

that I am not sick and if it were not contrary to the doctor's instructions I would stay right here, but he has told me not to come back this afternoon, and what is the use of having a doctor if you do not obey him?

#### INVOKES BLESSING

May the Lord bless you one and all, is my prayer for you. I thank God that I know we have the truth. I thank God that I know that he lives, that he hears and answers my prayers, that he guides me by his Spirit, that he gives me the inspiration of his Spirit to know what to do and how to do it for the benefit of his people here on the earth. I thank God for the remark made to me by President Joseph F. Smith—the last remark that he made before he passed on—"The Lord knows who he wants to stand at the head of his Church, and the Lord never makes any mistakes. The Lord bless you; the Lord bless you."

God bless you one and all. May we never lose the knowledge that he lives, that he hears and answers our prayers. May we grow in knowledge of Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Savior. May we grow in a knowledge that Joseph Smith was in very deed a prophet; that the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, given even before the Church was organized, have been fulfilled time and time again; that his name should be known for good and evil all over the world, and that he should suffer persecutions. Finally he was martyred for the cause. May we be loyal and true to that prophet and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is my humble prayer, and I ask it in the name of our Redeemer. Amen.

#### ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

##### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brethren and sisters: Today, after hearing the splendid report of the condition of the Church and the thrilling testimony of President Grant, we are all doubly grateful for our membership in this great Church.

Those of us who are fairly certain to be called upon at these conferences are torn between two desires: To bear testimony under the influence and inspiration of these vast gatherings to the truth of the restored Gospel; or to speak to some subject that seems of importance, perhaps of vital importance, to the Latter-day Cause. For this occasion I have chosen the latter course, and should like to discuss with you during the time allotted me, the reading habit, and especially the practice of the regular reading of the scriptures. It may not be directly a spiritual theme; but I have been impressed from my visits among the Stakes of Zion that it is one that needs to be called to the attention of the Latter-day Saints.

#### BOOKS AN AID TO CIVILIZATION

Our present civilization, whether for good or ill, really began when, about four hundred and fifty years ago, the use of movable type in the

printing press was invented. By means of this invention the thoughts of men and the knowledge of the world were distributed in inexpensive form among all classes of men. Thereby the prince and the peasant were brought to a more common level; a new freedom was sensed; the minds of men were liberalized; science and its associations came into being. We may safely date our present civilization, with its abundant knowledge and its freedom and richness of life, from the coming of modern printing.

#### PRINTING OF THE BIBLE A BLESSING

Latter-day Saints see even more in the coming of this great invention. To us it is part of the divine program to prepare the world for the restoration of the Gospel. Throughout the centuries, the Bible had been available only to a few. The cost of producing hand-made copies was too great for the common man to meet. The rank and file of the people learned of the hand-dealings of God with his chosen people from the lips of others, who often changed both words and meaning of the scriptural passage.

The new art of printing soon made the Bible available to all. Learned men, lovers of the Lord, were inspired to render the holy scriptures into the languages of the common people. The Bible became a household possession. The word of God was read around the family fireside of the lowly as well as the parlors of the great. Humanity became widely acquainted with the eternal law of the Lord.

Had it not been for the invention of printing with its gift of more perfect knowledge of the holy scriptures, and the equally new freedom of thought that followed, the coming of the Gospel might have been long delayed. In that sense, we may date even the preparatory Gospel period from the coming of modern printing.

#### VALUE OF LITERATURE IN THE CHURCH

When at length the Gospel was restored, the press became one of its main allies. The first active work of the Restoration was the translation and printing of the Book of Mormon. Soon thereafter, other publications were issued, and since that time to the present, printed matter has flowed steadily from the presses of the Church, to its members and to the people of the world. From its inception in 1830 to this year of 1939, the Church has made prolific use of printed materials.

This vast printed Gospel literature has been of untold value in presenting the restored Gospel to the world. Many have come into the Church from the reading of the Book of Mormon. Time and again, a tract, brought by chance to a person's attention, has led to conversion and membership in the Church. A tract in a shoe returned from the shoemaker was the first real teacher of the Gospel to my family. Today, as the Church spreads over the land, the printed page, in book or periodical, is becoming increasingly important in keeping Church members, everywhere, informed of Church progress, and in maintaining uniformity

in Church doctrine and practice. The printed page has been and is a powerful means to accomplish the labors that the Lord has laid upon his Church.

