

that is ours in living in this time, in the beautiful, wonderful world in which we live. May we let the gospel light guide us that we may be in the world and yet not partake of the evil of the world. I so ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We who associate with Brother Cullimore appreciate the great strength of his testimony and his service. He has just address us.

We will now hear from Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

Of the Council of the Twelve

Thirty-four gifted and inspired speakers have preceded me, and now on this autumn day I feel like the last leaf on the tree as I say a few words before President Lee gives his final counsel and blessing. It is not a new experience for me to speak immediately preceding President Lee. I have had that privilege a score of times recently. Each time I have felt like the freshman team before the varsity comes out for the big game.

But I regard this as a great opportunity to add my testimony. I humbly seek the direction of the Holy Spirit as I speak upon a sacred theme.

"We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet"

We have sung in this conference a marvelous hymn, a hymn we have sung in conferences for more than a century: "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." It is distinctive with us. As a people we sing some hymns that have come from other churches, and others sing some of ours. But only we can properly sing, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days."

It was written more than a century ago by a man of humble circumstances who lived in Sheffield, England. He worked in the steel mills and was discharged because he joined the Mormon Church. But there burned in his heart a great and fervent testimony; and out

of an overflowing spirit of gratitude, he penned these marvelous lines. They have become a grateful expression of appreciation for millions over the earth. I myself have heard them sung in 21 different languages as a reverent prayer of thanksgiving for divine revelation.

How thankful we ought to be, my brethren and sisters, how thankful we are, for a prophet to counsel us in words of divine wisdom as we walk our paths in these complex and difficult times. The solid assurance we carry in our hearts, the conviction that God will make his will known to his children through his recognized servant is the real basis of our faith and activity. We either have a prophet or we have nothing; and having a prophet, we have everything.

Work in the Philippines

Twelve years ago, in company with the mission president from Hong Kong, it was my opportunity to initiate the work in the Philippines. On April 28, 1961, we held a meeting that will never be forgotten by those of us who were present. We had no hall then in which to meet. We made a request of the United States Embassy for permission to meet on the beautiful porch of the marble memorial in the American military cemetery at Fort McKinley on the outskirts of Manila. We convened at 6:30 in the morning. In that hallowed

and sacred place, where are remembered the tragedies of war, we commenced the work of teaching the gospel of peace.

We called upon the only native Filipino member we had been able to locate. He recounted a story which I have never forgotten.

A living prophet

When he was a boy he found in a garbage can an old tattered copy of the *Reader's Digest*. It contained a condensation of a book giving the story of the Mormon people. It spoke of Joseph Smith and described him as a prophet. The word *prophet* did something to that boy. Could there actually be a prophet upon the earth? he wondered. The magazine was lost, but concern over the presence of a living prophet never left him during the long, dark years of war and oppression when the Philippines were occupied. Finally the forces of liberation came, and with them the reopening of Clark Air Base. David Lagman found employment there. His supervisor, he learned, was a Mormon, an Air Force officer. He wanted to ask him if he believed in a prophet, but was afraid to do so. Finally, after much inner turmoil, he mustered the courage to inquire.

"Are you a Mormon, sir?" the young man asked. "Yes, I am," was the forthright reply. "Do you believe in a prophet, do you have a prophet in your church?" came the anxious question.

"We do have a prophet, a living prophet, who presides in this church and who teaches the will of the Lord."

David asked the officer to tell him more, and out of that teaching came his baptism. He was the first native elder ordained in the Philippines and today serves as president of the Northern Luzon District of the Church, now knowing for himself that there is indeed a living prophet on the earth.

Revealers of truth

Could any people have a greater

blessing than to have standing at their head one who receives and teaches the will of God concerning them? We need not look far in the world to know that "the wisdom of the wise has perished and that the understanding of the prudent has come to naught." That wisdom for which the world should seek is the wisdom which comes from God. The only understanding that will save the world is divine understanding.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

It was so in the days of Amos and in all the years when holy men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. (See 2 Pet. 1:21.) Those ancient prophets warned not only of things to come, but more importantly, they became the revealers of truth to people. It was they who pointed the way men should live if they were to be happy and find peace in their lives.

