

“The Lord’s Side”

JOSEPH B. WIRTHLIN

My dear brothers and sisters, I express my sincere gratitude for this opportunity to be with you at this fireside tonight. I bring you greetings and best wishes from the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us tonight and what is said may be of benefit to all of us.

I am always refreshed and encouraged when I visit the youth of the Church because of your vigor, enthusiasm, hope, and faith. Your attendance at BYU and Utah Valley Community College, which represents one of the stakes invited to this fireside, indicates that you desire to study where you can learn the gospel while you complete your college education. Many of you are near the beginning of your productive lives. You will soon be leaders and examples to your families, the Church, governments, and communities.

I repeat what you have heard many times before: Perhaps you will have greater opportunities, but you will face increased challenges and problems than any generation before you. Your most important opportunity will be to help prepare a people to meet the Savior at his second coming. You will be challenged to live by the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus

Christ in the small but cumulative choices and decisions you make each day and to follow the counsel of the Lord to his people as given to his servants, the prophets and apostles.

I join with President Gordon B. Hinckley in referring to the young people of the Church as the “finest generation” in its history, truly “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). If you will be true and faithful to the values and principles you have been taught, you will rise above the “sordid elements of the world about you” (see “A Chosen Generation,” *Ensign*, May 1992, pp. 69–71).

I would like you to consider with me one of the great hymns of the Restoration: “Who’s on the Lord’s Side?” written by Hannah Last Cornaby, born in 1822 and an English convert to the Church. The words of this hymn seem particularly attuned to our time and society. The hymn impressed me when I was a small boy in the Salt Lake City Thirty-third Ward. It apparently was our Sunday School chorister’s

Joseph B. Wirthlin was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at BYU on 2 August 1992.

favorite song; we seemed to sing it every Sunday. We young children would leave Sunday School singing, “Who’s on the Lord’s side? Who? Now is the time to show.” The words and melody would stay in our minds after we sang it. In fact, I’ve never forgotten it or our chorister.

The words of the hymn echo the words of Moses as he called the rebellious children of Israel to repentance after he had destroyed the idolatrous calf they had made. “Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me. . . . Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord” (Exodus 32:26, 29).

Joshua, who succeeded Moses, told the children of Israel essentially the same thing after he had led them into their promised land of Canaan. Shortly before his death, he called the people of Israel together for a final blessing and warning, much as Moses had done. What a prophet says as he nears the end of his life is very important because he is concluding his accountability and placing the full responsibility for others’ conduct on their own shoulders. Joshua reviewed with Israel exactly what God had done for them miraculously and then exhorted them to

Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. . . .

And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.
[Joshua 24:15,24]

We, too, must choose whether we will serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, or follow the gods of indulgence and sin that clamor for our attention on every side.

The Lord has left no doubt in defining his side and where the Saints should be in their thoughts, words, actions, and practices. We

have his counsel in the scriptures and in the words of the prophets. To ancient Israel, the Lord said through Moses: “I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil” (Deuteronomy 30:15). The Lord counseled his prophet Jeremiah to instruct the people: “Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death” (Jeremiah 21:8). That is the contrast; that is the choice. Either we are on the Lord’s side of the line or on the side of the adversary. Nephi declared that we “are free to act for [ourselves]—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life” (2 Nephi 10:23). Yes,

Men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. [2 Nephi 2:27]

The line between those who are on the Lord’s side and those who follow the adversary has been with us from the beginning. Even before the creation of this world, the children of God divided themselves into two groups with different loyalties. One-third of the host of heaven followed Lucifer, separating themselves from the presence of God and from the two-thirds who followed the Son of God (see D&C 29:36–39). This division has persisted throughout the history of mankind and will continue until the day of judgment when Jesus comes again in his glory. We read in Matthew that all nations will gather before him, and he will

Separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . .

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

[Matthew 25:32–34, 41]

The prophet Nephi tells us why many choose the wrong side of the line:

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. [3 Nephi 6:15]

The Lord has given us prophets to guide us and keep us from evil if we will accept and follow their instruction. The Lord would say to us today as he said to the ancient Israelites: “Be not afraid nor dismayed . . . ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s . . . the Lord will be with you. . . . Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; *believe his prophets*, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chronicles 20:15, 17, 20; emphasis added).

In our conferences, we sustain the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. The Lord has appointed them as watchmen to warn the people (see Ezekiel 2:1–8) and as the “servant[s] of all” (D&C 50:26). He said: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

One latter-day prophet, President George Albert Smith, said:

The spirit of the adversary is the spirit of destruction. There are two influences in the world. The one is the influence of our Heavenly Father and the other is the influence of Satan. We can take our choice which territory we want to live in, that of our Heavenly Father or that of Satan.

