

PRESIDENT MARION G. ROMNEY

MAKING ONE'S CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

answers the question of how to make one's calling and election sure.

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ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Conference Report, April 3-6, 1954, p. 131-135.

To you who are listening in over radio and looking in by television, I extend the hand of fellowship. I sincerely pray that while I speak to you a few moments, I may say something which will be beneficial to you and which, perhaps (and this is my greatest desire), will stimulate you to think of things of eternal value and renew in you a determination to live to obtain them.

To you who are assembled together in this historic Tabernacle I extend the same greeting. I marvel at your faithfulness, your willingness to return to this meetinghouse on this mid-week day and listen to more preaching. I think you are the group who would attend the second session in a stake conference.

Seeing you here, and realizing that many of you attended the Primary conference, so that now you have been in meetings constantly for five days, I am reminded of an experience my wife and I had one time as we rode from St. George to Cedar City. The driver of the automobile in which we rode had with him his little boy, who was just tall enough to stand on his feet and look out through the windshield. He wore cowboy chaps and a cowboy hat. His father told us of two things he liked to do was to put on his cowboy clothes and ride his pony, and the other was to go to picture shows. It was difficult to persuade him to terminate either experience when he got at it. They would try to get him home after he had seen a show through once, but he continued to stay on.

One Sunday morning after Sunday School, he went home. His mother had gone to fast meeting, which followed Sunday School. The boy took off his Sunday clothes and put on his cowboy clothes and then looked for something to eat. Not finding what he wanted, he returned to the meeting-house to find his mother. Spying her as he came down the aisle, he said, in a rather loud voice, "Mother, why don't you come home? Are you going to stay here and see this thing through three times?"

Gathered together here as we are, and remembering the sustaining of a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and an assistant to that Quorum, I cannot help feeling the loss of Brother Cowley. We listened here just six months ago to his golden voice. I want to read to you one paragraph from his final message. I think it is significant for many reasons. One is that in this paragraph he mentioned Brother Morris, who today fills the vacancy left in the Quorum by his passing. We may be able to catch in this excerpt something of his eloquence and of his humility.

We have heard the prayer of the Prophet referred to this morning. Here was a young lad who believed in a promise that if any man lacked wisdom and would ask of God, it would be given to him; and in response to that injunction he took himself out into that grove, away from the superficial structures of men, and he didn't stand looking into heaven; he bowed upon the bended knees of his body, and he offered up his prayer to God his Father to bring clearness of vision to his mind, to divest from his mind the confusion which existed there pertaining to religion. How can people doubt that God heard that prayer? Any-one who would question that God heard the prayer of that boy must believe that the Father in heaven is cruel and shuts himself away from his children when they seek him. But he did hear that prayer, and as Elder Morris has mentioned, the light burst from heaven; down through that channel of light came the Father and the Son. Young people' if you prayed for your father to come in your hour of need, would he hide from you? Of course not. Neither will our Fath& who is in heaven hide from us who seek him out.

God grant that we may always have the spirit of prayer in our hearts. (THE IMPROVEMENT ERA, December 1953, p.962.)

As I sat here in this conference and realized that it was drawing to a close, I thought of what I might say here in these closing moments which would be of worth to the people of the Church, and this statement from the Prophet came to my mind:

It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and 'another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom. (*D.H.C. 5:403.*)

That passage from the Prophet's writings has been on my mind a great deal. He gave it at the end of a long sermon, in which he had been urging the people of his day to make their calling and their election sure. He himself had made his calling and election sure.

The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith on one occasion,

For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. (*D. & C. 132:49.*)

And then the Lord specifies in the next sentence the conditions that brought that great blessing to the Prophet Joseph.

Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. (*Ibid.*, 132:50.)

He gave that same witness to Heber C. Kimball. I suppose that a man who had that witness would be enjoying the more sure word of prophecy, which the Prophet defines as

...a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood. (*Ibid.* 3 131:5.)

In this conference we have been greatly entertained at times with eloquent oratory. We have been taught by great teachers. We have heard enough truth and direction in this conference to bring us into the presence of God if we would follow it. We have been taken on to the spiritual mountain and shown visions of great glory, but how many of us have heard that voice saying we would have a part therein.

