

sion stations for their cooperation in making possible such an extensive coverage of the proceedings of this conference.

A special meeting will be held for the patriarchs ordained since October, 1969, and those other patriarchs who were incumbent at the time of the last conference and were unable to meet. The meeting will be held on the third floor of the Church Office Building on Saturday, April 4, at 4:15 p.m.

We should like to express our appreciation for the lovely flowers which decorate the rostrum. For the beautiful white calla lilies we are indebted to the Oakland-Berkeley Stake High Priests and to Brother Irvin T. Nelson and his associates for handling and arranging these flowers, and also the beautiful floral display at the rear entrance of this building.

We are pleased to welcome here this afternoon these young students from the Cedar City Institute of Religion, Cedar City, Utah who will furnish the music for the session of the conference this afternoon. We are grateful for their presence and for their willingness to come here to add their youthful, exhilarating spirit and influence to this meeting. We are fully aware and appreciative of the efforts they have put forth to render this service.

Brother Blaine Johnson will conduct the chorus, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin this session by the chorus singing, "An Angel from on High," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Udell E. Poulsen, former president of the Finnish Mission.

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The Cedar City Institute of Religion chorus then sang "An Angel from On High."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Udell E. Poulsen, former president of the Finnish Mission.

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### President Smith

The invocation was offered by Elder Udell E. Poulsen, former president of the Finnish Mission.

The Cedar City Institute of Religion Chorus, conducted by J. Phillip Hanks, will now favor us with "The Seer, Joseph, the Seer," after which Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, one of the Assistants to the Twelve.

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The Cedar City Institute of Religion Chorus sang the number, "The Seer, Joseph, the Seer."

## Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

### *Of the Council of the Twelve*

● I have but one desire, my dear brethren and sisters. That is to say something which will add to your faith. To that end I seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### Growth of Church

I express thanks and wonder for the marvelous growth of the Church. A few days ago I participated with Brother Benson in the organization of the Tokyo Stake of Zion. Three weeks

before that Brother Tuttle and I organized the Lima Stake of Zion. A week or two ago Brother Romney organized a stake in Johannesburg. Think of it, within a period of a few weeks, strong and vigorous stakes have been organized in such far-away places as Japan, Peru, and South Africa.

The days of which our forebears spoke are upon us. These are days of prophecy fulfilled; and I, with you, am grateful to be alive and a part of this

vibrant, marvelous work which is affecting for good so many people in so many parts of the world.

This growth is not a victory of men; it is a manifestation of the power of God. I hope we shall never be proud or boastful concerning it. I pray that we shall ever be humble and grateful.

### Tribute to Joseph Smith

Last evening there was presented in this Tabernacle, with word and music, a stirring tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the First Vision. I am thankful that we paused to remember this most remarkable manifestation when the Father and the Son appeared to the boy Joseph on a spring morning in the year 1820. All of the good we see in the Church today is the fruit of that remarkable visitation, a testimony of which has touched the hearts of millions in many lands. I add my own witness, given me by the Spirit, that the Prophet's description of that marvelous event is true, that God the Eternal Father and the risen Lord Jesus Christ spoke with him on that occasion in a conversation as real and personal and intimate as is my conversation with you this day. I raise my voice in testimony that Joseph was a prophet, and that the work brought forth through his instrumentality is the work of God.

### Summary of Joseph's Work

I read again the other evening a summary of Joseph's work and a statement of our obligation to advance it. These words, poetic in their beauty, were written by Parley P. Pratt in 1845, less than a year following Joseph's death. I quote:

"He has organized the kingdom of God.—We will extend its dominion.

"He has restored the fulness of the Gospel.—We will spread it abroad. . . .

"He has kindled up the dawn of a day of glory.—We will bring it to its meridian splendor.

"He was a 'little one,' and became a thousand.—We are a small one, and will become a strong nation.

"In short, he quarried the stone. . . . We will cause it to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth." (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 5, March 1845, pp. 151-52.)

We are seeing the unfolding of that dream. I hope we shall be true and faithful to the sacred trust given us to build this kingdom. Our effort will not be without sorrow and setbacks. We may expect opposition, both determined and sophisticated.

### Efforts of adversary

As the work grows, we may expect a strengthening of the efforts of the adversary against it. Our best defense is the quiet offense of allegiance to the teachings which have come to us from those whom we have sustained as prophets of God.

Joseph Smith gave us instruction pertinent to the situation in which we find ourselves. Said he, "Go in all meekness, in sobriety, and teach Jesus Christ and him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith, or systems of religion, but pursue a steady course. This I delivered by way of commandment, and all who observe it not, will pull down persecution on their heads, while those who do shall always be filled with the Holy Ghost; this I pronounced as a prophecy."

