptures justice and mercy are frequently mentioned together and the thought arises: Can one be just and merciful at the same time, and can justice and mercy be merged? If so, how can we incorporate these principles in our lives to enrich them and qualify ourselves to better meet today's challenges?

The prophet Micah wisely asked: ". . . what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8.)

### Justice and mercy

Let us examine the prophet Micah's words regarding justice, mercy, and walking humbly before God, as it should make it easier for us to determine if the principles of justice and mercy can be merged and used effectively in our lives.

In order to do justly, honesty, fairness, and patience must characterize one's dealings with others. Jesus expressed it this way:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12.)

The Golden Rule is in reality the basic principle of dealing justly with your fellowmen.

To do justly becomes a matter of attitude, a desire to go beyond tolerating others and making an effort to love and appreciate people by serving them. Justice is deeply affected by the principle of love.

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**Judge not**

Jesus also taught:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. 7:1-3, 5.)

In being just, one will not condemn, find fault, or gossip, as there is no salvation in being critical of another.

We should recognize that generally we cannot judge the motives that prompt others' actions, and usually the more we understand their motives, the less we are prone to condemn.

The Savior has urged us to desist from evil; he has also told us to aggressively go forward and do good.

**Overcoming fear**

Today there are many frustrated, confused, and discouraged people in the world. To do justly, we are challenged to give them courage, hope, and strength; praise them and help them to understand that God loves them and has provided a way for them to be happy and successful; share with them the things we are blessed with in order to make their loads lighter.

Too often fear rules over the lives of many people, depriving them of blessings. Fear must be overcome, for the Lord has said: ". . . if ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C 38:30.)

I bear you my witness that as we live the gospel principles, we will build faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, confidence in ourselves, and overcome fear.

Now, let us consider the second thing the Lord requires of us, according to the prophet Micah—namely, that we have mercy.

Again recalling the words of the Savior: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7.)

We should also be aware that the

reverse is true—that if we are not merciful, we shall not obtain mercy.

**Mercy and forgiveness**

Here we should recognize another great eternal principle, that of forgiveness. Many times true mercy incorporates forgiveness. Mercy and forgiveness, to be effective, require great patience and understanding on the part of the one forgiving.

The apostle Peter asked Jesus how many times should he forgive one who would sin against him. The Savior's reply was to forgive an indefinite number of times. Then Jesus clarified the matter by giving the parable of the unmerciful servant, in which a certain king forgave a debt one of his servants owed him, amounting to 10,000 talents, because the servant asked for patience in the payment of the debt.

Then the same servant found one who owed him a hundred pence, and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest." (Matt. 18:28.)

Although the servant's debtor asked for leniency, the servant cast him into prison.

When the king heard of this, he recalled the unmerciful servant and said to him:

"O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

"Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. 18:32-35.)

**Obligation to extend mercy**

Thus, the great truth is taught that anyone receiving mercy is under obligation to the one extending it, whether it be man or God—the obligation of living the Golden Rule.

And we cannot reserve our mercy only for those who we think are

worthy of it. Remember: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7:1.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith, in discussing this matter on one occasion, stated:

"God does not look on sin with allowance, but when men have sinned, there must be allowance made for them. . . .

"The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls. . . . if you would have God have mercy on you, have mercy on one another." (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 24.)

### An increase of love

There can be no license for sin, but we are told that mercy, justice, and love should go hand in hand with reproof. The Lord's words are these:

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death." (D&C 121:43-44.)

This is especially important for us to remember as we reprove our children when the necessity arises.

### Walk humbly with God

The third requirement of the Lord, as explained by the prophet Micah, is to "walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. 6:8.) This requires a strong faith that God is a just and merciful God.

The prophet Alma, addressing himself to this subject, said:

". . . the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also." (Al. 42:15.)

To walk humbly with God, one must love God, be humble, meek, and obedient. Another important ingredient is to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

By walking humbly with God, by identifying himself with the building of the kingdom, one obtains inner strength and peace from his Heavenly Father, is happy and successful, and enjoys personal growth and development.

As an example, Peter, James, and John were humble fishermen until they became active in building the kingdom of God; then they became a powerful influence in the lives of men.

Sincere prayer and service in the Church help one to develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and confidence in himself.

### Meeting today's challenges

After considering the prophet Micah's words regarding justice, mercy, and walking humbly before God, is it easier to see how justice can be merged with mercy and how these principles can be beneficially incorporated in our lives to qualify ourselves to better meet today's challenges?

We have seen how justice and mercy were merged in the story of the unmerciful servant, and we have learned that it is God's way to reprove "betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love. . . ." (D&C 121:43.)

### Parable of prodigal son

Probably the greatest example we have is that described in the parable of the prodigal son, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful stories ever written. Here we are told of the return home of a wayward son, of the father's great joy, and of the feast that celebrated his return.

We must never forget, however, that although the wayward son was received back into his family with rejoicing and love, it was to the faithful son that the father said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." (Luke 15:31.)

Here we have an excellent example of how a wise, humble father merged the great principles of mercy and justice to the benefit of his family. Here we see that all persons are precious in

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the sight of God. In merging the eternal principles of justice and mercy, an equitable decision or result occurs, as was evidenced in this beautiful parable.

### God is just and merciful

I bear you my witness that God the Father and the Son live, and that they are just and merciful beings. Their justice and mercy was shown through the atonement of Jesus Christ and in restoring the gospel in its fullness through the Prophet Joseph Smith. And we should be grateful for God's mercy in providing a prophet to lead us today—President Joseph Fielding Smith. May the Lord bless and sustain him.

Those who are seeking a plan of life that will bring them peace, relief from inner tensions, happiness, and growth and development will find it in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We invite your sincere and prayerful consideration.

The strength of the Church lies in the testimony of its members that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, and that God is a just and merciful God.

To acquire eternal life requires devotion to the gospel principles. May we appreciate the blessings of the gos-

pel and dedicate ourselves to the upbuilding of God's kingdom, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

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The Tabernacle Choir then sang two songs as follows: "Redeemed of the Lord," and "All Creatures of Our God and King."

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### President Harold B. Lee

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Redeemed of the Lord," and "All Creatures of Our God and King."

Following a brief organ interlude, Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will then be our concluding speaker.

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Alexander Schreiner played a brief organ interlude.

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### President Lee:

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our concluding speaker.

## Elder Richard L. Evans

### *Of the Council of the Twelve*

● May I make two citations from the words of a discerning editorial writer, not one of my faith, but one of much faith: "If we neglect the divine . . . and give ourselves over wholly to the human," he said, "we may certainly count upon nothing but the triumph of pessimism. . . . True optimism must rest upon a calm, unshakable faith in eternal life and in the unlimited goodness of him who gives it."<sup>1</sup>

"We rest on no new reason for believing in the immortality of the soul," he continued. "The old reasons . . . are

quite sufficient . . . all religious faith and all hope of immortality begins with God, and rests on him. We came from him; we go to him. He lives, we live. . . . [And] why should not a Father reveal himself to his children? Why should he not send prophets and teachers, and why not a supreme Teacher, a Son of God and a Son of Man? . . . We rest on the fact of One who died and rose from the dead, whose name we give to our faith, and whose triumph over death is our triumph also."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editorial, *The Independent*, 1898, p. 1596.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1900.