I want to read a text by which we may test ourselves today and always as to where we stand with

reference to our faith and belief in God. It is the 25th verse of the 64th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today.

In the two paragraphs which precede it, the Lord makes clear three things: First, the meaning of the word *today* as used in the text; second, certain things which his people should do today; and third, some events which will come to pass tomorrow. Here are his words:

Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of *my* people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.

For after today cometh the burning...for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.

And then follows our text:

Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today. (*Ibid.*, 64:23-25.)

I have in my heart a desire to emphasize the importance of doing the will of God now while today lasts. Perhaps more hangs upon what a man does during the short period of his mortal probation than upon his performance in any other period of equal duration since the spirit hosts took sides in the great war in heaven.

Amulek, Alma's missionary companion, speaks to this subject as follows:

...now is the time and the day of your salvation;...

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold, the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

...therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. (Alma 34:31-33.)

Nephi taught this same doctrine and went one step farther. He declared that we must not only labor in this life, but that we must also continue that labor until the end of life. He pointed out that the gate by which one enters upon the straight and narrow path is repentance and baptism by water and of fire and the Holy Ghost, and then continued:

And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this straight and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay;...

...ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. (2 Nephi 31:19-20.)

And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved. (*Ibid.* 3 31:16.)

Mormon's performance, along with his counsel to his son Moroni, is an heroic example of one's continuing unto the end under the most trying circumstances. You will recall that it was Mormon who led the degenerate Nephites in their final struggle against the Lamanites. And a discouraging and thankless job it was! As he approached the inevitable end, he wrote to his beloved son Moroni, advising that he had just fought an important battle in which he did not conquer, and in which three of his most valiant leaders and a great number of his choice men had been killed. He continued,

And now behold, my son, I fear lest the Lamanites shall destroy this people; for they do not repent, and Satan stirreth them up continually to anger one with another.

Behold, I am laboring with them continually; and when I speak the word of God with sharpness they tremble and anger against me; and when I use no sharp-ness they harden their hearts against it; wherefore, I fear lest the Spirit of the Lord hath ceased striving with them.

For so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth me that they have no fear of death; and they have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually. (Moroni 9:3-5.)

Then, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, he declares his intention to continue to labor and encourages his son Moroni to do likewise. Listen to his plea and take courage therefrom:

And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God. (*Ibid.*, 9:6.)

In the light of these teachings, it would seem to be most unwise to rely upon the doctrine of the so-called second chance and wait until after death to perform our good works. I am acquainted with the doctrine that those who have had no opportunity to hear and receive the gospel in this life will have that opportunity in the world to come, and I rejoice in it. I rejoice in the vision and the revelation received by the Prophet Joseph Smith on the 21st day of January 1836, which teaches this doctrine. The Prophet reported that vision and that revelation in part as follows:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof... I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.

Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying- "All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (*D. H. C.* 2:380.)

All this I accept with joy. However, it does not teach, and I have never found anything in the scriptures nor in the teachings of the prophets which encourages me to believe, that those who have the gospel taught to them here will be able to make up their loss if they choose to wait for the next life to

obey it. I would not advise anyone to take that chance. As I understand the scriptures, taking such a hazard would be fatal.

Amulek, after speaking of the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed," added:

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked. (Alma 34:34-35.)

On this point of deferring obedience to the gospel, we might with profit consider the Savior's parable of the ten virgins. I do not remember any pro-vision being made in that parable for the five foolish virgins to enter into the marriage at a later time. I do remember, however, that after the door was shut they, having in the meantime filled their lamps with oil, came saying, "Lord, Lord, Open to us," and that his answer was, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." (See Matt. 25:1-13.)

In 1831 the Lord continued with the lesson he had in mind to teach with this parable. Speaking to the Prophet Joseph, he specified some of the blessings to be received by the five wise virgins. Said he:

And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins. For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, *and have not been deceived* -- verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver. (D. & C. 45:56-59.)

