

The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Frank B. Woodbury, Patriarch to the Salt Lake Stake.

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The Relief Society Singing Mothers, (Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting and Brother Frank W. Asper at the organ) sang "If With All Your Hearts."

Elder Frank W. Woodbury, Patriarch to the Salt Lake Stake, offered the opening prayer.

Selection by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments."

### PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

My brethren and sisters, in behalf of the General Authorities and in humility I bid you welcome, you who are here assembled in such large numbers, filling this historic Tabernacle to capacity, and also the tens of thousands who are listening in by radio and television. I pray for your help and assistance, and especially for the inspiration of the Lord, that we may sense his presence, and that everyone who is called upon to take any part in this conference may be guided by his inspiring influence.

It is with mingled feelings of joy and satisfaction, encouragement, anxiety, and apprehension, that I stand before you this morning.

### GROWTH AND PROGRESS OF CHURCH

I rejoice in the continued growth and progress of the Church. It is a great source of satisfaction to the General Authorities, and I am sure it will be to you, to know that from all parts of the world where the gospel is being preached, reports show substantial advancement in nearly every line of endeavor. The stakes and wards are growing in number, as also are the organized branches in the missions—in the Americas, Europe, and in the islands of the Pacific.

There are more houses of worship in the Church today than ever before in its history, and at the present time there are 420 buildings under construction. Temple ordinances performed since January 1, 1951 to August 31, 1951 exceed those for the corresponding period last year in all temples excepting one, and there is a slight decrease there, but the decrease is explainable. That is in Hawaii.

Notwithstanding this great building program and the other work being carried on in which ward members contribute fifty percent and missions and branches twenty and thirty percent of the cost of construction, tithes and offerings are steadily and consistently increasing.

### UPRIGHTNESS OF SERVICEMEN

Because of the call to military duty the number of missionaries in the field is not so large as one year ago. The missionaries are re-

turning and reporting for military duty by the scores every month. Reports of uprightness in the lives of these returned missionaries indicate that by example they will still continue to be good missionaries while serving their country.

I think I shall take time to give you just an extract from one of these reports. A letter dated September 4, 1951 from a major says this:

"This is quite a group we have. With the exception of two fellows it is made up entirely of returned missionaries. This morning we all ate together in the enlisted men's mess hall, and not a single one of them had coffee, even though boiling pitchers full were set at each table. I noticed a peculiar look on the mess sergeant's face as he scratched his head in bewilderment when thirty-two soldiers all took milk."

It is only a little incident, but it speaks volumes for the loyalty of our missionaries who are entering the service in their determination to maintain the standards of the Church. God bless them!

#### SUBVERSIVE TEACHINGS

All these and other favorable incidents and reports give cause for satisfaction and gratitude, but as I said, there are other things which give rise to feelings of apprehension. For example, the prevalence of pernicious ideas and subversive teachings which pervert the minds of the unstable and uninformed, and in some cases divert the youth from Church standards. In this regard there is reason for concern, too.

The quorums of the priesthood and the auxiliaries, and especially the parents, may not be doing all that they should to counteract these poisonous influences. Religious leaders, civic officers, and all lovers of law and order are today deeply concerned, and not without justification, about the recklessness and lawlessness of youth. Even young folk themselves are deprecating the disobedience of parental authority manifested by some of their companions.

It is a dangerous sign, brethren, when home discipline breaks down, and the loving advice of a wise father and a loving mother is defied. We are told by an elderly American explorer that among the Iroquois Indians "the crime which is regarded as most horrible, and which is without example, is that a son should be rebellious toward his mother"—an ideal that might be well cherished today among men who esteem themselves high in the scale of civilization.

#### MESSAGE TO YOUTH

Our country's most precious possession is not our vast acres of range land supporting flocks and herds; not productive farms; not our forests; not our mines nor oil wells producing fabulous wealth—our country's greatest resource is our children, our young men and women whose characters will largely determine our nation's future. If it were possible for me this morning to speak directly to the young

men and women of the Church, I would say that you should always remember that true joy of life is found, not in physical indulgence and excesses, but in clean living and high thinking; in rendering to others, not inconvenience, injury, or pain, but encouragement, cheer, and helpfulness.

