

take advantage of those choice teaching experiences which come occasionally, but come only once. I pray that adult leaders everywhere will work diligently to become this kind of shadow leader.

Earlier we talked about the increased emphasis on service. Youth today want meaningful, spiritual experiences. They will have them through service to others, not the kind that causes great excitement, but the kind that is simple and plain and good.

From what has been said I hope we all see the importance of the individual. Surely programs and activities are important, but they are important only as they influence for good the lives of individual boys and girls.

Strengthening the family

Finally, the Aaronic Priesthood MIA is committed to strengthening the family. The Church in no way intends to take the place of the family. Its entire effort is to strengthen the family. Parents, the greatest responsibility you will ever have is the responsibility for your family. We plead with you: love your children. Be interested in them. Be an example to them. Teach them correct principles. Bless them with discipline when appropriate and afterwards show forth a greater measure of love. I believe with all my heart that our sons and daughters have all the potential of the sons of Helaman if we as parents with the support of the Church will do our part.

May I paraphrase from Alma:

"And they are all young men and women, and they are exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold this is not all, they are men and women who are true at all times in whatsoever thing they are entrusted.

"Yea, they are men and women of truth and soberness for they have been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him."

May the Lord bless this royal generation that they may achieve that which he has foreordained for them, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Without announcement following Bishop Victor L. Brown's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Thou Art Repose."

President Harold B. Lee

We hope you bishops of the Church can catch the thrust of the enthusiasm of your file leader. The youth of this Church are going to be taken places and lifted by that kind of leadership. We have just listened to Bishop Brown who is the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve, who will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

Of the Council of the Twelve

The Savior taught with many parables, and they are well known. But he also taught with pertinent and piercing questions. One of them was this: "... what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.)

This is particularly important when we realize that the Lord defined

eternal life as the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Teachings of Savior

Each one of us has a soul to save. Each has the opportunity to obtain eternal life. Since our souls are so pre-

cious, we should leave no stone unturned in our effort to save them.

The Savior illustrated this great fact with some of his best-known parables. For example, he said:

" . . . The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Matt. 13:45-46.)

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he . . . goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matt. 13:44.)

In other words, he is telling us that salvation is the pearl of great price, salvation is the treasure in the field; and if we only realized its worth, we would give all that we have to obtain it.

Shall we not waken to this important lesson? It comes from the lips of God, who cannot lie.

Serving the Lord

The thing which is of most worth unto us is to be in the service of the Lord.

This means that we must not be blinded by the glitter of gold or the allurements of position or pleasure or even the false excitement of sin.

We must open our eyes to the fact that to serve God is the greatest career in the world.

To be saved in his presence is the greatest gift that can come to us, and to bring our family with us into the enjoyment of salvation will be the greatest achievement of our lives.

But we must understand that salvation is not a free gift. The offer is free indeed, through the atonement of the Savior. But its enjoyment must be earned, not with any halfhearted effort, but with wholesouled, undivided, concentrated application to a program of development which is called the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A pattern to live by

If we believe in immortality at all, we must also believe in God. And if we believe in him, we should accept the fact that it is possible for us to become like him. Actually, this is what God expects of us.

He gave us his Beloved Son Jesus Christ as a pattern to live by, and through him we can become perfect, even as God.

What a marvelous destiny! What an opportunity!

Is it any wonder that the scripture calls it the pearl of great price?

Then should we not make every effort to achieve it? But on the other hand, if we do not, what are we exchanging for our souls?

Degrees of glory

The Savior told us that in his house are many mansions. The apostle Paul gave us the further detail that in the world to come there are various degrees of glory. We will be assigned to them on a basis of our worthiness. We will be judged according to our works.

The rewards on the day of judgment will differ as one star differs from another star in glory. Paul said also that beyond the glory of the stars is another glory which he likened to the brightness of the moon, in contrast to the stars.

And still another is mentioned by him—the celestial glory—which is as superior to the others as the light of the sun outshines that of both the moon and the stars.

In modern revelation we are told that only those who are devoted to God and his way of life will reach the celestial glory. Only those who go there may become like him.

All others, going to the lesser glories, will be restricted in that they may not become like him.

Place to spend eternity

I ask you here today—where do you want to spend eternity? Where would you like your family to spend eternity?

If you knew that by living the gospel you may have celestial glory rather than a lesser one, would it not be worth the effort to obtain it?

Who would be satisfied with the subdued twinkle of a star if he could enjoy the brilliance of the sun?

Who would be content with the reflected light of the moon if he could have the radiance of the sun?

Who would exchange the privilege of becoming like God for the very questionable and temporary advantages of this world?

Who in his right mind would prefer the corruptions of the flesh, the sensual pleasures, and the false excitement of sin, rather than the opportunity of becoming like God; rather than having inspired intelligence, or of some day wielding some of the powers that God uses as he walks in his majesty?

Which of us would sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage?

Isn't it advisable that we direct to our own selves the question raised by the Savior: ". . . what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Whether we realize it or not, we answer that question every day of our lives by what we think and say and do. Our actions demonstrate whether we are working toward becoming like God or the world.

Worth of a soul

What will a man give in exchange for his soul?

What will a woman give in exchange for her soul?