No mention is made in this revelation of the whereabouts of the foolish virgins. Said the Prophet Joseph,

If men would acquire salvation they have got to be subject, before they leave this world, to certain rules and principles, which were fixed by an unalterable decree before the world was.

[Otherwise] the disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful. (D. H. C. 6:50-51.)

In view of these teachings and the many others which carry the message that today is the day for us to perform our labors, it would seem to be wisdom on the part of every soul who has been taught the gospel, to here and now make a daily conscious and sincere effort to live it. And this effort should continue to the end of mortal life. Failing to make such an effort, a person identifies himself as one who does not believe the Lord, for, said he, ". . . if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today."

That we may, by laboring today, inherit the great blessings we have heard so much about in this conference, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY
 Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles
Conference Report, October 1-3, 1965, p. 20-23.

Brethren and sisters: I stand before you today in deep humility. The words intend to speak will have little meaning unless they are impressed upon our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit. I sincerely invite you to join with me in praying that they will be so impressed.

To Gain Eternal Life

The theme I have in mind to discuss is "Making One's Calling and Election Sure." To do this one must receive a divine witness that he will inherit eternal life. The supreme objective of men who understand God, their relationship to him, and his designs for them is to gain eternal life. This is as it should be, for eternal life". . . is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.) To bring men to eternal life is God's "work and glory." To this end he conceives, brings into being, directs, and uses all his creations. (Moses 1:38-39.)

Eternal life is the quality of life which God himself enjoys. The gospel plan, authored by the Father and put into operation by the atonement of Jesus Christ, brings eternal life within the reach of every man. The Lord gave this assurance when he said, ". . . if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, . . ." (D&C 14:7.)

The fullness of eternal life is not attainable in mortality, but the peace which is its harbinger and which comes as a result of making one's calling and election sure is attainable in this life. The Lord has promised that ". . . he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (*Ibid.*, 59:23.)

I think the peace here referred to is implicit in the Prophet's statement, "am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer 5 morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men." (*DHC*, 6, 555.)

I also think it is implicit in this statement of the late Apostle Alonzo A. Hinckley which he wrote in a letter to the First Presidency after he had been advised by his physician that his illness would be fatal: "I assure you I am not deeply disturbed over the final results. I am reconciled and I reach my hands to take what my Father has for me, be it life or death...."

"As to the future, I have no misgivings. It is inviting and glorious, and I sense rather clearly what it means to be saved by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ and to be exalted by his power and be with him ever more." (*The Deseret News Church Section*, March 27, 1949, p.24.)

Make Your Calling and Election Sure

Now I come directly to my theme: I take my text from Second Peter, and as he did, I direct my remarks "...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us. . . ." (2 Peter 1:1.)

Peter, having put the Saints in remembrance of gospel fundamentals, admonished them to ". . . give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" (*Ibid.*, 1:10.)

By making their calling and election sure, the Saints were to gain entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To this fact Peter bore powerful witness. He reviewed his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with James and John, where, he says, they heard the voice of ". . . God the Father . . ." declare of Jesus, "This *is* my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then by way of instruction that such an experience did not of itself make one's calling and election sure, he added, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy;..." (*Ibid.*, 1:11, 17, 19.)

The Sure Word of Prophecy

Speaking on Sunday, the 14th of May, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith took this statement of Peter for his text. From the Prophet's sermon I quote:

"Notwithstanding the apostle exhorts them to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., yet he exhorts them to make their calling and election sure. And though they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy. . . . Now wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to hear the voice of God saying, This is my be-loved Son, etc." Answering his own question, the Prophet continued, "Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour' of trial, trouble and tribulation."

Then speaking directly to his listeners, the Prophet continued:

"...I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy,..." (*DHC.* 5, 388-389.)

A week later, May 21, 1843, the Prophet preached another sermon on the same text, from which I quote:

"We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this end. But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken," he said, "how much more those of the present generation!" And then in conclusion, "It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., etc., and an-other to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom." (*Ibid.*, 5, 403.)

