

and earth would establish his work to redeem humanity. That work is moving forward, brethren and sisters, and will continue its onward march until it has filled the earth, and nothing can stay its progress.

I so testify in great humility, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen. ○

Elder James A. Cullimore

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● My beloved brethren and sisters: How wonderful it is to be assembled here with you in this great worldwide general conference of the Church. As I note the various representatives of stakes from all over the world, I sense more than ever how completely this is a worldwide church. I am grateful to be here and to represent you in whatever way I might, and to be of service in this great church.

The covenants we make

Some of the facts that come to our attention in the line of our duty make me wonder if we take as seriously as we should the covenants we have made as members of the Church:

—The covenants made in baptism—wherein we “witness before the church that [we] have truly repented of all . . . sins, and are willing to take upon [us] the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by [our] works that [we] have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of . . . sins.” (D&C 20:37.)

—Promises made to our spouse and unto the Lord as we enter into the marriage covenant.

—All covenants made in the temple.

—Promises made to our bishop and stake president, branch president or mission president as we accept assignments to offices in the Church.

—The oath and covenant of the priesthood. The obligations we accept as we are ordained to the priesthood and act in its offices.

The Lord expects us to be obedient

President Joseph Fielding Smith

We have just listened to Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder James A. Cullimore, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve, who will be our concluding speaker.

to our covenants. Great blessings are promised us as we are obedient, both temporal and spiritual, the greatest of which is eternal life. (D&C 59:23.) Likewise, condemnation follows disobedience. The Lord expects us to be strong and conquering as we exercise our agency.

Responsibility of Church members

President McKay said, in reference to our responsibilities as members of the Church: “Membership in the Church carries with it the responsibility to overcome temptation, to battle error, to improve the mind, and to develop one’s spirit until it comes to the ‘measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.’ Habits of intemperance and sensual pleasures should have been buried in the waters of baptism. What folly to permit them to return when one realizes that not happiness but misery is allied with indulgence in sin!” (*Man May Know for Himself* [Deseret Book Co., 1967], p. 462.)

As we entered the waters of baptism, we covenanted with the Lord to be obedient and keep his commandments. The Savior set the pattern in this; Nephi told his people the following: “. . . he [the Savior] showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments.

“Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove.

“And again, it showeth unto the

children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.

"And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?" (2 Ne. 31:7-10. Italics added.)

It is the plan of the Lord that men will have their agency and are free to do as they so desire. President McKay said on another occasion: "The mission of the Church is to assist mankind to overcome evil and to cherish the good. It teaches that repentance is an eternal principle of salvation." (*Paths to Happiness* [Bookcraft, 1957], p. 190.)

Stimulate others to serve God

One of our great responsibilities is not only to live the gospel ourselves but also to stimulate in the lives of every other member of the Church a great desire to serve the Lord. Alma was most fervent in his approach to this great responsibility when he said: "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

"Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with a voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth."

And then, as if he realized it would not be the will of the Lord to be too forceful, as all must have their agency, he said: "But behold, I am a man and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me.

"I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction." (Al. 29:1-4.)

Righteous, active desires

It is of utmost importance that we stimulate proper desires in our lives, by study, by teaching, by constant activity. John A. Widtsoe wisely said: "Righteous desire, backed by a ready will and honest prayer, works wonders in human lives. It reveals truth. It trains the will for righteousness. It leads to increasing accomplishment. It is protection amidst the temptations and storms of life. . . .

"When such desire is coupled with obedience to law, the gates of heaven are thrown open to our high eternal destiny. As our desires are, so are we. . . .

"A man's desire should be his first concern, for no person can rise above his real desires. Neither can a nation rise above the assembled desires of the people. . . .

"Of course, desires are of value only when they drive us to action. Will must accompany desire. Then high resolve is born. Desire is the design; will the execution of the design. . . . When desire and will move together, in the right direction, we become strong and conquering."

He said further: "Too many of us spend our hours wishing for heaven, when an active desire for simple earthly blessings might form rounds in the ladder to celestial glory." (*An Understandable Religion* [Deseret Book Co., 1944], pp. 70, 64-66.)

In the selection of the first Quorum of Twelve Apostles in this dispensation the Lord said: ". . . by their desires and their works you shall know them." (D&C 18:38.)

Some good counsel was given to Hyrum Smith through revelation that could well be applied in our own lives as we build faith.

"According to your desires, yea, even according to your faith shall it be done unto you.

"Keep my commandments; hold your peace; appeal unto my Spirit;

"Yea, cleave unto me with all your heart." (D&C 11:17-19.)

Means to receive strength

As we strive to keep the commandments, it is wonderful to know that the Lord has provided means whereby we might receive strength. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of the Father is conveyed to every creature. It is the means of man's constant access to the Father. Modern revelation states: ". . . the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit." (D&C 84:46.)

The Lord has said plainly: "I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

"And to them will I reveal all mysteries . . . of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasures of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

"Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

"And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

"For . . . by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will." (D&C 76:5-10.)

The degree to which we receive help from the Lord for the guidance of our lives depends upon ourselves. We must be in tune with the Spirit to receive and understand its message. We must be worthy.

The guidance that we seek from our Heavenly Father greatly depends upon our obedience to every truth known to us. By our good works we demonstrate to the Lord our obedience.

Assurance from doing God's will

The greatest assurance we may receive as to eternal life, and following President McKay's direction, comes in "doing the will of the Father." The Savior said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.)

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John 2:3-5.)

Yes, membership in the Church carries with it the responsibility to live the gospel and overcome temptations. May we always have a strong desire to serve the Lord, remembering that the surest way to keep the faith is by being actively engaged in the work of the gospel.

I leave you my witness that this is his work in which we are engaged, and that he will bless us as we keep faithful and live the gospel, in the name of Jesus. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.