

Friday, October 4

First Day

television audience, we extend a cordial and hearty welcome.

We should like also to express appreciation for the lovely flowers which decorate the rostrum. These were arranged by the church gardeners under the supervision of Irvin T. Nelson, superintendent of grounds services for the Church; and also for the time they have spent in arranging the beautiful garden of flowers at the General Authorities entrance. We also want to express our thanks to Bishop Bradley McDonald of the Santa Cruz Ward, San Jose Stake, for the thousand freshly cut tuberous begonias which he has furnished to beautify this rostrum.

We are pleased to welcome this morning the members of the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the six stakes in the Las Vegas, Nevada, Region, who will furnish the music for the sessions of the conference today. We want them to know we appreciate and realize the efforts that they have put forth to render this service for us.

Sister Ellen N. Barnes will conduct the Singing Mothers. Roy M. Darley will be at the organ.

We shall begin this session by the chorus rendering, "Glory to God," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Clyde D. Sandgren, president of the Brigham Young University Second Stake.

Singing: "Glory to God."

Opening Prayer: President Clyde D. Sandgren, president of the Brigham

Young University Second Stake.

As the opening musical number, the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the six stakes in the Las Vegas, Nevada, Region sang the anthem, "Glory to God."

Elder Clyde D. Sandgren, president of the Brigham Young University Second Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President N. Eldon Tanner

The invocation was just offered by President Clyde D. Sandgren of the Brigham Young University Second Stake.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now sing, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments," after which Brother Robert McKay, the son of President McKay, will read his address.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Las Vegas Region sang the anthem, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments."

President N. Eldon Tanner

President McKay's address will now be read by his son, Robert. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve.

President David O. McKay

(Read by his son Robert R. McKay)

My dear brethren and sisters: As I meet with you this morning, my heart is full of thanksgiving and gratitude to the Lord for his blessings. Never before have I felt more appreciative than I do this morning of the great privilege of meeting with the members of the Church in a general conference in this hallowed building.

I extend to all of you—our special visitors, government and education leaders, stake and ward officers repre-

senting 465 stakes and 84 missions of the Church from far and near—my personal greetings and welcome to this 138th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church, and pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us throughout all the sessions.

Appreciation for blessings

As the years come and go, I experience an ever-increasing wonderment for life itself, and a deep sense of appre-

ciation for the opportunities and blessings it affords.

My thoughts turn with grateful appreciation to the blessings that I have enjoyed. I am grateful for the wise, careful guardianship and training of noble parents. Guardianship and training!—two qualities of parenthood wisely and discreetly applied during the extremely active, impressionable days of youth, a guardianship that kept me from turning to paths that would have ended in an entirely different kind of life. Every year increases my appreciation and love for an ever-watchful, precious mother, and a noble father.

I am grateful for nine brothers and sisters (three of whom are still with us), who made up a home environment—now a cherished memory—which, as an influence in character building, was second only to the ever-kind and discreet parental family guidance.

I am grateful for the sacrifices made by our parents to permit us children to enter the field of education. Through that opportunity I met my life's companion, who has ever been an inspiration: the mother and wise guardian of our seven children and the heart and center of a second lovely home.

I am grateful for the opportunity the Church and my parents gave me to enter the mission field, an experience that changed the entire course of my life.

I am grateful to my friends. He is truly blessed who has experienced the peace and richness of soul that spring from true and loyal friendship. I love my friends and true associates as one of the most priceless possessions of life.

I am grateful for citizenship in this great land, where the Constitution guarantees freedom. I denounce any ideology, any attempt of man or organization to change the fundamental principles of this great American republic.

Gratitude for America

I am grateful that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes with the Prophet Lehi that America is a "land of promise, a land choice above all other lands," a land of liberty unto those who keep the command-

ments of God. I love the Stars and Stripes and the American way of life. I have faith in the Constitution of the United States. I believe that only through a truly educated citizenry can the ideals that inspired the founding fathers of our nation be preserved and perpetuated.

