

the soundness of his principles and doctrines will be vindicated fully and completely. He cannot be removed or explained away by slander or vilification. He presented a plan which provides for the exaltation of the individual, the perpetuity and the coherence of the family, and the safety and security of the nation. He put divine approval upon the establishment of our republic and proclaimed freedom and equal rights as essential factors in man's progress and advancement. He declared that America was a land of promise, held in reserve by the Almighty for the fulfilment and the accomplishments of God's purposes. No one has sounded a higher note of patriotism than did Joseph Smith. In his veins flowed the blood of the Revolutionary Fathers, and to him the Constitution was an inspired instrument of government.

Joseph Smith gave to the world a foundation for intelligent faith, and he has also given to honest, sincere doubters a kindly light to lead them forward and upward to a higher goal and a more satisfying life. His testimony to the world still stands. God bless his memory. May his words and teachings be preserved to bless the human family forever, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## PRESIDENT DAVID O. Mc KAY

### *Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

When, on one occasion, the Prophet Joseph Smith was asked the meaning of the strength of Zion, he replied:

The strength of Zion is to put on the power of the priesthood.

You, brethren, radiate that strength tonight. No one can be in your presence as the priesthood of the Church filling this building, and representing thousands of others, without feeling heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of being numbered with you. God bless you!

### THE SACRAMENT

I desire, tonight, to say a few words regarding the administering of the sacrament. In so doing it is not my purpose to repeat the excellent sermon delivered yesterday by Elder Marion G. Romney on that same subject, but if I may be blessed with the spirit of this gathering and the inspiration of the Lord, I desire to supplement that timely address.

The greatest comfort in this life is the assurance of having close relationship with God. I am speaking to men who know what that experience is. The sacrament period should be a factor in awakening this sense of relationship.

... the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:  
And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat:  
this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.  
After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped,

saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. (I Cor. 11:23-28.)

No more sacred ordinance is administered in the Church of Christ than the administration of the sacrament. It was initiated just after Jesus and the Twelve had partaken of the last supper; and the Saints in the early days followed that custom. That is, they ate before they administered the sacrament, but that custom was later discontinued by instructions from Paul to the Saints to eat their meal at home so that when they met for worship they might meet as a body of brethren and sisters on the same level to partake of the sacrament in remembrance of the life and the death, particularly the death of their Lord.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRAMENT

There are three things fundamentally important associated with the administration of the sacrament. The first is self-discernment. It is introspection. "This do in remembrance of me," but we should partake *worthily*, each one examining himself with respect to his worthiness.

Secondly, there is a covenant made; a *covenant* even more than a promise. You have held up your hand, some of you, or if in England when signing a document, put your hand on the Bible, signifying the value of your promise or of the oath that you took. All this indicates the sacredness of a covenant. There is nothing more important in life than that. Until the nations realize the value of a covenant and promises and conduct themselves accordingly, there will be little trust among them. Instead there will be suspicion, doubt, and signed agreements, "scraps of paper," because they do not value their word. A covenant, a promise, should be as sacred as life. That principle is involved every Sunday when we partake of the sacrament.

Thirdly, there is another blessing, and that is a sense of close relationship with the Lord. There is an opportunity to commune with oneself and to commune with the Lord. We meet in the house that is dedicated to him; we have turned it over to him; we call it his house. Well, you may rest assured that he will be there to inspire us if we come in proper attune to meet him. We are not prepared to meet him if we bring into that room our thoughts regarding our business affairs, and especially if we bring into the house of worship feelings of hatred toward our neighbor, or enmity and jealousy towards the Authorities of the Church. Most certainly no individual can hope to come into communion with the Father if that individual entertain any such feelings. They are so foreign to worship, and so foreign, particularly, to the partaking of the sacrament.

## THE VALUE OF MEDITATION

I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion. In our worship there are two elements: One is spiritual communion arising from our own meditation; the other, instruction from others, particularly from those who have authority to guide and instruct us. Of the two, the more profitable introspectively is the meditation. Meditation is the language of the soul. It is defined as "a form of private devotion, or spiritual exercise, consisting in deep, continued reflection on some religious theme." Meditation is a form of prayer. We can say prayers without having any spiritual response. We can say prayers as the unrighteous king in *Hamlet* who said: "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

The poet, contrasting the outward form of worship, and the prayer of the soul, said:

The Power incensed, the pageant will desert,  
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;  
But haply, in some cottage far apart,  
May hear, well-pleased, the language of the soul.  
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.  
(Burns, "The Cotter's Saturday Night.")

Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. Jesus set the example for us. As soon as he was baptized and received the Father's approval, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Jesus repaired to what is now known as the mount of temptation. I like to think of it as the mount of meditation where, during the forty days of fasting, he communed with himself and his Father, and contemplated upon the responsibility of his great mission. One result of this spiritual communion was such strength as enabled him to say to the tempter:

. . . Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matt. 4:10.)

Before he gave to the Twelve the beautiful sermon on the mount, he was in solitude, in communion. He did the same thing after that busy Sabbath day, when he arose early in the morning, after having been the guest of Peter. Peter undoubtedly found the guest chamber empty, and when they sought him they found him alone. It was on that morning that Peter said:

. . . All men seek for thee. (Mark 1:37.)

Again, after Jesus had fed the five thousand he told the Twelve to dismiss the multitude, but Jesus went to the mountain for solitude. The historian says, "when the evening was come, he was there alone." (Matt. 14:23.) Meditation! Prayer!

I once read a book written by a very wise man, whose name I cannot now recall, which contained a significant chapter on prayer. The author was not a member of the Church, but evidently had a

desire to keep in close communion with God, and he wanted to find the truth. Among other things he said in substance:

In secret prayer go into the room, close the door, pull down the shades, and kneel in the center of the room. For a period of five minutes or so, say nothing. Just think of what God has done for you, of what are your greatest spiritual and temporal needs. When you sense that, and sense his presence, then pour out your soul to him in thanksgiving.

#### SACRAMENT PERIOD FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD

I believe the short period of administering the sacrament is one of the best opportunities we have for such meditation, and there should be nothing during that sacred period to distract our attention from the purpose of that ordinance.

One of the most impressive services I have ever attended was in a group of over eight hundred people to whom the sacrament was administered, and during that administration not a sound could be heard excepting the ticking of the clock—eight hundred souls, each of whom at least had the opportunity of communion with the Lord. There was no distraction, no orchestra, no singing, no speaking. Each one had an opportunity to search himself introspectively and to consider his worthiness or unworthiness to partake of the sacrament. His was the privilege of getting closer to his Father in heaven. That is ideal!

Brethren, we recommend that we surround this sacred ordinance with more reverence, with perfect order, that each one who comes to the house of God may meditate upon his goodness and silently and prayerfully express appreciation for God's goodness. Let the sacrament hour be one experience of the day in which the worshiper tries at least to realize within himself that it is possible for him to commune with his God.

Great events have happened in this Church because of such communion, because of the responsiveness of the soul to the inspiration of the Almighty. I know it is real. President Wilford Woodruff had that gift to a great extent. He could respond; he knew the "still small voice" to which some are still strangers. You will find that when these most inspirational moments come to you that you are alone with yourself and your God. They come to you probably when you are facing a great trial, when the wall is across your pathway, and it seems that you are facing an insurmountable obstacle, or when your heart is heavy because of some tragedy in your life. I repeat, the greatest comfort that can come to us in this life is to sense the realization of communion with God.

#### FATHER'S TESTIMONY

Great testimonies have come in those moments. It is just such an experience as that which came to my father in the north of Scotland when, as I have told some of you before, he prayed to God to remove

from him a spirit of gloom and despondency that overwhelmed him. After a night of worry and restlessness, he arose at daylight and repaired to a cave on the shore of the North Sea. He had been there before in prayer. There, just as the rays of the morning light began to come over the sea, he poured out his soul to God as a son would appeal to his father. The answer came: "Testify that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God!" The cause of his discouragement flashing upon his mind, he said aloud: "Lord, it is enough!"

There are those in this audience who knew my father and can testify to his integrity and his honesty. A testimony of that kind has one hundred percent value.

These secret prayers, these conscientious moments in meditation, these yearnings of the soul to reach out to feel the presence of God—such is the privilege of those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.

### ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTING THOUGHTS

Now I know that some of you are saying to yourselves, "music helps to intensify that feeling of communion." When you stop to consider the matter, you realize that there is nothing during the administration of the sacrament of an extraneous nature so important as *remembering* our Lord and Savior, nothing so worthy of attention as considering the value of the promise we are making. Why should anything distract us? Is there anything more sublime? We are witnessing there, in the presence of one another, and before him, our Father, that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, that we will always remember him, *always*, that we will keep his commandments that he has given us. Can you, can anybody living, who thinks for a moment, place before us anything which is more sacred or more far-reaching in our lives? If we partake of it mechanically, we are not honest, or let us say, we are permitting our thoughts to be distracted from a very sacred ordinance.

