

President Hugh B. Brown

First Counselor in the First Presidency

(During the delivery of President Brown's address, colored slide pictures were shown on a screen illustrating the theme of his message.)

Brethren of the priesthood, we are assembled this evening in this famous Tabernacle and in hundreds of chapels and other meeting places throughout the United States and Canada in what undoubtedly is the largest priesthood gathering in this dispensation, augmented by a large audience who have joined us on a TV broadcast.

We meet reverently in the name of the founder and head of the Church, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, of whose divinity we humbly bear witness.

Cultivate appetite for learning

Under the direction of his Prophet, President David O. McKay, the First Presidency of the Church issues an admonition and a charge that is directed to youth and adults alike—in short, to all members of the Church and to our fellowmen everywhere. But our appeal is primarily to you who are in that interesting but difficult period between childhood and adulthood, sometimes called adolescence, when you no longer yield to the strict control of childhood but are not ready to accept the full responsibilities of adulthood.

Keep in mind the challenging fact that your aim is not to get ahead of others but to surpass yourself; to begin today to be the person you want to be; to immortalize today and all the tomorrows that lie ahead, in order that your life may have eternal significance. Cultivate an unquenchable appetite for learning.

Each of you is the heir of the ages. They who have gone ahead of you have partially discovered and revealed a world of wonder with limitless uncharted fields ahead.

Incidentally, we have often urged our young people to carry their laughter over into their mature years. A wholesome sense of humor will be a

safety valve that will enable you to apply the lighter touch to heavy problems and to learn some lessons in problem solving that "sweat and tears" often fail to dissolve. A line from Proverbs advises us that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Prov. 17:22.)

Be prepared

We live in a fast-moving and rapidly changing society whose challenges are awesome in scope and baffling in complexity. Ours is an atomic age, when motion, action, and revolutionary change are constants. A new world is bursting upon us with startling suddenness and irresistible force—a world which is at once auspicious and ominous. The times require that we prepare to meet the demands of the future, make the required sacrifices, enjoy its rewards and priceless privileges, and accommodate ourselves to the universal law of change.

To that end, then, our first charge to you is "be prepared." Constantly prepare and continue to prepare for the future—your future—to which you are expected to make significant contributions. Man's flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge.

The preparation which we admonish is but another word for education, with its attendant discipline, whether imposed or voluntary.

Each one of you must face and solve the problem of what you are to do after you graduate from high school. This is one of life's pivotal questions that must be answered by you with resolution and enthusiasm. Your answer, if buttressed by courage and stamina, will determine in large measure how you will spend the balance of your lives. It is, therefore, of transcendent importance.

Dangerous detours

But there will be temptations and down-drag along the way—subtle whisperings intended to induce you to forsake your quest for knowledge and be led into dangerous detours. Beware that you do not yield to the sometimes enticing but always false and soul-destroying temptations to partake of things that God has said are not good for man.

I quote Mr. [Robert G.] Ingersoll, who certainly was not prompted by a religious motive, but who used his marvelous rhetoric to strike at this common enemy, alcohol: "I believe, gentlemen, that alcohol, . . . demoralizes those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. I believe that from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death, and dishonor, it demoralizes everybody that touches it. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime. All you have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of this stream of death—of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread; of the men of genius it has wrecked, of the millions who have struggled with imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing. And when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the prisons, and of the scaffolds upon either bank—I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol."

Let no one persuade you that the improper use of narcotics, which is becoming somewhat common on some campuses, can in any way be beneficial.

Some may tell you that certain drugs expand the soul, but as Al Capp told us in one of his comic strips: "Marijuana and LSD expand the soul in the same way that the atomic bomb expanded Hiroshima." I hope you will remember that whenever you

are tempted to partake of narcotics. As Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago said: "I am not worried about the economic future; I am worried about your morals. . . . The most insidious, the most paralyzing danger you will face in life is the danger of corruption."

"For each descent from fair truth's lofty way,
For each gross error which delays the soul,
By that soul's gloom and loneliness we pay,
And by the retarded journey to its goal."

Remember, the law of the harvest is inexorable. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." The use of any harmful substance will impede your progress toward your goal.

