

to the great parable of the talents spoken of by Jesus. He likened the kingdom of heaven to a man about to journey to a far country who called his servants to him and delivered to them his goods *in proportion to their several abilities*. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. He who received the five talents forthwith traded with them and doubled them. So likewise did he who received the two talents. But he of the one talent hid it. When the master returned, each gave his accounting. They who had multiplied their talents were commended, but he who returned but the one talent which had been given him was denounced as a slothful servant, and it was taken from him and given to the one who had converted the five into ten.

CHURCH PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK

This brings me to the lesson I want to draw from all that has been said before and furnishes the justification for saying it. This Church is so organized that it provides something for every member to do. And the doing of those things offers the only means by which members grow toward their promised destiny. Teachings are, in themselves, mere abstractions, powerless to save unless they are translated into deeds. It is the doing of the deeds that leads to growth through development of latent powers and the evolving of desired qualities of character. And deeds are the individual acts of persons. One might sit passively for an eternity hearing the best of instruction, or the exposition of the loftiest of principles without being much improved unless those teachings and principles were made fruitful through conversion into practices of living. It is what we make of our lives that counts. It is at once a marvel and a beauty of Christ's gospel that for every requirement it lays down in the way of admonition to righteousness, it provides a practical means for bringing it about. And that way is always to provide things for the individual to do which result in the development of the desired qualities of mind and spirit. This it does through the organized Church.

Thus does the Church become the medium for giving practical effect to the teachings of the gospel. It introduces order where ineffectiveness and frustration would otherwise be. It provides the means by which its members may step by step build into themselves that aggregate of desired qualities which make men good and crowd out the qualities that are bad. Thus do they grow towards perfection and do their part towards working out their own salvation.

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I am very grateful to my Heavenly Father for this privilege. I wish to bear to you my humble testimony that I know that this is the

work of God and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. These very words and the utterance of this testimony have already brought a blessing. The joy that floods my heart and soul as I bear this testimony is a great satisfaction.

During the administration of President Calvin Coolidge as President of the United States, I became a great admirer of the things he said and did. I want to read a few lines from President Coolidge:

There is no substitute for morality, character, and religious conviction. Unless these abide, American citizenship will be found unequal to its task. Somehow we must get back to God, and that is very difficult for modern minds who have lost simplicity.

I read this morning this verse from Jeremiah:

... Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. (Jeremiah 7:23.)

I am extremely grateful for the privileges that have come to me during my last calling in the Church. I have had the opportunity under assignment of going to Europe, Canada, and Mexico as well as traveling in many of the states of the United States. Today I would like to express appreciation for a number of simple incidents that have come to me recently. They may seem to you simple things on an occasion like this when great, profound doctrines are being taught, but to me these simple incidents have been deeply impressive, for constantly they have said to me,

Have more faith, live your religion, be what you say.

FAITH EXHIBITED

I shall not forget soon a young man at the hospital. He was entering the operating room. He was a very worthy young man and very dear to me personally. As they were wheeling him into the operating room, the doctor noticed that his eyes were closed. He said to the nurse, "Take his pulse quickly. He may be gone." The young man opened his eyes and said, "No, I'm not gone doctor. I was just talking to the Lord. I told him to be sure to be with you when you perform this operation. You may go ahead any time now. I am ready."

I am grateful for the privilege I had with the Mexican people of the Mexican and Spanish-American missions at the Arizona Temple, when I saw a humble Saint, entering the grounds, take off her shoes at the iron gate. I hurried over to her and said, "You may take your shoes off when you get inside," and she said, "Oh, no, I will take them off here. This is sacred ground to me." Then a little later in the sealing room I saw one of these dark-skinned mothers take into her arms her sixteen-year old son after they had gone through the sacred ceremony of sealing. She embraced her boy and said, "Now you are mine for eternity." I can't forget these simple things. To me they are truly great things. They have kept saying to me,

Have more faith. Know more about the temple of God. Seek the privileges of these great sacred opportunities.

CALIFORNIA CELEBRATION

Under a special assignment I was asked this year to go to Coloma, California, to be at the celebration of the anniversary of the discovery of gold and to represent our people on the program. Fifty to sixty thousand were in attendance. The governor and other dignitaries of that great state of California were present. They started three great years of celebration. I was very happy to have the privilege, humbly, to represent a group of Latter-day Saint men of the Mormon Battalion who were there at that time a hundred years ago. They had taken a contract to build a mill when the discovery of gold came, when people across the world started a trek to California and thousands left their homes and work. Even in San Francisco, judges were leaving their benches. People left their businesses. They rushed wildly to the place where gold had been discovered. I was proud to represent these humble Mormon men. They stayed with their task and finished their contract. They had made their promise to finish the mill, and on March 11, 1848, the mill was finished. Then they made their journey over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to meet their families and friends. The character, stability, the word of these men told me again what I must do.

TRACTING EXPERIENCE

I am grateful for a young missionary this year whom I met in the mission field. He told me of an incident that happened just a few days before. He said, "Brother Kirkham, I had a rather interesting experience just the other day. My companion and I were going out tracting. We had been instructed always to be prayerful as we approached a house, and when I came to the door the woman said to me, 'I understand you are a Mormon missionary. Well, I don't want anything to do with you. I know something about your people. You're just a menace. Leave this place.' Then," said the young missionary, "I had been told to be prayerful, so I continued in my heart to pray as I stood listening to what she had to say. The woman continued telling me what she thought of me and our people, and asked me again to leave. I continued to pray. In a few moments she turned abruptly and said, 'Well, why don't you come in?' " Thank God for the stability of the generation that's marching on to the greatest destiny of our people. They have taught me many helpful lessons.

May God grant that I may live worthy of their association, that I may live and do the thing I speak. May God grant that same high privilege to you, for then happiness shall be ours, and we will not need to go away to carry the message. The world will come to us..

God bless us, I humbly, pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.