

ADVICE TO LATTER-DAY SAINTS

In this time of panic and distress there are many who lose their heads and rush on banks, to wreck them. That ought not to be a characteristic of the Latter-day Saints. They ought, in majesty and in peace and in self control, to be sane and not insane. There are those who lose their faith, some allow their spirit to be broken, and some even commit suicide. It should not be so with the Latter-day Saints. Our position should be to study our problem and discover what led us into our present difficulties. Then go to work, and see to it that we solve our problem and let not this lesson be repeated unto us.

Let us not become ramblers. If we have failed in one place we need not go to the ends of the earth to try again. Right in the same community where you are you will discover another chance. You need not leave your farming occupations either. If you will be patient, and stay by the enterprises that you have undertaken, and practice self-denial, God will deliver you. The greatest losses are not financial. They are spiritual. Our financial losses will all be recovered if we will only be patient and see the hand of God working for the furtherance of his holy purposes. We have reached the day, thank the Lord, when his truth is triumphant, when it is going to succeed, the greatest day truth has ever known.

TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH

My soul rejoices to be identified with the Church that has the truth. I am more interested in seeing the truth succeed than any organization to which I belong, but thank God, the organization to which I belong has the truth, and everything that has come forth in this age is demonstrating it. It will stand every test, and it will stand forever.

God help us to be loyal to it, support it; there never has been an opportunity, in the history of this world, for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to really demonstrate its power, its virility and its strength. Now its day has come. Live our religion, and let our light shine, and we shall see God's work going forward to greater and holier accomplishments than in the past.

This is my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, for I believe with all my soul that God has not deserted us, but he is moving forward to the accomplishment of his purposes. May they speedily be accomplished. May we keep the faith and be found with God's work in the day of its victory, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER DAVID O. MCKAY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As I stand before you this morning I find my mind still occupied by an ever recurring thought suggested by a conversation I had recently with some students, more particularly with one student, who within a day or so, came to inquire for guidance and to seek possible help.

This particular young man was very much perturbed in his feelings. He had heard in one of his classes several imputations that seemed to

conflict with his ideas of religion. One of the latest, for an illustration, was this: His teacher had said that the principle of "Fasting is a relic of asceticism." I immediately asked him if he had ever thought that asceticism as related to fasting might be the prostitution of a worthy principle. He said he had never considered that phase of the question.

ASSOCIATION WITH LEADERS AN INSPIRATION

Before I comment further upon this conversation I desire to express a few thoughts in relation to the adequacy of this Church in supplying the needs of every human heart. An appreciation of the whole will make more impressive the importance of any particular part. I am happy that this one hundred and second annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints finds me in absolute harmony with the teachings and ideals of the Church. My confidence in the First Presidency as noble men and inspired leaders is secure. My association with the Council of the Twelve, with members of the General Sunday School Union board, with members of other general boards, with stake and mission presidencies, and with the priesthood generally throughout the Church is a constant source of inspiration and delight.

CHRIST THE IDEAL

The teachings and life of the Master never before seemed to me more beautiful, more necessary and more applicable to human happiness. Never have I believed more firmly in the perfection of humanity as the final result of man's placement here on earth. With my whole soul I accept Jesus Christ as the personification of human perfection—as God made manifest in the flesh, as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

"He stands alone," as one has said, "in unapproachable grandeur. Nineteen centuries roll away, and his character so lives that he inspires millions of men with impassioned love.

"Other men may seem to be children of their surroundings. He became what he was despite his surroundings, and he is the only one who can say, in truth: 'Do as I have done.'" His eyes looked beyond the present, peered into eternity, and comprehended the infinite. He is the image of God.

CHRIST'S GOSPEL A PERFECT PLAN

Accepting him as my Redeemer, Savior, Lord, it is but logical that I accept his Gospel as the plan of salvation, as the one perfect way to happiness and peace. There is not a principle which was taught by him but seems to me to be applicable to the growth, development and happiness of mankind. Every one of his teachings seems to touch the true philosophy of living. I accept them whole-heartedly. I love to study them. I like to teach them.

CHRIST'S CHURCH A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

So it is with the Church which Christ has established. Since it is founded by the Perfect One, it follows that when properly interpreted

it too approaches perfection. Every phase of it therefore seems to me to be applicable in some way to the welfare of the human family. When I consider the quorums of priesthood, I see in them an opportunity for developing that fraternity and brotherly love which is essential to the happiness of mankind. In these quorums and in the auxiliaries I see opportunities for intellectual development, for social efficiency. In the judicial phase of the Church I see an ample means of settling difficulties, of establishing harmony in society, of administering justice and of perpetuating peace among individuals and groups. In the ecclesiastical organization I see an opportunity for social welfare such as cannot be found in any other organization in the world. Thus do Christ and his Church become my ideal, my inspiration in life. I think it is the highest ideal for which man can strive.

FAITH AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL

Such faith in the Great Teacher and in his Church I consider a safe anchor for young people to possess, especially during the formative period of their lives, and I freely take issue with any man who deliberately destroys such a faith without offering something better in its place; and I know of nothing else in the world that can even approach Christ's Church as an anchor for the soul.

MORE FAITH NEEDED

One great need in the world today is more faith, less skepticism, more confidence, less doubting. As Bruce Barton expresses it: "Faith in business, faith in country, faith in one's self, faith in other people,—this is the power which moves the world. And why is it unreasonable to believe that this power, which is so much stronger than any other, is merely a fragment of the great power that operates the universe?"