President Smith then said, quoting his grandfather:

“There is a line of demarcation, well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord’s territory. On the other side of the line is the devil’s territory. . . . If you will stay on the Lord’s side of the line, you are perfectly safe, because the adversary of all righteousness cannot cross that line.”

What does that mean? It means to me that those who are living righteous lives, keeping all of the commandments of our Heavenly Father are perfectly safe, but not those who trifle with his advice and counsel. [CR, 30 September 1949, pp. 5–6]

Other latter-day prophets have issued warnings, when inspired by the Lord, on such subjects as moral cleanliness, Sabbath observance, child and spouse abuse, homosexuality, abortion, and gambling. These statements are the word of the Lord through his prophets to help people avoid the pitfalls, sorrow, suffering, and misery of sin and error.

The statements of the prophets are not given to compel, coerce, dictate, control, or infringe on any person’s right to choose. Church leaders are guided by the Lord’s injunction in the Doctrine and Covenants:

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile. [D&C 121:41–42]

The prophets and other Church leaders never have misled the members on a principle of righteousness. Every principle is for our benefit. However, if we choose to ignore the prophets, we choose the consequences that follow. We have the God-given agency to either follow the prophets or not, but we cannot choose the consequences of exercising that

agency. They will follow with absolute certainty. If we ignore the prophets, we become like the people the Savior chastised when he said: “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

In addition to the scriptures and the words of modern-day prophets, Latter-day Saints can discern clearly by the promptings of the Spirit the things they must do to be on the Lord’s side.

To be on the Lord’s side, we need to learn that true principles will lead us to peace and happiness in this world and to glory and exaltation in the world to come. We also need to learn that choosing the other side will only bring us problems, heartache, and sorrow. If we come too close to the line and tarry too long in the presence of evil, we are asking for trouble because we increase the likelihood that we might slip over the line into the territory of the adversary and become supporters of his cause instead of the Lord’s.

We must be cautious of seemingly small thoughts and actions that can lead to large consequences. Just a little anger, unkindness, or disobedience; a dishonest deed; a few unclean thoughts or a little pornography; one experiment with drugs; a few lies, a little fraud; or a feeling of hate—all these can lead us into the camp of the adversary. Giving just an inch here and there can put us close enough to the line that one slip will take us right over it. Young people who decide to experiment with only one cigarette, one dose of drugs, or one drink of alcohol—only one—often find themselves addicted to a habit that controls them and that they can break only with great difficulty.

Men and women who decide to flirt with adultery just once can become enmeshed in misery and unhappiness for themselves and their precious families. Few are able to get back on the Lord’s side immediately. Too many lose a loving companion, face separation from their children, develop bitterness, lose their economic stability, and lose their eternal blessings

unless they repent. The Church has only one acceptable standard of sexual morality, and that is complete chastity for both sexes. I urge you to avoid situations that permit physical feelings to take control of behavior. The notion that you can endanger your physical and mental health by letting strong passions go unsatisfied is a vicious falsehood. Self-control is one mark of a mature person; it applies to control of language, physical treatment of others, and the appetites of the body.

The Lord said, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8), and made Sabbath-day observance a sign between him and the people to indicate their obedience (Exodus 31:13–17). That commandment and sign have never been rescinded. In our day, standards for keeping the Sabbath day holy are lowered a little at a time by some individuals until practically anything seems to become acceptable. The sign between the Lord and his covenant people is trampled underfoot as Church members skip Sunday meetings to seek recreation at lakes and beaches, in the mountains, at sports arenas, and at theaters. Parking lots at supermarkets and discount stores often are full on Sundays. Many store owners feel compelled to open their doors on Sundays because of the demand for their merchandise and services. The people who misuse the Sabbath lose the blessings of spiritual food and growth promised to those who keep this commandment.

If we are to be on the Lord’s side, we must be very careful of the entertainment we allow into our homes. Parents sometimes allow their children to see and hear things that are objectionable because they have more and more difficulty finding a movie, videotape, or television program that does not contain offensive elements. Rather than ban entertainment, parents tend to permit their children to watch a movie with violence or profanity or sexual content and hope their children will realize that Hollywood’s standards do not reflect those

of the parents. The difference between Hollywood's standards and those of most Americans is appalling, as shown in a 1991 study.

