

President Harold B. Lee

No one can listen to that testimony without knowing that the Lord has called the right man to be his new witness in this high place.

The congregation and Men's Chorus will now join in singing "God Moves in a Mysterious Way His Wonders to Perform."

After the singing, Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will speak to us, and

then President Spencer W. Kimball will be our concluding speaker.

The Men's Chorus of the Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang "God Moves in A Mysterious Way His Wonders to Perform."

President Lee

Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.

Elder John H. Vandenberg

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

The dignity of the proceedings of this solemn assembly causes me to have the comforting assurance that the Lord, in his goodness, continues to provide inspired leadership and divine guidance to his church, the purpose of which is to build his kingdom upon the earth and serve his children. His church extends the invitation to all who so desire to partake of the power of the gospel, which will lift an individual out of oblivion and, in so doing, will give a feeling of satisfaction and happiness not to be found elsewhere. It provides the sources of control for self-improvement, a stable character, and a truly successful life.

Self-improvement

Who is there who has reached that point in life where he can afford to allow himself to stop growing or to stop improving? Although I never had the privilege of meeting her, I am told that my wife's mother often repeated the adage to her children: "If you consider yourself a nobody and do nothing to improve yourself to become a somebody, you truly will end up being a nobody." She, no doubt, understood the power and

capacity of every soul for self-improvement.

It is highly doubtful that there is even one soul upon the earth, regardless of station or age, who does not have ample room for personal growth and improvement. Quoting the words of one of the Lord's prophets: "If we are no better tomorrow than we are today, we are not very useful." (David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* [Bookcraft, 1957], p. 292.)

Lack of desire

The sad part of humanity seems to be the utter lack of desire, in the lives of many, to really do something about enlarging the vistas of their existence. A distinguished doctor made the observation that "for the great majority of people, the good life is identical with trivial entertainment, cheap music, superficial writing, and an unending stream of visual trash. Their life is divorced from an enthusiastic faith in the future. It is focused on immediate pleasures sustained by a simplification of the grave problems pressing upon them." (Dr. E. A. Gutkind, *Quote—the Weekly Digest*, vol. 51, no. 4, quote 32.)

Rather than accepting the challenge to change and grow, this type of person seemingly refuses to recognize the need to constructively reorganize portions of his life. One wonders, will the time ever come that will cause a reflection back on their lives? If so, their reaction could very well be as is expressed in a newspaper cartoon, under the heading "Ziggy," which said: "It's kind of a disappointment, after reflecting on your life, to finally come face-to-face with yourself in a mud puddle."

Use of leisure time

Listening to a commentator recently, I was impressed by a related idea. His comments included the following:

"Lin Yutang, the famous Chinese philosopher, has written: 'We do not know a nation until we know its pleasures of life, just as we do not know a man until we know how he spends his leisure. It is when a man ceases to do the things he has to do, and does the things he likes to do, that the character is revealed. It is when the repressions of society and business are gone and when the goods of money and fame and ambition are lifted, and a man's spirit wanders where it listeth, that we see the inner man, his real self.'"

Then he continued: "Have you ever thought much about that? Your leisure gives you away. I used to know a man who was head of a very large commercial empire. Beginning with nothing but ambition, he became a multimillionaire and, finally, retired as head of his far-flung company. He bought a large and magnificent yacht with which to cruise the world. And do you know what he did with his free time? He read salacious paperbacks and got falling-down drunk and had to be carried to bed, unconscious, every night. He's dead now. His leisure gave him away. There was nothing there. . . just nothing at all. He was a one idea man. Once he was away

from that idea, he was a lost child in the wilderness. He didn't enjoy his yacht . . . travel meant nothing to him. He was a pitiful, unhappy cypher. Not because he was rich . . . there are thousands, millions just like him in every walk of life. It was just that his millions, which gave him access to the whole world, were worthless to him and accentuated his nothingness."

Then the commentator asked the question: "What do you do with your leisure time? It's a good idea to examine carefully this important segment of your life. It exposes the real person—but not the finished person. We can change. . . ." (Earl Nightingale, "Our Changing World," No. 2459. Used by permission.)

Need for change

Change is what it will take to bring any individual out of the dilemma of living with principles of error. I believe the greatest force in the world to cause such a change is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul experienced one of the greatest such changes that took place in any man, and he concluded: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . ." (Rom. 1:16.)

The fourth Article of Faith reads: "We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." As we briefly consider each of these principles, we will be aware of the power embodied in each of them.

Faith

Faith is a principle of power. It is the cause of action. A prime example was taught by the Savior as we

read in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew:

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

"Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

"And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

"And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (Matt. 17: 14-16, 18-20.)

The evidence of the power of faith is clearly defined by the Savior. Faith in God will cause the miracle of change and set the course of action on the true purpose of life.

Repentance

Repentance follows faith as naturally as the day follows dawn. The poet writes: "The morning breaks, the shadows flee." (*Hymns*, no. 269.) Repentance is the very essence of change; it embodies the powerful principle of obedience to God's law and discipline of self. When applied to our lives, it provides a cleansing joy which surges through us.

