

had changed his tone entirely and very humbly begged my pardon and promised to read the tract, which I am sure he did.

I am sure that as we bear our testimonies in our sacrament meetings, that same effect goes out to others and assists others in strengthening their testimonies. And as we have heard testimonies here in this conference, they are a strengthening power to all of us. It was the strengthening power of their testimonies of the divinity of the gospel that was the motivating power to the pioneers in their trek across the plains; it gave them the courage to face the hardships and trials of that long journey.

A testimony is more than a mathematical calculation. It is more than the result of a given experience. As a young man enumerated a number of experiences in the process of his conversion, after each experience he said, "That was not what converted me." Again, "And that was not what converted me." It was the accumulation of many experiences with sincerity and prayer which put him in tune to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. And so it is with me and all others who have a testimony. The Spirit testifies from within.

#### THE SPIRIT WITHIN

Yes, I have had many experiences in the mission field and at home of healings, the blind made to see, the evil spirits rebuked, but the testimony of the divinity of the gospel comes not alone from these experiences but from the spirit within, which testifies of God and that he lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that he has established his gospel in the earth, with the full power of the priesthood through which all the ordinances unto salvation and exaltation may be performed.

That knowledge burns within me, and even though Satan has tried to take it from me, he has not succeeded and never shall, for I know this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power unto salvation, the light and life of the world. I know that President David O. McKay has been chosen of God to lead this people in this day. I sustain him and his Counselors and all the other General Authorities, and I pray God's blessings upon them.

May the Lord bless each of us with a burning testimony of the divinity of this gospel, and may the Lord help us to extend it to others that they too may receive the joy and blessings of the gospel, that the earth may speedily be prepared for his coming. May we all carry with us from this conference a renewed determination to go forth proclaiming his gospel in deed and in precept is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

*Of the Council of the Twelve*

My beloved brethren and sisters, I want to assure you today of my humility and my desire to say something which will be helpful.

I assure you also of my loyalty, my love for, and my faith in the prophet, seer, and revelator, President David O. McKay, and his Counselors.

As the statistics were read this morning of the growth of the Church, the thought came to me that perhaps our beloved President George Albert Smith, President Heber J. Grant, President Joseph F. Smith, all of whom I knew personally, and those others who have presided in this Tabernacle and over this Church, would be gratified to see the tremendous development in the Church. We hope that the spiritual growth has kept pace.

#### NEW CHURCH OFFICERS

Today we have sustained some new men in official positions as General Authorities of the Church. Having known each of these men, my heart is filled with gratitude to have them close to us. I have watched Brother Longden grow these past eight years since I met him first. I have been in Brother Stayner Richards' stake and have seen the precision with which his work was carried on. With Brother Moyle I helped to install Brother ElRay Christiansen as president of the East Cache Stake over which he now presides, and there I came in contact with a man of God, one whose love for his Heavenly Father was unsurpassed. It was my privilege just very recently to spend a week with President George Q. Morris in the Eastern States. I had never had the privilege of getting intimately acquainted with him before, but this week convinced me that he is one of God's great servants. And so I am grateful for these four men who are going to be associated with us a little closer than they have been in the past, and I am sure you people will be inspired by them. For a decade Brother Romney has been growing ever closer to his Maker. He has served faithfully; he has proved himself; he has stood the test and measured up. I am grateful to have Brother Marion Romney as one of our Council, and I shall fully sustain him.

As I think of the calling of these brethren, I am reminded of the statement made by the Savior in the ninth chapter of Luke, in which he says,

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:57-62.)

Five men today have put their hands firmly on the plow, never

to turn back. They have been willing to make adjustments, whatever is required, and the adjustments will not be few. They do not fear sacrifice. And so it is with the members of the Church to a greater or lesser extent.

### "PROVE THEM HEREWITH"

Before we came into the world, the Lord said to us and to the great multitude,

... we will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them. (Abraham 3:24-25.)

I believe it was from this very pulpit that my grandfather presented a sermon in which he said, "The test, the test, the TEST is coming." Well, the test is here. The test has always been here. We came into the world as a test. All the way down the line there are adjustments to make. There are sins to overcome. There is much to learn. There are weaknesses above which we must rise. We must gain self-mastery, become righteous, and attain *unto* perfection.