This is simply saying to them that satisfaction in daily life is found in trying to keep the simple law, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Right actions toward others always bring joy; wrongful deeds result in pain, and not infrequently, remorse.

#### OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSINGS

Conformity to the Lord's word or law will invariably contribute to man's happiness and salvation. Those who do not what the Lord commands, we are told, will be subjected to justice and judgment. In other words, there is eternally operative in the moral world a law of compensation and retribution—compensation commensurate with conformity to law; retribution in actual degree to the extent of disobedience.

In this sense I use the word *law* as having a deeper significance than a rule or dictum prescribed by authority for human actions. It means, rather, "a uniform order of sequence" as operative and unvarying as the law of the inclined plane, or the law of falling bodies.

Confirmation of this may be found in the Lord's statement to Cain, the first disobedient son in history. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." (Gen. 4:7.)

It is also stated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated.

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (D. & C. 130:20-21.)

It is said, parents, boys, and girls, that "the soul in the formative period of youth, while it is yet unspotted from the world, may be likened to a block of pure, uncut Parian marble, in which lie boundless possibilities of beauty or of deformity. From the crude marble one will chisel a form of exquisite grace and symmetry; another, a misshapen monstrosity, each visualizing in the formless stone the conception of his brain. Thus we are molded by our ideals."

#### NEED FOR RIGHT THINKING

Thoughts are the seeds of acts, and precede them. Mere compliance with the word of the Lord, without a corresponding inward desire, will avail but little. Indeed, such outward actions and pretending phrases may disclose hypocrisy, a sin that Jesus most vehemently condemned.

"O generation of vipers," he exclaimed, "how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12:34.) The Savior's constant desire and effort were to implant in the mind right thoughts, pure motives, noble

ideals, knowing full well that right words and actions would eventually follow. He taught what modern physiology and psychology confirm, that hate, jealousy, and other evil passions destroy a man's physical vigor and efficiency. "They pervert his mental perceptions and render him incapable of resisting the temptation to commit acts of violence. They undermine his moral health. By insidious stages they transform the man who cherishes them into a criminal."

#### EXAMPLE FROM CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens makes impressive use of this fact in his immortal story, *Oliver Twist*, wherein Monks is introduced first as an innocent, beautiful child; but as "ending his life as a mass of solid bestiality, a mere chunk of fleshed iniquity. It was thinking upon vice and vulgarity, that transformed the angel's face into the countenance of a demon."

That great writer says this: "It is almost impossible to believe that such a devilish nature as Bill Sikes, depicted in the same book, could be found in human form," but Dickens says: "I fear there are in the world some insensible and callous natures that do become, at last, utterly and irredeemably bad. But whether this be true or not, of one thing I am certain—that there are such men as Sikes, who, being closely followed through the same space of time, and through the same current of circumstances, would not give by one look or action for a moment the faintest indication of a better nature. Whether every gentler human feeling is dead within such bosoms, or the proper chord to strike has rusted and is hard to find, I do not know, but the fact is so, I am sure."

I am trying to emphasize that each one is the architect of his own fate, and he is unfortunate, indeed, who will try to build himself without the inspiration of God, without realizing that he grows from within, not from without.

#### THE GREAT STONE FACE

I have mentioned these negative things, but I call attention of the youth to the story of *The Great Stone Face* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Ernest one day said to his mother, as they sat looking at an immense rock in which nature had chiseled a man's face with noble features, and an expression, to quote Hawthorne, "at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast, warm heart that embraced all mankind in its affections and had room for more—"

"Mother," said Ernest, "if I were to see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

She answered, "If a prophecy come true, we may see him some time or other with exactly a face like that."