I was speaking recently to one man about this. He said: "Oh, but the beautiful music of the choir helps us to concentrate." Concentrate on what? The more beautiful the music, the more your attention is attracted to it, to the player, or to the composer. If it is beautiful music poorly played, then the discord detracts your attention. Have that music in preparation up to the moment, yes, but when the prayer is said, and that young priest speaks for us, as he does, then remember that we are placing ourselves under covenant. It will be ideal if, during the fifteen minutes, every man, woman, and child will think as best as he or she can of the significance of that sacred ordinance.

There is one other point which might be associated with the passing of the sacrament. It is a beautiful, impressive thing to have our boys administer it. They are the servants; they are waiting upon us and waiting upon the Lord; and have come there because they are worthy to officiate if the bishop has spoken to them properly.

. . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. (Isaiah 52:11.)

If every boy could sense this, quietly and with dignity he would pass the sacrament to us. Sometimes they pass it first to the organist, as if no moment should be lost before she starts to distract our attention. The music starts at once. No matter how good it may be, the tones of the organ, if we are respectful to the organist, divert our attention from the prayer that has just been offered.

#### PRESIDING OFFICERS TO RECEIVE SACRAMENT FIRST

Rather should that young man carry the sacrament to the presiding officer, not to honor him, but the office, as you honored our President tonight. That presiding officer may be the bishop of the ward; if so, let the young man carry the sacrament first to the bishop. After that pass it to one after the other who sit either on the left or the right of the presiding officer; not going back to the first and second counselors and then to the superintendent. The lesson is taught when the sacrament is passed to the presiding officer. The next Sunday, the president of the stake may be there, who is then the highest ecclesiastical authority. Do you see what the responsibility of the deacons and the priests is? There is a lesson in government taught every day. It is their duty to know who is the presiding officer in that meeting that day. Next Sunday there may be one of the General Authorities. Those young men will have in mind the question, "Who is he today, and who is the presiding authority?"

#### COMPANIONSHIP OF HOLY SPIRIT

But the lesson I wish to leave tonight is: Let us make that sacrament hour one of the most impressive means of coming in contact with God's spirit. Let the Holy Ghost, to which we are entitled, lead us into his presence, and may we sense that nearness, and have a prayer offered in our hearts which he will hear.

My thought is partially expressed by Edwin Markham in the following lines:

The builder who first bridged Niagara's gorge,  
Before he swung his cable, shore to shore,  
Sent out across the gulf his venturing kite  
Bearing a slender cord for unseen hands  
To grasp upon the further cliff and draw  
A greater cord, and then a greater yet;  
Till at last across the chasm swung  
The cable—then the mighty bridge in air!

So may we send our little timid thought  
Across the void, out to God's reaching hands—  
Send our love and faith to thread the deep—  
Thought after thought until the little cord  
Has greatened to a chain no chance can break.  
And we are anchored to the infinite!

God help us, brethren, so to live that we may sense the reality, as I bear you my testimony tonight it is real, that we can commune with our Father in heaven, and if we so live to be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Spirit, he will guide us into all truth; he will show us things to come; he will bring all things to our remembrance; he will testify of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as I do tonight, and of the restoration of the gospel, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Men's Chorus sang "Unfold Ye Portals Everlasting."

### PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, Jr.

#### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

Brethren, I renew to you a sentiment that I think I have expressed every time I have met this great group of priesthood, since I have had the opportunity to address you. It is a great joy to be with you, to feel your spirit and to enjoy the inspiration which comes from your presence. I renew again the thought that I have so often expressed that if we could bring real unity, the unity of one man, into the priesthood of this Church, we would wield an influence that would affect the course of world affairs. We cannot do it and will not do it until we are so united. It is my belief that it is our opportunity, not only, but also our duty and responsibility to come, as the old expression went, "to a unity of the faith." I cannot believe that the Lord will hold us guiltless if we do not do this. It is the obligation of those who bear the Holy Priesthood of God.

#### NEGLIGIBLE PERCENTAGE OF FINANCIAL MISHAPS

Yesterday, in an aside comment I made, as I was reading the financial report, I did you brethren an injustice. I think that I said that our financial mishaps in carrying on all this tremendous expenditure and collection of funds would not exceed one tenth of one percent. In the last ten years there has been just a little over in mishap, eight ten-thousandths of one percent, and out of all those who handle these great funds there is not one man who is under bond. I dislike to boast about ourselves, but I think we may challenge the world on that record. I am grateful to you brethren for your integrity, your honesty, and your truthfulness which represents a long step toward the unit to which I have already referred.

#### SCRIPTURES REFERRING TO ONE TRUE GOSPEL

I thought tonight that I might read a little scripture to you and then refer to a matter to which I have referred before and which is very near to my heart. I am reading from Second Nephi, 26th chapter and 20th verse: