

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Study conference talks

We have had a wonderful time since early yesterday morning when President Romney spoke to us on self-reliance in the welfare meeting. It was a timely message, and in the environment in which we live today, we all should be looking to greater self-sufficiency, a greater spirit of self-reliance, a greater desire to take care of ourselves and our own. His talk, along with others given at that session, should be read and reread for our blessing and benefit.

Then when we opened the conference yesterday morning, we had the marvelous and wonderful experience of hearing Brother Haycock read in behalf of President Spencer W. Kimball a stirring message. It touched our hearts. We were blessed by reason of it. And I should like to suggest that at the earliest opportunity—it will be published in the *Ensign*—all of us should read that talk. We have sung here this afternoon a hymn which is peculiar to this Church: "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet To guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 196). Do we mean it? If so, we should read and hearken to his words. God help us to be obedient to the counsel which comes through his prophet.

And then during the subsequent sessions, we have been taught, we have been encouraged, we have been fortified in our faith, we have been strengthened in our convictions, we have gained a greater appreciation of this work and a more certain knowledge of Him who stands at its head.

I think that among all of the many wonderful and significant things which the Prophet Joseph Smith said, there are few that are of greater import than his declaration to a traveler who had asked how he governed so heterogeneous a people. "I teach them correct principles," he said, "and they govern themselves."

(See George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958, p. 529.) My brethren and sisters, having been taught correct principles, let us go from this conference with a determination to govern ourselves in accordance with these principles.

Use self-discipline to resist evils

There is so much of evil in the world, and so great a need for good to overcome it. Anyone who has read a newspaper or listened to a news broadcast during the past few days could not help being moved by the story of what must have been the work of a depraved individual in introducing a deadly poison in place of a beneficent medication. It is an indication of the depths to which men may sink, and of the great need in this world to overcome evil with good. We ought to do better; we ought to become as leaven; we ought to become as a light from which goodness and truth and beauty and virtue could spread across the world.

There are those among us who would succumb to evil things and to the wiles of the adversary. I would just like to say a word about pornography. It is a growing, vile, and evil thing. It is on our motion picture screens, it comes into the homes of the people on television receivers, it is on newsstands, it reaches out in other ways to entrap and beguile and destroy those who are enticed to partake of it. I am satisfied, my brethren and sisters, that no Latter-day Saint can with impunity afford to witness or read or partake of this growing evil in any way. God help us and bless us with the self-discipline to resist and abstain and flee from, if necessary, this pernicious and growing thing which would destroy us.

We have been encouraged to strengthen our homes, to fortify the

Spirit of the Lord in those homes, to cultivate appreciation and respect and affection one for another. It is a terrible thing that we hear occasionally of child abuse. This is a growing evil across the world. I opened the Doctrine and Covenants the other day while thinking of this, and read these words of the Lord given through the Prophet Joseph Smith who was then in the misery and loneliness of Liberty Jail. He spoke out concerning those who should raise their hands against the Church, but in a larger sense he spoke out against those who would abuse children. He said, "Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house.

"Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them." (D&C 121:19-20.) What a statement that is, concerning those who would offend little children!

I feel likewise that it ill becomes any man who holds the priesthood of God to abuse his wife in any way, to demean or injure or take undue advantage of the woman who is the mother of his children, the companion of his life, and his companion for eternity if he has received that greater blessing. Let us deal in kindness and with appreciation with those for whom the Lord will hold us accountable. I never get over the depth of meaning of the words President McKay often quoted, "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother" (Quoted in *Richard Evans' Quote Book*, Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971, p. 11).

Counsel on politics

Now a word on politics. This is an election year, and there are many strong and strident voices incident to political campaigning. It's a whole-

some and wonderful system that we have under which people are free to express themselves in electing those who shall represent them in the councils of government. I would hope that those concerned would address themselves to issues and not to personalities. The issues ought to be discussed freely, openly, candidly, and forcefully. But, I repeat, I would hope that there would be an avoidance of demeaning personalities. Said Shakespeare in *Othello, the Moor of Venice*:

Who steals my purse steals
trash. . . .
But he that filches from me my
good name
Robs me of that which not
enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

(Act 3, sc. 3, lines 157-61.)

Reach out with love

Let us reach out with love and kindness to those who would revile against us—and there are some, as Elder Ashton has indicated. I think frequently of the words of Edwin Markham as he put them in that little verse:

He drew a circle that shut me
out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

(In Hazel Fellman, ed., *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936, p. 67.)

In the spirit of the Christ who advised us to turn the other cheek, let us try to overcome evil with good.

Spread the gospel graciously

We live in a great and challenging day. General Omar

Bradley is quoted as having said, "We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living." (As quoted in Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1950, p. 349.)

We have so much to do in this world to spread the influence of this gospel. Let us go forth on our assigned mission. We feel the compulsion of the Lord's mandate to teach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (See D&C 133:37.) We hope that in so doing we shall not offend, but rather that we shall do so with graciousness and in that spirit of love which was of the very essence of him of whom we testify.

Continue in well-doing

We shall continue the great work of strengthening our people wherever they may be found in the

nations of the earth. We shall give encouragement to those who are weak in the faith. We shall try to teach them by example and precept. We shall work together in the spirit of charity and love one for another. We shall go on building houses of worship across the world, where our people may gather together and strengthen one another as they unitedly worship the Lord.

We shall continue the great work that goes on in our temples, an unmatched work of love reaching out even to those who have gone beyond the veil of death. Can there be a greater labor of love than this? It comes more nearly of partaking of the spirit of the Lord himself, who gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for all of us, than any other work of which I know. It is done in the name of him whose salvation is universal.

God bless all of us to open our eyes and to unstop our ears, to look, to listen, to learn, and to come to an understanding and appreciation of the great, eternal truths of which we bear witness, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Gratitude for prayer

My brothers and sisters, this has been a grand day for me, to sit here and listen to the conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in our famous tabernacle. The prayer offered by Brother Russell Ballard has been answered, I am sure, during this conference.

Speaking of prayer, it is so important that we know to whom we are praying and that our prayers will be answered in our best interests. As we pray to the Lord, let us remember that it was prayer that brought this church to the earth, when Joseph Smith, as a boy, read:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

I wonder if we realize just what a blessing it is to have our prayers answered, and to be able to ask for what we need.

Strive to follow teachings

And then that beautiful speech of President Kimball's that Arthur [Haycock] read to us in the beginning session: it in itself gave us enough to think about as we strive to follow the teachings of the Lord and Savior