

"Then to side with truth is noble
 When we share her wretched crust,
 Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
 And 'tis prosperous to be just;
 Then it is the brave man chooses,
 While the coward stands aside,
 Doubting in his abject spirit,
 Till his Lord is crucified,
 And the multitude make virtue
 Of the faith they had denied."

May God keep us steadfast in the truth, and help us to preach the Gospel and discharge the great responsibility that rests upon us, the proclaiming of the message of salvation, by example as well as by precept, and may we all endure faithful to the end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A duet entitled, "Music of the Pines," was sung by Sisters Lizzie Thomas Edward and Agnes McMullan Bolto; words and music by John Chamberlain.

ELDER DAVID O. M'KAY.

Mutual aid of Church members—
 Those who give offerings, and observe to fast, bless themselves—
 Healthful effect of fasting—Fasting, a means of attaining self-control—
 If each member of Church donated ten cents monthly, all needs of the poor could be supplied.

"Our people are efficient, prosperous and happy, because we are a body who aid one another in the productive life." This expression from a recent publication entitled, "The Religion worth having," came to me this afternoon as I listened to my brethren present the various phases of this great latter day work. The Latter-day Saints are truly a people who aid one another in the productive life, a life that tends towards the salvation of the human being. By that salvation I do not mean just

a place in the hereafter where all our cares and worries may cease, but a salvation that applies to the individual, to the family and to society here and now. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the perfect organization of the Church as revealed in this dispensation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we are aiding one another *spiritually* by taking advantage of the many opportunities for service in the Church. We are fostering *brotherhood* by activity and association in priesthood quorums, in auxiliary associations and in our social gatherings and ward reunions. We are aiding the young people in securing *wholesome pleasures*, by giving them sweet and wholesome enjoyment under the direction of the priesthood, as it serves particularly in the Mutual Improvement Associations of the Church as well as in other organizations and in the amusements under the direction of the authorities of the ward. The Church is aiding in *temporal matters* and a practical benefit is resulting to the people today through the united efforts of the membership of the Church. In such ways, and many others, the Church fosters the practical things of life.

During the few minutes that I stand here this afternoon I desire to call attention to the principle of Fast Offerings, as one of our economic efforts toward aiding one another. I mention it because of the fact that in the report given by our president at the opening of this conference, it was stated that \$160,000 had been appropriated from the tithing fund to aid the worthy poor. I thought at once of this principle established by revelation whereby all the men and women in the Church may not only benefit those

who are in need of financial aid, but by so doing may bring blessings unto themselves. We are asked, as a Church, to fast once a month—to refrain from eating from Saturday evening meal until Sunday evening meal. The requirement is that all members of the Church fast that day, attend to their meetings, particularly their sacrament meeting, and in accordance with the revelation of God, give their oblations, render their sacraments and offer their prayers to God. We are asked, further, to contribute in effect the amount of those two meals for the benefit of the worthy poor in the ward. No stated amount is given, each one is left to give voluntarily that which he believes he ought to give, so that the bishop may have in his hands sufficient funds to aid those who may be in need.

Now, it is a little, simple thing, and at first thought it does not seem to have much of the power of salvation in it, but like all other principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ, it is associated with the fundamental principles of life and salvation. That is why I desire to call the attention of the presiding authorities who are before me, as well as of all the Saints in Israel, to the importance of living up to this requirement more closely in the future than they have done in the past. Let us see what it means.

If we contribute to the bishop the value of two meals once a month, we are certainly no poorer financially than we would be if we had consumed those meals as we regularly do. There cannot be any loss to our own family in a financial way, and we have given at least a mite towards alleviation of hunger, perhaps distress, in some home that is less fortunate, less blessed than

we. There is no loss to us financially, no man is poorer, no man is deprived of one blessing, no child is deprived of anything that he would have had if he refrained from giving that small contribution. Financially then, nobody who gives it is any the poorer.

Physically, we are better off by refraining from eating at least once a month than we are when we eat regularly three meals a day. Time will not permit to go into this phase of the subject; but I am just reminded now of having read a few days ago, the opinion of one of our leading athletes who in his training watched the effect of eating three regular meals, then of eating two regular meals and finally of eating one meal daily, regularly, and he concludes so far as he is concerned that when he ate three meals a day he had been eating too much, and when so doing he found it necessary to fast at regular periods in order to maintain his vitality to the standard possessed when he ate more sparingly. Physiology books will give us the same lesson. So, generally speaking—each individual must take this for his own good,—but generally speaking no person is injured in any way by his depriving himself of those two meals on Fast Day, but on the contrary he is benefitted physically.