That face, as you know, was finally depicted in the countenance of Ernest himself. Having lived a life in which he had constantly kept before himself the vision splendid, there was chiseled in his own countenance the benign features of the great image.

What a man continually thinks about determines his actions in times of opportunity and stress. A man's reaction to his appetites and impulses when they are aroused gives the measure of that man's character. In these reactions are revealed the man's power to govern or his forced servility to yield.

#### DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS RETRIBUTION

No man can disobey the word of God and not suffer for so doing. No sin, however secret, can escape retribution. True, you may lie and not be detected; you may violate virtue without its being known by any who could scandalize you, yet you cannot escape the judgment that follows such transgression. The lie is lodged in the recesses of your mind, and impairment of your character will be reflected sometime, somehow in your countenance or bearing. Your moral turpitude, though only you, your accomplice, and God may ever know it, will some day canker your soul.

"The more I know intimately the lives of other men, to say nothing of my own," said Huxley in a letter to Charles Kingsley, "the more obvious it is to me that the wicked does not flourish nor is the righteous punished.

"The ledger of the Almighty is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence. The absolute justice of the system of things is as clear to me as any scientific fact. The gravitation of sin to sorrow is as certain as that of the earth to the sun, and more so, for experimental proof of the fact is within the reach of us all, nay, is before us all our lives, if we had but the eyes to see it."

Associate with that the saying in the Book of Mormon, "Sin is never happiness." (See Alma 41:10.) Man is endowed with appetites and passions for the preservation of his life and the perpetuation of his kind. These, when held under proper subjection, contribute to his happiness and comfort; but when used for mere gratification, lead to misery and moral degradation.

#### PROSTITUTION OF LOVE

Associated with these natural instincts, young folk, is a sin that always seeks seclusion. It is the prostitution of love, the noblest attribute of the soul. God has instituted marriage and the family as the proper condition of expressing in our lives this divine virtue. But sometimes men and women with low ideals and weakened wills permit their passions, like unbridled steeds, to dash aside judgment and self-restraint, and to cause them to commit sin that may sear their conscience and leave in their hearts an everlasting regret.

In this day when modesty is thrust into the background, and chastity is considered an outmoded virtue, I appeal to you to keep your souls unmarred and unsullied from this sin, the consequence

of which will smite and haunt you intimately until your conscience is seared and your character sordid. A chaste, not a profligate life is the source of virile manhood, the crown of beautiful womanhood, the contributing source of harmony and happiness in family life, and the source of strength and perpetuity of the race.

Remember, too, the significance of the Savior's saying that if any shall commit adultery even in his or her heart, he shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear.

Resist evil, and the tempter will flee from you. If you keep your character above reproach, no matter what others may think, or what charges they make, you can hold your head erect, keep your heart light, and face the world undauntedly because you, yourself, and your God know that you have kept your soul untarnished.

The only thing which places man above the beasts of the field is his possession of spiritual gifts. Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical instincts and passions, or whether he will make as his life's end and purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

#### FACTORS IN INFLUENCING YOUTH

I said we had a little apprehension that quorums and auxiliaries were not doing all possible to guide youth along these lines. In the Church we have two great divisions: first, organized stakes, composed of wards and other groups—quorums and auxiliaries; second, the missions, divided into branches in which are also, to a limited degree, quorums and auxiliaries. These groups should become greater factors in influencing youth. Consider for a moment what the quorums might do, if the presidency of each quorum, the leaders of each group, and the members would wield influence upon their fellows as the Lord intends they should.

The quorum is an essential part of the Lord's plan for rendering mutual aid. No other organization in the world is so effectively organized into working groups as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; for example, there are today approximately 137,000 men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, men inspired with the same ideals and similar hopes, bound by a solemn duty to help one another to secure economic as well as spiritual aid and comfort. There are also approximately 57,000 men under twenty-one years of age, associated together in the Aaronic Priesthood. There are 57,000 others holding the Aaronic Priesthood, or a total of 114,000 in the Aaronic Priesthood. What a mighty force for good these quorums would be if the spiritual welfare of each member and his obligation to the Church were considered the special duty of each presiding officer! That is a possibility of achievement.

