

and then retired to their homes.”

Dimitrious continued: “Very early in the morning, as I lay upon my bed, I was awakened by the noise of many trucks entering the village. I heard the sound of soldier’s boots, the rap at the door, and the command for every boy and man to assemble at once on the village square. I had time only to slip into my trousers, buckle my belt, and join the others. There, under the glaring lights of a dozen trucks, and before the muzzles of a hundred guns, we stood. The Nazis vented their wrath, told of the destruction of the dam, and announced a drastic penalty: every fifth man or boy was to be summarily shot. A sergeant made the fateful count, and the first group was designated and executed.”

Dimitrious spoke more deliberately to the Scouters as he said: “Then came the row in which I was standing. To my horror, I could see that I would be the final person designated for execution. The soldier stood before me, the angry headlights dimming my vision. He gazed intently at the buckle of my belt. It carried on it the Scout insignia. I had earned the belt buckle as a Boy Scout for knowing the Oath and the Law of Scouting. The tall soldier pointed at the belt buckle, then raised

his right hand in the Scout sign. I shall never forget the words he spoke to me: ‘Run, boy, run!’ I ran. I lived. Today I serve Scouting, that boys may still dream dreams and live to fulfill them.” (As told by Peter W. Hummel.)

Dimitrious reached into his pocket and produced that same belt buckle. The emblem of Scouting still shone brightly. Not a word was spoken. Every man wept. A commitment to Scouting was renewed.

It has been said, “The greatest gift a man can give a boy is his willingness to share a part of his life with him.” To leaders who build bridges to the hearts of boys, to parents of Scouts, and to Scouts everywhere, on this our 75th anniversary, I salute you and pray our Heavenly Father’s blessings upon you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the spirit of this great conference and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I speak to you.

Worshipping with song

According to scripture, after the Savior instituted the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper with the Apostles, they sang a hymn and “went out into the mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30). From this scripture it is evident that the singing of hymns

was a part of the religious services at that time.

Today, one of the important parts of our worship services is the congregational singing of hymns, in addition to the beautiful choir music. As each of our religious services is opened by a hymn and a prayer, the spirit of worship is established and a beautiful feeling of fellowship is felt. Today I would like to emphasize the importance and value of participating in congregational singing.

In our Latter-day Saint hymns, we sing praises to the Lord, pray

unto the Lord, recite great religious truths—in effect sermons—and our minds and spirits are elevated and spiritually stimulated.

President Heber J. Grant, in discussing the matter, said: "No individual singer, or organization of singers, in the Church, should ever render a selection unless the words are in full harmony with the truths of the gospel, and can be given from the heart of the singer. In other words, our songs should be in very deed 'Prayers unto the Lord.'" (*Improvement Era*, July 1912, pp. 786-87.)

President Spencer W. Kimball, in referring to our singing of hymns, said: "Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been preached were preached by the singing of a song. There are many wonderful songs. . . . Sing them through." (*New Zealand Area Conference Report*, 20-22 Feb. 1976, p. 27.)

Doctrine, prophecy, and inspiration

In July of 1830, just three months after the organization of the Church, a revelation from the Lord was given to Emma Smith through her husband, the Prophet Joseph Smith, in which the Lord stated: "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12).

In this revelation, Emma Smith was charged with the responsibility of compiling a hymnbook for the use of the Church. Brother W. W. Phelps, one of the great hymn writers of this dispensation, was appointed to assist and arrange for the printing. Ninety hymns were compiled, and in 1835 the first edition was published.

To illustrate the doctrine, prophecy, and great inspiration contained in our hymns, let me quote from a few.

"I Know That My Redeemer Lives" was selected as one of the ninety hymns in the first hymnbook, and the words were written by Samuel Medley. In this hymn, we sing:

I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence
gives!

He lives, he lives, who once was
dead.

He lives, my everliving head.

He lives to bless me with his love.

He lives to plead for me above.

He lives my hungry soul to feed.

He lives to bless in time of need.

O sweet the joy this sentence
gives:

"I know that my Redeemer
lives."

(*Hymns*, no. 95.)

J. Spencer Cornwall, commenting on this song, wrote: "To hear this loved song rendered by an assembly of devoted Latter-day Saints is a spiritual baptism" (*Stories of Our Mormon Hymns*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968, p. 108). How true this is! This is one of our most popular hymns in which we express thanks for the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Background of two great songs

"Praise to the Man," (*Hymns*, no. 147), one of W. W. Phelps' inspiring hymns, is a magnificent tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith. This beautiful hymn not only incorporates the elements of rejoicing and prophecy, but also contains basic doctrine, as is evidenced by the statement, "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven." The law of sacrifice is an important part of the gospel of Jesus Christ and contributes to the building of faith, love, and many other virtues.

