

west from Nauvoo, a library was to be built by the seventies, and President Joseph Young inaugurating it through the permission and the blessing of the Prophet Joseph Smith, announced that, "There shall be erected in the city of Nauvoo a library where the learned may come and read the great literature of the world."

In 1850, President Joseph Young again had in mind the building of a great library, and Truman O. Angell became the architect of it. He drew plans for one of the most beautiful buildings to be erected on the western frontier which should house a large collection of books for the use of the seventies.

They were looking to the future, to preach the gospel. My brethren, we must keep in mind always that we must become students of world history. Think of what has already been said from this pulpit concerning the pioneers, and I leave you this angle of thought which has already been expressed. It is now known that the five great institutions of civilization, that came from the very beginning of man's history upon the earth, have been perpetuated up to the present time. They were perpetuated in this state by the pioneers, and they lie at the root of our civilization. They are first, industry based on agriculture; second, the home; third, the state; fourth, the public school system; and fifth, the church.

Paul, the Apostle, was a seventy and a graduate of the University of Tarsus. So were Barnabus, and the evangelist Luke. They fostered these institutions, and we are to perpetuate them. We are to live by them, and hold them sacredly as we work our way through life.

My brother seventies, and all the priesthood, may we dedicate our lives as never before to the perpetuation of this great work, and always know that it is art, knowledge, and religion that bring spirituality, and it is the spiritual forces that will save the world.

God bless us. May we understand and see as never before, I ask, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Brothers and sisters, you would think, if you could test my blood pressure and feel my heartbeat, that what I am going to say is the only thing that counts in this conference. I am under no illusions on that score, however, but I would like to have what I say be in harmony with the spirit of this great occasion, and I would like to have your faith and prayers while I stand here.

### THE CHURCH A LIGHT TO THE WORLD

A great deal has been said in this conference already about the welfare program and about the pioneers. I have not been able to

get my thoughts off these two great subjects, and so I think I shall talk about them both.

This entire centennial year we are appropriately dedicating to the honor and memory of our pioneer fathers who a century ago arrived in these mountain valleys after a long and tedious journey. Truly, they played well their important role in the great pioneering drama of this last dispensation.

But that drama did not begin or end with the taming of the wilderness and the subjugation of the desert, for the Church is commissioned to hold up a light to the world and a standard for its members in all things pertaining to righteous living and the eternal welfare of men. The Lord made this abundantly clear in March 1831, when he said:

. . . I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me. (D. & C. 45:9.)

The everlasting covenant spoken of in this revelation is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the keys of the gospel have been committed to the Church. Continuous pioneering—going before and preparing the way for others to follow—is therefore the inescapable responsibility of the Church. Its over-all pioneering assignment, as the revelation states, is to prepare the way for the second advent of the Redeemer.

#### PIONEERING CONTINUOUS

Much pioneering was done before the Saints crossed the plains; and a beginning was made even before the Church was organized, for a flood of new light and knowledge burst upon the world in the Prophet's first vision, before which the narrow frontiers of sectarian ignorance fell back in hopeless rout. Surely, the Prophet Joseph Smith was a mighty pioneer in obtaining a knowledge of God and of religious truth. The Church has been a pioneer in many other fields, particularly in health and education.

To some extent the pioneering movements of the Church have followed a common pattern. Usually a present need has been felt, to meet which divine guidance has been sought and received, and always the solution has struck at the fundamental issues of the problem involved, so that in the process not only has the immediate need been met, but the building of the kingdom of God has also been advanced.

Since pioneering is a continuous responsibility of the Church, we Latter-day Saints of today, if we are true to our heritage and professions, must also be pioneers, and I believe that we are. We heard here Friday in the welfare section of the annual report, something of what has been accomplished during the last ten years and of what

is now being done in Church welfare. After thinking of these activities in connection with the pioneer movements of the Church, I am persuaded that the Church today is meeting its pioneering responsibility through its welfare program, and I believe that if we carry it forward to its full possibilities, we shall accomplish a pioneer task in our day and time equal to the one accomplished by the pioneers of 1847.