### A steady course

I should like to take a few of the words of that statement as a theme for something I should like to say, if the Lord will inspire me.

"Contend not with others, but pursue a steady course."

We live in a day of shifting values, of changing standards, of will-o'-the-wisp programs that blossom in the morning and die in the evening. We see this in government, we see it in public and private morality, we see it in the homes of the people; we see it in the churches, and we even see it among some of our own members who are led away by the sophistry of men.

Men everywhere seem to be groping as men in darkness, casting aside the

traditions that were the strength of our society, yet unable to find a new star to guide them.

We recently participated in a dedication of the Church pavilion at the Expo '70 world's fair in Japan. One of the speakers was a Japanese government official who warmly complimented the Church on its participation in this exposition, which is devoted almost entirely to man's technical achievements. He deplored the waning influence of religion in the lives of the people of his own nation, with a consequent deterioration of standards and ideals.

### Absence of moral leadership

It appears to be so everywhere. Some months ago I read a provocative article by Barbara Tuchman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian. Said she:

"When it comes to leaders we have, if anything, a super abundance—hundreds of Pied Pipers—ready and anxious to lead the population. They are scurrying around, collecting consensus, gathering as wide an acceptance as possible. But what they are not doing very notably is standing still and saying, 'This is what I believe. This I will do and that I will not do. This is my code of behavior and that is outside it. This is excellent and that is trash.' There is an absence of moral leadership in the sense of a general unwillingness to state standards."

She continues, "Of all the ills that our poor . . . society is heir to, the focal one, it seems to me, from which so much of our uneasiness and confusion derive, is the absence of standards. We are too unsure of ourselves to assert them, to stick by them, if necessary in the cases of persons who occupy positions of authority, to impose them. We seem to be afflicted by a widespread and eroding reluctance to take any stand on any values, moral, behavioral or esthetic." ("The Missing Element—Moral Courage," *McCall's*, June 1967, p. 28.)

### Church standards

While standards generally may totter, we of the Church are without excuse if we drift in the same manner.

We have standards—sure, tested, and effective. To the extent that we observe them, we shall go forward. To the extent that we neglect them, we shall hinder our own progress and bring embarrassment to the work of the Lord. These standards have come from him. Some of them may appear a little out of date in our society, but this does not detract from their validity nor diminish the virtue of their application. The subtle reasoning of men, no matter how clever, no matter how plausible it may sound, cannot abridge the declared wisdom of God.

I recently heard the patriarch serving in the Milwaukee Stake, who sits in this hall today, speak a few words that I have not forgotten. Said he: "God is not a celestial politician seeking our vote. Rather, God is to be found, and God is to be obeyed." (Hans Kindt.)

The satisfying thing is that obedience brings happiness. It brings peace; it brings growth—all of these to the individual, and his good example brings respect for the institution of which he is a part.

### Contention unnecessary

Our adherence to these divinely given standards need never be an offensive thing to those about us. We need not contend with them. But if we will pursue a steady course, our very example will become the most effective argument we could ever advance for the virtues of the cause with which we are associated.

The Lord has given us counsel and commandment on so many things that no member of this church need ever equivocate. He has established our guidelines concerning personal virtue, neighborliness, obedience to law, loyalty to government, observance of the Sabbath day, sobriety and abstinence from liquor and tobacco, the payment of tithes and offerings, the care of the poor, the cultivation of home and family, the sharing of the gospel, to mention only a few.

There need be nothing of argument or contention in any of them. If we will pursue a steady course in the

Saturday, April 4

First Day

implementation of our religion in our own lives, we shall advance the cause more effectively than by any other means.

### The word of the Lord

There may be those who will seek to tempt us away. There may be those who will try to bait us. We may be disparaged. We may be belittled. We may be inveighed against. We may be caricatured before the world.

There are those, both in the Church and out, who would compel us to change our position on some matters, as if it were our prerogative to usurp authority which belongs alone to God.

We have no desire to quarrel with others. We teach the gospel of peace. But we cannot forsake the word of the Lord as it has come to us through men whom we have sustained as prophets. We must stand and say, to quote again the words of Miss Tuchman: "This is what I believe. This I will do and that I will not do. This is my code of behavior and that is outside it."

There may be times of discouragement and deep concern. There certainly will be days of decision in the lives of each of us. It was ever thus.