In the early days of the ministry of the Savior, he gave to us in a great sermon:

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (Matt. 5:40-41.)

And he says a little later,

... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:

... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (*Ibid.*, 5:44-46, 48.)

### SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE

The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life, and in all of our activities we should remember that.

Brother Romney spoke of the beautiful life of the Savior, his life of sacrifice. I wonder as we go into our testimony meetings if we ponder on the atonement and his sacrifice. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Do we take the bread and the water in remembrance of the body, the flesh and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, or do we just take bread and water?

When we pray to our Heavenly Father, do we follow routine procedures and pray a prayer of words or do we pray unto the

Lord with all our hearts and souls? The letter killeth, and the spirit giveth life. Just this week a young woman said to me that she had been praying for light and for the solution to some of her problems, but though she had uttered many prayers she felt that her petitions had not gone higher than the ceiling.

And with the other principles of the gospel—are we sincere and devout? Do we pay our tithes with a great devotion—with a gratitude for the privilege, or do we pay as a matter of fact and through routine, or because we feel under pressure? It is my candid opinion that the Lord does not need the tithes we pay. Certainly he puts them to beneficial use, in the erection of chapels, temples, in missionary work, in educational endeavors, but the Lord could find other ways and means to finance his program without the tithes. It is you and I who are blessed when we pay the tithes. We have obeyed a principle; we have mastered our desires; we have obeyed a commandment without necessarily knowing fully why. You will remember that the angel said to Adam, "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (P. of G. P., Moses 5:6.) Adam was a man of God with a great faith, and he continued to offer sacrifices unto the Lord because it had been commanded, even though he did not fully understand why, and even though it meant a considerable financial sacrifice to him. Why did he offer sacrifices—because it was a commandment of his Heavenly Father. He had been told to perform this act by one whom he knew to be his God. He had absolute faith and confidence that blessings would come through such obedience, and he did not hesitate. After he had lived the law, then came the understanding, for the miracle follows the faith rather than faith the miracle. The angel explained to him that it was to keep him in constant memory of the coming of the Christ who would save the world, and exalt those of the people who would live the commandments.

Had Adam waited until he could have fully understood and rationalized the program, perhaps in the meantime his family would have fallen away from the truth, and he himself might have lost his faith. He needed something tangible—a constant sacrifice—to help him to remember the coming of the Savior at a later time. And so we partake of the sacrament to remind us of the sacrifice that the Savior did make, and now we may pay our tithes which will be a constant reminder to us of the promises and the requirements of our Heavenly Father. So each time we pay our tithes it is a personal sacrifice and brings with it a blessing in faith and closeness to our Heavenly Father.

#### THE WORD OF WISDOM

Frequently I hear people talk about the Word of Wisdom and emphasize the fact that it will increase the period of their lives if

they observe it strictly. I, also, believe that it is the Lord's law of health and that it will extend our lives and will give us better health while we live. But that is not the reason I obey the law of the Word of Wisdom, and I wish to digress to emphasize again that the Word of Wisdom is a law. From this very pulpit it has been declared by prophets of God to be a law—not just a suggestion.

President Francis M. Lyman, in the April 1908 general conference said:

... I believe the time is ripe for the Latter-day Saints, particularly, to place themselves in accord with this revelation, the Word of Wisdom, which was given in the beginning by the Prophet Joseph as a Word of Wisdom, with promises which are very precious. In the beginning, it was not laid down as a strict commandment. I do not know whether or not the Lord took into account the fact that our forefathers, and our fathers had been so used to many things forbidden in the Word of Wisdom that it might be difficult for them to order their lives in harmony with those requirements: so we were given perhaps thirty to forty years of training and experience before the Lord announced, through his servant the Prophet Brigham Young, that the Word of Wisdom has now become a commandment of the Lord. President Young laid it down very strictly and exactly from this stand that from that time henceforth the Word of Wisdom is a commandment from the Lord, and all Latter-day Saints are required to observe it. (*Conference Report*, April 1908, 14-15.)