What will parents barter for the souls of their little children, these tiny ones who are given into their care by the Almighty himself, to whom they should teach the principles of righteousness, and whom these parents

should lead into the proper pathways of life?

Are there any parents who are willing to trade their children's future for a mess of pottage to be consumed greedily by themselves? Dare they sacrifice the welfare of their little ones to gratify their own self-centered interests?

Child neglect! How widespread it is!

What is the value of a child's soul? What is any soul-worth?

Would you exchange it for a thrill? Would you exchange it for advantage in business? Would you exchange it for social life, or for emancipation from home and family in a woman's liberation movement? Would you exchange it for any amount of money? What is your rate of exchange?

Whether we realize it or not, we are making this very kind of bargain if we prefer worldly things over our religion.

Putting God first

The only way to save our souls is to put God first in our lives.

If we reverse the process and relegate him to second, third, or fourth place, we make an exchange that we will rue throughout the eternities. It is possible to lose our salvation by default.

Realizing this, can we afford to be other than active in the Church? Can we afford to neglect our families? Can we afford to mix worldliness and Godliness, knowing very well that they will not blend and knowing, too, that Jesus said we cannot serve both God and mammon?

The Lord teaches that unless we are valiant in his service, we surrender the opportunity for celestial glory. To be valiant means to be anxiously engaged in the good cause. It means to serve him in all diligence, with an eye single to his glory, and to labor in his kingdom with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

But it must be in *his* kingdom, not

in some other group, religious or otherwise.

So what will we exchange for our soul? Will it be worldly advantage, or money, or pleasure, or the corruption of sin, thinking that wickedness gives enough thrill to compensate for all its miseries?

What will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Listening to the Savior

Fathers and mothers, are you listening? Are you listening to the Savior calling to you and your little ones?

Do you hear his words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

And hear these words, too, from your Savior and your Redeemer:

"... inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

"And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:25-28.)

Are we doing all of this, parents, or are we making an exchange that we will later regret?

Can you hear the words of the Savior, speaking by modern revelation and saying: "... thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him." (D&C 59:5.)

Are we doing this, or are we making an exchange for something else?

Do you hear him say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself . . ." (D&C 59:6.)

Do you obey?

And do you hear him say, "... thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it?" (D&C 59:5.)

Obedience to the gospel

Do you comply? Or do you put aside his words in exchange for your personal desires? Do you suppose for one minute that you can separate the salvation of your soul from obedience to the gospel?

One of the greatest of all the commandments is the Golden Rule. Do we do unto others as we would be done by? And if not, what kind of exchange do we make?

What shall we say of those who cheat a little newsboy out of his collections? What kind of bargain do they make?

And what shall we say of those who refuse to pay their doctor bills or hospital bills, but in their hypocrisy go to Church on Sunday and sing praises to the Lord?

And then comes this appeal of the Savior:

"... the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." (D&C 69:29.)

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." (D&C 59:9.)

How many meet this requirement? It is a commandment from heaven, given to each of us. If we fail to keep it, do we tend to exchange our soul's welfare for worldly things such as Sunday business, Sunday pleasure, and weekend vacations?

What will a man give in exchange for his soul?

The riches of eternity

We should realize that the Lord means just what he says in dealing with us. He offers us the riches of eternity; and while we are in mortality, he offers us an abundant life, with peace of mind, true happiness, and freedom from the enslaving influences of sin.

But this can come only through obedience. And why obedience? Because he desires that we become like him—because we are his children—and because we cannot achieve perfection by imperfect means.

To become Christlike we must do the works of Christ.

The Lord does not take any free agency away from us in giving us this commandment. He gives us unlimited and unrestricted freedom of choice.

But he makes it abundantly clear that if we do not serve him, we shall not receive his reward.

Mere membership in the Church will not save us. The revelation says:

“. . . he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

“Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause. . .

“. . . he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned.” (D&C 58:26-27, 29.)

And again: “He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple; and he that saith he receiveth it and doeth it not, the same is not my disciple, and shall be cast out. . .” (D&C 41:5.)

So you see, what we do or fail to do determines our status before him.

Worldliness or salvation

It is not Church membership alone that he asks. Nor is it reading the

scriptures alone, nor paying tithing alone. It is wholehearted obedience and faithfulness of heart that counts.

The choice is placed before us—worldliness or salvation. Which shall it be? There is no middle ground in this matter. Lukewarm obedience is spurned by the Lord. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The Savior asked another pertinent question:

“. . . what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? . . .” (Matt. 16:26.)

It must needs be that there is an opposition in all things.

It must needs be that we have complete freedom of choice.

But knowing the facts, will we exchange the divine blessings of both here and hereafter for the questionable things of this world? Is it really conceivable that we would choose darkness rather than light, or sorrow rather than joy?

Yet this is what we do if we turn away from active service in the Church. This is the exchange we make.

Let us never forget that the Lord has promised that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all that he has may be ours.

And this is my testimony to you, in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

After Elder Mark E. Petersen's talk and without announcement, the Tabernacle Choir sang “Lead Kindly Light.”

President Harold B. Lee

If the world could read and understand that challenging sermon of Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve and if we would all take his sermon and compare it with our own activities, I think it would be a real exercise in character building. Thank