### THE MEANING OF THE WELFARE PROGRAM

I believe, as President Clark has said, that through the welfare program the Church is attempting to abide by the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22.39); that the Lord tried to bring his people to this condition through the United Order but was unable to do so and had to take the United Order from us; that the records will show that the reason was the selfishness and greed of the people; that had the people lived the United Order, we could have had a millennium then, a hundred years ago; that if we do not go forward with the welfare program and live it now, it will be because of our selfishness and greed, and the Lord will take the program away from us; and that in such case the members of the Church a hundred years from now will look back upon our day with the realization of the fact that we could have brought in a millennium if we had but lived this law. When we live it, then only will swords be beat into plowshares and that day of peace arrive. President Grant characterized it as

... one of the greatest and most important things the Church has ever undertaken to put over.

The development of the welfare program has followed the usual pattern. In the first place, it emerged under its present name out of a pressing current need. There has been some criticism of it on this point, as if the function of the Church was not to deal with problems of the day. But how can it be a light to the world if it does not deal with the problems which plague the world?

The Church was dealing with a present problem when it undertook the great westward trek a century ago. The Prophet Joseph was dealing with a current question when he received his first vision, for others in the community in which he lived, as well as he, wondered which of the contending sects had the truth. It was not the nature of the problem but what was done about it, which set the Prophet apart from his fellows and marked him as a pioneer.

In the second place, the welfare plan was inspired by the Lord and is divinely led. President Grant, the prophet through whom the Lord established it under its present name, so considered it. President George Albert Smith has referred to it as the "Lord's great welfare program." President Clark, President McKay, and Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve, all men who stood close to

President Grant in the early days of this program, have testified that it was inspired of the Lord, as have others of these men whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. Of course, acceptance of it as being of divine origin has not been universal. No truth was ever so accepted when first revealed.

#### APPRECIATION EXPRESSED FOR WELFARE WORKERS

I call to mind a visit from a venerable brother who came to my office some three years ago to protest what some of the brethren had said about Church welfare. In the course of the conversation he said he had emigrated to Utah during the administration of President Wilford Woodruff because that prophet of the Lord had advised it. He thought President Woodruff spoke by the inspiration of God. He also thought that President Snow and President Joseph F. Smith so spoke. I asked him if he thought President Grant, who was, at the time of our conversation, the President of the Church, spoke by the inspiration of the Lord, and he said, "I think he ought to keep his mouth shut about welfare questions."

It is not so difficult to profess acceptance of the dead prophets. The real test comes on the acceptance of what the living ones say, for that requires absolute sincerity and the courage of one's convictions.

And right here, lest I forget it, let me parenthetically pass along to you, my brethren and sisters, who by the tens of thousands have heard the voice of the Lord in the welfare program and have accepted it and are carrying on as true pioneers, my tribute. I express to you my sincere appreciation.

In this connection, I have record of 3,088 people who deserve special mention. On the strength of their belief that the welfare program is the Lord's plan, 1,729 of them have discontinued and 1,359 of them have refrained from accepting public relief, all against a tremendous public and private pressure to take it. From a bishop's letter to me of January 28, 1947, I quote the following:

A check of the ward records shows me that there have been thirty-five people who have either stopped taking the old age pension or have refused it since the plan's inception. There are also six other families who have accepted the Church program, each of them being eligible for more than a hundred dollars a month of government money. Of the forty-one mentioned, who have refused government aid or dole, we are helping only ten. Only one receives all her sustenance; all are working except one, who is our present problem. All forty-one have received some help. I sincerely believe that the support received by these people which has meant the most, is moral support. These fine people have accepted the Church guarantee of help, and while leaning on that promise, have gone ahead on their own resources very largely, and are living happy, useful lives.

Financially, we have had to ask for approximately three hundred dollars from the stake and the Presiding Bishopric during the past year, but since we have had three funerals from among the group and severe sickness, we still feel good about it. If our people were to pay an honest fast offering, we should have had hundreds to spare.