The Lord has insisted upon our refraining from the use of liquor, tobacco, and tea and coffee. I am sure that such abstinence will increase the length of our lives and increase the vigor of our lives. But I am sure that a deeper value comes from the observance of the Word of Wisdom than the mere length of life, for after all we must finally all pass away. The time will come when our bodies and spirits are separated, and our bodies will be laid in Mother Earth to go through the regular process, and though we do wish to continue our mortal existence as long as we can consistently, I am confident that there are greater blessings which will come to us than the strictly physical.

#### OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSINGS

When I refrain from the use of these forbidden things, I am obeying my Heavenly Father, and whether or not I understand the purpose I will still receive the blessing. The Lord has promised to all of us who obey his commandments and live his statutes that all that he has is ours. The living of the Word of Wisdom is a test. Perhaps he chose to make a part of this test those things which would be universally used and would take character and courage and strength to leave alone. It was given as a principle and "... adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints." (D. & C. 89:3.) If one obeys the Word of Wisdom only because of the physical, perhaps it is of the letter. But if he can stand the test and prove himself, that he will obey the commands of God, then it is of the spirit, and

he will reap rich blessings. There may be other things which are destructive to the body, but since the Lord through his prophets has specifically mentioned certain items, then these we must refrain from using. Should the Lord later include in the Word of Wisdom any other things which are difficult, we will also obey them.

#### LAW OF THE FAST

The law of the fast is another test. If we merely go without food to supply welfare funds, it is much of the letter, but in real fasting, for spiritual blessings, come self-mastery and increased spirituality.

In the fourteenth chapter of Luke the Lord says,

. . . When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14:12-14.)

Are we interested in what we can get or are we interested in what we can give? The Savior's life was one of unselfish service. The Savior's doctrine and gospel is one of selflessness. Are we interested in the glamorous and in the spectacular? Is our Church service like the prayer of the Pharisee or like the Publican? You will remember the Savior gave us the parable,

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (*Ibid.*, 18:10-14.)

#### THE MANSION

In his booklet *The Mansion*,\* Henry Van Dyke gives us a most interesting picture of the type of man who prays for show and for his great words, who makes his gifts where they will bring him personal return, who serves himself first and his neighbor as a convenience to himself. His story is of one John Weightman who lived in a large stone house which carried the air of calm and reserved opulence. Like his house he was a self-made man, firm, solid, success-

\*See Henry Van Dyke *The Mansion*, pp. 16-23, 55ff., 57-59.

ful. The stern architecture of his home was symbolical of his social position, religious doctrine, and business creed. He gave generously to established charities. There were foundations which he established. He gave his family luxuries, trips, court presentations, seasons on the Riviera. His name was known and respected far and wide. Over a hundred million dollars had sat around his table at banquets.

Weightman had expressed to his critical son, "I have never made a single dollar that the courts would not uphold, at least in the long run, and yet my affairs have prospered. Not one of my charities but has brought me in a good return, either in the increase of influence, the building up of credit, or the association with substantial people. Of course, you have to be careful how you give to secure the best results. No indiscriminate giving, no pennies in beggars' hats."

His check in the collection plate was far more valuable to him than an equal amount in cash would have been. He identified himself with all public drives and reminded his son, "You will learn, my boy, that it is wisdom to put your gifts where they can be identified and do you good also."

His son would have him assist a sick man whose business was failing, but the father said, "Give him a few hundred, but don't overwork your gratitude. All you'll get from him will be a letter of thanks. Don't get sentimental. Religion is not a matter of sentiment, but principle."

When the son had left, John Weightman sat alone in his carved chair feeling strangely old and dull. On the library table were clippings praising him for his benevolence. One editor called them the "Weightman Charities." There were hospitals he had endowed, schools he had helped, community enterprises which he had fostered. His son's denunciation had caused him to think. Could he be wrong in his philosophy of life? He sat at the table; the opened Bible lay before him. His eyes fell upon the words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . ." then sleepily, heavily, he tried to fix his mind upon it. He read further, ". . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . ." The book seemed to float away—the light vanished. Could this be death? The thought came quietly, irresistibly. He sank to the table and slipped into the blank unknown.

