

Then in our own dispensation comes this great reward:

"For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing." (D&C 132:5.)

Blessings of eternity

Then he speaks about the blessings of eternity. He said of those who keep the commandments and live worthily:

". . . and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

"Then shall they be gods, because they have no end . . . then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. . .

". . . if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also." (D&C 132:19, 20, 23.)

To the children of Israel he spoke. He promises this to us today.

"For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

"And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

"And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

"And I will walk among you, and

be your God, and ye shall be my people." (Lev. 26:9-12.)

His peace promised

And as he left them, he promised:

"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." (John 14:27.)

All this—what more could be desired or asked for? All these blessings and numerous others to every one of us who is willing to live the commandments and be truthful and honorable in our dealings.

I bear witness that God has given us conditionally all these and thousands of other good things. He has organized his true church upon the earth. This is his church. He has given us the total program which will carry us forward toward perfection; and he has given us prophets to lead and guide us. And President Harold B. Lee today is the leader of this kingdom and this people, and he is a prophet of God. This I know. To this I bear solemn witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We have just listened to President Spencer W. Kimball, who is, I am sure the Church knows, one of the most beloved of all our leaders today. Brother Kimball's voice, his manner, his spirit have impressed all of us today.

We shall now hear from Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My Church assignments require me to do considerable traveling throughout the world. When I arrive in a city, a stake president or one of his counselors usually meets me at the air-

port. Although seldom if ever have I met him before, I can invariably find him among the crowd of watchers at the gate and can walk up to him and greet him. He can also recognize me among

the crowd of deplaning passengers. A certain amount of publicity is associated with our work as General Authorities. Our pictures appear in various magazines and news articles, so I can explain how he can recognize me from having seen my picture. But how is it that I can so readily recognize him?

Experience in Rio de Janeiro

Just this January, Sister Burton and I were walking along a street in Rio de Janeiro, when I saw a man walk past us who appeared as though he would make a good Mormon. I thought to myself, "If I could only speak Portuguese, there would be a fine missionary contact." He stopped ahead of us to look in a shop window and as he did so, he turned facing us. When he saw us he waited until we came up to him and then spoke to us in English. We returned his greeting and he asked us if we were Americans. We replied in the affirmative and he asked, "Are you perchance Mormons?" I replied, "Yes. What do you know about the Mormons?" He told us he was a Mormon also and we had a lovely visit with him. We learned he was a bishop's counselor in one of the Rio Wards. We met him again in a conference session, along with other wonderful Latter-day Saints who lived in that beautiful city. How was it that we could recognize one another among the teeming thousands of people walking along that busy street?

A question asked by one of the ancient prophets in the Book of Mormon gives an answer. He was talking to church members when he said:

"And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye received this mighty change in your hearts?" (Al. 5:14.)

Change in appearance

What a challenging question

not only to them, but to us also! If we truly accept God in our lives and live in accordance with his commandments, God will work a mighty change in our appearance and we will begin to appear more like our Heavenly Father, in whose image we have been created. Could it be this appearance we recognize when we meet men and women who are trying to live close to the Lord?

The prophet then goes on to say this about the final day of judgment which someday each one of us must face:

"I say unto you, can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances?" (Al. 5:19.)

A true saint

I dare not say that Mormons are perfect, for you know as well as I do that we each have many human faults. We do, however, call ourselves saints as did the members of the Church of Jesus Christ in the days of the original apostles. When those apostles wrote letters to the members of the Church they addressed them as saints. A saint is not necessarily a person who is perfect, but he is a person who strives for perfection—one who tries to overcome those faults and failings which take him away from God. A true saint will seek to change his manner of living to conform more closely to the ways of the Lord.

It is true that we each have imperfections to overcome. Life is a constant series of challenges and trials. Notwithstanding, we should never fail to strive for that perfection of life which can bring us closer into harmony with God. As the apostle Paul said in writing to the Philippians:

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as [would] be [come] perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be other-

wise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phil. 3:14-15.)

Total commitment

Thus we should seek to overcome any discovered fault in our characters which tends to take us away from a total commitment to God.

I would like to speak about that principle of dedication or total commitment. It appears to me that when we join the Church of Jesus Christ and especially when we receive the oath and covenant of the priesthood, we should commit ourselves wholly and completely to the cause of God. By this I do not mean we need give up our daily occupations or our interests in the daily affairs of mankind unless we are called by authority from God to do so. I do mean that a true change must occur in our thinking so complete and so total that our very lives are changed for the better as far as our attitudes and our actions are concerned.

