

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

May my words express a love for God and mankind while I speak to you, my brethren and sisters. A few friends of mine from New York, members of the Episcopal Church, are in attendance at these services. At home they attend their services at the church of St. John the Divine, one of the most beautiful places of worship ever erected in America. We bid you welcome. We are glad to have you hear something of our beliefs, something of the great truths of the Living God. We respect you in your worship and your religious beliefs. It is one of the rich sayings of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, that we believe in worshipping God according to the dictates of our own consciences, and we allow every man the same privilege, let him worship how, where, or what he may. We honor you in your worship.

TESTIMONIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

You will hear from this pulpit this morning the testimony of every Latter-day Saint who speaks. Far and wide in the world you will hear the same testimony concerning this latter-day work which was given to the world by the word of God to the Prophet Joseph Smith. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. It is our testimony that God has given us the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, was the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Testimony with us is a very divine thing. It is a sacred trust and can come only to one who has opened his heart and mind to hallowed living with earnest prayer and deep faith in God and Jesus Christ. It is the most divine gift of all, and this testimony lies deep in the heart of every member of the Church.

A MODEL CITY

When the Latter-day Saints crossed the Mississippi River in the winter of 1846 and began their journey to the far west, they left the city of Nauvoo, a city of beauty and high religious and civic life. It had been built within a short period of time, but it came to be, under the direction of the Prophet of God, the greatest city, morally, in America. There was a civic consciousness that can well become the model of the cities of our country today.

The people were rich in the Spirit of God, and they had a culture all their own. The men and their families were reduced to humble circumstances. They had little to eat, but living in their wagons drawn by mules and oxen, they were making their way to their new home in the West. They carried copies of the Bible and the Book of Mormon with them. They had come to love books of

literature and history, and they sang their psalmodes by night and by day.

HERITAGE OF AMERICAN INDIAN

We have heard some of the brethren speak of the American Indians in this conference. We are carrying the gospel to all the tribes of America, and we have become particularly interested in the traditions of these people. The *Night Chant* of the Navajo and the *Hako* of the Pawnees have been translated into English. They are mysterious but beautiful dramas. The Indians, if understood, developed fine artistic feeling; and it has been said that their traditions will yet become the foundation for the richest American literature and feeling. Everyone knows that the American Indian passed on to us, and through us to the world, a heritage of utility beyond the dreams of avarice. This was in such homely things as the inestimable food plants, which he had brought from the wild to a high state of domestication. Few seem to know that he has prepared a second heritage of beauty, a gift of fine arts, illusions, and immaterial creations which rise above mere utilities as the mountains rise above the plain. "The English find in the Arthurian romance a never-failing inspiration." Americans in the future will surely realize an epic grandeur in the song sequences and world stories of the first Americans. We know that they once had their testimony of the Living God and Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. The following short poem will give an idea of the beauty of their thoughts. It was written by a Tewa Indian:

Oh, our Mother, the Earth; oh, our Father, the Sky,
 Your children are we, and with tired backs
 We bring you the gifts that you love.
 Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
 May the warp be the white light of morning,
 May the weft be the red light of evening,
 May the fringes be the falling rain,
 May the border be the standing rainbow.
 Thus weave for us a garment of brightness
 That we may walk fittingly where birds sing,
 That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,
 Oh, our Mother, the Earth; oh, our Father, the Sky!

HIGH REGARD FOR YOUTH

We Latter-day Saints have a high regard for the youth of the world. It is our desire to have our homes influenced by the Spirit of God, that our children may grow in a knowledge of what true religion is. I think we are all agreed that one great need of the hour is to bring back the fine concept of the faith in God which our forefathers had.

Yesterday Bishop Isaacson in his address referred with feeling to this Tabernacle. In the early days of this state, the Mormon

pioneers built many public buildings and memorials that bore witness to their love of the beautiful. Everything that they did to create homes and cities showed a mingling of definite religious feeling with the creations, and they thought of it all as God's work. It was from their faith and trust that their genius developed in the days of hardship and toil. There was something of emotional color in what they did, a something that made them strive to unite the work of their daily duties with the light of heaven. It was Ruskin who said that

The power of the human mind had its growth in the wilderness; much more must the conception, the love of beauty be an image of God's daily work.