I was thrilled that a long-cherished dream was fulfilled when, on September 17, 1968, we dedicated a 100-foot-tall flagpole on Temple Square and hoisted the Stars and Stripes along with our state flag on that sacred spot. At the same time panels engraved with scriptural references regarding the sacredness of the Constitution of the United States, the free agency of man, and law and order were also dedicated.

I am grateful most of all for the gospel, the true philosophy of a happy life, which sanctifies and makes operative all other blessings.

I am grateful for the blessings of the Lord to his Church in all the world, and for the assurance of his divine guidance and inspiration. With deep gratitude, I acknowledge his nearness and his goodness.

Loyalty of Church members

It is a source of real encouragement to contemplate the loyalty and energetic efforts of the members who contribute their time and their means to the Church. There is a general response on the part of the members of the Church everywhere. The faithfulness of the members of the Church in the payment of their tithes and offerings, as well as the financial support given to the Church building program and to the welfare organization, is a source of great joy to me.

I love life! I think it is a joy to be alive in this age. Every morning as I view from my windows the mountains to the east, and greet the sun as it ushers in these unexcelled autumn days, or even watch the storm clouds as they roll over our skies laden with life-giving moisture, I feel the joy and privilege of life and appreciate God's goodness.

A marvelous age

I appreciate and realize the accomplishments, to a certain degree, of this

wonderful nuclear age in which we live. Scientific discoveries of today stagger the imagination. Nearly every day we read of almost unbelievable accomplishments. This marvelous age has only now begun, and the youth of today, and many of us, will yet see exciting developments unfold as research continues. It is our prayer that the potential for good of these discoveries will far outweigh their potential for destruction.

Yes, it is a glorious age in which we live, and I have faith in the law-abiding and industrious people of this country, as well as throughout the world, and I trust that only good will be realized from the material strides being made.

Increase in crime

However, no thinking man will doubt that this age is fraught with limitless perils, as well as with untold possibilities. As we read and learn of conditions that are developing among the people, we must admit there are real causes for apprehension and alertness. As we note the increase in crime and the disrespect for law and order, we are naturally shocked and alarmed. Just recently J. Edgar Hoover reported that:

"We have on the loose in our country today a predatory monster called Crime. It is growing in size and violence. Its far-reaching forages threaten every city and hamlet in the Nation, and it strikes fear in the hearts and minds of the law-abiding public. It is ripping away the very fiber of our society and our system of government.

"... One appalling aspect is the fact that many people in positions of responsibility continue to deny this truth. They prefer to close their eyes and hope that crime, if ignored, will go away. This wishful approach is doomed to failure.

"... Concerted efforts have been made to minimize the seriousness of the crime problem and to explain away the shocking truths behind crime statistics. It is suggested that our population increase is responsible for a corresponding rise in the rate of crime, and that extensive population growth

of the crime-prone young age groups has not been taken into account in crime figures. Under close examination, as has been shown before, these arguments do not measure up.

"For instance, our population increased approximately 10 percent from 1960 throughout 1967. During that period, the volume of serious crimes rose 88 percent. Thus, crime outpaced the population growth by almost 9 to 1. The young age group population, 10 to 17 years, climbed 22 percent from 1960 through 1967. Arrests of persons in this category for all criminal acts increased 72 percent during the same period. . . .

"The answer to our Nation's crime problem will be found in direct, positive action—not by waiting and hoping the problem will go away. A good beginning would be to let the guilty criminal know that when he is arrested, he will be promptly prosecuted and substantially punished for his misdeeds. A good time to begin would be now." (*FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, June 1, 1968.)

We cannot, we must not, be insensible to the evil forces around us, and especially the communistic conspiracy, the avowed object of which is to destroy faith in God, to sow discord and contention among men with the view of undermining, weakening, if not entirely destroying, our constitutional form of government, and to weaken and subvert the ideals of our younger generation. When acts and schemes are manifestly contrary to the revealed word of the Lord, I feel, as do my associates, justified in warning our people against them.