Changed attitude

A person's attitude is perhaps the hardest of all personal attributes to change. If your attitude is right, then your life is made right. If your heart is touched, your mind and way of thinking will change and your life will change for the better accordingly. I believe we must become so immersed in the gospel of Jesus Christ that we become physically as well as mentally more and more like the Lord himself. We must yield our whole hearts to him. What we then do is done not because we are asked to, nor because we are forced to, but because we want to. Neither pressure nor force can be exerted upon us from outside, when what we do is done because it is our own choice and desire. It then makes no difference to us what other men may think, or say, or do. Our hearts being committed wholly to God, what we do is done out of our love for and our trust in him. We then serve God in every way we can because we

have been converted, our attitude has been changed and we now desire to become like him both spiritually and physically.

If we believe in Jesus Christ that completely, then we can say as did the people of King Benjamin that we know of a surety of the truth of the gospel:

"... because of the Spirit of the Lord God Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." (Mosiah 5:2.)

Daily dedication

When I speak then of total commitment, I do not refer to a momentary dedication which comes from being filled with the Spirit of God only on certain occasions such as in this conference. I refer to a daily or continuing spirit of devotion and dedication which comes from keeping all the commandments of God every day. We must not pick and choose which commandment of God we will or will not obey. Every one is important. For example, we cannot postpone genealogical research, temple work, or missionary work until after we retire. When we accept Jesus Christ, we accept his apostles and prophets and his total concept of Christian living. We then gladly accept the admonition of God's servants and willingly have family prayer, hold family home evening, keep a year's supply of food on hand for emergencies, send our sons and daughters on missions, keep the fast, pay an honest tithe, care for the poor and the needy, and are kind and thoughtful and considerate of others. We willingly become saviors for our families and go to the temple regularly to officiate in behalf of our kindred dead who have sacrificed so much for us.

Genealogy and temple work

When we therefore understand this principle of commitment, we will

realize the importance of priesthood genealogy and temple work. The Lord said that unless the hearts of the fathers are turned to their children and unless the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers, this earth life would fail its purpose. Genealogical work is therefore important and we should get on with it. Yet it will succeed no faster than the bishops in the individual wards give leadership to this program. It will succeed no faster than stake presidents in their individual stakes become actively involved in priesthood genealogical work. There are those who say that they are too busy to give leadership to this program, but I believe such persons fail to understand that it is a basic priesthood program given us by God. Will God's work fail in its purpose? Is anything too difficult for God? The answer we all know. God's purposes will be fulfilled by those servants he has chosen to lead out in this work. It is this total commitment, this dedication of purpose, this unflinching faith in God's work that I am referring to, not only in this, but in all priesthood programs.

Whole-hearted service

From the following scripture, it is clear that the admonition to become totally committed to the cause of Jesus Christ is important to all, especially to those who regard themselves as members of the Church of Jesus Christ in good standing:

"And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds and strength.

"But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

"Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation;

"Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also." (D&C 20:31-34.)

As I understand this scripture, it means that Jesus Christ is kind and merciful to us when we serve him with our whole hearts, but not any of us can take refuge in past righteousness or service. It also means that there is a possibility that any one of us can fall out of good standing, even those who have already achieved a certain degree of righteousness. Therefore, we need to be on our constant guard, each of us, that we not allow ourselves to fall into habits of carelessness in our faith, in our prayers, or in our various Church activities or responsibilities. It is for this reason that I am resolving again to live closer to God each day and to follow his chosen prophets and apostles more diligently than I have ever done in the past.

As the coming of the Lord approaches, Satan's pressure on us will increase. We will thus have to live closer to the Lord than we have ever done before. I resolve to do this for I know that God lives. I know that Jesus Christ is his Only Begotten Son, and that these brethren who we sustain as our leaders are true apostles and prophets. They have been called and ordained of God to lead us back into his very presence. I invite all of you who hear my voice or who read this message to take heed as the scriptures have indicated, and that you rededicate yourselves in a total commitment to serve the Lord with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

As one listens to Elder Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, one can readily understand why the students at the USU voted him one year as the most preferred professor, and most loved teacher. We commend him.

Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.