#### FAITH INCREASES BY STUDY OF GOSPEL PRINCIPLES

Faith itself, the foundation principle of the Gospel, may be developed and maintained by use of printed words. Faith is a living thing, subject to all the laws of life. It may be begotten; it may grow; it may weaken; it may die. Therefore it must be cherished, fostered and fed. Regular, continuous Gospel study, through the printed page, is of prime importance in the maintaining and growth of certain belief.

Moreover, faith must be intelligent. Ignorance breeds superstition, the opposite of faith. Knowledge is a vital ingredient of the foundation of faith. The gaining of knowledge has ever been enjoined upon the Latter-day Saints. "Man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge" declared Joseph Smith. That means, of course, knowledge of truth, the highest expression of which is the Gospel. The position of knowledge is high in the Kingdom of God. Reading is a main avenue to knowledge.

The man who does not add knowledge to knowledge, throughout his life, may endanger his very faith. Latter-day Saints should be readers; they should cultivate the reading habit.

With all this before us, the available evidence indicates that we are not a reading people. Our reading seems to be occasional, unsystematic and fragmentary. The motion picture, the radio, and the automobile, all welcomed by Latter-day Saints, have unduly invaded our reading time. These great gifts to man should be enjoyed by all, but they should be used wisely and moderately, if our zest for them is to be keen. The best of things may be overdone.

#### DAILY READING HABIT URGED

The reading habit is most valuable in life. I mean by that the practice of using a little time, say half an hour a day, in the systematic reading of worthwhile literature. The mind is opened to precious fields of thought; the achievements of the ages become ours; even the future takes form. As the mind and spirit are fed by well chosen reading, comfort, peace and understanding come to the soul. Those who have not tried it, have missed a keen and easily accessible joy.

Moreover, a person who engages in such regular daily reading, if only a few minutes a day, in the course of a few years becomes a learned man. But it must be a regular, daily habit. It is a common experience in the foreign mission field that the less educated man who studies the new language without missing a day becomes a more perfect master, and that sooner, of the language, than the more highly trained elder, who studies the language by fits and starts. Some of the best educated men that I have met have never been in college but have acquired the habit of daily reading of good books for a few minutes a day. And, may I add, this applies to leaders as to the people.

## WARNING AGAINST DEMORALIZING LITERATURE

Of course, reading, as everything else, may be misused. There is on our American market a mass of worthless literature, books and magazines, often sexy, unsound and demoralizing. The land is flooded with them; they are available in every village. They are poisonous offerings which too often make up the reading of young and old. It is a type of intellectual and spiritual suicide. The effects of such reading are much like those of habit-forming drugs, creating unnatural, unhealthy desires, and weakening both body and mind. Such time as we do give to reading should be devoted to carefully selected literature, high grade magazines and books, which cost no more, but build up the mind, and feed the spirit of man.

## THE GOSPEL TO BE STUDIED IN THE PRINTED WORD

However, let it be remembered that no practice surpasses that of reading daily from the sacred scriptures of the Church, and from the expositions of Church history and doctrine by competent writers on Gospel subjects, found in the books, pamphlets and periodicals issued by the Church. The Gospel is a vast system of truth, of such eternal meaning that it is never exhausted. The more it is studied, the more interesting and appealing it becomes. And, the opened vistas of truth that come to the earnest student of the scriptures, increase and maintain faith in the truth and reality of the Gospel. Knowledge of the Gospel is food for faith in the Gospel. Only by careful and continued study can a vision of the majesty of the Gospel be won. Many a spiritual failure may be traced to Gospel starvation.

I fear that too many Latter-day Saints know the Gospel only superficially, and take most of it for granted, without making the effort of inquiry. This is in direct contradiction to the Gospel principle that every member of the Church must, as it were, stand upon his own feet, and know for himself that the Gospel is true. The words of the Lord are clear: "And the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction, and the power of my spirit quickeneth all things."

I urge upon all Latter-day Saints to read the scriptures, thoughtfully, every day. In some households it may even be possible to read a chapter from the scriptures before the evening meal begins, when the family are seated around the table. The practice is helpful to young people.