Modern prophets

I think today of a young man I know who, as a Christian, trying one church after another, could find none that taught of a prophet. Only among the Jewish people did he find reverent mention of the prophets, and so he accepted and embraced the Jewish religion.

In the summer of 1964, he went to New York City and visited the World's Fair. He entered the Mormon Pavilion and saw pictures of the prophets of the Old Testament. His heart warmed within him as he heard the missionaries speak with appreciation of these great men of ages past through whom Jehovah revealed his will. Then, as he progressed through the pavilion, he heard of modern prophets—of Joseph Smith who was called a prophet, a seer, and a revelator. Something stirred within him. His spirit responded to the testimony of the missionaries. He was baptized. He served a mission in South America where he had many converts. He re-

turned home and has since become the means of bringing his family and others into the Church. It is heartwarming to hear him testify that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God and that all who have succeeded him have been legal successors in this high and sacred calling.

Foreteller of events

Could anyone, willing to read without bias the story of Joseph Smith, doubt that he was a great foreteller of events to come? Nearly thirty years before a shot was fired, he foretold the tragic American Civil War and stated that following that, war would be poured out upon all nations. You and I of this generation are witnesses to the fulfillment of those remarkable words.

He foretold that this people, then living in Illinois, would be driven out, would suffer much affliction, and would become a great and mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. Our presence today in this great Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City is evidence of the fulfillment of those marvelous words of prophecy.

It has been so with his successors. On a cold winter day in 1849, when our forebears in this valley were hungry and living on sego roots and thistle tops, while gold was being found in California, Brigham Young stood in the old bowery on this square and spoke prophetic words to those who felt they might leave the hardships of life here to go to greener pastures in California. Among other things, he said:

"We have been kicked out of the frying pan into the fire, out of the fire into the middle of the floor, and here we are and here we will stay. . . ."

"We shall build a city and a temple to the Most High God in this place. We will extend our settlements to the east and the west, to the north and south, and we will build towns and cities by the hundreds, and thousands of saints will gather in from the nations of the earth.

"This will become the great highway of the nations. Kings and emperors and the noble and the wise of the earth will visit us here. . . ."

Prophecy fulfilled

How could anyone stand in the Visitors Center to the north of us and witness the hundreds of thousands, yes, the millions, who come each year to visit us, and have any doubt that Brigham Young spoke other than as a prophet? Over the years there has been a veritable parade of notables who have found their way to the office of the First Presidency, there to meet particularly the man whom we sustain as the president of the Church and as the prophet of our day. They include leaders in the governments of the earth, in business and commerce, in education, in the professions. These are among "the noble and the wise of the earth" of whom Brigham Young spoke when we were an outcast people, isolated in a mountain wilderness.

An American prophet

Two weeks ago we were riding a plane from San Francisco to Sydney, Australia. We noted a young man in a nearby seat reading the book *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet*. When opportunity presented itself, I spoke to him. I told him that I had read the book, that I had known the author, and asked him what his interest was. He said, among other things, that he had an interest in prophets and that this matter of a possible modern prophet had intrigued him. He had picked up the book at the library. We had a lengthy conversation in which I bore my witness that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet. Not only did he speak of things to come, but more importantly, he was a revealer of eternal truth and a testifier of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am hopeful that that young man, as he continues his studies, will have come into his heart a

similar testimony. I feel confident that he will.

Gratitude for prophets

I am profoundly grateful, my brethren and sisters, not only for Joseph Smith as the prophet who served as an instrument in the hands of the Almighty in restoring this work, but also for all of those who have followed him. A study of their lives will reveal the manner in which the Lord has chosen them, has refined them, and has molded them to his eternal purposes. Joseph Smith declared on one occasion: "I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; . . . with all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there, and thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty."

He was hated and persecuted. He was driven and imprisoned. He was abused and beaten. And as you read his history, you see the evolution of which he spoke. There developed a power in his life. There came a refinement. There grew a love for others which even overcame his own love for life. The corners of that rough stone were knocked off, and he became a polished shaft in the hand of the Almighty.