Problem of alcoholism

It is appalling and shocking to learn that an estimated six million Americans suffer from alcoholism. The Public Health Service ranks alcoholism as the fourth major public health problem in the United States. The impaired morals, ruined health, broken homes, and increased traffic deaths that result from drinking are well known by all of us. Just recently I read a report by a leading columnist who said that the American consumers spend three times

as much for beer, wine, and hard liquor each year as they spend to send their children to private colleges; that they spend nearly four times as much for cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products as they spend each year for health insurance; and spend far more each year on personal care—hairdos, haircuts, cosmetics, etc.—than on all religious and welfare activities. (Sylvia Porter, *Deseret News*, August 20, 1968, p. C-2.)

One of the great influences upon my youth was the memorizing of that important saying: "My spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle." I recall other warnings. One came to me as a boy. I sat on a spring seat by the side of my father as we drove into Ogden. Just before we reached the bridge across the Ogden River, a man came out of a saloon on the north bank of the river. I recognized him. I liked him because I had seen him on the stage. But on that occasion he was under the influence of liquor and had been, I suppose, for several days.

When he saw us, he broke down and cried and asked Father for 50 cents so that he could go back into the saloon for another drink. As we drove across the bridge my father said, "David, that man whom you just saw in that drunken state used to go with me to visit the members of the ward in their homes as a representative of the priesthood." That was all my father said to me about the incident, but it was a very vivid warning to me about the effects of dissipation that I have never forgotten.

The rapids are below you

A little later, one of our teachers gave us a story to read about a group of young people sailing down the river toward Niagara Falls. I cannot give you the author, nor the title of this old schoolbook, but I can give you the memory of that lesson that has stayed with me all my life about those young folks who were drinking and carousing and having a good time in the boat sailing down that river.

A man on the shore, realizing the dangers that lay ahead, cried out to them, "Young men, ahoy! The rapids are below you!"

But they ignored his warning, and defied him, saying, "We are all right!" And they continued on their way, laughing and carousing.

As they got closer, the man cried out again to them, "Ahoy, there! The rapids are below you!"

But they heeded not his warning call until suddenly they realized they were in the midst of the rapids. With all the power at their command, they failed to turn their boat upstream, and "So," said the man who had tried to warn them, "shrieking and cursing, over the rapids they went!"

Well, it is a very impressive picture, and as I said, the lesson left an indelible impression upon me.

Warning for youth

One man, writing a weekly column in a newspaper, had this warning about the youth of today:

"Never has youth been face to face with more breathtaking opportunities and more deadly influences. Never before has character been so decisive a factor in the survival of the young. Nowadays, a 12-year-old child must be possessed of a strong character in order not to get irrevocably blemished and flawed.

"The road from boyhood to manhood has become sieve-like: those without the right size of character slip into pitfalls and traps. The rate of failure in the present young generation will be astronomical. The supposedly most sheltered generation is actually the most exposed.

"The society of the young is at present almost as subject to the laws of sheer survival as any animal society. In the Bay Area you can see the young beset and preyed upon by vultures, wolves, and parasites: dope peddlers, . . . lechers, perverts, thugs, cult mongers and ideological seducers. Everywhere you look you can see human beings rot before they ripen." (Eric Hoffer, *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 16, 1968, p. A-7.)

Help for young people

It is one thing to stand on the shore and cry: "Young men, ahoy! There is danger ahead!" It is another thing to

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row into the stream and, if possible, get into the boat with the young men, and by companionship, by persuasion, and by legitimate force, when necessary, turn the boat from the rapids. Too many of us stand on the shore and cry: "Young men, ahoy! There is danger ahead!" Let us get into their lives; let us touch their personalities by our personality, and let them feel that there is something real in this religion, that it is the greatest thing in life, that nothing else can make them so happy and satisfied as the true religious life.

A clean man is a national asset. A pure woman is the incarnation of true national glory. A citizen who loves justice and hates evil is better and stronger than a battleship. The strength of any community consists of and exists in the men who are pure, clean, upright, and straightforward, ready for the right, and sensitive to every approach of evil. Let such ideals be the standard of citizenship.