## SCRIPTURES A GUIDE TO RIGHT LIVING

Whoever has failed to read the scriptures has missed much in life. The beauty and eloquence of language, and the sublimity of ideas, found in the Bible, are not even approached in any man-made literature. The simple faith, and clear exposition of eternal truth, in the Book of Mormon, are as a light on the path of life. The solemnity of thought, and the echo of the voice of the Lord, in the Doctrine and Covenants, guide men in the actions of their lives. And the picture of the eternal love of

God for his children as set forth in the Pearl of Great Price makes the human heart swell with joy. We may well pity the man who does not know the scriptures of the Lord.

If mankind would turn daily to the word of God as found in the scriptures there would be less of warfare and misery, and the dawn of peace would be seen.

#### PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Much of our reading may be supplied, in addition to the standard Church works, by the splendid publications of the Church. The *Deseret News* is a most excellent source of live news, none better, for all who live within the radius of its operations. Every Latter-day Saint family so located which seeks a daily newspaper should subscribe to the *Deseret News*. Several magazines appeal to special groups within the Church: *The Improvement Era*, the organ of the Priesthood quorums, Mutual Improvement Associations, Department of Education, Music Committee, Ward Teachers, and others; the *Relief Society Magazine* representing the great body of mature women in the Church, represented here today by these 1300 melodious Singing Mothers; *The Instructor*, for all Sunday School workers; *The Children's Friend* for children under the direction of the Primary Association; and *The Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, organ of the Genealogical Society of Utah. Besides, there is a somewhat steady flow from Church headquarters of books and pamphlets dealing with the Gospel and related subjects.

While it may not be expected that every family shall possess and read all this material, yet I have a feeling that those who complain most about our wealth of Church literature, are those who read that literature least. Those who do give some time regularly to our Church literature keep up with the progress of the Lord's mighty work, and also increase in Gospel knowledge and Gospel power.

#### ADVICE GIVEN TO HYRUM SMITH

Before the Church was organized, Hyrum Smith became convinced of the truth of his brother's message, and with the fiery zeal of the new convert, desired to go out to preach the Gospel. But, the Lord restrained him and asked him to wait a while. "Seek not to declare my word," said the Lord, "but first seek to obtain my word. . . . Study my word . . . until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, and then shall all things be added thereto." This divine counsel given to Hyrum Smith may well be taken to heart by us of this day. By the study of God's word, we shall not only have the visions of the Gospel opened before us, but our faith will increase and we shall be better able to do our part in carrying forward the latter-day cause of the Lord, for our own welfare and that of our fellow men.

#### GRATITUDE FOR THE GOSPEL

I am grateful for the Gospel, and its advancement among the children

of men; for its truth which throws light into the dark corners of life; and for the faith which every man may win who but seeks it, which declares the reality of the Gospel and all its claims; for the written word to guide and comfort us. As a people we must cherish the gift of the Gospel, increase our faith by adding knowledge to knowledge and good works to better works.

May the Lord help us so to do, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER DAVID A. BROADBENT

#### *President of the North Central States Mission*

My brethren and sisters: If we are to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," I made considerable progress six months ago when I sat here through six long meetings fearing and waiting for this opportunity and then did not get it.

I value above all else in the world my membership in this Church. I take it that it is not expected, nor is it my privilege to preach the Gospel to the Saints at home; my appointment is to those abroad in the world.

We have a fine group of men and women, your sons and daughters—eighty-two in number at present—laboring in the North Central States Mission. They are all well, they are all happy in their labors and rejoicing in the privilege that is theirs to be representatives of this great Church.

As Pasteur seems to have proven definitely that "only life can produce life," I am becoming quite convinced during a period of less than two years of presiding in our mission that *only effective Church training can produce effective missionaries*. We have missionaries of all grades of scholastic training, but neither scholarship nor technical theological knowledge makes successful missionaries; but almost without exception, he or she who has come up through the training of the organizations of our Church, and from homes wherein is found a testimony of the Gospel in which our youths and maidens have imbibed the spirit of the Gospel, these are ready to enter immediately into active service when they arrive in the mission field, regardless of their intellectual training. In saying this I am not unmindful of the fact that "the glory of God is intelligence" and that "a man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge," yet learning has to be made over into wisdom and we have to make ourselves sensitive to the power of the Lord. As the humble fishermen in the days of Christ proved superior to the trained Rabbi, so our missionaries, male and female, who are "born again," in spite of their lack of worldly knowledge prove to be strong expounders of the restored Gospel. These touch the hearts of men great and small as measured by the world. These touch the heart and demonstrate the scriptural truth that "No one can say that Jesus is the Christ except by the Holy Ghost."