More than 100 top television writers and executives were asked questions that paralleled a poll taken of average American viewers. The results:

—A whopping 85 percent of the country believes adultery to be wrong. But in Hollywood, it's 49 percent.

—A minute 4 percent of the nation says it has no religious affiliation, compared to 45 percent in Hollywood.

—Some 76 percent of Americans feel [homosexuality is] wrong. In Hollywood, it's 20 percent.

*—Abortion rights are supported by 59 percent of the country [which is appalling] compared to Hollywood's 97 percent. [See Chris Hicks, "Hollywood's Values Clash with Our Own," *Deseret News*, 19 July 1992, p. E9]*

Truly, parents and children will need to be diligent and cautious in choosing what type of entertainment to take into their homes.

Now is the time to show which side of the line we are on. Alma, the great prophet, said, "This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God" (Alma 34:32). We may need courage to take a stand. We may be unpopular. We may have some groups and associates who disregard our standards and even scoff at our ideals and beliefs. The purpose of these groups is to destroy the freedom of the people, as stated succinctly in a recent newspaper editorial. They consider it unconstitutional for a child going to public school to carry a Bible, but a discussion of *Playboy* magazine is "freedom of expression."

Isn't it interesting that these groups consider it "freedom of expression" to profane the Lord's name and use obscenities, but oppose prayer in public places? These groups combat public faith yet uphold the right of anyone to

have an abortion. They openly oppose good and love evil.

Being on the Lord's side means not only that we shun evil, but that we seek and cultivate the good wherever it can be found, whether within or without the Church. In a recent conference address, President Howard W. Hunter said:

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we seek to bring all truth together. We seek to enlarge the circle of love and understanding among all the people of the earth. Thus we strive to establish peace and happiness, not only within Christianity but among all mankind.

In the message of the gospel, the entire human race is one family descended from a single God. . . .

. . . Every person is a spiritual child of God. In this gospel view there is no room for a contracted, narrow, or prejudicial view. . . .

. . . There is no underlying excuse for smugness, arrogance, or pride. . . .

We believe there is a spiritual influence that emanates from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space. (See D&C 88:12.) All men share an inheritance of divine light. God operates among his children in all nations, and those who seek God are entitled to further light and knowledge, regardless of their race, nationality, or cultural traditions.

*Elder Orson F. Whitney . . . said: "[God] is using not only his covenant people, but other peoples as well, to consummate a work, stupendous, magnificent, and altogether too arduous for this little handful of Saints to accomplish by and of themselves." (In CR, April 1921, p. 32.) ["The Gospel—A Global Faith," *Ensign*, November 1991, pp. 18–19]*

Recognizing this broad view of who can do good, we must be cautious that we do not confuse our opposition to wrongheaded ideas or dangerous practices with opposition to sincere, good-hearted people. Many good and honest people of different faiths or of no faith at all are

on the Lord’s side in seeking the betterment of their fellowmen and exerting a positive influence on society. Please consider with me a few examples of such good people.

A national magazine recently included a feature article about two brothers—not members of our Church, but with Utah roots—whose acts of kindness are on the Lord’s side. They honor people who are committed to serving others. Since 1988, Val and Bill Halamandaris have given the National Caring Awards in Washington, D.C. Recipients have included both famous and obscure adults and young people, such as a former secretary of health, education, and welfare; a lifelong resident of Watts in the Los Angeles area who has single-handedly found housing for hundreds of homeless neighbors; a world-famous physician; and a Minneapolis housewife who began her own soup kitchen.

Successful in their business and government careers, the two brothers were “concerned with the materialism of the country and the tremendous amount of attention we were paying to celebrities. There are millions of people doing extraordinary things in this country, and nobody was honoring them.”

The magazine article asks,

How did two brothers in their late 40s, with successful careers in Washington, come to devote so much of their lives to an ideal as abstract—and certainly unremunerative—as caring? As it turned out, the story began long ago.

“We’re a couple of kids from Carbon County, Utah,” Val explained. “After the railroads met at Promontory in 1869, they shipped a lot of the railroad workers—Chinese, Greeks, Italians—down to Carbon County to work in the coal mines. Our grandfather was a Greek immigrant who worked on the railroads. Our father was a miner. We grew up in a multicultural society where everybody was comfortable with everybody else, where we were constantly reminded of the goodness of people. We heard about the importance of doing things for

others day in and day out.” As Bill remembered: “When somebody needed something, you did what had to be done.”

*. . . “There is joy in transcending yourself to serve others.” [Michael Ryan, “Somebody Cares,” *Parade Magazine*, 28 June 1992, pp. 24–27]*

These brothers are good people who are honoring those who care for and serve others. Their efforts are the fruits of having learned in their youth to accept those who are different from themselves, not judging wrongly, but simply serving.