There is still another blessing, and here I believe is the most potent factor, the most saving power in this Fast day requirement. What our young people need, what every man and woman in this world needs in order to keep himself or herself free and unspotted from the sins of the world, is the power of self-mastery. Each individual should studiously practice self-control. It does not come all at once. Nature never

makes cash payments as a whole, says William George Jordan. Her payments are always made in small installments. Those who desire to win self-mastery must do it by constant application. About the only definite command, to fast as given in the Law, refers to this principle as an "affliction of the soul." It is associated with spiritual uplift, and therein is one of the greatest blessings that come to those who will fast as God has asked them to. Some may say, "Well, that isn't much, I cannot see how the refraining from partaking of food once a month regularly is going to give me any self-control." It does, however, it is one of the best lessons that adults as well as children can practice. Appetite is calling, there is a yearning and the natural tendency is to yield. Teach the child to master appetite. Teach him, not harshly, but kindly, with the Spirit of the Lord, with the spirit in which the revelation was given, and you will find that in childhood these little lessons in abstinence coming daily to your boy, unconsciously are placing into his little spirit power that may save him from falling in disgrace sometime when he is driven on by the fire of youth to the very verge of the precipice of destruction. Then is the time that he will need mastery of self and he will have it. Men who have studied this principle suggest that we need to take some such lesson as this not only weekly or monthly, but daily. Mr. Wm. George Jordan, says in that excellent article, "The Kingship of Self-Control":

"Let us each day do as mere exercises in discipline, in moral gymnastics, a few facts that are disagreeable to us, the doing of which will help us in instant action in our hour of need. The

exercises may be very simple, dropping for a time an intensely interesting book at the most thrilling page of the story, walking home when one is able, when the desire is to take a street car; talking to some disagreeable person and trying to make the conversation pleasant. These daily exercises in moral discipline will have a wondrous tonic effect on man's whole nature. The individual can attain self-control in great things only through self-control in little things." [That is in harmony with the suggestions that Professor James gives in his excellent article on "Habit." He makes practically the same point, by saying,] "Be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do, every day or two, something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it; so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test." He says it is something like paying an insurance, a fire insurance; you may not need it, but if ever the fire come you are protected by the small payments you have given, "so it is" he says, "in these daily habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition and self-denial in unnecessary things. The man will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him and when his softer fellow mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast."

Don't think that there is not a spiritual significance in the little principle of fasting. Don't think parents, that you are favoring your child when, out of compassion, you say, "Oh give him his breakfast; oh let us have breakfast; let us have dinner; I have the headache; the little boy is too young to go without his meal," and so on. You don't know what you are doing by such teaching as that. I want to tell you that the children of our Church can be so taught this principle of self-denial that they will set worthy examples to their parents in the observance of it. Your little deacons particularly—there is a magnificent

opportunity for teaching them one way of honoring the priesthood.

Now, what does obedience to this requirement mean in aiding those who might be in need? It means that one hundred sixty thousand dollars need not be taken from the tithing fund because some of us did not comply with the principle of fast-offerings! If you estimate those two meals as being worth only five cents each—that is all, say that you are saving, by refraining from eating those two meals, only five cents each. If you contribute that amount as your offering on fast day, your bishop will have sufficient funds in his hands to pay out all that he needed in 1914 to support his worthy poor and will have as much more on hand towards help for the next year. Five cents a meal for each person is not much; surely we ought to do that. This would mean \$1.20 per capita, an amount more than sufficient to supply all the present demands for the worthy poor in our Church. Think what it means and particularly when we are aiding ourselves by doing it. We are losing nothing financially; we are blessing ourselves physically, and we are gaining greater spiritual power, to withstand the temptations that we meet in life: and best of all, we are practicing the very essence of our religion; the true Christ-spirit is manifest in that little offering. You know what the Savior said when He referred to the time when the Son of Man shall come in His Glory:

“Come ye, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: for I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat; I was naked and ye clothed Me; I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink; I was sick and in prison and ye visited Me; and then they will say: Lord, when saw we Thee hungry and

gave Thee meat? or thirsty and gave Thee drink? or naked and clothed Thee? or sick and in prison and visited Thee? Then will He say to them: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me.”

That is in accord with the beautiful sentiment expressed in the last stanza of the hymn that the prophet had sung in Carthage jail, just before he was martyred. “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief.” You remember how he was hungry, thirsty, beaten, thrust into prison; and then at last, in a moment, “the stranger started from disguise”:

“The tokens in his hands I knew,
The Savior stood before my eyes;
He spake and my poor name he
named,
O! me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be,
Fear not, thou didst them unto me.”

God help us to obey these principles more faithfully in the future than we have in the past, to be efficient, prosperous and happy always, because in the strictest sense of the word we do all we can, by obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel, to aid one another in the productive life: I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us that we offend Him when we do not acknowledge His hand in the events which shape our lives. We live in a day of miracles, but unfortunately the hearts of the people have waxed gross, and their ears dull, that they do not perceive the hand of the Almighty in the events which are transpiring. I be-