President Harold B. Lee

It has been so with those who have succeeded him. Through long years of dedicated service, they have been refined and winnowed and chastened and molded for the purposes of the Almighty. Could anyone doubt this after reading the lives of such men as Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith? The Lord subdued their hearts and refined their natures to prepare them for the great and sacred responsibility later thrust upon them. It has been so with him who stands as President of the Church today, our beloved leader, President Harold B. Lee. I hope he will pardon

me. I do not wish to embarrass him. But can one who knows something of his life deny the same influences at work? He came out of circumstances that would today be classed as poverty. From firsthand experience he knows the meaning of hard manual labor. He served as a missionary and was rejected by most of those upon whom he called. He sacrificed for an education. He has known serious illness when life seemed to hang by a thread. He has walked through deep and dark valleys of sorrow. Looking back upon the history of his life, it all appears to be part of a pattern, a refining process that he might better understand the trials, the afflictions, the sorrows of others. And yet, with all of this, there is a great buoyancy of spirit that rises above the tragic and the sorrowful and lifts to higher ground all of those he touches and influences.

As one who recently walked with him as a junior companion in the missions of Europe and England, I have seen young people eagerly press about him with tears in their eyes and smiles, sweet and beautiful, upon their faces. I have seen missionaries sit enraptured as he taught from the scriptures, speaking, like the Master, "as one having authority." I have seen little children sit almost motionless as he spoke their language and led them to understand sacred truths of the sacrament. I have seen elderly men and women weep as he blessed them.

I have seen few things more touching than a strong young man embracing the President and then later with tear-moistened eyes saying, "Never have I been so near to heaven."

Prophetic calling

As one to whom the spirit has borne witness, I testify of his prophetic calling, and add my voice to the voices of our people over the earth, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days." I am grateful. I am satisfied that the peace and the

progress and the prosperity of this people lie in doing the will of the Lord as that will is articulated by him who shall speak to us as we close this great conference. If we fail to observe his counsel, we repudiate his sacred calling. If we abide his counsel, we shall be blessed of God.

*We ever pray for thee, our Prophet dear,
That God will give to thee comfort and
cheer;*

*As the advancing years furrow thy brow,
Still may the light within shine bright as
now. . . ."*

—LDS Hymns, no. 386

God lives and is a revealer of eternal truth. Jesus Christ is our Savior and stands at the head of this Church. We have a prophet upon the earth, a seer and a revelator to teach us. God give us the faith and the discipline within ourselves to follow that teaching. I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

No one who has traveled with Brother Hinckley has ever thought of him as being on the second team. He is one of God's noblemen.

Now if I may collect my thoughts a little bit, and express gratitude; first to those who have rendered such beautiful music, this great Tabernacle Choir. These choruses have been wonderful; the conductors and members of the choruses, the organists,—they have all been great. Somehow when we listen to the Tabernacle Choir, they seem to have the talent to lift us to heaven. The Lord bless you wonderful people who give so much of yourselves, and inspire us so much with your great talents and your unselfish devotion. We don't won-

der that you musicians who are so gifted might have some temperamental disturbances among you. We wouldn't think you were professional if you didn't have some such to characterize your associations together. But we believe you are big enough to rise above all of that, and to sing glories and praises to God. Thank the Lord that you have the association in this great organization.

We thank all of you brethren of the General Authorities. I am never more proud than when I hear my brethren speak. All of you have contributed greatly to the conference with messages of inspiration.

And to you of the television and radio stations, press representatives, who so fairly report what is said and done, we express special thanks. The newspapers, even though they may not be connected with the Church, do such a remarkable job, we can't help but express our deep appreciation.

We thank our city officials, the traffic officers, the fire department and the Red Cross, the doctors here who sit in the wings, hoping that we don't have a heart attack, or some physical ailment, but standing by to help if anything should happen; the Tabernacle ushers with all the patience in the world, seating these great audiences in a courteous manner; the managers and owners of stations who have given, as a public service, the great coverage of the conference from coast to coast in this country, Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, Central America, Canada; and by satellite, one of the great inventions of the world, to Australia and South America. To all of these we can't say enough to express our deep, grateful appreciation. The Lord bless all of you.