

Most urgent needs

Our present most urgent needs are that we should read more and understand more and think more and do more and be more and live more. Jesus emphasized his own mission by saying, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10.) We must not allow the holy scriptures to sit on our shelves unopened while we continue to starve to death spiritually because we fail to practice those great success laws on which the eternal exaltation of our souls depends.

May God help us to be more grateful

for those thrilling, lifesaving truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and may he help us to wholeheartedly eat the bread and more freely drink the waters of life that in his abundance our souls might live.

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

President Harold B. Lee

We have just listened to Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve.

We will now hear from Elder John H. Vandenberg, newly sustained as Assistant to the Twelve Apostles.

Elder John H. Vandenberg

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

This morning as I walked into the Tabernacle, one of the attendant brethren said to me, "Bishop, I am looking forward to hearing your speech this afternoon." And then he added, "You are the last one."

I suppose he had in mind that this great conference has brought so many things, so many good things—the testimonies of the prophets, seers, and revelators, exciting changes, and testimonies of the brethren that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ—to the extent that our cups truly run over.

Experience in Bishopric

What a blessing it is to set a course and work diligently at it. This past decade I have had the privilege of working with two wonderful men. You have seen the good works and heard the good words of Elder Robert L. Simpson and Bishop Victor L. Brown. This isn't a parting or a farewell, but I will always cherish the experience I have had in working with these two wonderful men of God. God bless them, and God bless the Church for their service.

I know that we are led by revelation.

It comes to us through the prophet of God, Joseph Fielding Smith. I have thought a good deal about this, because I know that he is a prophet and that his counselors serve God as they serve with President Smith.

Interest in peace

In thinking what I might say at this conference, I wasn't aware that this change in my assignment was coming. I was down in Hawaii recently, and a young Hawaiian girl approached us and greeted us with both arms uplifted, holding up two fingers of each hand. I asked her what the sign meant, and with a broad smile she immediately replied, "Peace."

In traveling the highways, we often observe passing automobiles in which young occupants display the same sign at windows. We see the word *peace* painted on walls, fences, sidewalks, and, at times, in psychedelic colors on vehicles.

We wonder at the apparent interest in peace by the current generation. Is it any different from that of generations past? What do we mean by this expres-

Sunday, April 9

sion of peace? Is it a passing fad, or is there deep determination for its accomplishment?

Peace of Master

Peace was placed in two categories by the Master. You will recall his words to his disciples during the days before his crucifixion. He had admonished them to keep his commandments and had promised to send them another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, which is the Holy Ghost, who would teach them all things and bring all things to their remembrance that he had said unto them. Then he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (See John 14:15-27.)

What did the Savior mean when he said "not as the world giveth"? What kind of peace has the world to give?

Enemy of peace

Certainly it is true that many are searching for peace in the world, and yet some follow paths in their search that could only lead in the opposite direction—paths of avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. Surely the greatest enemy of peace is selfishness and with it the desire to pile up treasures on earth. This brings to mind the parable by the Good Teacher as found in the Gospel of Luke:

"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

"And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:13-21.)

Rich toward God

How can we be rich toward God? Does this refer to the laying up of treasures in heaven by living his commandments—love of God and of our fellowmen? Wouldn't living each day with these objectives in mind bring into our lives that peace spoken of by the Savior? Aren't we all too much inclined to be encumbered about by many things and forget those things that are most needful?

Henry David Thoreau thought so, for we read in his book *Walden*: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. . . . Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of manhood."

And Joshua Liebman wrote similarly in his little book *Peace of Mind*: "A man may have a home, possessions, a charming family, and yet find all these things ashy to his taste because he has been outstripped in the marathon race by some other runners to the golden tape line. It is not that he does not possess enough for his wants, but that others possess more. It is the more that haunts him, makes him depreciate himself and minimize his real achievements.

"The time has come when a man must say to himself: 'I am no longer going to be interested in how much

power or wealth another man possesses so long as I can attain enough for the dignity and security of my family and myself. I am going to break through this vicious circle which always asks the question of life in a comparative degree: Who is bigger? Who is richer? Who has more? I am going to set my goals for myself rather than borrow them from others. . . ."

Ambitious men

I believe that this is one thing we can learn from our youth today. They have, in many cases, set simpler values and seen through the transitory worth of material things. They recognize that ambition that leads men to seek power and domination over others brings not peace, but frustration. Certainly history is replete with examples of the rise and fall of ambitious men, and during temporary relief from hostilities between nations the cry always rises, "Now we will have peace." How many wars have been termed "a war to end all wars"?

Yet an encyclopedia shows that during the period from 1496 B.C. to A.D. 1861 there were 227 years of peace compared with 3,130 years of war. Ambition, either privately or collectively, gives little hope for the achievement of peace.

Universal search

Today we have a universal search for peace—a generation of peace; yet most of those who discard the grasping, selfish race for power know not where to turn to find a way of life to take its place.

But peace cannot be achieved by making a sign or by writing words on fences. It must come first and most completely to the individual through his own efforts in keeping the commandments of our Lord and Savior, for God made all men to enjoy such peace.