The import of the figures given in this letter is tremendous. Of forty-one persons who were receiving public relief, thirty-one of them are now self-sustaining. Only one of the remaining ten needs to be wholly supported. From the resources of this one ward in fast offerings and welfare contributions and through the welfare storehouse, plus just three hundred dollars from some other ward's fast offerings, the public welfare funds are being saved \$2,175.00 a month, or \$26,100 a year. You yourself may compute what it would mean by way of a saving from public welfare funds if every ward and stake in the Church made the welfare program function fully. Here indeed is a practical demonstration of the inspiration of the plan.

I doubt not but that thousands of you who are within the sound of my voice can bear truthful witness from your own experiences that the program is divinely led, and I testify that all the rest of you can have that witness for yourselves if you will follow the admonition given by Moroni with respect to the Book of Mormon. (See Moroni 10:4,5.)

And although it neither adds to nor detracts from the divine origin of the plan, it is a common experience, while showing visitors through Welfare Square, to hear them express surprise, if not actual amazement, at the program and its accomplishments, and to hear them express their conclusions that nothing short of a religious motive and a great spiritual faith could induce people to carry on such an endeavor.

As it does in other things, the Church through its welfare program strikes at the fundamental issues underlying the problems to be solved, for the Church is never an opportunist. It does not deal in half measures. To solve the liquor and tobacco evils, it teaches Church members to abstain from the use of liquor and tobacco. The solution of the Church to social disease is chastity and virtue. To eliminate war, the Church would substitute for hate in the hearts of men, and for force, love and meekness.

The Church does likewise in its welfare program. It affords an opportunity for its members, while receiving the help they need, to preserve and develop within themselves through self-effort, those pioneer virtues of industry and thrift which are the priceless possessions of every self-respecting person and which are indispensable to man's eternal progression. In this way the Church would conquer idleness and indolence and exalt the poor, saving them from the awful degradation of the temporal political and spiritual bondage into which the panaceas of the world, which neglect the development of these fundamental virtues, inevitably lead.

To finance its welfare plan, the Church accepts the free will offerings and consecrations in cash and services of God-fearing people, who are voluntarily seeking to subscribe to the Master's admonition to love one's neighbor as oneself.

## FAITH NECESSARY TO CARRY FORWARD THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Thus the Church, through its welfare program, is not only meeting the immediate problem of supplying the necessities of life for its members, administering to them according to their need, but also at the same time it is building the kingdom of God by pioneering a way in which all men, rich and poor alike, may be brought together as one in love and unity. Certainly, the Church in this work is going before and preparing a way for others to follow. It is holding up a light to the world, a standard for its members and for the Gentiles to seek to attain.

And there are among the Gentiles those who are seeking such a light, and some have caught a glimpse of it. Recently an industrialist who has come to Utah to establish a manufacturing industry, told me that the thing which first attracted him to Utah was the statement of President Grant in the middle thirties, calling upon Church members to avoid the curse of idleness, eschew the dole, give a full day's work for a day's pay, and preserve in their living the pioneer virtues of industry, thrift, and self-respect. He said that those statements sounded to him like a rallying call of a great leader in a disintegrating civilization. Such was his reaction to the battle cry of God's living prophet.

Now, my brothers and sisters, how far shall we go in this modern pioneering work? Shall we succeed? The answer to these questions depends upon how much faith and courage you and I have. You will recall that at the time President Grant characterized it as "one of the greatest and most important things the Church has ever undertaken to put over," he added: "And it will be put over because we have the ability and the power to do it."

For my single self, I am persuaded from all I see and hear in the world of today, and such inspiration as I enjoy bears to me the same witness, that a continuation of our way of life is contingent upon a triumph in the lives of men of the principles of thought and action implemented by the welfare plan. I feel no doubt about the ultimate outcome. To me the unknowns in the equation are "the time it will take and how much suffering will be required to bring us to obedience. For the Lord has said his ". . . people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience" to these principles, "if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer." (D. & C. 105:6.)

He also makes it clear that this obedience must come as a prerequisite to the redemption of Zion. (See D. & C. 105: 1-6.) And none of us doubts that Zion will be redeemed. It is therefore abundantly clear that the Church, through its welfare plan, is pursuing its over-all pioneering assignment of being a messenger before the face of the Lord, preparing the way for his glorious coming. God grant that we shall not falter. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel," by Phelps; Hymn Book No. 194, L.D.S. Hymns No. 231.