

destroyed, a Kingdom that shall not be left to other people, a Kingdom that shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and, the Prophet adds, it is a Kingdom that shall stand forever. It is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, the stone that is to become a great mountain; yes, the prophet says it is the stone that is to fill the whole earth. (Daniel 2) It is our belief that this refers to our own land, choice above all other lands, and to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with its principles of free agency and self-government.

PEACE ACHIEVED THROUGH UNSELFISHNESS

And now, in the name of Him who is our only King, Jesus the Son of God, let us as members of the Church and as citizens of this great nation, unite in an appeal to our heavenly Father, with whom nothing is impossible, to bring to us and to all mankind that glorious blessing of peace, good will and understanding, for which righteous people all over the world these days are so devoutly praying. And when making these our heartfelt, prayerful appeals may we never forget that only by living unselfish lives, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and extending to all men their God-given liberty, can we hope to secure joy and happiness and everlasting peace.

By our faithfulness and devotion to these righteous principles may we bring to our beloved nation and to the distressed people of all the world these choice blessings, I humbly pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I have been impressed as you have by the services thus far this afternoon, and of course what was said this morning. I do not know what part of President Clark's talk impressed you most, but I know what gave me the most comfort. It was when he said: "I will now speak and take a hand in putting myself out of misery." Shocked as I was in hearing one of the Authorities make such an intimation, I thought, "Well that certainly helps some of the rest of us out." After all, as someone has said, "There is as much human nature in one of us as the rest of us."

There are two things that a person prays for in trying to fill this speaking responsibility. One is, he prays that he will feel at ease to the extent that he might say what he would like to say; and, second, that what he does say may be tempered with inspiration from above that he will be wise in saying nothing that would be improper. I certainly pray that I may be blessed in these two regards this afternoon.

VISITS TO STAKES BRING ENCOURAGEMENT

The Presiding Bishopric have been going through the Church considerably lately. We see what is going on here, and what is going on

there, and of course in some of these places we see what is *not* going on. It is a wise observation that we should not be pessimists. We are cautioned to observe the bread part of the doughnut as well as the hole. Now it is not my purpose in any sense to be a pessimist. I want to appreciate the food of the doughnut as well as the space inside.

When you see two hundred lads of the Aaronic Priesthood take part in a chorus in a Stake conference, you begin to realize that somebody is at work with boys. When you see some Stakes do outstanding things you thank God for such leadership. The other day in one of the Stakes I called at a little home and saw sitting on the floor three deep—they had to sit on the floor to be accommodated in the house—about fifty-five to sixty young people, ninety per cent of whom having attended their sacrament meeting this night, now assembled in a Book of Mormon class, wholesomely conducted by themselves. You see those things and you are impressed.

When you see a little Bishop stand up and say that he could account for every one of his Lesser Priesthood boys for the past ten years, and each one of them is wholesome, clean, and sweet, it makes you appreciate what some people are doing. Of course that sounds pretty much like the fellow they tell about crossing the plains, driving a swarm of bees. He contended he did not lose a bee. But I believe that Bishop. God bless him!

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

Now for just a minute let us look at the inside of the doughnut. You cannot ostrich-like put your head under the sand and say there is no danger about you. You have to take facts as they are. There is a fact thrown out to you and to me that is a challenge, and I mention it. This is our work; I mean the Aaronic Priesthood. It is the work of the Presiding Bishopric. *There are right now 36,733 adult Aaronics in this Church of record*; men twenty years of age and above who are not Elders or hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. May I remind you that the average attendance at sacrament meeting of these men is five per cent. I have too much sense to condemn that group of men. The best gold we have, we shall find in those men if we dig down deep enough and use the right process in "smelting the ore." Now there is a challenge to you.

Another way of saying it is that out of ten boys from twelve to twenty you are really teaching or training only six the way you should. Now put that figure in front of us—36,733. Look at it sideways, from the front and from the back, any way you want to look at it! It is there staring us straight in the eye. Someone has said, "Let us have the strength to face a fact though it kills us." Let us face the facts.