All others not enrolled in quorums should be enlisted in the auxiliaries, and the whereabouts and attitude toward the Church of each one known by at least some teacher or officer.

## THE HOME

But even more potent in influencing child life is the home. Upon the parents the Lord has directly placed the responsibility of teaching their children. I wish this paragraph could be written and put on the wall of every home in the Church:

"... inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the Living God, and of baptism and of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents." (D. & C. 68:25.)

The character of a child is formed largely during the first twelve years of his life. It is estimated that in that period a child spends approximately 3200 hours in school; 416 hours in Sunday School and Church; but 52,500 hours in the home, not counting twelve hours a day for sleep.

In other words, he spends sixteen times as many waking hours in the home as in the school, and 126 times as many hours in the home as in the Church!

Thus, "In the homes of America are born the children of America, and from them go out into American life American men and women. They go out with the stamp of these homes upon them, and only as these homes are what they should be, will children be what they should be."

I shall not take time to quote all Luther Burbank said about the training of children as he trained plants, but he says the use of an influence over and over again is necessary, keeping everlastingly at it. This is what fixes traits in plants, the constant repetition of an influence until at last it is irrevocably fixed and will not change. "Parents, you cannot afford," he says, "to get discouraged. You are dealing with something far more precious than any plant, the precious soul of a child."

Parents who do not know where their children are at night are recreant to the sacred obligation of parenthood, and untrue to the high ideals of the Church regarding home life.

Do not say now in your minds that that is impossible. Just go back to your own homes and the care that you know your father and mother had regarding you.

## UNDERMINING FORCES

I must not elaborate upon this further, but I wish to mention another condition that gives cause for concern and apprehension, and that is the insidious influences, as well as the blatant heralding of ideas that undermine century-tried principles of peace, of justice, and of advancement toward the day of universal brotherhood.

We are grieved when we see or hear men and women, some of whom even profess membership in the Church, looking with favor upon the pernicious teachings of these groups, especially Communism. These credulous, misguided persons claim to be advocates of peace, and accuse those who oppose them as advocates of war. They should remember that all of us should ever keep in mind that there are some eternal principles more precious than peace, dearer than life itself.

Our revolutionary fathers sensed this, and their innermost feelings were expressed in the words of Patrick Henry: "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?"

Free agency, for example, is a divine gift, more precious than peace, more to be desired even than life. Any nation, any organized group of individuals that would deprive man of this heritage should be denounced by all liberty-loving persons. Associated with this fundamental principle is the right of individual initiative, the right to worship how, where, or what one pleases, and the simple privilege to leave a country, if one choose, without having to skulk out as a culprit at the risk of being shot and killed.

At heart Communism is atheistic, and Facism is equally antagonistic to freedom and to other Christian principles—even denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the existence of God.

#### NEED FOR INTEGRITY

Today there is a great need in the world for men of integrity, men of honor, men whose words are as good as their bond, leaders of nations who will consider international agreements sacred.

The philosopher Thoreau said, "It matters not half so much what kind of ballot you drop into the ballot box once a year, as what kind of man you drop out of bed into the streets every morning."

Man's greatest need is real conversion to the eternal truths of the gospel—to the truth that Jesus Christ came to give life and light to the human family. I feel that with all my soul, and so do you fellow-workers who sit before me.

Recently, a group of friends presented one of their number with a valuable, practical gift. In accepting it, the man said that wherever he might travel, the possession of that gift would be a constant reminder of his friends' affection and regard.

Brethren and sisters, all life is a gift of God. Appreciation of that fact should inspire us with a desire to live daily exemplary lives, that others, seeing our good deeds might be led to glorify our Father in heaven, of whose existence and inspiration I testify before you this morning, and of the divinity of whose Church I bear testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.