

Elder Danford M. Bickmore, President of the Hyrum Stake, offered the opening prayer.

The Choir sang the hymn, "An angel from on high."

### ELDER ALONZO A. HINCKLEY

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I plead with you for your supporting power. I never needed it more.

This is a beautiful occasion, a wonderful opening to a great conference. Our souls have been thrilled by the sweet melodies of this stake choir. God bless their talents and give them a desire to use these talents to praise the Lord our God forever. My soul has thrilled, and I have said out of the depths of my heart when every one of the brethren has closed his remarks, Amen—the Lord let it be so.

#### A BEAUTIFUL SETTING

We are surrounded with beauty, with peace, with comfort in this, one of the most remarkable spots upon the face of the earth. It seems to me it was never more beautiful than today. I do not have to invite you to look over the beautiful sweep of green which extends back to the north wall and see the wealth of color that rises to the top of that wall. There is no other setting like it in all the world. It is a rare privilege, in the shadow of the Temple erected to the most high God, to meet in this great assembly room in conference capacity, after a lapse of a hundred and six years since the organization of the Church.

#### THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

I thought as I listened to the burning testimony of the President this morning, testifying of the divinity of the Lord our God, the Redeemer of the world, testifying of the divine mission of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and bearing his testimony as to the worthiness of his predecessors—I thought, after having had a lifetime acquaintance with the general authorities of the Church and now one year's experience in close daily contact with them, why could I not, a humble man, testify of the living, testify of the leadership of this Church as it is today.

I have seen these men day in and day out. I have witnessed them in their wrestling with the grave problems that arise to be solved. I have observed the vast amount of routine work that must constantly be given careful attention day by day. These leaders are known to us. Their lives are open books. They have grown up under the eyes of the people. Their incomings and their outgoings are known to all. They are chosen of God to carry forward his work at this period in the history of the Church.

I ask for your deliberate consideration and your feeling of reverence for the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What a variety of men constitutes the General Authorities of this Church! When any problem comes before them, think of the various viewpoints that are brought to bear in its solution, and think of the safety and security of each solution as it goes out to the people with the wise recommendations of all.

#### THE ORACLES OF GOD

I bear testimony that my brethren live in the love and favor of God and that they carry their responsibilities with fidelity. I bear testimony of the unity and the feeling of brotherly love that exist in the presiding councils. I bear testimony of the deference and reverence that are given to the President of the Church, in recognition of his long life of faithful devotion to the cause of truth, his known unswerving integrity under every condition of life that has ever confronted him, his generous spirit, his heart of understanding and his ear that is open to the petitions of the just and the good.

We rejoice with him in the inspiration that came to him in the happy choice that he made of his counselors. President Clark, a born straight thinker, a righteous defender of the truth, is a man of undeviating and unfaltering devotion to the Church, who is never given to expediency and cannot be lured by position or place away from the high standards of the Church. President McKay, with his manly physique, a perfect physical specimen, it seems to me, presided over by a trained and a keen mind, enjoys a spirituality that has made him, not of his own volition but by common consent, the idol of youth, the foremost Sunday School teacher and officer of his day. The sweetness of his life flows into ours in richness and lifts in us every good quality and ambition.

These men constitute the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the oracles of God chosen to receive the mind and the will and the word of the Lord and to impart it unto the people. I bear testimony that the avenues of revelation are open. The brethren are worthy. Jesus is at the helm. This is his work and he leads his servants.

#### WILLING TO GIVE HIS LIFE

I could go on down the line, for one year's close contact with these brethren has found a response in my heart and brought a richness into my life that I have no ability to express in words. President Clawson, who stands at the head of the Council of the Twelve, has been steadfast and true while he has pegged out his better than seventy-eight years in faithful service. He stands before us a living witness that men walk the earth in this generation of time who would give their lives for the

truth and for their friends. I recall, as many of you recall, in history that Ruderger Clawson stood by the side of his companion, Elder Joseph Standing, and saw him shot down in cold blood, and then heard the voice of the leading mobocrat give the order, as he designated Ruderger Clawson, "Shoot that man." Brother Clawson, looking down the barrels of those guns that were leveled at his head, folded his arms and said with majesty, "Shoot." He made the sacrifice, he offered his life, but the Lord willed it otherwise and he walks about among us true and faithful, living out the measure of his creation.