MORMON TABERNACLE

This Mormon Tabernacle expresses something of the strength of character and religious idealism of the Latter-day Saints. The only building of its kind in the world, it is unique in the history of American architecture. While its massiveness suggests a people strong in spirit, conviction, and purpose, its lines indicate a splendid adoption of scientific principles in architecture. It is a plain, oval-shaped building, studded with heavy entrance doors all the way around; there is no attempt at ornamentation of any kind. The building is a fine example of the utilizing of the resources of the land for the purpose of having a place for divine worship. The building impresses one as an immense, irresistible force, "humanly super-human," an expression of sovereign intelligence and feeling. It is as the great Ibsen has said of all art, "an illumination of life." The interior impresses one with its majestic, vaulted ceiling, and "the vastness of the place grows upon one and inspires one with mingled feelings of solemnity and admiration."

WORLD-FAMED ORGAN

The building of this world-famed organ is a dramatic story. It is inseparably connected with the name of Joseph Ridges, a native of England, who went to Australia as a youth and later emigrated to America. In Australia he worked in an organ factory; while in Sydney, Elder Ridges constructed a small pipe organ, and having joined the Church, he was advised to take his instrument to Utah. He immigrated to Utah, and shipped his little organ, in tin cases, to San Pedro in California; he afterwards brought it to Utah by ox team.

In the early sixties Elder Ridges was selected by President Brigham Young to build an organ in the Tabernacle. After submitting preliminary drafts to President Young and his counselors, Elder Ridges began making arrangements for the construction of the instrument and was assisted by his associates, Shure Olsen, Neils Johnson, Henry Taylor, Frank Woods, and others. Meetings were

held with these men almost daily, and the reports of each man's work were heard. While one was collecting various specimens of wood from the canyons of Utah, another was making good tools with which to carve the wood, while still a third man was experimenting in making glue. Specimens of wood were sent by people from all over Utah, and it was finally decided that the best wood was found in the hills around Parowan and in Pine Valley, about three hundred miles south of Salt Lake City. It was a fine grain of white pine variety, free from knots and without much pitch or gum. For the large pipes, it was especially well-adapted.

The large pipes, some of which measure thirty-two feet, required thousands of feet of timber. Over the long, lonely roads labored the oxen, day by day, hauling the heavy logs to Salt Lake City. At times there were as many as twenty large wagons, each with three yoke of oxen drawing its loads. The roads were rough and dusty, and many streams had to be bridged that the wagons might pass over them without difficulty.

About one hundred men were employed constantly in the construction of the organ, and it was dedicated in October 1867. It is a majestic creation, and to this day, thousands come to listen to its melodious strains. It is one of the great instruments of the world.

STATUE OF MORONI

Casting your eye to the pinnacle of the center tower of the temple, you see Cyrus Dallin's statue of the Angel Moroni, a beautiful creation by that noted sculptor, who was a native of Springville, Utah, and who died recently in Boston. I had the honor of his acquaintance. He was one of the noblest men I ever knew. One time in discussing his work, he said:

To believe in angels marks one who lives near to his God. It is one of the most beautiful concepts a man can have. I am glad I came to believe that Moroni, whoever he was in history, came back to earth again as an angel from God's throne.

This is why Dallin created his masterpiece on yonder temple.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PIONEERS

Wherever you go, you will find the buildings of pioneer days always great structures with artistic features. The State of Utah had its beginning over one hundred years ago when the pioneers arrived in this valley, and it was in 1850 that the Territory of Utah was organized. The people brought with them their ideals, which they had developed at Nauvoo. That city had a university and public schools. The people built a "Seventy's Hall of Science," which was to have a great library. This is what a Methodist minister, a Mr. Briar, wrote concerning the city before the Mormons had left it:

Instead of seeing a few miserable log cabins and mud hovels, which I expected to find, I was surprised to find one of the most romantic places I had visited in the west. The buildings, though many of them were small and of wood, bore the marks of neatness which I had not seen equalled in this country. The farspread plain at the bottom of the hill was dotted over with habitations of men with such majestic profusion that I was almost willing to believe myself mistaken; and instead of being in Nauvoo, Ill., among Mormons, that I was in Italy at the City of Leghorn. . . . I gazed for some time with fond admiration upon the plain below. Here and there arose a tall, majestic brick house, speaking loudly of the untiring labor of the inhabitants, who have snatched the place from the clutches of obscurity, and wrested it from the bonds of disease; and in two or three short years rescued it from a dreary waste to transform it into one of the first cities of the west. . . . I found all the people engaged in business—much more than any place I have visited since the hard times commenced. I sought in vain for anything that bore the marks of immorality. . . . I could see no loungers about the streets, nor any drunkards about the taverns. . . . I heard not an oath in the place. I saw not a gloomy countenance; all were cheerful, polite, and industrious. I conversed with many leading men and found them well-informed, hospitable and generous. I saw nothing but order and regulation in the society. . . .

