

President David O. McKay

(Read by his son, David Lawrence McKay)

The Prophet Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young both saw in vision the place in the Rocky Mountains to which the Saints would eventually be driven. I am wondering whether they also saw in vision such a gathering of priesthood as we have here in this Tabernacle and in the more than 400 other buildings tonight. I think the Prophet must have seen it, for he said: “. . . the Saints [will] become [a great and] a mighty people.” (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 85.)

Impression made by guide

I am impressed not only with the power that you radiate, but also with the responsibility that each one of you carries. I am reminded of an incident I have related on other occasions. Some years ago, a dinner was given in honor of Mr. Gordon Rentschler, who was then chairman of the board of the National City Bank of New York. When that gentleman expressed his appreciation for the honor bestowed upon him, he said, among other things:

“One of my first experiences—twenty-odd years ago—Orville Wright and I came here one day with four or five others. We went over to the temple grounds. We were taken around by some man—we never learned his name. Here was an extraordinary individual telling the story—I think it was at noontime. Orville Wright and I came back to this hotel [the Utah], and Orville said: ‘You know, that fellow has got something that we are all missing, and that is the reason these fellows are a great people.’ We spent one of the most interesting hours I have ever spent in my life.”

Authority given from on high

Now, we do not arrogate to ourselves the thought that we merit these adjectives. I am referring to it only because there was something which impressed those men as being peculiar to our

people. Well, if they only could have known it, that something is represented here tonight by this large gathering of the priesthood. That something is the priesthood, the divine authority, the authority given from on high for each one to represent God in the particular field in which that one is assigned to labor.

I tell you, brethren, it is a wonderful thing to have the privilege of being one of this group and being considered worthy to be a representative of the Most High. I said I was conscious of a great responsibility, too. The instance that I related—the remark made by the renowned inventor of the airplane—brings home to us the responsibility of maintaining that something distinctive which has impressed other renowned visitors who have been in our midst, and which in the future should continue to impress them.

Youth need religion

We shall be privileged during this meeting to witness a filmstrip on the timely subject “After High School, What?” with a narration by President Brown.

Education, as this presentation will portray, has always been an essential part of the gospel plan. Members of the priesthood, especially, should seek constantly for that upliftment which will qualify them for the good life and service in the cause of the Master. Well might we ask, “After ordination to the priesthood, what?”

Education to be complete must include spiritual growth. In this sense, youth need religion.

Religion stabilizes society

I shall offer only three reasons this evening for giving proper religious training to youth.

First: Youth should have religion in order to stabilize society. Goethe has rightly said that “the destiny of any nation at any given time depends on

the opinions of its young men under five and twenty."

On this same thought, Roger W. Babson many years ago had the foresight to comment as follows:

"Although the airplane opens up boundless opportunities, it also threatens limitless perils. All depends upon whether we can match this flood of new material powers with an equal gain in spiritual forces. The coming generation can see in a minute more than the former generation could see in a week. The coming generation can out-hear and out-travel the former generation. Horse-power has expanded beyond all dreams. But what about man power? What about spiritual power, and the power of judgment, discretion, and self-control? Unless there is a development of character equal to this enlargement of physical forces, there is sure trouble ahead. Twenty-five years ago, an intoxicated man might tip the buggy over, but commonly the old horse would bring him home. Today, a driver under the influence of liquor, maims and kills. Tomorrow, therefore, is something to ponder over. Without moral progress, in pace with physical progress, the airplane will merely make dissipation more disastrous, immorality more widespread, and crime more efficient. As one result of the automobile has been to put hell on wheels, the airplane will put hell on wings unless righteousness, too, is speeded up. On the development of character depends whether the airplane shall bring prosperity or calamity." (*Forum*, April 1931.)

"Science," says Millikan, "without religion obviously may become a curse rather than a blessing to mankind. But science dominated by the spirit of religion is the key to progress and the hope of the future."

Hayden gives a similar warning, as follows: "Today, as seldom if ever before, human society is threatened with disintegration, if not complete chaos." Why? "All the ancient evils of human relationships, injustice, selfishness, abuse of strength, become

sinister and terrible when reinforced by the vast increase of material power. The soul of man cowers, starved and fearful, in the midst of a civilization grown too complex for any mind to visualize or to control. Joy and beauty fade from human living. Yet life—abundant, beautiful, laughing life—has been our age-long labor's end. What other conceivable worth has the mastery of the material world, the exploitation of the resources of nature and the creation of wealth, except as a basis for the release of the life of the spirit?" And then he adds: "We are witnessing either the crumbling of civilization under the weight of its material mechanism, or the birth of a new organization with a spiritual ideal."

