

October 1946 General Conference

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My dear brethren and sisters: In the few minutes allotted me, I shall not deliver a sermon or make an address or a speech. I propose to make a few remarks relative to a few current matters that I believe to be important. These remarks are made to Latter-day Saints only, and on my own responsibility Others may listen if they care to. But since other people do not believe our religious teachings, it is hopeless to expect that they will be influenced by anything I say at this time.

The Present Sinful Condition of the World

But to continue: We live in a sinful world. Much wickedness abounds. Crime is rampant and much of it goes unpunished, for many criminals are never even apprehended. Lawlessness is everywhere. There is also an immense amount of wrongdoing going on all the time that can hardly be classed as wickedness or crime. Selfishness, greed, smoking, drinking, profanity, Sabbath breaking, are examples. It is needless to say that any Latter-day Saint who indulges in any of these things, or in many others not mentioned, is violating his covenants. But since many Latter-day Saints do indulge, to a greater or less extent in these things, the need of repentance is ever present among us, and the obligation to repent is much greater with us than it is with other sinners who have not covenanted to keep the commandments of the Lord.

For of him unto whom much is given much is required. ([D. & C. 82:3.](#))

Need for Repentance Among Latter-Day Saints

Regrettable as it may be, sinful indulgences among Latter-day Saint people are often a real handicap to our stake missionary work because non-members see so much bad in many of us that they feel we should first convert ourselves. In other words, they cannot hear what we say because what we are rings so loudly in their ears. They would rather see a sermon any day than hear one. Our principles are lofty, but our indulgences often seem to belie our sincerity, "for a tree is judged by its fruit." For example, we teach total abstinence from the use of narcotics, and Utah is rightly regarded as a "Mormon" state—a state wherein our people are in the majority. Yet, reputedly reliable statistics show that Utah's people consume as much alcoholic beverage per capita as is consumed on an average per capita in the United States. According to official figures, during the fiscal year 1946, there was paid in Utah for liquor and tobacco, two hundred eighty percent more than was paid in the fiscal year 1941.

Yes, frankness compels us to admit that the sins of the world exist among us to a greater or less extent. For this reason, responsible leaders in the Church, the stakes, and the wards are continually calling our people, as well as the people of the world, to real, sincere repentance. Repentance from what, does someone ask? The answer is obvious: Turn away from and do no more those things that are out of harmony with the teachings of the Master, Jesus Christ. These

are summarized in two great commandments—to . . . love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. ([Luke 10:27.](#))

Man Given Power to Choose Good or Evil

Why love God, I was once asked. Because he is our Father who loves his children dearly and is the giver of every good we have. It is his work and his glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, as he told Moses. Due to these facts, he has given us a way of life to follow, which, if we do, will bring us great joy both here and hereafter. But he does not compel us to pursue the way indicated. He has given us our free agency which we may exercise without severe condemnation only so long as we do not infringe upon the rights of our fellow men, and I repeat, only so long as we do not infringe upon the rights of others. But because of an evil power in the world during the life of the human family, many of the Father's children have yielded to temptation and departed more or less widely from the ways of the Lord. In consequence, sin, wickedness, and crime have developed among men, resulting in misery and suffering in various degrees, depending upon the extent of the departure from the divine path. The Apostle Paul's description of the last days certainly fits these times. He wrote:

. . . perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. ([II Tim. 3:1-4.](#))

These deplorable conditions in the world are now even worse in some respects than Paul described them. Because of man's increasing power to control the forces of nature, he has multiplied the ways of injury both to himself and to his fellow men. As an example, we now have the atomic bomb.

Peace Can Come Through Following the Golden Rule

Up to this point, I have spoken only in general terms and have said nothing new. Let me now specify a little. The world at the moment is in a critical and very unsettled condition. Notwithstanding the fact that we have just emerged from the most widespread and destructive war the world has ever seen, there is little or no evidence that men have repented from the sins that brought on the war. The inhabitants long for peace, but there is yet no peace, because selfishness and greed are still dominant, and too many people are determined to get what they want, using to this end, any and every means within their power.

Some keen and wise observers in this country have recently asserted that the United States now faces the most critical period in its history. Various groups of men are striving to agree on terms of peace, but success has not yet been sighted. The spirit of the Golden Rule does not yet dominate the hearts and minds of the negotiators, and so another war may be imminent; it is being talked of in hushed terms. Apparently it can be avoided only if certain great powers will recede from positions they have taken. During the recent war, ideals were set up and efforts to implement them are now meeting with determined opposition, just as was the case following

World War I. This country fought then, as it did in the recent conflict, that war should be no more.

Why can't the same rules govern nations as govern individuals? In civilized countries, no two men can go at each other with their fists or guns without subjecting themselves to prosecution in a court. Why can't a similar rule apply to nations? Why is it legal to slay in masses and not in singles? Shall we not continue to hope and pray that efforts to outlaw war will soon succeed? God grant that this may be so, and that we shall not have to await the millennium for this great boon!

The Repeal of Certain Laws Urged

But international war is not the only danger we face. The outlook internally is very dark. The struggle to get more and more for less and less seems to be growing in intensity and is spreading to more groups and individuals. In all of this, the idea of universal brotherhood and the Golden rule seems to be forgotten. Furthermore, the fundamental principle of the Declaration of Independence from England giving the right to the individual of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is currently violated in the case of millions of people, not only by organizations, but in certain cases, I very much regret to say, apparently by the federal government itself. The right to labor is denied except through membership in organizations, exempt from rules and regulations that govern individuals and industrial organizations engaged in business. Equality before the law does not exist in the relationship of employers and labor unions. Why is this so? One reason is because too many politicians are so deeply afflicted with the itch for office that they will do nothing that is opposed by officers of labor unions. These organizations could be of great benefit to their members and still function within the letter and spirit of the divinely inspired Constitution as it was made by the Fathers of our Republic. The "closed-shop" and so-called jurisdictional and sympathetic strikes should be outlawed at once by the federal government and every state in the American Union. Shall America be as the founder-fathers planned the land of the free and the home of the brave? If so, the repeal of some laws and the making of better ones is the need of the hour. Who can deny it?

