

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor In the Presiding Bishopric

If I remember correctly, I followed Brother Kirkham last conference, and as far as I am concerned, I will be glad to follow him any time, and yes, follow in his footsteps all the way. I am not like the gentleman who had a wife like the wife that Brother Thomas E. McKay spoke about in conference. He didn't want her nagging at him. He wanted her away from the battle so he could fight in peace. He had a wife who thought she was better than he. Before she died, she had put on her tombstone, "Follow me." You see, she wanted him to land in the celestial realms she was dead sure of. He wasn't quite satisfied with the epitaph as it was, so he finished it. It then read, "To follow thee I'm not content, until I know which way you went."

THE WORK WITH THE BOYS OF THE CHURCH

Oscar Kirkham has done a wonderful work in this Church and particularly with boys. If I could follow him all the way, I would be very content. I had the pleasure of riding down to conference in the automobile this morning with Elder Merrill. We were talking about some of the observations he made with boys in this conference. He was very kind to us, I thought, and by virtue of his observations in the conversation this morning, I am spurred on to say some of the things I am going to try to say this afternoon. I told him I couldn't say what I wanted to say at our Aaronic Priesthood meeting, because if I went into too much detail the bishop and his counselors of a certain ward would be sure to guess about whom I was talking, and I have so much to answer for now that I wouldn't be that brave. Brother Merrill said, "Surely, you don't mean to say that 'tyranny' towards boys exists today." When I told him the whole story, he could hardly believe it. The trouble with many of the fine things we hear is that they always mean the other fellow. We don't "Stop, Look, and Listen." That sign on some of your farms says, "This means you." Some of these observations I am trying to make do mean you and me.

Like Brother Merrill, I had another talk I wanted to give this afternoon, but I am throwing it away. To hear me tell it, my very best talks I have never given. Of course, that isn't hard to believe, and such news is comforting.

Someone has said the reason the boy likes a dog is because it is the only thing around the ranch that doesn't criticize him. When he's around, he's a pain in the neck. Yes, but if you had the experience of some of the rest of us, when he isn't around, it's a pain in the heart. Stay with him. I saw one of the finest demonstrations of love for a boy in Yellowstone Stake. The story is about President Hess of that stake, and I am going into some detail:

STORIES ABOUT BOYS

I was attending a big banquet in St. Anthony, about six hundred strong, the select of the land. All the fathers of the stake were there sitting beside their sons. Yes, they hired the biggest hall in the place. Some of us were sitting at the head table. I discovered about three chairs from where I was sitting something that decidedly interested me. It was a half-kept kid. The back of his head looked like the back of a dog. What I'm trying to say is that he'd been neglected. I went on without asking any questions, and yet I got curious. After the party was over I inquired as to who the lad was. Here is the story I got: Coming down the highway from his home President Hess was accosted by a shabbily dressed lad. The boy was invited to get in the car. He asked, "Where are you going, mister?" The answer was, "I'm going to a party for fathers and their sons." The boy was a real Yankee. He said, "Where is your boy?" "I haven't him with me tonight," came the answer of the president. "Well, say, mister, why can't I be your son tonight?" Well, the end of the story is, that urchin sat at the head of the table as big as you please with the rest of us. *Brethren, that's America. That's the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* You never can tell what's under that mat of shaggy hair. You can never tell what heart beats buttoned up in that threadbare coat. Let's love him.

Did you ever hear the story of the lad in the slums and his little sister who desperately took sick? There had to be a transfusion. (We'll go through the story in a hurry.) They thought her brother's blood would match. They tried it out, and it "clicked." When asked to give his blood for his sister, he said, "Sure." When they cleaned his arm, its whiteness, with the dirt off, nearly scared him to death. Well, they took a pint of his blood. An hour after the pumping procedure he was told that his sister had revived and was getting along fine. But what was the question the kid of the slums asked? It was, "Doc, when do I croak? When do I croak?" He thought when he was asked to give his blood to his sister that it meant he was to give his life for his sister. I repeat, "Will you give your blood to your sister?" "Sure." That was the answer from an American lad of the slums.

Christ said that no man is greater than he who gives his life for his fellows. Sometimes virtue is put up in clumsy parcels, but underneath often you've got gold.

A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE

Talk the boy's language. Be reasonably firm. Don't let him run over you. No boy loves you if you let him run over you.

I once heard a very interesting story about the boys of a certain school district years ago in a backwoods country. They rode every teacher out of the village. The school trustees didn't know what to

do about it. As fast as a new teacher came he was ridden out. Finally, one of the trustees said, "I have a fellow that can take care of this school." They cried out, "Trot him out. Send him here." The teacher got to the school Monday morning at eight-thirty and brought with him his six-shooter. (I remind you that this was a school in a wild country.) Well, a hawk floated overhead, flying a little low. He was circling around, and he was a real temptation. The new teacher pulled out the six-shooter, pulled the trigger twice, and the hawk fell at his feet. Of course, the school population gathered around this crack shot. He observed, "That wasn't so bad, was it?" Well, he next went into the schoolroom. He noticed the blackboard wasn't kept so spick and span, that a bull's-eye on the board with a couple of holes in it would not do any particular harm. He stepped off a few steps, took the six-shooter, pulled the trigger a couple of times more, hitting the bull's-eye squarely, and said, "That wasn't so bad, was it?"

Well, he was talking their language. But he wasn't through yet. He pulled out his watch. "It's time to ring the bell." He picked the leader of the gang, the one that had done the most in the past in running former teachers out of their country. He requested, "Ring the bell." The fellow stepped back with his fingers in his vest and replied, "Ring it yourself." Out came the six-shooter. It pointed at the bully. "Ring the bell." He did.

Now, I didn't say that if you want to lead a bunch of boys take a six-shooter with you. I didn't mean that. But talk their language and have them mind.

PRaise FOR STAKE LEADERS

God bless you fine men. To repeat again, as we go around your stakes and see what you are doing, if we were to give way to our feelings we would sit down and cry like babies at your accomplishing great things. You are doing a fine job. I don't know what some of us do for you in the way of inspiration when we stand before you, but I know what inspiration we get from you in holding your hands and looking into your eyes. God bless you. Amen.

ELDER HUGH B. BROWN

*President of British Mission and Church Coordinator
for Service Men*

My brethren and sisters: I am very grateful for the unexpected privilege of attending this great conference. I am proud to be the messenger to bring love and greetings from the saints of the British mission, the people who have endured so much during the last five years of war. These people have seen their homes, villages, towns and cities destroyed, but have carried on in the face of difficulties