

I want to congratulate the Tabernacle Choir for their attire. It was noted that in their broadcast at Constitution Hall during the inaugural festivities, all the ladies seated on the front row had dresses that covered their knees.

Now what kind of magazines come into your home? With perhaps one or two exceptions, I would not have any of the major national slick magazines in my home. As President Clark so well put it, "... take up any national magazine, look at the ads and, if you can stand the filth, read some of the stories—they are, in their expressed and suggestive standards of life, destructive of the very foundations of our society." (*Conference Report*, April 1951, p. 79.)

President Cannon's test

Now hear this test proposed by President George Q. Cannon: "If the breach is daily widening between ourselves and the world . . . we may be assured that our progress is certain, however slow. On the opposite hand, if our feelings and affections, our appetites and desires, are in unison with the world around us and freely fraternize with them . . . we should do well to examine ourselves. Individuals in such a condition might possess a nominal position in the Church but would be lacking the life of the work, and, like the foolish virgins who

slumbered while the bridegroom tarried, they would be unprepared for his coming. . . ." (*Millennial Star*, Oct. 5, 1861 [Vol. 23], pp. 645-46.)

To repeat again from the Book of Mormon, ". . . they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men." (2 Ne. 28:14.)

May we cherish God's revelations more than man's reasoning and choose to follow the prophets of the Lord rather than the precepts of men in my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

After the singing, Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will speak to us; and he will be followed by Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

The congregation and the chorus joined in singing the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

BISHOP JOHN H. VANDENBERG

Presiding Bishop

Sometime ago a friend sent me a short story put in verse by Sam Walter Foss. Though it was written several decades ago, the message seems particularly relevant today. It is entitled "The Calf-Path," and reads as follows:

"One day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home as good calves
should;

But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked path as all calves do. . . .

"The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;

And then a wise bellwether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bellwethers always do.
And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was
made.

"And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent
about,
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path; . . .

"The forest path became a lane

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That bent and turned and turned
again:

This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his
load

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in
one. . . .

"The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street;
And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare. . . .

"Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed this zigzag calf about
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;
For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

". . . For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-path of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.
They keep the path a sacred groove,
Along which all their lives they move;
But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf."

Many paths to travel

In today's world there are many paths for people to travel. There are some who, like those who followed the calf, are pursuing a course in life for no other reason than that others have preceded them. They follow a path without thinking where it may lead them or even who made the path. They justify their course because it is so well traveled.

With so many ways meandering in so many directions, some may be confused. Careful analysis reveals, however, that the solution is a matter of defining our objectives and then following the path that leads to them. Every person should analyze the ulti-

mate destination of the way he is traveling.

An unkind word spoken by a husband to his wife may start a conflict at home that leads to misery, turmoil, and ultimately divorce.

You can visualize the destination of the journey that begins with the neglect of children in order to pursue worldly goods. Yet many mothers persist in traveling such a course.

What about the path that starts with that first so-called social drink? This could lead to mistrust, immorality, poverty, broken homes, and broken lives.

Has good ever come from walking the path of drug abuse? No. It leads rather to addiction, insanity, immorality, suicide, and a dissipated life.

Exposure to suggestive, obscene literature and entertainment, which provides repeated examples of indiscretion and immorality, leads to a breakdown in one's moral values. A person soon finds that by this subtle means he has been induced to tread the path to the point where immorality becomes a common and accepted practice with him, with personal degradation and misery the end products.

The strait gate

Yet in spite of their destinations, these paths have many travelers. It is of such evil ways the Lord was speaking when he counseled against them and said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matt. 7:13.)

The idea that a person would have to try each of these paths before he could judge whether it be wrong is a cunning plan laid by the adversary to entrap the souls of men. A continual exposure to evil ways develops a lowered resistance to them, a higher degree of tolerance for sin, which eventually leads to the embracing of the evil practices. Do not forget that the very ability which man has to learn from the experiences of others sets him above the animal world.

To avoid the broad way, spoken of by the Master, it is necessary for all

persons to periodically evaluate the course of their lives and to envision the ultimate end toward which they are traveling.

Story by Van Dyke

In the story "The Mansion," by Henry Van Dyke, one of the characters by the name of John Weightman envisioned the ultimate result of the path of life on which he traveled.

One evening as he prepared to retire, he opened the Bible and read from Matthew, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . ." (Matt. 6:19-20.)