Just as running madly after worldly things does not bring peace, neither does sitting idly. Because our modern

conveniences often leave us much time beyond that which is necessary to sustain ourselves and our families, it becomes important not to spend this time idly, for there is much to be done if we are to partake of the Lord's peace.

Period of peace

Probably there is no quicker way to enjoy inner peace than by serving one another. There is recorded in history a marvelous period of time when this peace did indeed banish avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride from men's hearts. It was shortly after the Savior's visit to the American continent after his death and resurrection. We read:

"... the people were all converted unto the Lord . . . and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

"And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear. . . .

"And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land. . . .

"And now, behold, it came to pass that the people of Nephi did wax strong, and did multiply exceedingly fast, and became an exceedingly fair and delightful people.

"And they were married, and given in marriage, and were blessed according to the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them.

"And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses; but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

"And it came to pass that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land; but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus.

"And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

"And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

"There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.

"And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land.

"... Nephi, he that kept this last record, . . . kept it eighty and four years, and there was still peace in the land, save it were a small part of the people. . . .

"And it came to pass that two hundred years had passed away. . . ." (4 Ne. 2-3, 5, 7, 10-11, 12-13, 15-20, 22.)

This was indeed a fortunate people whose history is contained in the Book of Mormon, a book which covers nearly three thousand years and which reveals that only during those periods of time when the people were keeping God's commandments did they enjoy peace, love, happiness, and prosperity.

Peace through the gospel

Today man's greatest desire and hope is to find a life of peace and joy, progress, and freedom, which can only be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, paradoxically, we live in a world

where war, destruction, contention, law-breaking, and immorality surround us, and many become lost. One of these, a young woman, tells her story in the current issue of the *NEW ERA* magazine for youth. How fortunate she was in finding the true gospel of Christ to show her the way out of the confusion in which she had wandered; and what gratitude she expresses to those caring young people who showed her the way!

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we accept as positive knowledge from God the fact that each human being lived in a preexistent spiritual world as a child of God and came to this mortal life for a great and necessary part of eternal life. This mortality provides the opportunity to choose the right and to obtain knowledge by faith in the revealed plan of God, which will bring peace and freedom for mortal as well as eternal life.

We accept as a fact that God has revealed through his chosen prophets the way of life which leads to peace, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Human passions for mortal gratification, including selfishness, envy, anger, and pride, must be replaced by spiritual ideals, and sin must become abhorrent to us, for we know that all we do here will affect our lives in eternity.

We believe that only through this knowledge and way of life can an individual or a nation achieve that peace which is so desired and sought after.

Peace in our hands

And so we say to this generation, which is so verbally calling for peace, that this thought toward peace today is indeed significant, for it is true that peace is in our hands—our own personal peace as well as in great measure the peace of our world. Believe in it, work for it, live for it; for in it, as you follow through and work for the establishment of peace first in your own souls, you will then have true peace.

Now as we go from this great con-

ference, brothers and sisters, let us go recognizing that our cup is filled to overflowing. We have been charged with the great messages of God's prophet. We have been charged with the testimonies of the brethren. We have been charged with the Spirit of God, which has been in our presence and is now in our presence.

Let us go forth with our personal testimonies, to which I wish to add mine, that I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that we live and serve, if we but will, under the direction of God's prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith, supported by two other prophets, Harold B. Lee and Nathan Eldon

Tanner, and supported by thirteen other prophets, the Quorum of the Twelve and the patriarch.

God be with you and bless you as we go forth to carry out our assignments, whatever they are, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

President Harold B. Lee

He to whom you have just listened is Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Twelve.

We will now be privileged to hear from President Joseph Fielding Smith, who will give the concluding address of the conference, and leave us his blessing.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

My dear brethren and sisters: I feel that the Lord has been with us in all the sessions of this conference; that we have been fed the bread of life; and that we are better prepared now to be the kind of people the Lord would have us be.

I am grateful to all of the Brethren for their wise counsel and for the messages they delivered as they were guided by the power of the Spirit.

I think we should conclude on a tone of thanksgiving, of blessing, and of testimony.

Thankfulness for blessings

I have no language to convey the feelings of thanksgiving which are in my heart for the infinite and eternal blessings the Lord has given to me, to my family, to the Church, and, in fact, to the whole world.

I am grateful for the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God—that because of his suffering and death all men shall be raised in immortality, while those who believe and obey his laws shall have eternal life in his kingdom.

I am thankful for the restoration of eternal truth in this final gospel dispensation; for the mission and ministry

of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and my grandfather, Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch; and for the fact that the keys of the kingdom of God have been committed again to man on the earth.

I am pleased with the growth and development of the Church, with the increased missionary work, with the many temples we now have, and with the lives of all those who are seeking to serve the Lord.

Prayer for saints

I pray that the Lord will bless all the members of the Church; and by virtue of the keys and power which I hold, I bless the Saints—those who dwell in the household of faith, those who love and seek the Lord.

What a glorious thing it is to have the saving truths of the everlasting gospel, to be members of "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30), to be on the path leading to eternal life in our Father's kingdom!

O God our Heavenly and Eternal Father, look down in love and in mercy upon this thy church and upon the members of the church who keep thy