These two sermons were given by the Prophet just thirteen months before his martyrdom. Four years earlier, however, he had thus instructed the Twelve: "After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the

testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 3, 380.)

In the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants is recorded a revelation in which the Lord, addressing some of the early Saints in Ohio, said: ". . . I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

The Promise of Eternal Life

"This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom;" (D&C 88:3-4.)

I should think that every faithful Latter-day Saint "...would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God." (*DHC*, 5, 388.)

As I read the sacred records, I find recorded experiences of men in all dispensations who have had this sure anchor to their souls, this peace in their hearts.

Lehi's grandson Enos so hungered after righteousness that he cried unto the Lord until ". . . there came a voice unto [him from heaven] saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Years later he revealed the nature of this promised blessing when he wrote:

"...I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father." (Enos 5, 27.)

To Alma the Lord said: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life;..." (Mosiah 26:20.)

To his twelve Nephite disciples the Master said: "What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?

"And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

"And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest" (3 Nephi 28:1-3.)

As Moroni labored in solitude, abridging the Jaredite record, he received from the Lord this comforting assurance: ". . . thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." (Ether 12:37.)

Paul in his second epistle to Timothy wrote: ". . . I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: . . ." (2 Tim. 4:7-8.)

In this dispensation many have received like assurances. In the spring of 1839, while the Prophet Joseph and his associates were languishing in Liberty Jail, Heber C. Kimball labored against great odds caring for the Saints and striving to free the brethren. On the 6th of April he wrote:

"My family having been gone about two months, during which time I heard nothing from them; our brethren being in prison; death and destruction following us everywhere we went; I felt very sorrowful and lonely. The following words came to my mind, and the Spirit said unto me, 'write,' which I did by taking a piece of paper and writing on my knee as follows: . . .

This is what he wrote as dictated by the Lord:

"Verily I say unto my servant Heber, thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; for thou art careful to hearken to my words, and not transgress my law, nor rebel against my servant Joseph Smith, for thou hast a respect to the words of mine anointed, even from the least to the greatest of them; *therefore thy name is written in heaven, no more to be blotted out for ever.* (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 1888 ed., p. 253. Italics added.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said: "... I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for *verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.*" (D&C 132: 49. Italics added.)

Now in conclusion, I give you my own witness. I know that God our Father lives, that we are, as Paul said, his offspring. I know that we dwelt in his presence in pre-earth life and that we shall continue to live beyond the grave. I know that we may return into his presence, if we meet his terms. I know that while we are here in mortality there is a means of communication between him and us. I know it is possible for men to so live that they may hear his voice and know his words and that to receive the Holy Spirit of promise while here in mortality is possible. And so, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, ". . . I exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until [by the more sure word of prophecy] you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, . . ." (*DHC*, 5, 389.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY
Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles
Conference Report, April 6-9, 1967, p. 79-82.

My brothers and sisters, I have in mind speaking to you a few minutes this afternoon about a subject that I myself have learned about through some rather severe experiences since the last conference. Therefore, if I am to do this effectively, I must have the Spirit of the Lord. I have sought it. I ask you now to join with me in asking the Lord to bless '15 while I occupy your valuable time. The subject I have selected is "peace in this world." I have taken my text from the 59th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

The works of righteousness bring peace . . . and eternal life

"... he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

This text promises two rewards: one in this world and another in the world to come. Reference to "the world to come" brings to mind an incident that occurred in a divorce action when I was practicing law some 35 years ago. As the court was about to render its decision, the plaintiff, a woman, requested and was granted a private conference. Nervously approaching the bench, she audibly whispered: "Your honor, I want a divorce for this world only, not for the world to come."

Unlike that judge the Great Judge who spoke the words of our text has jurisdiction both in this world and the world to come; although the promised rewards in the two are interdependent. I propose in these remarks to deal principally with peace in *this* world.