### Narrative of family conversion

Every man and woman in this church knows something of the price paid by our forebears for their faith. I was again reminded of this when I recently read the narrative of my wife's grandmother. I think I would like to share a few words from that story of a 13-year-old girl. She tells of her childhood in Brighton, that delightful city on the south coast of England, where the soft, green hills of Sussex roll down to the sea.

It was there that her family were baptized. Their conversion came naturally because the Spirit whispered in their hearts that it was true. But there were critical relatives and neighbors and even mobs to deride and inflame others against them. It took courage, that rare quality described as moral courage, to stand up and be counted,

to be baptized and recognized as a Mormon.

The family traveled to Liverpool, where with some 900 others they boarded the sailing vessel *Horizon*.

As the wind caught the sails, they sang, "Farewell, My Native Land. Farewell." After six weeks at sea—to cover the distance covered today by a jet plane in six hours—they landed at Boston and then traveled by steam train to Iowa City, for fitting out.

There they purchased two yoke of oxen, one yoke of cows, a wagon, and a tent. They were assigned to travel with and assist one of the handcart companies.

Here at Iowa City also occurred their first tragedy. Their youngest child, less than two years of age, suffering from exposure, died and was buried in a grave never again visited by a member of the family.

### Story of pioneer journey

Now let me give you the very words of this 13-year-old girl as I read a few lines from her story:

"We traveled from 15 to 25 miles a day . . . till we got to the Platte River. . . . We caught up with the handcart companies that day. We watched them cross the river. There were great lumps of ice floating down the river. It was bitter cold. The next morning there were fourteen dead. . . . We went back to camp and had our prayers, [and] . . . sang 'Come, Come Ye Saints, No Toil Nor Labor Fear.' I wondered what made my mother cry [that night]. . . . The next morning my little sister was born. It was the 23rd of September. We named her Edith. She lived six weeks and died. . . . [She was buried at the last crossing of the Sweetwater.]

"[We ran into heavy snow. I became lost in the snow.] My feet and legs were frozen. . . . The men rubbed me with snow. They put my feet in a bucket of water. The pain was terrible. . . .

"When we arrived at Devils Gate it was bitter cold. We left many of our things there. . . . My brother James

... was as well as he ever was when he went to bed [that night]. In the morning he was dead. . . .

"My feet were frozen; also my brother's and my sister's. It was nothing but snow [snow everywhere and the bitter Wyoming wind]. We could not drive the pegs in our tents. . . . We did not know what would become of us. [Then] one night a man came to our camp and told us . . . Brigham Young had sent men and teams to help us. . . . We sang songs, some danced and some cried. . . .

"My mother had never got well. . . . She died between the Little and Big Mountains. . . . She was 43 years of age. . . .

"We arrived in Salt Lake City nine o'clock at night the 11th of December 1856. Three out of the four that were living were frozen. My mother was dead in the wagon. . . .

"Early next morning Brigham Young came. . . . When he saw our condition, our feet frozen and our mother dead, tears rolled down his cheeks. . . .

"The doctor amputated my toes . . . [while] the sisters were dressing mother for her grave. . . . When my feet were fixed they [carried] . . . us in to see our mother for the last time. Oh, how did we stand it? That afternoon she was buried. . . .

"I have thought often of my mother's words before we left England. 'Polly, I want to go to Zion while my children are small, so they can be raised in the Gospel of Christ, for I know this is the true church.'" (Life of Mary Ann Goble Pay.)

Thus conclude portions of the narrative of a 13-year-old girl.

### Sacrifice for faith

I conclude with this question: Should we be surprised if we are called upon to endure a little criticism, to make some small sacrifice for our faith, when our forebears paid so great a price for theirs?

Without contention, without argument, without offense, let us pursue a steady course, moving forward to build the kingdom of God. If there is trouble, let us face it calmly. Let us overcome evil with good. This is God's work. It will continue to strengthen over the earth, touching for good the lives of countless thousands whose hearts will respond to the message of truth. No power under heaven can stop it.

This is my faith and this is my testimony.

God help us to be worthy of the great and sacred commission that is ours, thus to build his kingdom, I humbly pray, as I leave with you my witness and testimony of its divinity, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Joseph Fielding Smith

We have just listened to Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy.

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

● A few days ago we had another stimulating experience as we visited with some of our young friends. Time was taken not only for group discussions and opinions, but for some private talks as well. We learned again that our choice youth want answers.

They want direction. They want acceptance. One young lady impressed us with her very sincere, "Why can't I be the same every day? Some days I feel like I'm on top of the world; other times I'm discouraged and am low, especially on myself."