We have confidence in the majority of the young people, but no matter how firm our confidence in them is, we must not close our eyes to the fact that the number of delinquents and youthful criminals is increasing. In the interest of the moral atmosphere of our communities, the welfare of the state, and the perpetuity of our democratic form of government, we must apply the proper remedies and, if possible, remove the causes of crime.

Letdown in home ideals

Another important cause for the increase in delinquency is a letdown in home ideals. A married woman who refuses to assume the responsibilities of motherhood or who, having children, neglects them for pleasure or social prestige is recreant to the highest calling and privilege of womankind. The father who, because of business or political or social responsibilities, fails to share with his wife the responsibilities of rearing his sons and daughters is untrue to his marital obligations, is a negative element in what might be and should be a joyous home atmosphere, and is a possible contributor to discord and delinquency.

Fathers may and should exercise a helpful, restraining influence, where a

mother's tenderness and love might lead to indulgence toward the children. In this respect, however, every father should ever keep in mind that he was once a mischievous youngster himself, and deal with his boy sympathetically.

Need for more religion

The home is the best place in the world to teach the highest ideal in the social and political life of man, namely, perfect liberty of action so long as you do not trespass upon the rights and privileges of another. The great need in the American home today is more religion. Parents should make it obvious, both by their actions and their conversations, that they are seriously interested in the fruits of true religion. Next to the home, the Church should be a dominant force in safeguarding our youth.

There is a potent power in life that will solve our problems, and that potent power is religion. Spiritual development and moral integrity are fundamental in the lives of all who would build a community that will contribute to the safety and advancement of our republic or of any other nation. President Calvin Coolidge truly said: "The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country. There is no way by which we can substitute authority of law for the virtue of man. Of course, we can help to restrain the vicious and furnish a fair degree of security and protection by legislation and police control, but the real reforms which society in these days is seeking will come as a result of our religious convictions or they will not come at all.

"Peace, justice, humanity, charity—these cannot be legislated into being."

Christ is the light

The principles of the gospel are the surest and safest guide to mortal man. Christ is the light to humanity. In that light, man sees his way clearly. When this light is rejected, the soul of man stumbles in darkness. No person, no group, no nation can achieve true success without following him who said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in dark-

ness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12.)

I say to the youth of this Church, and to all people everywhere: God exists. He is near. Have faith in him; seek him diligently, and he will reward your efforts. Submit yourselves to him and to his environment, that you may have that testimony that comes from within. Such is your privilege. Such a feeling and testimony you may obtain if you but seek him diligently. Live clean, upright lives, and devote your-

selves not to self but to the life and happiness of others.

That you may gain that testimony, which I now bear to you, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

President McKay's message has just been read to us by his son, Robert.

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

Elder LeGrand Richards

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I am sure, my brothers and sisters, that our hearts have been touched with gratitude to the Lord for the presence of our Prophet and for his wonderful message to us. So many of us have enjoyed him through the years. He has been a great leader. With all our hearts we can sing, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days."

Statements of the Savior

I appreciate the privilege of standing here. I realized that I might have to say a few words in this conference, and so on my bended knees I asked the Savior, whose servant I am, if I might have his inspiration that I might say to you what he would like me to say. I had the thought come to me that if he were standing here at this pulpit this morning, what would he want to say to us? And I began recalling some of his marvelous statements to his people when he tarried among them in his mortal life, such as the one in the song this beautiful mother's chorus sang today, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments." How could we in any better way prove to him that we love him than to keep his commandments?

Then he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16.) I think that applies to this Church collectively and to us indivi-

dually. If there is any question in our minds individually as to whether we are contributing to help make the light of truth shine through this entire world through the achievements and the accomplishments of this great Church, then we are failing in our great responsibility.

I think of his words when he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) It isn't the words we speak that will bring forth his love. It is the keeping of his commandments and doing the will of our Father in heaven. That ought to apply in every hour of our lives, day and night, and as we come and go, so that we will feel that we can walk and talk with him. I tell you that you can feel a nearness to him through the power of his Spirit that will enrich your lives. Each one of you, as you know, can testify as I do here before you this day.

Then he indicated that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13-14.)

Be not of the world

In other words, as I have thought of the statements of the Master, it