Also in the same stanza with the sacrifice doctrine, we sing, "Wake

up the world for the conflict of justice. Millions shall know 'brother Joseph' again." What a prophetic utterance! At the time Brother Phelps wrote the hymn, there was figuratively a handful of Church members. Now, millions *do* know that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God and millions more will undoubtedly obtain this testimony. I thrill every time I sing this tremendous hymn.

"We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (*Hymns*, no. 196). The words to this hymn were written by William Fowler and published in 1863. This hymn basically acknowledges our thanks and gratitude to our Father in Heaven for restoring the gospel in its fulness and establishing His church with prophets to guide us in these latter days. This beautiful hymn is another of the most popular hymns as LDS congregations meet and sing in every part of the world.

"Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 13) was composed by William Clayton on 15 April 1846, and in an edition of the *Relief Society Magazine* in 1921 (Jan., p. 58), the following story is told regarding the origin of this hymn:

"President Brigham Young, feeling great anxiety, because there were murmurings in the camp of Israel, called Elder William Clayton aside, and said, 'Brother Clayton, I want you to write a hymn that the people can sing at their camp-fires, in the evening; something that will give them succor and support, and help them to forget the many troubles and trials of the journey.'

"Elder Clayton withdrew from the camp, and in two hours returned with the hymn known as, 'Come, Come, Ye Saints.' His personal testimony is to the effect that it 'was written under the power and inspiration of the Lord.'"

In this hymn we sing:

Why should we mourn or think
our lot is hard?

'Tis not so; all is right.
Why should we think to earn a
great reward,
If we now shun the fight?
Gird up your loins; fresh courage
take;
Our God will never us forsake;
And soon we'll have this tale to
tell—
All is well! all is well!

Many pathetic pioneer stories are told with reference to how this compassionate plea touched their hearts and brought them great courage and comfort.

In a southern states mission, a young girl was walking home with a friend and began humming "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Her friend said, "My, that's a beautiful melody. What is it?" The girl told her about it, and made a date to take her to a Church service. After attending a few times, she arranged for the missionaries to teach her family. The family have all been baptized and are happy doing their part in building the kingdom.

This great hymn truly epitomizes the great faith and courage of our pioneer ancestry and today builds this faith and courage in the present generation as we approach the pioneering work of this age.

Other hymns with spiritual power

"O My Father" (*Hymns*, no. 139), written by Eliza R. Snow in Nauvoo in 1843, is another of the greatest LDS hymns. This remarkable hymn depicts our existence in the premortal existence with the Father and Mother of our spirits. Then, in the last stanza we sing:

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.

This hymn truly lays out all the great drama of eternal life as revealed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As one sings this beautiful hymn, he appreciates more and more the literal Fatherhood of God the Eternal Father.

"The Spirit of God Like a Fire" (*Hymns*, no. 213) was another composition of W. W. Phelps and was also published in the first LDS hymnbook. The emotional impact and spiritual power that this hymn generates as it is sung was demonstrated as it climaxed the dedicatory services of the Kirtland Temple on 27 March 1836. It is my understanding that this hymn has been sung at the dedicatory services of each of the LDS temples built since the Kirtland Temple dedication. It has, of course, been sung in many dedicatory services of ward and stake chapels.

This hymn heralds the restoration of the gospel, the bursting of the veil over the earth, and the angels coming to visit the earth. The chorus is an exclamation of great joy:

We'll sing and we'll shout with
the armies of heaven,
Hosanna, hosanna to God and the
Lamb!
Let glory to them in the highest be
given,
Henceforth and forever; Amen and
amen!

Music is inspirational

The great Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus have, for many years, been an inspiration, not only to LDS members, but to millions of others as they have sung these and other hymns.

Ward and stake choirs also per-

form a most important part in our worship meetings and are participated in by thousands of members who receive great joy and spiritual growth in so doing.

Again, I would like to emphasize the value and importance of participating in congregational singing. I often wonder, when I see people in a worship service not singing, could it be that they are missing a beautiful, inspirational experience?

As I have sung the inspired messages contained in our hymns, my testimony of the Fatherhood of God and the divinity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has been strengthened.

Also, our LDS hymns bear witness that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, did appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that he was and is a great prophet through whom the gospel in its fulness was restored.

Gratitude for President Kimball

My gratitude for our beloved prophet Spencer W. Kimball is intensified as I sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." May the Lord continue to bless and sustain him.

As we sing our hymns, let us be conscious of the beauty and import of each hymn, and as we do, our singing will deeply move our souls, bring us in closer harmony with the Holy Spirit, and strengthen our testimonies. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.