

the glorious work they are performing, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

My brothers and sisters, it is a wonderful privilege to be able to attend this conference with you today. I thank the Lord for membership in this great Church.

THE "PEARL OF GREAT PRICE"

When Jesus was among men, he said that the gospel was the pearl of great price, and one seeking goodly pearls would sell all that he had in order that he might acquire the pearl of great price. I thank God that I possess this pearl of great price through having membership with you in this great Church. And then Jesus indicated that if we would seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness that all other things would be added unto us. Not that we seek last, that we give him the crumbs that fall, as it were, from the Master's table, but that we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and I thank the Lord that there are so many faithful Latter-day Saints who are seeking first the kingdom and they are enjoying the gifts and the blessings of the Lord which are above all other riches in this world.

KEEPING UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

One of the means by which we can increase our spirituality and appreciation of the gospel is by doing what the Lord has suggested in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day. (D. & C. 59:9.)

Is there any true Latter-day Saint who would not like to keep himself more unspotted from the world? Is there any father or mother in Israel who would not like his or her sons and daughters to keep themselves unspotted from the world? We have been greatly impressed by the letters we have received from our boys and girls away from home during this war—how they have traveled, in many cases in jeeps, for miles in order that they might meet with a few more of our boys and girls, and these letters have indicated the joy that these boys and girls have had when they could meet together. These letters have convinced us that such meetings have contributed largely to the ability of our boys and girls to go out into the world of men, wicked as it is, and keep themselves unspotted from the world.

Jesus said:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:20.)

Wouldn't you like to go where he is? Wouldn't you like your children to go where he is, where they can visit with him through his holy spirit and feel his power? For I do know that when men and women meet together in his name, there he is present at least by the power of his holy spirit.

While I was attending a stake conference a short time ago a bishop handed me a copy of a letter written by a young man from Normandy just following D-Day, where he had been engaged in the conflict, and in substance he said to his bishop: "Bishop, when I was home I didn't bother you very much. I never came to your church, but when I come back I am serving notice on you now that I want a reserved seat, and I will always be there to occupy it." Well, he did not come back. He fell in action, but methinks that in the heavens above the heavenly hosts would recognize the expressed wish of that boy.

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE AT SACRAMENT MEETINGS

Brothers and sisters, I think there is nothing more important, if we would find joy and peace and the happiness the gospel has to give, than that we as Latter-day Saints form the habit of attending our sacrament meetings and taking our children with us. I think the Church has a right to expect that of its leaders. I think the Lord expects it of us. It always grieves me if I hear someone say, "Well, he or she is a general board member, a member of the high council, a member of some ward in a position of responsibility, and he does not attend sacrament meetings." I tell you we just cannot live our lives alone, either. We need the blessings that come from meeting together, and we need to set the example to those who are about us, for as with the priest so with the people, and the people are likely to follow if we set the example and point the way.

Jeremiah of old, speaking of our day said:

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jer. 3:14-15.)

Many of us have spent many years of our lives inviting backsliding Israel, the children of God, to come to Zion, and when they arrive here they find out how marvelous is the organization of the Church and the priesthood quorums and the auxiliaries that Brother Kirkham has been speaking of, which the Lord has provided to feed them with knowledge and understanding if they will only come and attend their meetings; but if they do not attend their meetings, how can the Lord feed them with knowledge and understanding as he has promised?

I remember reading the remarks of President Grant where he said he knew Saints in foreign lands who would walk miles to be able to attend a sacrament meeting because they loved the truth and they

loved the Church; and when they came here that love waxed cold and they would not even walk across the street; and then he indicated that just as the body without food will wither and die so also will the spirit of man wither and die without spiritual food. And I could not help thinking of the words of Jesus. After he had fasted forty days, (and there can be no question but what he was hungry), the devil came to tempt him and pointing to the stones said:

. . . If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But Jesus rebuked him in the words of Isaiah, saying:

. . . It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:3-4.)

We must go where the words of God are to be heard if we would not wither and die spiritually.

Brigham Young said:

Whether we be poor or rich, if we neglect our prayers and our sacrament meetings, we neglect the Spirit of the Lord, and a spirit of darkness comes over us. (*Journal of Discourses* 10:300.)

We do not want to neglect our prayers; we do not want to neglect attendance at our sacrament meetings. We do not want a spirit of darkness to come over us. I want to bear testimony to you Latter-day Saints, as a result of my own experience and training, and that of my children, that I know of no better way that we can keep the spirit of God burning in our souls and in their souls than by attending sacrament meetings. When I walked out of our fast meeting one day with my son, who was a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, he turned to me and said, "Daddy, if the bishop had not announced the closing song just when he did, I could not have kept my seat another minute." And I thanked the Lord that my boy was there to feel that spirit and that power, for

. . . where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:20.)

When I think of how marvelously the Lord has provided for our spiritual growth and edification and advancement, and how dilatory some of us are in accepting his invitation, I feel, as I imagine Alma did, of old, when he said:

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth. (Alma 29:1.)

that I might be able to make the Saints realize the importance of their responsibilities in these matters. I wonder when Jesus does meet according to his promise, and there are groups of two or three where there might be tens or hundreds, if he does not feel as he did when he stood overlooking Jerusalem and cried out,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not! (Matt. 23:37.)

Then he adds:

Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:38-39.)

May we accept his invitation, mingle with the Saints, strengthen the wards in their meetings where we reside, that we may not have a spirit of darkness come over us and that our houses may not be left desolate unto us.

May God bless this great Church and kingdom and all its members, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

There is always safety in either a silent prayer or a request aloud by one having this responsibility. Yes, it is safer to have the prayers in our behalf of those who are listening in. I am keeping in mind some of the words of President McKay in his prayer today, namely: "May those who take part today say those things they should, that when they have finished there will be no regrets." I have in mind also a few words uttered by Sister Kate Barker yesterday in Relief Society conference in her prayer. I thought those words just a little unusual. They were: "Lord we thank thee for another chance." She was speaking of the world war and that it is now over. In other words, we are all happy and thankful to the Lord that we are still here and have another chance to go on.

THE POWER OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

So much has been said of late about the atomic bomb that one mentioning it here shows considerable bravery. It takes considerable intelligence, they tell me, to know much about this discovery. Therefore, I can say very little about it. I know this (if you can believe what you read) that where that bomb struck, incident to the first real experiment in the dry hills of New Mexico, that it took the sand of the desert and made glass out of it, so terrific was the generated heat in the explosion. I don't know too much about the damage done by the atomic bomb to the cities where dropped, but I have a prayer in my heart that the explosion of those bombs and the realization of the possibilities of their destruction have done something to the human mind. I must say that years ago I didn't know whether or not I liked the expression "God-fearing people." I thought we shouldn't fear God too much and that we should have his love rather than to be afraid of him. As I grew older, however, I began to think and wonder if there wasn't some sound philosophy in having