Others who are on the Lord’s side are the gifted authors and composers whose inspired and sacred hymns convey deep spiritual messages in meetings of congregations in many parts of the world, enriching our Church and many others.

Just three months after the Church was organized in 1830, the Lord commanded Emma Smith, the Prophet Joseph’s wife, to “make a selection of sacred hymns, . . . to be had in my church.” The Lord said: “My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:11–12).

In the preface of the LDS hymnal, the First Presidency wrote:

Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings.

The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.

Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. [Hymns, 1985, p. ix]

Faithful and devoted Christians who were not of our faith created many of our favorite and most inspiring hymns, including “How Great Thou Art,” “I Need Thee Every Hour,”

“I Stand All Amazed,” “Because I Have Been Given Much,” and “How Firm a Foundation.”

In addition to strengthening church meetings spiritually, sacred hymns can help us control our thoughts, recognizing that our thoughts precede and lead to our actions. Elder Boyd K. Packer taught that we can replace unclean, improper, and degrading thoughts by focusing our attention on sacred music. Elder Packer suggested that we

choose from among the sacred music of the Church one favorite hymn. . . . one with lyrics that are uplifting and the music reverent. Select one that, when it is properly rendered, makes you feel something akin to inspiration.

Now, go over it in your mind very thoughtfully a few times. Memorize the words and the music. Even though you have had no musical training, even though you do not play an instrument, and even though your voice may leave something to be desired, you can think through a hymn. I suspect you already have a favorite. . . . you can only think of one thing at a time. Use this hymn as your emergency channel. Use this as the place for your thoughts to go. Anytime you find that. . . shady actors have slipped in from the sideline of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, think through this hymn. . . . then you will begin to know something about controlling your thoughts. . . . [This sacred music] will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is clean and uplifting and reverent, the baser thoughts will leave. [Boyd K. Packer, “That All May Be Edified” (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), pp. 38–39]

The hymn “How Firm a Foundation,” which is attributed to Robert Keen, an eighteenth-century member of a London Baptist church, was included in the first LDS hymnal, produced in 1835. This hymn served an extraordinary purpose in our early Church history. After the horrific massacre of seventeen Saints at Haun’s Mill in 1838, the bereaved women and children survivors gathered at one of the

homes. Among them was Amanda Smith, whose husband and one son had been killed, and whose other son had been wounded seriously. Gathering together “in our utter desolation,” Amanda wrote later, “what could we women do but pray?” When prayer was forbidden by the militia—under the threat of death—Amanda slipped into a cornfield where “I prayed aloud and most fervently.” In her own words,

“When I emerged from the corn a voice spoke to me. It was a voice as plain as I ever heard one. It was no silent, strong impression of the spirit, but a voice, repeating a verse of the saint’s hymn” [“How Firm a Foundation”]:

*That soul who on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I cannot, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!*

“From that moment I had no more fear. I felt that nothing could hurt me. . . .

. . . The soul who on Jesus had leaned for succor had not been forsaken even in this terrible hour of massacre.” [Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York, 1877), pp. 129–32]

We thank the Lord for the pure in heart who have left us their legacy of sacred hymns!

Our family has a personal interest in the massacre at Haun’s Mill because Sister Wirthlin’s great-grandfather, Joseph Young, was there. He had just arrived in Caldwell County, Missouri, from Kirtland, Ohio, when a small group of armed men told him he could proceed no further because he was a Mormon. He eluded the group and joined some of the Saints. He later saw the advancing mob of about 240 armed men fire into the mill where many of the Saints had taken refuge; he saw the robbing and looting. He fled to preserve his own life and then returned to help care for the wounded and bury the dead.

Most of us know of instances where the Church and its members have been persecuted, criticized, or misunderstood. But perhaps we are less aware of individuals and groups who have risen to defend the Church. One of the best known of such people is Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a Pennsylvania military officer whose influence assisted the Saints after their expulsion from Nauvoo and during their travails across Iowa and at Winter Quarters, the trek west to the Great Basin, and the early years in the Salt Lake valley. He traveled by sea from the East to the West Coast and then cross-country to Salt Lake City to help avert war and bloodshed as Johnson's army approached the Great Basin.