His life seemed to be returning to him after a blank interval, and Mr. Weightman found himself in a strange land traversing paths and meeting friendly groups clothed in white, among whom he recognized the old village doctor, a plain, hard-working, self-sacrificing man. Another one he recognized was a poor bookkeeper who had slaved through the years to care for a crippled daughter while the mother was in an institution for the insane. This also had been a life of sacrifice. He saw a widow who had labored long and with much sacrifice for her children; a schoolmaster who had devoted

himself to the training of youth, and many others with joyful countenances and light steps—all these people seemed to be going to the Eternal City to possess their mansions.

As the stream of people came to the Holy City, a robed personage welcomed them. "Come in, your mansions are ready." One by one the individuals left the party and entered the mansions which were prepared for them. There was evidence of surprised joy, as though their buildings were lovelier than they had expected. From within came sweet voices of welcome, low laughter, and sweet songs.

The largest mansion and the most beautiful of them all was pointed out to the doctor as his, and John Weightman was left alone with the guide.

"Where do you wish to go?" asked the guide. And Weightman recounted his many charities, his gifts, and his endowments, and when the guide stopped before a rude hut, small as the shepherd's shelter, apparently made of discarded scraps and cast-off materials, the earth-man was shocked! Surely there must be a mistake! He renamed the many things he had done for schools and churches and hospitals, and the angel-guide said, "We have saved and used everything you sent to us—this is the mansion prepared for you. All the things you did on earth—many of them were good—but verily you have had your reward for them. Would you be paid twice? The good you accomplished in the world counted where you counted it, but it does not belong here."

The deep, searching, flaming look of the guide seemed to strip John Weightman naked and withered him as he winced and cried brokenly, "Tell me, then, if my life has been of such little worth, how came I here at all?"

"Through the mercy of the King," it came softly.

"Then how have I earned it?" John asked.

"It was not earned—it was—given. *Only that good which is done for the love of duty, only those plans in which the welfare of others is the master-thought, only those labors in which the sacrifice is greater than the reward, only those gifts in which the giver forgets himself.* Was there nothing like that in your life?"

"Nothing," he sighed. "If so, they were few, and I have long ago forgotten them."

The guide smiled gently, "These are the things that the King never forgets; and because there were a few of them in your life, you have a little place here."

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"John Weightman's numbness prickled into normalcy. Bodily weariness and lassitude weighted upon him, but he was calm, resolute, and light of heart. What had happened to him he knew not. But this he knew—great truths had been forced into his consciousness."



This man Weightman, like many of the moderns, forgot the admonition of the Lord when he said:

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (Matt. 6:3-4.)

They also forget that the Lord said:

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matt. 6:5.)

They forget also that the Lord said again:

Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (*Ibid.*, 6:16.)

#### GRATITUDE FOR UNSELFISHNESS

I am grateful that all through this great Church there are many people who live unselfishly, who pray in the quiet of their homes, who are far more interested in paying their tithes, of which no one knows except their bishop, than they are to pay large contributions which may be heralded far and wide. I am grateful that there are numerous people in this Church who go quietly week after week to attend their meetings; worship the Lord in their assemblies; bear testimony in their fast meetings; serve faithfully as ward teachers, stake missionaries, or in the auxiliaries or priesthood quorums without glamor, without praise, without public notice.

God bless us, brothers and sisters, that we may "seek *first* the kingdom," that we may forget all else, and that we may project ourselves out of ourselves into the great world of service to our fellow men, realizing that after all, the two great commandments which the Lord gave to us did this very thing. He did not mention ourselves, he mentioned others. He said,

. . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; . . . love thy neighbor as thyself. (Mark 12:30-31.)

All of this is service to others—love of others, not love of nor service to ourselves. May the Lord bless us that we may be unselfish in this kingdom, give of ourselves generously that we may live by the spirit rather than by the letter, that we may continue to rear large families, training them in righteousness to the end. And all this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The congregation arose and sang the hymn, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."