

of the Lamb of God and of His blood, which was shed for us.

It is no small thing that this symbol reappears in the Word of Wisdom. Beyond the promise that Saints in this generation, who obey, will receive health and great treasures of knowledge is this: "I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21).

He ransomed us

I cannot with composure tell you how I feel about the Atonement. It touches the deepest emotion of gratitude and obligation. My soul reaches after Him who wrought it, this Christ, our Savior of whom I am a witness. I testify

of Him. He is our Lord, our Redeemer, our advocate with the Father. He ransomed us with His blood.

Humbly I lay claim upon the atonement of Christ. I find no shame in kneeling down in worship of our Father and His Son. For *agency* is mine, and this I *choose* to do!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elders George R. Hill III and John R. Lasater, who were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy at April conference last year.

Elder George R. Hill III

Science and religion complementary

My beloved fellow servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, since receiving this special call to full-time service for the Master, I have studied and pondered and prayed, as do all of you, to determine how best to serve.

It has been my privilege during the forty years prior to last April conference to search for truth through research in the physical sciences, an endeavor which blends some inspiration with a lot of perspiration, but which leads to the discovery of facts and principles which bring much benefit to mankind. I am most grateful for that privilege, as well as for the simultaneous privilege of discovering the principles of truth revealed directly from the Lord to his chosen prophets, as recorded in the scriptures. To the many young people of the Church who have the privilege of discovering truth through the scientific method, let me add my testimony to those of Elders James E. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe (author of a choice book, *In Search of Truth*) that there is no conflict between the facts and

truths of science and those given to us by direct revelation. Rather than conflicting, the facts and truths in each area complement each other, each supplying answers to basic questions which we must know, eventually, if we are to fulfill our destiny as sons and daughters and copartners with our Father in his eternal plan.

Apparent conflicts arise when the theories of science—which serve as a scaffolding erected to try to understand relationships among observed facts—are mistaken for the experimentally verified facts.

Occasionally also, some people subject the scriptures to personal interpretation. This can give rise to differences in perception as well. I have learned to say, "I don't know," when confronted with choices which seem to be in conflict. No true scientist will say that we have final, exact answers through scientific research; it is an ongoing, learning process. The Articles of Faith teach us that the Lord "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9). As members of the Lord's church our blessing is to

believe all that is true and to diligently seek learning "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

Search scriptures for solutions

In our assignment in the Philippines, we have found it necessary to go to the scriptures for solutions to the challenges accompanying the wonderfully high conversion rate of a very spiritually sensitive people who need guidance in Church administrative procedures.

This is occurring in a land with an extremely high unemployment rate. We find food and materials shortages which remind us of the conditions that must have followed the destruction of the Nephite cities at the time of the Savior's crucifixion. At that time, the resurrected Savior gave the surviving Nephites some direction they needed to reestablish their civilization. He quoted His own words to Malachi of the need for their being faithful in their tithes and offerings:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say: Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. . . .

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. . . .

"And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts" (3 Nephi 24:8, 10, 12).

The marvelous fulfillment of that promise within three years is described in 4 Nephi 1:2-5.

The members of the Church in the Philippines are becoming aware that sacrifice precedes the blessing and that they must live the law of tithing and the law of the fast if they are to receive the promises given those who do, as described in Isaiah 58:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free? . . .

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? . . .

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily. . . .

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (vs. 6-9, 11).

Mosiah 4:26 reinforces this counsel.

Retain, reactivate, and record

We are finding it very important to follow the advice given by the First Presidency—to get back to basics and to practice the new version of the three R's. Because the flood of new members exceeds the normal friendship capacity in wards and branches, our perceptive mission presidents and stake presidents are cooperating in the "Retaining and Reactivating, by Recording the participation and growth in Church service" of each current member and recent convert to the Church. The marked increase in continuing activity of new members is most encouraging and satisfying.

Meeting the need for leaders

The need for leaders who understand the principles of the gospel and who can carry out the detailed administrative responsibilities in their new callings, while ministering to the individual, reminds us of the challenges faced by the Prophet Joseph in the Kirtland era of the early Church. Then, as now, there was a need for intense instruction in the Lord's way of doing things. The Lord's direction then was to institute the "school of the prophets, established for their instruction in all things that are expedient for them, even for all the officers of the church, . . . even down to the deacons" (D&C 88:127). The stake priesthood

leadership meeting provides a forum for the pretraining of potential leaders, to supplement the learning-by-observing method followed in established areas of the Church. What a blessing it is to be able to go to the scriptures to find the answers to virtually any challenge we face in our Church callings.

Let me close by expressing my love and gratitude for goodly parents, to my

choice wife and companion, and to our children and grandchildren, who sustain us so well with their prayers and the lives they lead. To them and to you I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that Jesus lives and loves each of us with an unbounded love, and that Ezra Taft Benson is His chosen prophet today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder John R. Lasater

I am aware, more than at any other time in my life, of the great responsibility that rests on the shoulders of those who carry out assignments at this pulpit. Nevertheless, I rejoice in the blessing and opportunity that is now mine to add my personal witness regarding the divinity of this great work to which we have been called.

Example of the Master Shepherd

The personal nature of the Lord's ministry as the Master Shepherd should be the pattern for all who shepherd the flocks of Israel. The depth of His love, His willingness to give freely of Himself, His undeviating loyalty and devotion to the cause shared so completely with His Father, and His constant attention to the needs of the one stand as hallmarks of the true shepherd's calling.

A shepherd in Morocco

Some years ago, it was my privilege to visit the country of Morocco as part of an official United States government delegation. As part of that visit, we were invited to travel some distance into the desert to visit some ruins. Five large black limousines moved across the beautiful Moroccan countryside at considerable speed. I was riding in the third limousine, which had lagged some distance behind the second. As we topped the brow of a hill, we noticed that the limousine in front of us had pulled off to

the side of the road. As we drew nearer, I sensed that an accident had occurred and suggested to my driver that we stop. The scene before us has remained with me for these many years.

An old shepherd, in the long, flowing robes of the Savior's day, was standing near the limousine in conversation with the driver. Nearby, I noted a small flock of sheep numbering not more than fifteen or twenty. An accident had occurred. The king's vehicle had struck and injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd. The driver of the vehicle was explaining to him the law of the land. Because the king's vehicle had injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd, he was now entitled to one hundred times its value at maturity. However, under the same law, the injured sheep must be slain and the meat divided among the people. My interpreter hastily added, "But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do."

Startled, I asked him why. And he added, "Because of the love he has for each of his sheep." It was then that I noticed the old shepherd reach down, lift the injured lamb in his arms, and place it in a large pouch on the front of his robe. He kept stroking its head, repeating the same word over and over again. When I asked the meaning of the word, I was informed, "Oh, he is calling it by name. All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name."