Labor Strikes in America

Let us glance for the moment at some recent events. Some months ago, a great labor strike was called which directly involved hundreds of thousands of people and indirectly the entire country. An increase of thirty percent in wages was demanded in order that the same take-home pay, enjoyed during the war should continue. But it was requested that there should be no increase in the cost of living—a request impossible to implement. Those making these demands seemed to have forgotten that in order to hasten war production, war workers were given their wage demands and were thus placed in a highly favored class in comparison with all other civilians who received no wage increases. When these workers returned to civilian production, was it fair, right, and just to continue this discrimination? Remember that these discriminated-against civilians greatly outnumbered the war workers. But even so, the politicians know that the majority of the people are unorganized and that labor unions hold the balance of power in elections; hence their subservience to labor unions.

What have the great strikes of the last several months accomplished? Among other things, they have impoverished many of the members of labor unions and it will take years to recover all the wages lost during the prolonged strikes; they have increased the cost of living for everybody; they have brought labor unions into disrepute; they have delayed the production of much needed civilian goods; they have brought unrest, suffering, and uncertainty into millions of homes, and have thrown great multitudes on to public relief; they have brought indecision and trouble to the government, both federal and state, and have weakened the influence of America abroad. The method of the strike has been the mass-picket and the closed shop. What difference, in principle, is there between this method of holdup and that of a gun? In both, force is applied. Then are not both methods forms of robbery? And is not robbery intolerable to our American way of life? Does not freedom demand that all forms of robbery shall be outlawed? Shall not the cries of a suffering people be heard and relief be granted? Do we not need statesmen and fewer weak-kneed politicians in public office? Shall the selfish interests of a few continue to prevail over the interests of the many? Are not the interests of the public always involved in strikes and lockouts? Hence, does it not appear that a means of bringing peace to management and labor is an imperative need of the hour, if we are to revert to the way of life given us by the founders of our Republic—a way that made our country great? Various means to this end have been proposed by both writers and speakers; but as I see it, no means of bringing permanent peace can succeed unless they are characterized by the spirit of the Golden Rule. I discussed this phase in a radio address given last November, showing that fairness, right, and justice must be the basis of settlement to attain permanent peace. To this end arbitration courts seem necessary.

A Warning Against Communism

I would like to call attention to what appears evident to me the similarity of the spirit seen in some phases of certain labor troubles with that of communism as it exists in some parts of Europe. I again remind you that I am speaking to Latter-day Saint people. I ask your attention while I read a circular given to the people of the Church by the First Presidency ten years ago and published in *The Improvement Era* of August 1936. It is as follows:

Warning to Church Members

With great regret we learn from credible sources, governmental and others, that a few Church members are joining, directly or indirectly, the communists and are taking part in their activities.

The Church does not interfere, and has no intention of trying to interfere, with the fullest and freest exercise of the political franchise of its members, under and within our Constitution which the Lord declared: "I established . . . by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose," ([D. & C. 101:80](#)) and which, as to the principles thereof, the Prophet dedicating the Kirtland Temple, prayed should be "established forever."

But communism is not a political party nor a political plan under the Constitution; it is a system of government that is the opposite of our Constitutional government, and it would be necessary to destroy our government before communism could be set up in the United States.

Since communism, established, would destroy our American Constitutional government, to support communism is treasonable to our free institutions, and no patriotic American citizen may become either a communist or supporter of communism.

To our Church members we say: Communism is not the United Order, and bears only the most superficial resemblance thereto; communism is based upon intolerance and force, the United Order upon love and freedom of conscience and action; communism involves forceful despoliation and confiscation, the United Order voluntary consecration and sacrifice.

Communists cannot establish the United Order, nor will communism bring it about. The United Order will be established by the Lord in his own due time and in accordance with the regular prescribed order of the Church.

Furthermore, it is charged by universal report, which is not successfully contradicted or disproved, that communism undertakes to control, if not indeed to proscribe the religious life of the people living within its jurisdiction, and that it even reaches its hand into the sanctity of the family circle itself, disrupting the normal relationship of parent and child, all in a manner unknown and unsanctioned under the Constitutional guarantees under which we in America live. Such interference would be contrary to the fundamental precepts of the gospel and to the teachings and order of the Church.

Communism being thus hostile to loyal American citizenship and incompatible with true Church membership, of necessity no loyal American citizen and no faithful Church member can be a communist.

We call upon all Church members completely to eschew communism. The safety of our divinely inspired Constitutional government and the welfare of our Church imperatively demand that communism shall have no place in America.

Heber J. Grant

J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

David O. McKay

I have read this letter because I feel the need for it is more evident today than it was ten years ago. The spirit of communism is unquestionably wholly foreign to the spirit of true Americanism. As seen in the country where it has long been dominant, it is wholly atheistic; it denies the existence of God; as frequently manifested, it is extremely cruel and inhuman. Confiscation and murder have been employed to reach its end. It should be impossible to get any Latter-day Saint to give the least degree of sympathy to communism as it is manifested in Europe.

Brethren and sisters, there is but one safe course for us-which is to be steadfast, loyal, and true to the Church and its leadership. May the Lord help us to be so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.