Peace

First, let us agree upon the meaning of the word "peace." "Freedom from civil disturbance or war" is one dictionary definition. That this is not the "peace" promised, however, is evident from the fact that about the time the Lord spoke our text, he also said: ". . . the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace [meaning freedom from civil disturbance or war] shall be taken from the earth, . . . (D&C 1:35), and from the further fact that in 1894 and again in 1896, President Woodruff, then the Lord's mouthpiece on the earth, indicated that the time for such peace to be taken from the earth had then come. (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp.251-52.) Informed Latter-day Saints know that this earth will never again, during its telestial existence, be free from civil disturbance and war.

Nor does the "peace" of which we speak mean "harmony in personal relations," another dictionary definition. Jesus made this plain when he said:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Matt. 10:34-35.)

Jesus *was*, however, talking about the "peace" of which we speak when to his disciples 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." (John 14:27.)

He was also talking about such "peace" when, just before he offered his intercessory prayer, he concluded his instructions to his disciples with the words:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.)

From these scriptures it is apparent that the "peace" of our text is heaven-sent

Among those who enjoy it, of course, it brings "harmony in personal relations." If men generally enjoyed it, it would banish civil disturbance and war. But in the absence of both mutual concord and civil peace, it may and does dwell in the hearts of many people. The promise of it runs to each and every person who will qualify himself to receive it, regardless of the actions of those about him. ". . . he who doeth the works of righteousness shall," says the Lord-not *may* or *can*, but *shall* -- "receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

The revelation from which our text is taken not only extends to the Saints the comforting promise

of peace in this world; it also specifies some of the specific works of righteousness upon which the promise is conditioned. The circumstances under which the revelation was received, as well as its content, are interesting and instructive.

During the summer of 1831, "the mission to Western Missouri and the gathering of the Saints to that place was the most important subject which then engrossed the attention of the Church." (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol.1, p.182.) "Those are the words of the Prophet Joseph. Between the 19th of June and the middle of July the Prophet and his associates traveled from Kirtland, Ohio, to Independence, Missouri. The Prophet himself walked all the way from St. Louis to Independence, a distance of about 300 miles.

Between the time of their arrival and the 7th of August, when the revelation was given, the Colesville Branch arrived to join the few Saints who had preceded them. "W. W. Phelps preached to a western audience." (*DHC*, Vol.1, p.190.) Several other revelations were received. "The first log, for a house, as a foundation of Zion in Kaw township" was laid. (*DHC*, Vol. 1, p. 196.) "The site for the temple was revealed and dedicated, and the first conference in Zion was held.

Interest and enthusiasm among the people ran high. "The Saints, having but recently arrived on the scene, were all agog over the glorious predictions concerning latter-day Zion.

It was under these circumstances, with the Saints perhaps a little over-anxiously anticipating Zion as it shall be in its perfection and without fully appreciating the works of righteousness required to bring about that perfection, that the Lord said to them:

"...blessed,... are they who have come up unto this land with an eye single to my glory.

"Yea, blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed my gospel; for...

"...they shall ... be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time-they that are faithful and diligent before me.

"Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

"Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." (D&C 59:1, 3-9.)

Then, after giving detailed instructions concerning observance of the Sabbath day, the Lord concludes with this promise:

"...learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

In this manner did the Lord relate the rewards to specific works and urged the Saints to learn for themselves that peace in this world comes as a reward for works of righteousness.

Peace in this world, being an inner feeling, is difficult to define. It may, therefore, perhaps be best understood through illustrations. You who are familiar with the Book of Mormon will recall the experiences of Enos, who, in the true spirit of repentance, sought forgiveness of sins with such persistent

faith and prayer that "there came a voice unto [him,] saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed" Whereupon Enos wrote:

"...I ... knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

"And I said: Lord, how is it done? "And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ,... wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole." (Enos 6-8.)

Thereafter Enos besought the Lord to preserve a record, "...that it might be brought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites,...

"...and he covenanted with me [wrote Enos] that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time.

"And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest." (Enos 13, 16-17.)

Contributing to the peace and rest that filled the soul of Enos was the accompanying assurance of eternal life in the world to come that accompanied it This he thus expressed:

I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen." (Enos 27.)