Education our first obligation

Education has always been recognized by the Church as the number one obligation of each generation to its successor and of each individual to himself. Each one of us is a divinely endowed, eternal, and intelligent being. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to encourage and keep alive the questing spirit, to learn and continue to learn everything possible about ourselves, our fellowmen, our universe, and our God, who is our Father.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "To be saved a man must rise above all his enemies, not the least of which is ignorance." (See *Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 392.) His deep and abiding interest in education is shown by the fact that he founded the first adult education program in America—the School of the Prophets.

Although the refugee Saints were busy erecting a temple and preaching the newly restored gospel, they nevertheless were admonished by the Lord through the Prophet to teach one another "of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth [general knowledge]; things which have been [history], things which are

[current events], things which must shortly come to pass [prophecy]; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms." (D&C 88:79.) In short, a general and comprehensive education.

Devotion to learning

The early Mormon pioneers, despite constant persecution, the continual uprooting of their homes, and the toil of subduing a hostile desert, kept education paramount in their thinking and teaching. They brought books, charts, and textbooks on many subjects across the desert plains with them.

As proof of their devotion to learning, the early colonists, soon after their arrival in Utah, founded the University of Deseret—later to become the University of Utah. Shortly thereafter, they founded Brigham Young Academy, Ricks College, and 30 additional Church-sponsored academies, each guided by Brigham Young's charge to Professor Karl G. Maeser that nothing be taught, not even the alphabet or the multiplication table, without the Spirit of God!

Recently the First Presidency issued a statement on the subject of education. In it they said, among other things, "The Church has long encouraged its members, and especially its youth, either to obtain a college education or to become well-trained in some vocation."

Education a necessity

In our fast-growing industrial society, education has become a necessity, for unless our young people are well trained, they will not be able to obtain dignified and profitable employment in the future.

"The positions that do not require education or training are decreasing from year to year and soon will be non-existent. We therefore strongly urge all young people to engage and continue in formal study of some kind beyond high school. Of equal im-

portance is the selection of an educational program that takes into account each individual's interests, talents, and goals."

Need for guidance

In choosing the best academic program for the future, you will need help and guidance. First, go to your parents for advice. They have known you longer than anyone else and have a mature insight into what it takes to succeed in life. They are deeply interested in your future; they love you with a self-sacrificing devotion that makes your well-being paramount to their own. Also, most of you are dependent upon them for financial help.

Next, you should turn for help to your Church leaders. Many of them have had experience in various fields. They will be glad to counsel with you and will join with you in seeking divine guidance.

I was very glad this splendid chorus sang tonight "O My Father," and as they sang, I visualized a boy on his knees, calling out to his Maker:

"O my Father, thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold thy face?"

(Eliza R. Snow, *Hymns*, 138.)

Your high school counselor will help you with special personal information. He has access to your academic file and can discuss with you your strengths and weaknesses, your interests and aptitudes.

His guidance library will also have information that will prove to be of real assistance in helping you make important decisions.

The seminary and institute teachers also will be able to help you to understand and apply the educational program of the Church. Other teachers with specialized training will be glad to inform you about their own fields of interest.

Also available to you are the services of the Educational Information and Guidance Center. Its mission is to assist all Latter-day Saint students in

making their educational decisions. We encourage you to contact the center through any of the educational agencies of the Church. Representatives of the center can give you information and guidance that will help you to see more clearly the challenges and promises facing you.

The final decision, however, is up to you. You may consult with other people, examine your tests and grade-point averages, and get a better understanding of yourself and your possibilities, but you must evaluate all that is available, create an appetite for the best, and then with ambition on fire and with undiscourageable pluck, continue to make the final irrevocable decision. Remember, the most important thing is not what you do but that you qualify to do it with excellence as you progressively find the activity which provides a continuing challenge and inspiration.

Technical training

You may decide to go to a technical college or training school and prepare for a trade. Here, too, this age of technology demands thorough preparation.

Brigham Young, himself a painter and glazier, said: "I believe in education, but I want to see the boys and girls come out with an education at their finger's ends as well as in their brains. . . ." (M. Lynn Bennion, *Mormonism and Education* [Salt Lake City: LDS Church, 1939], p. 105.)

At a technical college you may receive training in drafting, electronics, farm technology, secretarial and office skills, photography, computer programming, and many other subjects. These courses vary in length from a few months to a few years, with diplomas and certificates offered at their conclusion.

Training in your chosen field while you are in military service is another possibility. The United States Armed Forces Institute and similar military educational agencies make credit courses available in many branches of education.