Now what about your pedagogy, what about your human kindness, what about your *boys' men*—ability, and all the rest of the virtues that we oftentimes brag about? I ask you the question, where is it all? Where are those other four? Why don't we touch their lives more successfully than we do?

APPEAL FOR BETTER LEADERSHIP

Sometimes I think we give the boys an *acid test* and a *burning test*. Let me explain what I understand that means: If you will take a bone that has stood on an anthill for three or more years, (I don't care how dry it is), and you soak it in muriatic acid, as dry as that bone is you can tie it in a knot. You have nothing but gristle or animal matter left. Now take what you have left and put the torch under it and you haven't very much left of that bone. The muriatic acid in one case eats up the mineral or the lime, and the burning eats up the animal matter.

Now that is just what some of us do with boys. I am looking now at the inside of the doughnut. I am looking at those things we do *not* do. I am keeping in mind all the time some of the fine things that we do. You give the boy the acid test and then the burning test. Now let us see what we mean by the acid test. Here is one:—you give the boy improper supervision. Someone has said, "We are not *shepherds*, we are *sheep herders*." We "*taketh*" them not down into green pastures, but we "*draggeth*" them over cacti and rocks, and before we get through with them, their mouths are bleeding from briars and thorns we "*suffereth*" them to eat. Sometimes if you get a good boys' man for the boys, along comes a petty vacancy in the Ward and you let him go. Somebody suffers. There is not a bigger job in this Church than taking care of these boys. *The boy of today is the man of tomorrow*. When our deacon comes to his quorum meeting, too many times he is met with an unprepared program. He is met too many times with a leader who knows little or nothing about boy psychology or the first principles of getting his interest. We fumble him about with our clumsiness and lack of consistent follow-up until up his sleeve, while he respects us, his soul rebels against our promiscuousness.

When you see these figures—just four out of ten—you may think of that poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and say to yourself, "*Someone has blundered*." We'll have to wake up; we'll have to put more life into our stewardship, if you please, of these boys. I cannot think of anything that better illustrates what I want to say than a story that has been told before. I apologize for alluding to it again, but it may crystallize better what I am trying to say.

A Scotch minister had trouble with a good brother in his congregation who *would* go to sleep. The minister stood it as long as he could. Finally he called Sandy to him and told him he would have to stop going to sleep; he could not stand it any longer; that he was setting a bad example. The brother insisted he couldn't help it. Finally the minister's eyes brightened, and he thought he had some real inspiration. Said he: "When you come to Church next time, bring a little snuff in a can; and when you feel yourself getting drowsy, just apply a little bit of snuff in your nose."

Then his good church patron had some inspiration and he came back with: "Wouldn't it be an awful good thing if you'd put a wee bit o' snuff into your sermons." *We'll have to put more snuff in our teaching of boys*.

I wouldn't have a lad that wouldn't wiggle, and if you think the way some of you folks take care of this wiggling lad, the way you handle him is right, you are sadly mistaken. I hate to say it, but I do not hesitate for one minute. I have seen conditions that warrant my saying it. The leadership sometimes of these boys is dead on its feet. We do get into ruts, and boys that look for a little spark of animation from us are disappointed.

In a lecture that was delivered before a hospital convention the other night, a wise observation was made by the speaker. He spoke in hospital terms because they understood them. He warned them against a disease altogether too prevalent. This ailment has afflicted too many men who are supposed to lead boys. The lecturer said: "If you get the disease there is no need of being vaccinated; that won't do you any good; they cannot operate; when you get this disease, the only thing you can do is to *blast*. Now here is the disease: it is metallurgic fever. It is the condition in the body where the iron in the body turns to lead and centers in the seat of the trousers."