He fell asleep feeling comfortable in that he had been a benefactor, since he had donated generously to charities, foundations, and other worthy causes. As he slept, he dreamed that he visited the life after death and was to receive his mansion. He was dismayed to find that his mansion in the other world was only a hut in a big field of weeds. He complained to the guide, "Surely, sir, there is something wrong."

"There is no mistake," said the guide. "Were not all these endowments carefully recorded on earth where they would add to your credit? Verily you have had your reward for them. Would you be paid twice?"

Humbled, Weightman asked, "What is it that counts here?"

The guide replied, "Only that which is truly given. Only that good which is done for the love of doing it. Only those plans in which the welfare of others is the master thought. Only those labors in which the sacrifice is greater than the reward. Only those gifts in which the giver forgets himself. These are the things that the King never forgets; and because there were few of them in your life, you have a little place here."

Counsel of Helaman

Helaman, the Nephite leader and prophet, counseled his sons that they might be equipped with the discernment to select the proven and eternal path. He said, "And now, my sons,

remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall." (He. 5:12.)

In this day when the adversary is endeavoring to lead mankind "carefully down to hell" (2 Ne. 28:21), it is imperative that parents lead and discipline their children in the teachings of the gospel. Our youth need this guidance and direction, and they themselves want it. They plead within, as did the psalmist, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." (Ps. 119:35.)

"Narrow is the way"

The gospel is described by the Savior in this way: ". . . strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14.) It requires discipline to travel this narrow way.

In our modern world we talk of and use a method to efficiently and effectively accomplish a project. It is known as the "critical path" method. This method is a way of correlating the chain of critical activities necessary for the completion of a given project, calling for high discipline in timing and filling each step in productive order.

The critical path is the narrow way, and in business, education, science, or life we must follow a critical path or narrow way to achieve ultimate success. Thus it becomes a matter for you and me to consider. Someone calls it to our attention in this manner:

"Your greatest problem is yourself. You are also your greatest treasure. If you can get yourself determined upon—find out what you are and what you are for—and if you can discover and develop the elements of value in your nature, your life will take on the

beauty of orderliness and your need of the savings bank will be less and less, for you will be your own riches. I say, if you can, for this procedure takes wisdom, and wisdom is the fruit which ripens slowly. Perhaps you are not yet wise; perhaps you are still incapable of self-analysis; perhaps you are confused amid the surfaces and appearances of life; perhaps your code of conduct is based upon the customs of the times and the sayings of the alleged sages; perhaps you are disheartened and discouraged—even in frenzy of retreat before the things in your life which seem to oppose you and beat you back. But even so, this is but a condition or mood which is not final—the condition will right itself, the mood will pass.” (Richard Wightman, *The Speakers Desk Book* [Maxwell Drake, 1937], p. 686.)

Words of a missionary

To this I might add, you will achieve ultimate success if you will align yourself to the discipline required by the narrow way which leads to eternal life. There is great joy and satisfaction in the realization of so embarking, as evidenced by the words of a missionary in the mission field:

“... I have come to an understanding of the meaning of life—why I am here and where I want to go.

“It amazes me how little I knew about the gospel before. Sure, I had a lot of facts down, but I just hadn’t caught the vision. I had heard people say that the gospel was and is a message of happiness and good news, yet I didn’t understand why. It is here that I have begun to feel the joy that the gospel was established to give to man.

“Here, material and worldly things

have taken on a second importance; and because I attach a greater importance to what is important, I am happier than before. Christ promised that if we seek first his kingdom, all other things will be added unto us. I know this is true.

“At home when I didn’t like something, I went away from it; here I can’t. I have to face it, learn to get along in situations and with people that are hard to get along with. How great it is to find that you have conquered something that you otherwise would run away from!

“Every day is spent trying to be more successful, doing things that are hard, and growing from it.” (Willard Mitt Romney, “Without a Worry in the World,” *Era*, January 1969, p. 75.)

The proven way

Many parents and youth of the Church are securing their lives against the forces of evil by following the counsel of the Savior.

No one, it would seem, would knowingly follow a “calf-path” through life, yet carelessly they may do just that.

We must not be deceived. That established by the Savior is the only proven way; it is the only way that can stand the test of the eternities. May we follow him into the joy of eternal life. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

He will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy, who in turn will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks, Assistant to the Twelve.

ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice to be with you today. I have been inspired and strengthened by the beautiful music and the messages of Presi-

dent McKay and our other leaders.

We are living in a remarkable age, the dispensation of the fullness of times, and I am grateful for the knowl-