Many specialized schools offer training in art, music, drama, electronics,

business—even heavy equipment operation. Most of this training is bona fide, but the student must be discriminating and selective and be sure that what he chooses will move him toward his goal of an educated person in the field of his interest and aptitude.

Some businesses and firms will accept a person immediately upon graduation from high school and provide on-the-job training with a beginning salary, but this in most cases should be merely a stepping-stone.

We strongly urge all who have the aptitude, ambition, and gumption to continue their education on the college level and beyond. No young person should aim lower than his capacities justify. The world of tomorrow will make way for the specialist who is trained to work mathematical formulas, plead a case in court, discover a cure for a dread disease, develop new and better agricultural techniques, and so forth.

Combine training with spiritual growth

For those of you who decide to pursue a college education, the Church has developed a variety of programs to help in combining high academic training with spiritual growth.

And that to me was the center of the President's remarks tonight: to add religious training to all your other seeking for knowledge, and then on your knees to ask God for guidance.

The Latter-day Saint Student Association has been established to bring into correlated relationship all phases of Church activity. We desire to encourage and assist students in achieving a more significant academic, religious, and social education. We seek to identify and meet the needs of our students on specific campuses. Under the direction of the priesthood, we try to develop Church programs that will help our college students to cope with challenges they meet on college campuses as well as in life generally.

The Brigham Young University

The largest Church-related program

is offered through Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. This is the mother institution of the Church School System, with a student enrollment of more than 20,000. Here you are invited to obtain a degree in one of 13 colleges or in the graduate school.

The central concern at Brigham Young University, next to confirming your faith in God, is gaining and imparting knowledge. BYU is receiving wide recognition for achievement in many fields of study and research. This academic excellence is made possible by a professional, dedicated faculty, where serious-minded students will realize that the world today is looking for the educated mind and the skilled hand.

Religious activity is an integral part of all Latter-day Saint education and is available to all students. Many wards and stakes are organized on various campuses, with students assuming nearly all of the leadership positions.

Church colleges

Ricks College, a comprehensive junior college in Rexburg, Idaho, was founded in 1888 and is the oldest educational institution now engaged in higher education in Idaho.

The several thousand students who attend Ricks College may obtain an associate degree for transfer to a four-year institution, or may complete a one or two-year terminal program in technical, business, secretarial, or nursing fields.

The Church College of Hawaii is located on the island of Oahu. Its buildings were erected by Church building missionaries, and are the contribution of dedicated young men from New Zealand, Tonga, and Samoa.

This college is intended for the blessing of the Church members in the Pacific, giving them a fully accredited four-year course of study.

Institutes of religion

Obviously, not all Latter-day Saint students who desire a college educa-

tion can enroll in one of the Church-related schools. Therefore, a program of religious education in the institutes of religion has been set up near many college campuses throughout the country.

"We strongly urge students to enroll in classes at the institutes so they can augment their secular learning with a religious education and spiritual experience." (Statement of the First Presidency.)

We now have 185 institutes of religion where advanced courses, suited to the college environment, are available.

At the institutes, students may participate in well-directed social programs, enjoy many inspiring devotionals, and benefit from a counseling program headed by trained personnel.

At many universities and colleges where there is no institute, Deseret Clubs have been formed. Their major purpose is to bring together the youth of the Church and to provide social and cultural experiences in harmony with the highest ideals and standards.

Other educational programs

At the Latter-day Saint Business College, located in Salt Lake City, students may take a variety of business courses leading to a three-month certificate, a one-year diploma, or a two-year associate degree. Here, too, an institute program provides religious training in conjunction with regular classwork.

Another Church-sponsored program of education is that of continuing education courses available to those living away from the university. These courses can be counted toward a degree.

In the many educational programs developed by the Church, there is a place for you. Whether you desire a two-year, four-year, master's, or doctor's degree, whether you desire pre-professional training for any of a variety of careers, technical training, business training, home study, or religious training on campuses not affil-

ated with the Church, there is a program set up that will help you attain your educational goals.

The key to a wise, happy choice lies in choosing what will be best for you as an individual. In that way you will find the satisfaction of becoming a productive, contributing, and independent member of the Church and of society. The writer of the Proverbs said, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." (Prov. 4:7.)

