

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

Of the First Council of the Seventy

IN these few minutes allotted to me, I humbly pray that the Lord will bless me. I feel the weight of the responsibility. I certainly need the blessings of the Lord. I want to try and leave with you one idea that you may carry back into your own private thinking and life to magnify, to bless, to make beautiful. And I believe out of my own thinking and prayers it is here.

There is a phrase that is often heard among the Latter-day Saint people. It was heard when I was a boy. The four standard works of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Have you read them? Do we know what they are? I often think of the inspiration and help that has come to me as I have read the word of the Lord.

The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price! There are the four great standard works of the Church.

During the last year or two I have tried to make them a part of my life. I humbly bear testimony that in them there is inspiration, there is strength, there is confidence, there is the word of the Lord.

Let me read a few sentences of the Bible. I quote from the 27th Psalm—one of my favorite passages of scripture. They are all familiar to you.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . .

Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. . . .

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psa. 27:1, 3-6, 14.)

There is great beauty and strength in the Bible. Do you read the Bible? Do you read it prayerfully? A library of sixty-six books written by many men, covering nearly three thousand years. The general theme is a true and living God sounding the call to reform and rededication.

The Old Testament is the divine foreshowing of his coming. The New Testament, the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the masterpiece of world literature, the most majestic exposition of religion ever given to man.

The first five books of the Old Testament stand at the head of the literature of the world. Words like these:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . .

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. . . .

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. (Gen. 1:1, 3, 27.)

It contains the great teachings of the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount. Fewer words, if any, have such a great influence for good upon the human family. Here by prayerful study we may learn the truer values of life, the road to real happiness.

I am going to try to make it a real part of my life. Out of prayerful thought I bear testimony and invite you that this year may be a great year for you and for me in this glorious literature.

Another of these standard works of the Church is the Book of Mormon, to which I refer briefly. I read from Third Nephi:

Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed. (3 Nephi 18:19-21.)

A lonely boy in Shanghai, China, hunts for a Mormon. No one is found. He wants to find one of his own people. "Try a Latter-day Saint," says a fellow companion. "They are sometimes called that." Discouraged he goes back to his bunk. He finds the fellows waiting with a package on his cot. He opens it and finds the package wrapped in a white box. At first he thinks it is a box of candy and goodies, and then when he looks closer he sees a name. Reverently he says, "Hello, Mother." "A Book of Mormon," says a fellow nearby.

Inspirations came to three of these chaps. They pledged together that they would read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the other general scriptures.

... the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them. (1 Nephi 3:7.)

This startled the imagination and the will of these fellows to go after this task.

The Doctrine and Covenants, another of the standard works of the Church. In Section 78:

And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.

And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more. (D & C 78:18-19.)

When we had finished reading the Doctrine and Covenants, my wife said, "Oscar, I think we should say a prayer." We prayed.

The Pearl of Great Price, another of the four standard works of the Church. This book contains the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, and extracts from the history of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and other important words of the Lord.

I close with these words from the Third Epistle of John, 4th verse:

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

May the Lord bless us as we prayerfully study the four great standard works of the Church.

May the Lord bless our children that they may ever walk in truth, that by the reading or studying of these great books, there shall come to them inspiration, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Oscar A. Kirkham of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us.

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses will now favor us with, "The Gospel Restored." This is arranged by Dr. Gerrit de Jong, to be conducted by Elder Ralph Woodward.

The closing prayer will be offered by Elder Austin Gudmundsen, president of the Inglewood Stake, after which this Conference will stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The music for this session has been furnished by the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses, conducted by Elder Ralph Woodward. Elder Alexander Schreiner has been at the organ. This group of choice young people with their inspirational singing will be with us again this afternoon.

The Combined Choruses sang the selection, "The Gospel Restored."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Austin Gudmundsen, president of the Inglewood Stake, will now offer the benediction and the Conference will be adjourned until two o'clock.

Elder Austin Gudmundsen, president of the Inglewood Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p.m.