FAITH SHOULD BE INCREASED NOT UNDERMINED

Now, at the opening of my remarks I referred to my conversation with a student because it illustrates two things: First: Insinuations made to the young who are yet undecided as to what are the most important things in life may shake the faith of youth, and "Youth without faith is a day without sun."

Secondly, I cite that instance to bring home to us today the necessity of parents and officers in the Church teaching more earnestly and diligently the principles of life and salvation to the youth of Zion and to the world in order to keep the latter properly balanced through the formative period of their lives.

"Our civilization is imperiled today," writes an American statistician, "simply because it is ill balanced. Our spiritual culture lags so far behind our material culture, in its development, that we have no adequate control over the latter. Our science, our education and our government can do much to help correct this lack in our spiritual development, but in the main this must be done, if done at all, by religion and by the Church, for religion is the creator and the conservator of our social ideals, and the church is their chief propagator."

The confidence and faith I have expressed this morning in the First Presidency, the Twelve, and others of my associates, as well as in the Gospel and especially in the Savior, applies also to the tenets and teachings of the Church. Every one when properly interpreted and applied has in it a saving power and blessing for all who will accept it.

PRINCIPLES TO BE APPROACHED FROM PROPER VIEW POINT

There is not time this morning even to mention further these various phases of the Church, each one of which will apply to the needs, to the education, to the peace of individuals. I should like to take, as an example, however, the principle already named. Considering this will illustrate also how even a teacher may himself become warped in his attitude toward what he might consider merely a dogma. You know there are occasionally men in the profession of teaching—as that is my profession I can speak plainly—who pride themselves on being iconoclasts; but unfortunately, when such teachers break their so-called images they supply nothing to replace them. They destroy ideals but offer no others, thus leaving the young boy in doubt and uncertainty. Such a one seems to me to be heaving anchor and starting out on the ocean of life before his course is even charted. It is well not only for church people but for educators everywhere when teaching the young to have in mind the three “C’s” as well as the three “R’s” mentioned so proverbially. By those three “C’s” I mean character, conduct, citizenship. The teaching of religion in public schools is prohibited, but the teaching of character and citizenship is required.

PRINCIPLE OF FASTING APPLIED TO HEALTH

Every principle and ordinance of the Gospel may be attacked from one angle or another as a mere “ism,” but it may also be considered as possessing elements of soul growth, beauty and sublimity.

Consider for a moment this principle of fasting. It is as old as the human race and undoubtedly when first practiced was related to health. It is generally conceded that most people usually consume more food than the body requires. Overeating clogs the system with deleterious waste products. When such a condition exists a short fast is useful as a means of restoring the body to its normal active state. One authority referring to this says, “The great thing about the fast is that it sets you a new standard of health.” And an eminent Scotch physician adds, “Fasting for a longer or a shorter period is often a beneficial practice especially in the case of those who have been living too freely.”

TO SELF-CONTROL

But besides this there is the spiritual strength derived from the subjecting of the physical appetite to the will of the individual. “He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires and fears is more than king.” As in eternal life, so in self-mastery, there is no one great thing which a man may do to obtain it; but there are many little things by observing which self-control may be achieved. And a subjecting of

the appetite to the will and a refusal to satisfy desire are two of these little things. Writing on this very question, the subjection of appetites and desires to the will, the psychologist William James admonishes "To do each day something which you do not like to do." If there were no other virtue in fasting but gaining strength of character, that alone would be sufficient justification for its universal acceptance.

AS AN ECONOMIC BENEFIT

But associated with this practice in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the giving of a fast offering, the underlying purpose and far-reaching benefits of which make the monthly observance of fast day one of the most significant features of this latter-day work. Besides the benefits already mentioned there are: First, all the spiritual uplift that comes from a Christ-like desire to serve one's fellowmen; and Second, an economic means which when carried out by a perfect and active organization will supply the needs of every worthy poor person within the confines of the organized branches of the Church.

The regularly constituted fast consists of abstinence from eating two meals once each month. The value of these two meals is given as a voluntary donation for the relief of those who are hungry or otherwise in distress. Sincere observance of this rule means spiritually that the divine principle of service is expressed and the resultant promise of the Master is merited, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Let us apply this principle to some local condition. Recently there was carried on in Salt Lake City, as in other progressive cities, a campaign to raise \$155,000 to be used for charitable purposes. Suppose that at the beginning of 1931 everybody in this city had observed the fast for the special purpose of aiding the needy through the Community Chest. There are 140,000 people in Salt Lake City. That would be 280,000 meals a month. At an average cost of 10c a meal, \$28,000 a month or \$336,000 a year would be made available for the relief of the poor, or more than twice as much as was collected for this worthy purpose during this year.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

So you may take any phase of this Church and prove its potency in its particular field in the advancement of the individual, in the happiness and peace of the home, in the progress, safety, and perpetuity of society.

God help us to contribute our might and influence to the perpetuation of the Church of Jesus Christ, of which we can truly say: "Persecution has not crushed it; power has not beaten it back; time has not abated its force; and what is most wonderful of all, the abuses and treason of its friends have not shaken its stability." May neither prosperity nor popularity hinder its progress any more than these other forces, and may teachers and parents unite in impressing youth particularly to be loyal to that which we know is good for humanity and contributive to eternal salvation, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.