At times numerous persons have sought and obtained this feeling of peace at the same time. Recorded in the first chapters of Mosiah is a powerful message received by King Benjamin from an angel of the Lord and delivered by him to his subjects. The message concerned the atonement of Christ, by means of which men, through faith and repentance, may obtain forgiveness of sins, which forgiveness heals the spirit and thus brings peace to the soul. Having delivered the message, Benjamin "cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

"...And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God,...

"And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ . . ." (Mosiah 4:1-3:)

Another dramatic example of a community experiencing peace in a world of tribulation concerns the people of Alma, who had covenanted with the Lord in the waters of Mormon and who were later brought into bondage by Amulon, who "put tasks upon them, and put taskmasters over them.

"And . . . so great were their afflictions that they began to cry mightily to God.

"And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

"And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him;...

"And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me;

"And I will . . . ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, . . . while you are in bondage;...

"And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease,...

"And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage." (Mosiah 24:9-16.)

These illustrations are but samples of the many to be found in the scriptures. But each of them, as do the others, evidences the truth of our text that peace in this world always comes after the receiver has done the works of righteousness. Enos, the subjects of King Benjamin, and the people of Alma had all demonstrated, by good works, their faith in Christ before the reward came. This is the way peace comes in this world. It can be obtained in no other way. The promised peace of our text emanates from Christ. He is the source of it. His spirit is the essence of it.

I bear you my witness that I know that you and I may enjoy the promised "peace in this world" and the assurance of "eternal life in the world to come" on the prescribed terms. Only those who experience such peace and assurance can appreciate how they come and the joy they bring. The thought of them, however, is associated in my mind with two scriptures. First, from the account Nephi gives of his experience on the mount with the Spirit of the Lord, who said to him:

"...Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?

"And I answered him, . Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.

"And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul." (1 Ne. 11:21-23.)

Now, such joy and peace does not come from knowing about Deity; it comes from the knowledge implied by Jesus when, thanking his Father for the power to give eternal life to his followers, he said: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

God bless you, my beloved brothers and sisters, that you may get your sights on coming to know God, the Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent: not just to talk about them, but a personal acquaintance with them. When you get such a knowledge, you will have "peace in this world." In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.

PRESIDENT MARION G. ROMNEY
Second Counselor in the First Presidency
Ensign, November, 1981, p. 14-15.

In the seventeenth. chapter of John, it is recorded that as Jesus prayed to the Father in behalf of his disciples, he said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

In his prayer Jesus made it perfectly clear that the eleven disciples knew him to be the Son of God. He had taught them who he was and that he had been sent from his Father. That they had received a witness in their hearts and souls to the truth of his teachings is made clear in the following statement by John:

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;

glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." (John 17:1-2, 6-8.)

By receiving the Savior's message and accepting him for what he was and is, the Apostles obtained eternal life.

This knowledge of "the only true God, and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3) is the most important knowledge in the universe; it is the knowledge without which the Prophet Joseph Smith said no man could be saved. The lack of it is the ignorance referred to in the revelation wherein it is written: "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131:6.)

We should keep in mind that there is more than one source of knowledge. There is the knowledge obtainable through man's normal sensory organs. Such knowledge should be sought after. The Lord has commanded us to get all such knowledge we can in this manner.

There is also knowledge of divine things which comes through direct revelation -- religious knowledge, it is sometimes called. And there are two aspects to religious knowledge. One of them concerns the great store of religious knowledge which we have in the scriptures. Ever since the beginning, from Father Adam's time until now, the Lord has given through his prophets, by revelation, religious knowledge. Such knowledge concerns the verities of life. It deals with God and his Beloved Son, the great gospel plan, and the mission of Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. The other aspect to religious knowledge is the personal witness available through inspiration, a form of revelation that comes to each individual.

The whole world has access to the revealed word of God as it is recorded in the Bible. And the whole world *could have* access to the revealed religious knowledge recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Millions of people who read and study the Bible do not understand it. Millions do not understand what Jesus said in the prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John from which our theme is taken. The reason they do not understand it is that their understanding has not been enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. They have not received a personal witness.

To know God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, whom he sent, one must, as did the Apostles of old, learn of them through the process of divine revelation. One must be born again. Let me give you an illustration from the recorded teachings of the Savior as to what I mean.