Aim of true education

President McKay has said, "Character is the aim of true education. . . True education seeks to make men and women not only good mathematicians, proficient linguists, profound scientists, or brilliant literary lights, but also honest men, with virtue, temperance, and brotherly love. It seeks to make men and women who prize truth, justice, wisdom, benevolence, and self-control as the choicest acquisitions of a successful life." (*Era*, Vol. 70 [September 1967], p. 3.)

We urge all members, young and old, to keep in mind always that the true purpose of life, both here and hereafter, is to seek the joy of eternal progression. As the glory of God is intelligence, man can only share that glory through continuing education of the whole man. As the Lord himself told Joseph Smith: "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (D&C 130:18-19.)

Provision to excel

We charge you then, brethren and sisters, to be prepared—physically, mentally, spiritually, morally, aesthetically, and in every other way prepare for what the glorious future holds. The Church is making every possible provision for all of its members to excel.

We commend to you some verses

that have inspired some to believe in themselves and to continue the quest for knowledge:

"You may be what you will to be;
Let cowards find their false content
In that poor word environment,
But spirit scorns it and is free.

"It conquers time; it masters space;
It cows the boastful trickster chance,
And bids the tyrant circumstance
Uncrown and fill a servant's place.

"The human will—that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless soul—
Can hew its way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene."

We repeat, you may be what you will to be, if you are willing to pay the price.

Strive to be disciples of Christ

May God bless and inspire you to believe that because he is your Father there is inevitably something of him in you, and therefore, just as an acorn may become an oak, so you, each one possessing a divine spark, may develop into something like that from which you came.

Modern technology has eliminated all the barriers of time and space which formerly lay between the citizens of our world. Moscow and Washington, D.C., are closer together today than Salt Lake City and Ogden were 100 years ago. We have become literally one human family, living in the same territory if not in the same house. Former classifications of mankind are no longer valid, for we are neither strangers nor foreigners any more. God grant that Latter-day Saints may strive to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and will be found in the forefront of those who recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every human being who walks this earth, regardless of his race, color, or creed.

May he bless and inspire you to believe in yourselves and in the availability of divine guidance. As one young man in Vietnam was heard

to say as he was going out and not expecting to come back:

"I thank thee, God, that come what may,
I may stop along the way
At any time of night or day
And talk to thee."

A call to be prepared

The war which began in heaven and has been going on ever since—a war in which the immortal souls of the children of men are at stake—is about to reach a climactic point. This appeal, therefore, is in a very real sense a call to arms.

The call to be prepared is sent to each one of you by and from the President of the Church, the Prophet of God. It is vital and of paramount importance. The preparation must begin at the center of your hearts and extend to the end of your fingers and toes. Each one of you may become the master of his fate, the captain of his soul.

As David Sarnoff, the best-informed man in his field today, said to a class of students: "You face the new powers conferred by science to wreck or rebuild the world, and the degree to which you carry faith in God, in your fellowman and in yourselves, together with a sense of responsibility and continuing self-discipline, by this you will be able to determine whether these tremendous forces, now coming into your hands, will be used to build a better world or be responsible for its destruction. . . . The world needs the upsurge of spiritual vitality to resist the current cynicism and materialism. The gradual elimination of physical hungers will deepen the more elemental hunger for faith and salvation, for age-old values beyond the material and the temporal, they will gnaw at the spirit and the heart of man."

Confidence to wax strong

We need stout hearts to meet the future, a future pregnant with unborn events and big with possibilities. We need faith to try, hope to inspire, and

courage to endure. ". . . let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever." (D&C 121: 45-46.)

Return again to that beautiful hymn, "O My Father," and think of that boy on his knees, saying:

"When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then at length, when I've completed
All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation
Let me come and dwell with you."

That prayer will be progressively answered upon your heads as you qualify yourselves by getting and continuing an education in all fields to which you may be led; and wherever you may be led, remember that God, your Father, is hovering over you, pleading for you, saying unto you, "Come unto me. . . ." (Matt. 11:28.)

May his peace and blessing be with us all. May we be inspired, each one of us, as we leave this building tonight, to make something of ourselves, to be better than we are, more knowledgeable, more understanding, more sympathetic, more inclined to reach out for the underprivileged, and to those who need help. I pray for his blessing and peace to be with all of us, humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

At the close of this meeting, I wish to announce that many television and radio stations will carry conference proceedings Sunday morning to a nationwide audience, including Hawaii and Alaska.