Here is another way of saying the same thing:

Man was not made to sit entranced
 And press, and press, and press his pants,
 But rather with an open mind
 To circulate among his kind.
 So, my friend, beware the snare
 That lurks within the cushioned chair.
 To run the race it has been found
 Both feet must be upon the ground.

THE TRUE STORY OF A BOY

Now I say these things seriously. We ourselves are in a deep slumber and we expect to keep awake a wiggling, wholesome, American boy. That is an *acid* test. What may be another acid test?—not putting the proper value on a boy. Do you look to the value of the heart that beats under his coat, or do you see only the outside of the coat? Many a good mother misjudges a boy because he is not a Lord Faunteroy. Because he doesn't keep his hair combed, you think he is on the road downward. Sometimes you do not see him as he really is. He puts his worst foot forward; he is in the "ugly duckling" stage. But if he were treated anywhere near right, he would develop into a bird of real plumage and grace.

To illustrate: A little girl of the slums was found dangerously sick. There must be a blood transfusion at once. Her ragged urchin brother was accosted:—would he give his blood for his sister? "Sure," he thundered back. After they had worked on his arm for a few minutes, its whiteness, because of the wash, he had not witnessed before, almost frightened him to death. The pumping apparatus was set to work and his sister revived. When he learned that his sister fared well, notice the deep-seated surprise back to the doctor. (I hope you get it.) "Fine, Doc, but when do I croak?"

Do you in judging look at the thread-bare ragged apparel, or are you

bent on discerning the sacrificing thump of the heart that beats deeper down in his soul?

Christ said that no greater thing can any man do than to give his life for his fellows. That young lad thought that when he was asked to give his blood for his sister, it meant that he was giving his life. We in our civilization box the ears of the lad until his ear drums are numb and he is deaf the rest of his life, and that same fellow is the man who gives you your electric light today. We put a dunce cap on an Einstein, and our schools court martial the boy who may be the military general of tomorrow, who cuts through smoke and shrapnel to victory and makes this the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

Not understood. Poor souls with *stunted vision*
 Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge;
 The poisoned shafts of falsehood and derision
 Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age
 Not understood.

Not understood. How many hearts are aching
 For lack of sympathy? Ah, day by day
 How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking
 How many noble spirits pass away
 Not understood.

Oh God, that man would see a little *clearer*
 Or *judge less harshly* where they cannot see,
 Oh God, that men would draw a little nearer
 To one another, they'd be nearer Thee
 Not understood.

With this boy is our *vision stunted* and do we *measure* him by our *narrow gauge*? Fathers and mothers, you make some mistakes. Teachers in schools, and we in the Church should *see* a little *clearer* and *judge less harshly*.

TEACHERS MAY INFLUENCE BY EXAMPLE

Now to the burning test to this lad: I mention it as the third test, but not the least. The burns that take place here go down into the bone. Now I am speaking of the example that we set as the teachers of this boy. What kind of men do your Bishops pick to teach these boys? what kind of life are we, whom the boy is supposed to look up to, living? If you please, *will our lives "hold water?"* Do we have a long face on the Sabbath day and in holy places, and play a different tune in our conduct in the affairs of men in the ordinary business of life? In my judgment there is nothing doing more harm in this Church today than men who are trying to play a double game. The boy always finds it out. You can't fool him. By our conduct we often pull up by the roots the most precious sprouts of confidence ever germinated.

To illustrate what I am driving at: Maybe some of you remember Deacon Jones, who is mentioned in the book, "David Harum." He was a sanctimonious, wonderful fellow on the Sabbath day, but during the week you had to hold on tight to your eyebrows or he would take them too—one of those two-faced "angelic" souls that grace this world; the