So much for the relation of religion to the stabilizing of society.

Religion satisfies the soul

Second: Youth need religion to satisfy the innate longing of the soul. Man is a spiritual being, and sometime or another every man is possessed with a longing, an irresistible desire, to know his relationship to the Infinite. He realizes that he is not just a physical object to be tossed for just a short time from bank to bank, only to be submerged finally in the ever-flowing stream of life. There is something within him that urges him to rise above himself, to control his environment, to master the body and all things physical, and to live in a higher and more beautiful world.

James Russell Lowell, in his tribute to spring, says:

"Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and
towers,
And groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers."

So there is in man not only an instinct, but also a divinity that strives to push him onward and upward. The sense is universal, and at some time in his life every man is conscious of possessing it.

Three great needs

Associated with this spiritual urge are three great needs that remain unchanged throughout the centuries: (1) Every normal person yearns to know something of God. What is he like? Is he interested in the human family, or does he disregard it entirely? (2) What is the best life to live in this world in order to be most successful and to get the most happiness? (3) What is that inevitable thing called death? What is beyond it?

If you want your answers to these longings of the human soul, you must come to the Church to get it. Only true religion can satisfy the yearning soul. At this point, we approach the border line between science and religion. The line between the cold facts of science and the revelation of the spirit is so fine that students need to contact a mind that can and will lead them from the real, the practical, into that realm which satisfies the soul.

Religion gives purpose to life

Third: Youth need religion to comply properly with the purposes of creation. There is a purposeful design permeating all nature, the crowning event of which is man. Here, on this thought, science again leads the student up to a certain point, and sometimes leaves him with his soul unanchored. For example, evolution's theory of the creation of the world offers many perplexing problems to the inquiring mind. Inevitably, a teacher who denies divine agency in creation, who insists that there is no intelligent purpose in it, undoubtedly impresses the student with the thought that all may be chance.

I say that no youth should be left without a counterbalancing thought. Even the skeptical teacher should be fair enough to say that Charles Darwin himself, when he faced the great questions of eventual annihilation, if creation is dominated only by chance, wrote: "It is an intolerable thought that man and all other sentient things are doomed to complete annihilation,

after such long-continued, slow progress."

And another good authority, Raymond F. West, lecturing on immortality, said: "Why this vast expenditure of time and pain and blood? Why should man come so far if he is destined to go no farther? A creature which has traveled such distances and fought such battles and won such victories deserves, one is compelled to say, to conquer death and rob the grave of its victory."

Immortality and eternal life

The facts are, and the student should so understand, that all the preparation of earth is but an anticipation of the crowning glory of creation. Fosdick says: "The perpetuation of personality is the highest thing in creation." This great thinker has come by reasoning to what Joseph Smith received by revelation, which is one of the most sublime utterances in modern scripture: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) God's plan, God's purpose, is the perfection of humanity. He does care; he does love his children. He is not merely a blind force, not an abstract power, but a living, personal God.

God a personal being

Charles A. Dinsmore, formerly of Yale University, made the following statement concerning God as a personal being:

"It is the eye of faith that sees the broad horizons, the color and the gleam. Religion, standing on the known experience of the race, makes one bold and glorious affirmation. She asserts that this power that makes for truth, for beauty, and for goodness is not less personal than we. [And that is the declaration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that Jesus is not less personal than we, and that his Father, the Eternal Father, is a personal God.] This leap of faith is justified because God cannot be less than the greatest of His works;

the Cause must be adequate to the effect. When, therefore, we call God personal, we have interpreted Him by the loftiest symbol we have. He may be infinitely more. He cannot be less. When we call God a Spirit, we use the clearest lens we have to look at the Everlasting. As Herbert Spencer has well said, "The choice is not between a personal God and something lower, but between a personal God and something higher." (*Christianity and Modern Thought*, Yale University Press, 1924.)

Stand on true education

We of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints take our stand on true education from what has been given to us in the scriptures. In the Doctrine and Covenants it was revealed that: "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (D&C 130:18-19.)