It has been said: "Disgrace clings to no man after repenting, any more than feet defiled with mud of the world, come yet soiled and polluted from the cleansing bath." (Spurgeon.) King

Benjamin gives further emphasis to this thought:

"And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.

"And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in knowledge of the glory of him that created you. . . ." (Mosiah 4:10, 12.)

Baptism

Baptism requires obedience to the law of God. The divine fiat has been to call all men to repent and be baptized. Baptism is a companion to repentance. It is a principle and an ordinance of the gospel, and when complied with, it is the power of entering into the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus complied with this ordinance to fulfill all righteousness. The prophet Nephi said:

"And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water!" (2 Ne. 31:5.)

The efficacy of the ordinance of baptism is unquestionable as it cleanses the reborn person.

Gift of the Holy Ghost

Baptism prepares the individual to receive the rebirth of the spirit, the laying on of hands, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Joseph Fielding Smith brings to mind these words from the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto

him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him. . . ." President Smith says further: "It mattereth not whether we live long or short on the earth after we come to a knowledge of these principles and obey them unto the end." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [Deseret Book, 1961], p. 199.)

Unnumbered opportunities

In these principles we find the un-failing power to change. As to the effective use of our leisure time, we have, in the gospel, unnumbered opportunities. As one acquires knowledge of the gospel principles and pursues his course, he can successfully apply those principles to his individual circumstances, whether his position be one of great or meager possessions; whether it be early in life, during his economic production period, or in retirement. The gospel is meant to temper life and to bring it into true balance and fruition.

The Lord has decreed that "the Church hath need of every member." (See D&C 84:110.) This implies development of its members by participation in the programmed activities of children and youth, filling the numerous teaching opportunities, administration assignments, fulfillment of member duties, the fulfillment of priesthood duties, not forgetting to visit the homes of members (which, until this day, has not been attended to as the Lord directed), searching out the records of ancestors, and temple participation, all of which are only

part of the never-ending list of activities with which to fill our leisure hours.

The individual power is attested to in this scripture: "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward." (D&C 58:27-28.)

Success or failure

As we consider the aspects of growth and achievement, the word *success* obviously comes to the fore—success as it applies in terms of the world. Success or failure can carry most of us either to the peaks of happiness or to the depths of despair. People will do almost anything to keep from being branded a failure.

If a man achieves worldly success and does not blend into his life a program of self-improvement to bring about a sensible balance, he no doubt will end up as a failure. He may win the honor of men, but what about his salvation—his eternal future? Think back on the example of the man with the yacht. Was he successful? Worldly-wise, yes! But when it comes to the things that count, wasn't he more like the man who "spent all his life letting down empty buckets into empty wells; and he is frittering away his age in trying to draw them up again"? (Sydney Smith in John Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, p. 523.) Such people seek fulfillment and meaning in their lives but are unable to find it, because they themselves have misplaced their values.

Recently at a stake priesthood meeting I was greeted by two good convert brethren from the Netherlands, one of whom I like to think I had some participation in his conversion. I turned to him and asked: "Have you ever been sorry for having joined the Church?" His eyes brightened, and he

responded with happy enthusiasm, saying, "No, never!"

Here, in my opinion, was a successful man. No doubt he had many vicissitudes in his life. His worldly possessions were probably minimal, but his good works—treasures in heaven—are innumerable. Here is evidence of just one of the thousands—millions—who have had similar experiences of becoming a "somebody."

And I ask you, brethren, sisters, where would we be, where would you be, where would I be, if it were not for

the power of the gospel of Christ? I bear witness to its power and I do so humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We have just listened to Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Twelve.

President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, will now be our concluding speaker.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President of the Council of the Twelve

Beloved brethren and sisters and friends: Long will this solemn assembly remain in our memories. Long will we tingle from the impressive address of President Lee, following the voting. I think almost if one had a heart of stone, it would melt with the demonstration of this morning to see all the various groups raise their hands in unison to support the leaders of the Church, and it touched my heart deeply.

Sustaining of President Lee

Another act in the greatest drama is being played. No theatrical stage has ever produced such acts of such engrossing interest and importance as have been the scenes of the history of the Church in these last days. The stage has changed from New York to Ohio to Missouri to Illinois to Utah. The conditions have altered and the people who have taken the parts are different people. Today another great leader is sustained. What a privilege for us who are here to be a part of such an important event! In this change in leadership of the Church, it is important that the quorums of the priesthood and the assembly of the Saints have an oppor-

tunity to express their gratitude, pledge their support and confidence, and reaffirm their covenants.

The calling of President Harold B. Lee follows the same pattern as that of the other Presidents back for many, many years. He holds all the same keys, has the same authority, represents the same church except that it has grown much larger.

Growth of Church

When the Church was organized in 1830 it was composed of six people. So the Prophet Joseph Smith presided at first over a very small group, but it grew to many thousands by the time of his martyrdom.

When Brigham Young became President, there were approximately 40,000 members. In 1877 the new President, John Taylor, presided over about 145,000. Wilford Woodruff in 1887 had about 192,000 under him. When Lorenzo Snow became President in 1898, there were about 253,000 members, and then Joseph F. Smith had over a quarter of a million. President Heber J. Grant had nearly half a million; George Albert Smith one million, and when