kind Christ speaks of in his rebuke to the old Pharisees; a front as pious as apple sauce, but a trail on the sands of time of dead men's bones. He was on his deathbed; he was doomed to go. He had made quite an impression on some of the village who did not think very straight; but he did not fool the boys. The boys had his number. He began to sink, and sink, and finally he got so low that instead of answering the doorbell or the knock on the door by the inquirers, they had a blackboard put out in front of his abode. Every half hour the attending physician gave his temperature and his pulse. There was quite a commotion in the village, everybody was watching that blackboard. Well, the boys watched it, too, and they were waiting for an opportunity to express themselves. (If you ever want to get the proper value on yourself, ask the boys.) I think the last bulletin read, "8:05 a. m.—pulse 50, temperature 86." When nobody was looking, a bright lad, with mischief bent, who knew the Deacon, slipped up with a piece of chalk, and excitingly recorded: "8:22½ a. m. Much excitement in hell; Deacon Jones not yet arrived."

As Bobbie Burns put it, "The man of independent mind looks and laughs at *a', that*."

DISCIPLINE MOLDS CHARACTER

Now I would not have you think for a minute that I want you to pamper this boy. Let him stand on his own feet. One man said: "One of the greatest crops that America is reaping today is the spoiled child." Some of you people who have worked all your lives are as guilty as the man of wealth. You say, "I have had such a hard time in my life that I certainly won't let my children go through the same thing." And the spoiling process goes on. I do not think that we appreciate to the full extent what this means. Does your girl or boy know how to spell "gratitude"? Do you let your boy fight for what he gets, or do you hand him all his desires on a silver platter.

I remember at our home, for years and years, we had a cow. (I won't forget the cow because of certain responsibilities I had connected with it.) Every time a calf would come to town, father would in the course of events send at the proper time for the butcher. But there was one little heifer that father said we would keep. When that animal was about nine months old, father came home one day with a big strap with spikes driven from the inside out. He said that it was to go over the calf's nose. In other words, the day had arrived when the calf must be weaned. I wonder sometimes if we parents use the same philosophy on our children? Do we wean them? I am speaking now figuratively. Many a boy becomes eighteen, or twenty, goes through school, and, if you please, remains not weaned. Many a boy is spoiled because you can't spank grandmothers. Yes, too, because you can't spank parents. Until the last few years, I have thought that the cow ought to have worn the strap and the spikes ought to center in that part of her anatomy that the calf was most interested in. But I have changed my mind entirely, I think that as far as the children are concerned, the strap still belongs over their noses with the spikes going out. Parents should be painfully

reminded when the occasion arises that the weaning is in process. America will learn before she gets through that her children *should know more than stepping on the gas, smoking Turkish blends, and ordering up chocolate eclairs and tutti-frutis*. Yes, and what's true of the children of Uncle Sam is doubly true of this Church.

I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still
It moved and yielded to my will.
I came again when days were past,
The bit of clay was hard at last;
The form I gave it still it bore
But I could change it never more.

I took a piece of human clay
And gently formed it day by day;
I molded with my power and art
A young child's warm and yielding heart.
I came again when days were gone,
It was a man I looked upon.
The form I gave him still he bore;
But I could change him never more.

Now, may the Lord bless us in this boys' business. Don't forget while we are putting the acid test and the burning test on this lad, tobacco shoots her shrapnel, liquor drops bombs from the sky, and then you find indolence and bad habits walk arm in arm with the boy to destruction.

Let's handle this boy more scientifically. Let's give him more attention. He's more valuable than our crops, our hogs, and our business. *He is the man of tomorrow*. Give him the right start. The boy is like a zipper; start him right and he'll come through. Don't jerk him, you might tear the meshes and then you haven't a track to travel on.

May God help us to *hold these boys*, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

The *Singing Mothers Chorus*, under the direction of Sister Nellie M. Bennion, will sing: "The Lord is my light," by Allitson.

I am sure that I express the gratitude of all the people here in conference, and those who have been listening in on the air to these *Singing Mothers* for their splendid music.

Again I urge you brethren and sisters to drive carefully, and save your lives and the lives of others.

The chorus sang "The Lord is my Light." (By Allitson)

Elder Charles C. Heaton, President of the Kanab Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 10 o'clock a. m., Saturday, October 5, 1940.