And also:

"It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131:6.)

Southey tells us that on his walk one stormy day, he met an old woman to whom, by way of greeting, he made the rather obvious remark that it was dreadful weather. She answered philosophically that, in her opinion, "Any weather is better than none!" Likewise, any education is undoubtedly better than none, but a free people, to remain free, must ever strive for the highest and best.

The role of religion

Courses required of all students in our public schools should include the important areas of study that directly or indirectly provide the student with opportunities for spiritual growth and religious inspiration. From such study it is reasonable to expect that our students will better understand how vital has been the role of religion at critical moments in history; how im-

portant spiritual insights in religious faith can be in the lives of men and women; how closely related are human greatness and such qualities as honesty, integrity, humility, generosity, and compassion.

We may expect in our students more idealism and less cynicism, more wholesome courage and faith in the future, and less pessimism and foreboding fear. We may hope for increased tolerance of racial and religious differences, increased respect for those of opposite political views or for those of lower social and economic levels; increased awareness of the basic and inviolable dignity of the individual man or woman. We may contribute to the development of a more sensitive social conscience—a greater sense of responsibility for the less fortunate in our society. We may even, perhaps, without knowing it, bring a boy or girl closer to God.

I am repeating what we all know and feel when I say that our country's greatest asset is its manhood and its womanhood. Upon that depends not only the survival of the individual freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution and Bill of Rights and all other ideals for which the founders of the Republic fought and died, but also the survival of the best that we cherish in present-day civilization throughout the world. The preservation of these must come through education.

Promulgation of truth

The Church stands for education. The very purpose of its organization is to promulgate truth among men. Members of the Church are admonished to acquire learning by study, and also by faith and prayer; to seek after everything that is virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy. In this seeking after, they are not confined to narrow limits of dogma or creed, but are free to launch into the realm of the infinite.

But gaining knowledge is one thing, and applying it, quite another. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge, and true education—the education for which the Church stands

—is the application of knowledge to the development of a noble and God-like character.

Development of moral and spiritual values

A great and continuing purpose of education has been the development of moral and spiritual values. To fulfill this purpose, society calls upon its institutions. Special claims are made on the home and the school because of the central role of these two institutions in the nurture of the young.

By moral and spiritual values, we mean those values which, when applied in human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring it into accord with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic culture.

Youth need religion. The world needs it. It is the world's greatest need!

God help us to teach the true religion as revealed in this dispensation by the Lord Jesus Christ to Joseph Smith. God bless you teachers in the Church schools, institutes, and seminaries, that you may have the spirit of this great latter-day work and lead the children to the realm of immortality and peace here as well as happiness throughout eternity.

Responsibility of priesthood

God bless you brethren. With all my heart I pray God to bless you, that

every member of the Church, as well as everyone who holds the priesthood, may sense the responsibility of membership in the Church of Christ. If we can only maintain the standards of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the future of the Church is secure. Truly, men and women will see a light that is not hidden under a bushel, but one that is set upon a hill, and they will be attracted by it, and will be led to seek the truth more by our acts and deeds and by what we radiate in virtue and integrity, rather than by what we say.

I pray God to bless us in this great work in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

The men's chorus will now sing, "O My Father."

The men of the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "O My Father."

President N. Eldon Tanner

We are fortunate indeed to have such a lovely chorus.

Dr. Lowell L. Bennion, Associate Dean of Students at the University of Utah, who is a leading educator and has contributed much in the field of education, and given a lifetime of service to the Church, will now speak to us.

Elder Lowell L. Bennion

Member of the Youth Correlation Planning Committee

My dear brethren and friends: President McKay has asked me to talk to the youth of the Church about education. I am not particularly grateful for this task, but I am thankful for his trust and faith in me. I am also grateful for the example which he has set for us in the field of education. President McKay loves the Lord with all his mind, as well as with his heart and soul. I know this from personal experience.

On several occasions when I have

dared to impose upon him with problems that were very critical to me, I have always come away satisfied in my mind as well as in my heart. One thing he taught me when I first began to teach in the Church has been extremely helpful. He said, "Brother Bennion, remember, words do not convey meanings; they call them forth." I speak out of the context of my experience, and you listen out of the context of yours, and that is why communication is difficult. I don't