Long sympathetic to the Saints and their cause, Colonel Kane shared his feelings before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1850. In a lengthy discourse, he reviewed his acquaintance and association with Church members over several years, noting their suffering and endurance; their industry and enormous accomplishments while destitute; their order and discipline; their happy, cheerful natures; their devotion to their families, to each other, and to their God; their hope and faith in the future because of their religion; the injustice of their persecution; and their loyalty to the government that had turned its back to them. He closed his discourse by stating that he had never "heard the single charge against them as a community—against their habitual purity of life, their integrity of dealing, their toleration of religious differences in opinion, their regard for the laws, or their devotion to the constitutional government" that he did not know to be unfounded (see Thomas L. Kane, "The Mormons," in Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War* [Salt Lake City, 1881], pp. 64–106).

Based on trust and the strength of personal conviction, Colonel Kane and the Saints forged friendships and genuine understanding that

culminated in Brigham Young's designation of Colonel Kane as "our constant friend."

Less well known but equally courageous was Reverend Frederick Vining Fisher, pastor of the First Methodist Church in Ogden, Utah. In the early 1900s, Utah and the Church were the objects of considerable and often scurrilous articles in the print media. In 1911, a series of magazine articles attacked the Church for "polygamy, deception, bigotry, and the seeking of political power." Reverend Fisher felt inclined to respond.

Writing in a New York journal, *The Outlook*, he wrote that "with a personal knowledge of conditions twenty years ago, now, after some months of personal contact with that Church and its leaders . . . I am at least in as much a position to speak as magazine writers who have spent from two days to a month in the State seeking material to prove a predetermined prejudice." Writing that "Utah deserves some fair play at the hands of the press," Reverend Fisher described the Church as "half a million praying, Bible-reading, law-abiding, thrifty, God-fearing men and women. America has no more strong, genuine, devoted Christians than some of the First Presidency, apostles, and leaders of the Mormon Church."

To be sure, Reverend Fisher differed with the Church on points of doctrine and beliefs. But these differences caused no discord. What Utah needed, concluded Reverend Fisher, "is not a fight on Mormonism, but a common fight of Mormon and Methodist, Protest and Catholic, on sin; not bitterness, but brotherhood; . . . not a chasm between Gentile and Mormon, but a union of the strongest leaders of both types of Christianity on earth" (see Frederick Vining Fisher, "A Methodist Minister's View of Mormonism," *The Outlook*, 29 July 1911, pp. 726–28).

I do not know why Reverend Fisher held such positive views of his Mormon neighbors, but we can be grateful for his courage in

countering the articles that criticized Church members and leaders.

On the principle of contention among churches, the Prophet Joseph Smith said:

If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear them down? No. I will lift them up, and in their own way too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the force of reasoning, for truth will cut its own way. Do you believe in Jesus Christ and the Gospel of salvation which he revealed? So do I. Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst. [Teachings, pp. 313–14]

Joseph Smith also wrote: “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may (Articles of Faith 1:11).

In recent years the Anti-Defamation League and the National Conference of Christians and Jews have stood up for the Church. They have issued statements that have helped overcome misinformation circulated by critics of the Church. In the form of books and videotapes, this misinformation describes our beliefs inaccurately and unfairly and ridicules and treats lightly our most sacred principles and ordinances. We appreciate the modern “Colonel Kaness” for their goodwill and courage in being fair and honest. May we be found in the service of others that they may be able to say of us, “our constant friend.”

Brothers and sisters, as member of communities, in seeking solutions to issues and concerns, we are best served by being tolerant of others’ thinking and feelings—not a tolerance

that becomes indifference, but a genuine tolerance that considers other views fairly and judges them on their merit, all the while maintaining a common civility. Quoting President Gordon B. Hinckley:

There is too much intolerance in the world. There is too much of it in our own society . . .

. . . We must not only be tolerant but we must cultivate a spirit of affirmative gratitude for those who do not see things quite as we see them. We do not in any way have to compromise our theology, our convictions, our knowledge of eternal truth, as it has been revealed by the God of Heaven. We can offer our won witness of the truth, . . . but never in a manner that will give offense to others. [“Out of Your Experience Here,” BYU 1990–91 Devotional and Fireside Speeches (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1991), p. 30]

As I come to the close of my remarks, I express my love for you and my earnest hope that you always will be on the Lord’s side of truth and righteousness. I admonish you to follow the prophets, to heed their counsel and give your attention to their warnings. All they say and do is for your benefit. Be grateful for the good that people do everywhere, whether to serve society generally or in behalf of the Church. Always be tolerant and considerate of the views and beliefs of others, recognizing each one as a son or daughter of God.

I bear my humble witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. This is his church; he directs it through his prophets, beginning with Joseph Smith in these latter days and continuing to our present prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.