In the third chapter of John, it is written that Nicodemus, a very wise man, in fact a member of the Sanhedrin, came to see Jesus by night-he did not yet have enough courage to come to see him during the daytime. But he came to Jesus by night, and said:

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.)

In this statement Nicodemus unwittingly but clearly revealed the fact that he did not know who Jesus was. All he could see in the Son of God was a great teacher. This was all he could be expected to see, however, because he based his knowledge of who Jesus was upon what he had seen and heard of the Master's miracles. Perceiving this, Jesus informed him that the knowledge of divine things could not be had through man's normal senses.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus. (John 3:3.)

Although Nicodemus was wise in the things of the world, he could not understand this simple statement of truth. As a matter of fact, his answer revealed amazement:

"How can a man be born when he is old?" he said. "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4.)

Jesus, still persisting in his efforts to get him to understand, continued:

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) Here we have the Savior saying that the kingdom of God can neither be seen nor entered except one be born again.

But Nicodemus still could not understand. Jesus then stated the great law: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That is, that which we learn through our normal senses has to do with this earth. "And that which is born of the Spirit," he said, "is spirit." (John 3:6.) The things that we learn through the process of inspiration are of God, of the Spirit.

Everyone who would know God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, must receive such knowledge by the Spirit. Church members have, of course, been through the process. They have been baptized and confirmed members of the Church and have had hands laid upon their heads for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through these ordinances the door is unlocked. Submission to this is absolutely essential to rebirth. But to obtain life eternal one must so humble and purify himself that he in fact receives through the power of the Holy Ghost a personal witness that God is his Eternal Father and that Jesus Christ is God's Son and our personal Savior as well as the Redeemer of the world.

Let me give you an illustration. It is personal to my family, but it makes the point, so I hope you will pardon my use of it. My wife was reared in a home where they had prayer night and morning; where, almost daily, they discussed gospel principles around the family hearth. She loved education and wanted to go to college. Her father, however, thought college was for boys. In her struggle for an education, she developed an attitude of awe toward people who had been through college. As a member of a stake Sunday School board in Idaho Falls, she taught a class. There came to the class a nonmember of the Church, the wife of one of the brethren on the board. This woman had received a college degree from the University of Idaho. My wife, having not yet received her degree, was a little timid in the presence of this woman.

One of the lessons in the course dealt with the First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As she made her preparation for the lesson, there came into her mind the realization that this nonmember would be present in the class. This realization was followed by the question, 'What will she think of me, an ignorant girl, saying that the Father and the Son actually came down from heaven and appeared before a fourteen-year-old boy?' The thought terrified her, and she concluded that she couldn't do it. She went to her mother, crying, and said, "Mother, I can't teach this lesson. I don't know that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son. I know I have been taught it all through my life by you and Father. I have believed

you, but personally I don't know it. This woman will ridicule me. I just can't stand up before the class with this woman present and teach this lesson."

Now, her mother had not been to school very much. She was not an educated person by the world's standards, but she had faith in God the Eternal Father and in Jesus Christ, his Son, and she said to her daughter, "What did Joseph Smith do to get that vision?"

"Well," she answered, "he prayed."

"Why don't you do that?" she said to her daughter.

This young girl returned to her room and there, for the first time in her life in fact, she went to the Almighty with a sincere desire to know whether he lived and whether he and the Savior actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph. Coming out of that room, she went to her Sunday School class and taught that lesson with joy, with knowledge, with conviction. She had been born of the Spirit. She knew.

Now, my beloved brethren and sisters, everyone has to have a spiritual experience to gain eternal life, to know God the Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. I plead with you to seek this knowledge if you don't already have that knowledge. You know the way now. It is not a mass experience. It must come to each individually. It must come to you. It must come to those whom you teach. We must teach by the Spirit, "and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach," said the Savior. "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith." (D&C 42:14.)

You who have been baptized have the right to it. Desire it. Pray for it. Work for it, and God will give it to you.

That you may each receive that knowledge of God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, to know which is eternal life, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.