Joseph Smith himself became a student of Greek and Hebrew, and classes in the ancient languages were organized in the Kirtland Temple, which the Prophet Joseph attended. The Mormon pioneers established schools in Utah at the beginning of their activities here. In 1850 they organized the first university west of the Missouri River, and in 1851 a library was brought across the plains by ox team. It had been purchased in New York City by Dr. John M. Bernhisel and was the finest collection of historical, philosophical, scientific, and literary works in the history of the American frontier. This collection contained the works of the classical writers of ancient Greece: Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle; the Latin writers, Virgil, Tacitus, and Herodotus; and the modern great writers, Shakespeare, Milton, and Bacon. These are just a few of the authors of the books that were brought in this great collection. The library from the beginning received copies of the *New York Herald*, *New York Evening Post*, the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, and the *North American Review*. Of the scientific works there were Newton's *Principia*, Herschel's *Outlines of Astronomy*, and Von Humboldt's *Cosmos*. The treatises on philosophy included the works of John Stuart Mill, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Emanuel Swedenborg.

MUSIC AND DRAMA

The ideals and daily lives of a people are judged by their standards of amusements. Among the fine arts encouraged by the pioneers of Utah were music and the drama, and hardly had the colonizers planted their fields of grain and begun building their homes when they built a theater in this wilderness—a theater that in pioneer days noted actors visited, among whom was Sir George Pauncefort of Drury Lane Theatre in London. He played *Hamlet*, and from that time on great artists graced the stage of the old theatre, including

Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, and many others. So successful were these early pioneers in carrying out their ideals that M. B. Leavitt, in his *Fifty Years of Theatrical Management*, says:

Sweeping as the statement may seem, I do not believe that the theater has ever rested on a higher plane, both as to its purpose and its offerings, than at Salt Lake City, the capital of Mormondom.

LOVE FOR BEAUTY AND TRUTH

Even when the early-day Missionaries went to England—and this as early as 1837—they went with open minds to learn everything they could that would be conducive of the ways of God. Let me here recite to you an example of love for beauty and truth when three missionaries from Salt Lake City in 1857 wended their way to the Missouri River, called as they were on missions to England. Seymour B. Young, Phillip Margetts, and David Wilkins pulled their hand-cart from Salt Lake City to the Missouri River, where they were able to take a train at Council Bluffs for New York. During that long journey on foot—for they walked all the way, camping at night on the streams of water—they would have their supper, consisting of dried meat and bread, and before rolling up in their blankets to get their rest, they always had their prayer to God. One night, we are told by one of these men in his journal, they sat by their fire, and Phillip Margetts, who became one of the noted actors of the Salt Lake stage and who was known in New York and London for his ability as an actor, recited the words of *Hamlet*:

. . . What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

And then he gave another of his favorite quotations, from *Macbeth*:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. . .

APPRECIATION OF IDEALS

To the youth, to the boys and girls of the Church, if you could only realize how our forefathers expressed their ideals of culture and learn to abide by those ideals today, you would know what happiness means. If this appreciation could grow in your hearts, there would be a revival of the stage as we used to have it, which would be a revival of the plays of Shakespeare and Moliere and Corneille, and all the masters of the great literature of the past. There would be

an appreciation of music and the drama, of literature and sculpture, and the old ideals would come back to us as expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God. (D. & C. 88:119.)

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And do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house, may be taught words of wisdom out of the best books, and they may seek learning even by study, and also by faith, as thou hast said. (*Ibid.*, 109:14.)

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O Lord, we delight not in the destruction of our fellow men: their souls are precious before thee. (*Ibid.*, 109:43.)

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Remember the kings, the princes, the nobles, and the great ones of the earth, and all people, and the churches, all the poor, the needy, and the afflicted ones of the earth. (*Ibid.*, 109:55.)

These are just a mere semblance of the teachings of Joseph Smith. Think of what they should mean to the students of universities and colleges. Think of what America will regain when nations accept this divine truth; as the Prophet Joseph Smith expressed it:

"I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves."

To the youth of this land I give these words of Sir Francis Drake, who sailed up the Pacific Coast at the close of the sixteenth century, and then on around the world:

Men pass away, but people abide. See that you hold fast the heritage we leave you, yea, and teach your children its value, that never in the coming centuries their hearts may fail them, or their hand grow weak. Hitherto we have been too much afraid. Henceforth, we will fear only God.

May God ever direct us all in our holy work, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

President George Albert Smith

I am sure you will be interested in knowing that all of our friends who came to Conference today are not in this building. There are 2,850 in Barratt Hall and 2,021 in the Assembly Hall, in addition to the few that are in this building. (Laughter)

We will now hear from Elder Joseph F. Merrill, of the Council of the Twelve.