#### MEN WITH OUTSTANDING QUALIFICATIONS

So I could go on down and name my brethren: Reed Smoot, the illustrious Senator, now at this mature period of his life giving out of his rich experience all that he has for the building of the Church and Kingdom of God; George Albert Smith, the apostle of love and sympathy and good will; George F. Richards, the patient, the exact, the true, the tried; Joseph Fielding Smith, an oracle, one who knows all that God has revealed perhaps as well as any other living man.

And so I might go on down through the list, but time will not permit, naming each in his place, each with his outstanding qualities, all united for the building of the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth.

#### LEADERS IN STAKES AND MISSIONS

Then as we reach out and discover, as I have been permitted to discover as I have visited the stakes and missions and met the fine leaders we have serving as presidents of missions, presidents of stakes, bishops of wards, as superintendencies and presidencies of auxiliary organizations and the good men and women that they have gathered about them, all down the line, I marvel as I say: "Oh, Lord, it is true; Thou hast brought forth a great and marvelous work. Thou hast lifted an ensign to the world." And I feel that I could almost sing with Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Rise from the dust and shake thyself, and go forth in power and in dominion."

#### AS THE VOICE OF GOD

God bless the leaders of Zion and bring into our hearts a renewed feeling of reverence; that henceforth their voices, as they speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost, shall be unto us as the voice of God. In this hour when war drums are rolling, fleets are massing, soldiers are

being marshaled and all the powers of destruction are being assembled, let us remember the word of the Lord who said: "When that day shall come that peace shall be taken from the earth, when the devil shall have dominion over his own, I the Lord shall rule in the hearts of Zion and shall come down in judgment upon the earth."

That God may help us to know who we are, be what we ought to be, live as we should live and go forth with the irresistible power of righteousness in the proclamation and living of the truth, is my prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER NICHOLAS G. SMITH

*President of the California Mission*

My brethren and sisters, last night I was visiting the home of one of my brothers, and in talking with him about the Church he said: "Not long ago the Bishop made certain proposals of things that he wished to do in the ward. I immediately stood up in that meeting and objected and made a tirade against what he was wanting to do. Apparently I made one convert, for as I took my seat another brother arose and began to berate the Bishop for his proposals, and as I listened to that brother I thought: 'What a fool I have made of myself.' As soon as he had finished his talk against the Bishop's proposals I stood up again and said: 'Bishop, I am right back of you in anything you want to do.'"

I find that frequently we, as members of the Church, are not as loyal as we should be to the brethren who preside over us. It is an easy matter to criticise and find fault with what is being done, but I have learned, through my association with the brethren that they don't do things without considerable prayer and thought; and that when they are united, we can well afford to stand directly behind them and support them in every move they make.

Not so very long ago, in California, a member of the high council came to me and began to complain and criticise because at the Exposition in San Diego we had placed young men and women, our missionaries, to meet the public who came from all parts of the world to visit that great Exposition. He said: "We should have more mature men to handle the crowds that gather there." For be it known that some fifteen hundred people a day have come to our little bureau at the San Diego Exposition, to hear the story that these young men and young ladies have to tell. I said to him, "I have every faith in our missionaries, young though they be, and I am sure that with our faith and prayers they will be able to do their job successfully."

Just recently I visited the Fair, and in reading the diary of one of the missionaries I came to an entry that he had made which interested me and I asked permission to copy it because I thought it was really rich. This happened on September 7th. The diary was that of Elder