

QUOTES from Latter-day Saint General Conference Addresses on Music and Hymns

Here are a few addresses to look up and read in their entirety:

"Inspiring Music - Worthy Thoughts" ... Elder Boyd K. Packer; October 1973

"LDS Hymns - Worshiping With Song" ... Elder Franklin D. Richards, October 1982

"Worship Through Music" ... Elder Dallin H. Oaks; October 1994

"The Nourishing Power of Hymns" ... Elder Jay E. Jensen; April 2007

"Music can help you draw closer to your Heavenly Father. It can be used to educate, edify, inspire, and unite. However, music can, by its tempo, beat, intensity, and lyrics, dull your spiritual sensitivity. You cannot afford to fill your minds with unworthy music." (President Thomas S. Monson, April 2010 General Conference)

"Years ago I was singing Handel's Messiah with a group of people from different faiths. Even though our beliefs were different, we were all singing about the same Messiah, our own personal Savior. I had sung this oratorio many times, but during one particular practice, the Spirit told me that I was not only singing notes, I was singing my testimony: "Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4). I knew with all my soul that He had done that for me. For a moment the 300 other voices became a whisper and I felt like I was all alone with the Lord. I felt His love and reassurance that He had carried the griefs and the sorrows of my teenage heart, and through my obedience, He would continue to walk with me for the rest of my life. To feel that blessing and comfort and complete love from the Lord is worth any price." ("Standing in Holy Places", Sister Sharon G. Larsen, April 2002 Young Women's Meeting)

"While prayer, scripture study, and service in the Church helped me to learn the Father's plan and gain and develop an eternal perspective, I have an increased appreciation for the contribution that sacred hymns

bring to conversion.

"During my childhood and youth and especially in Primary, the hymns of the Restoration, written by true servants of God, played a profound role in my conversion to the gospel and an understanding of His plan. President Packer has said, "If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 29; or Ensign, Nov. 1991, 22).

"In the First Presidency preface of the current hymnal, we are reminded that "inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. . . . Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (Hymns, ix).

"Many hymns reveal the doctrines of the great plan of redemption. Some hymns came as a result of great sacrifice, the ultimate being death, and they communicate a spirit of holiness and consecration to lead us to conversion to the Father and His plan.

"With the teacher improvement emphasis this year, parents, teachers, and missionaries will improve gospel teaching by ensuring they understand the plan themselves and sing the hymns that carry the same spirit. Sing them—hopefully not in a perfunctory way, rather with purpose—to begin and end meetings and as

part of lessons or to introduce or summarize ideas in the lessons." (Keep an Eternal Perspective: Elder Jay E. Jensen, April 2000)

"No matter where we are, no matter our circumstances, we all can be faithful Latter-day Saints. We can pray and worship the Lord in the privacy of our own closet. We can sing anthems of praise to the Almighty even when we are alone. We can study the scriptures. We can live the gospel. We can pay our tithes and offerings though the amount be ever so small. We can walk in faith. We can strive to live lives patterned after the life of our Master." (Welcome to Conference: President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 1998)

"I have a final suggestion. With the single exception of those priests occupied breaking the bread, all who hold the Aaronic Priesthood should join in singing the sacrament hymn by which we worship and prepare to partake. No one needs that spiritual preparation more than the priesthood holders who will officiate in it. My young brethren, it is important that you sing the sacrament hymn. Please do so." (The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament: Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1998)

"You have just listened to the strains of "Come, Come, Ye Saints. My first opportunity to really become acquainted with "Come, Come, Ye Saints" was in a little stone tabernacle in southern Idaho, where I grew up as a boy. Inside that little tabernacle built out of lava rock by the local members of the Church back in the late 1880s there was a stand, a podium similar to what we have here, and then a pipe organ in the back, like this beautiful pipe organ we have here, but smaller. This was before electricity and motors, and it had a pump system. The way to get air into the pipe organ is through a bellow system. Someone would sit on a stool and pump the lever at the back of the organ. It was always a great privilege to a young man to be selected to sit on that stool and pump the organ.

"In that little tabernacle, when we would sing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," I felt the spirit and power of

the music would raise the roof. You could feel it because of the power, the faith, and the testimony of the members. In that little tabernacle we would have Aaronic Priesthood choruses where we'd learn to sing. It was there we would sing "A Mormon Boy." We don't hear that song much anymore. I wish we would. "A Mormon boy, A Mormon boy, I am a Mormon boy. I might be envied by a king, for I am a Mormon boy" (Evan Stephens, in Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People, comp. Jack M. Lyon and others [1996], 296).

"That made a great impression upon me. Just think of that for a moment. "I might be envied by a king." Here's a king with all the power, all the pomp, all the wealth the king would have. But I was beginning to learn that we held, as members of the Church, blessings, priesthood blessings, knowledge, information that the king wouldn't know about and didn't have. "I might be envied by a king, for I am a Mormon boy." (Hymn of the Obedient: "All Is Well": Elder David B. Haight, October 1997)

"Perhaps you know people in the broad congregation of this conference, or in your local ward or stake—or in your own home—courageous people who are carrying heavy burdens and feeling private pain, who are walking through the dark valleys of this world's tribulation. Some may be desperately worried about a husband or a wife or a child, worried about their health or their happiness or their faithfulness in keeping the commandments. Some are living with physical pain, or emotional pain, or disabilities that come with age. Some are troubled as to how to make ends meet financially—and some ache with the private loneliness of an empty house or an empty room or simply empty arms.

"These beloved people seek the Lord and His word with particular urgency, often revealing their true emotions only when the scriptures are opened or when the hymns are sung or when the prayers are offered. Sometimes only then do the rest of us realize they feel near the end of their strength—they are tired in brain and body and heart, they wonder if they can get through another week or another day or sometimes just another hour. They are desperate for the Lord's help and they know that in such times of extremity nothing

else will do." (The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, October 1996)

"When Newel Knight informed his wife, Lydia, that the Saints would have to leave Nauvoo and move yet again, she responded with tenacious faith, saying, "Well, there's nothing to discuss. Our place is with the Kingdom of God. Let us at once set about making preparations to leave." Brother Knight had moved his family several times already as many of the Saints had moved from New York to Ohio to Missouri and to Illinois. Lydia Knight's devoted submission to what she knew was God's will typifies powerfully the faith of those heroic early Saints. With their faith in mind, the words of a familiar hymn take on added meaning:

Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word.
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death!

(Faith of Our Fathers: Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 1996)

"The administration and passing of the sacrament is preceded by a hymn which all of us should sing. It doesn't matter what kind of musical voice we have. Sacramental hymns are more like prayers anyway—and everyone can give voice to a prayer!

We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.
(Hymns, 1985, no. 194)

"It is an important element of our worship to unite in such lyrical and moving expressions of gratitude. ("This Do in Remembrance of Me": Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, October 1995)

"When you are young not all of life's questions and difficulties have arisen yet, but they will arise, and,

unfortunately for your generation, they will arise at a younger and younger age. The gospel of Jesus Christ marks the only sure and safe path. So older men, seasoned men—men passing on to you the legacy of history—continue to call out to youth.

"This call from one generation to another is one of the reasons we hold priesthood meetings with dads seated next to sons, and priesthood leaders at the side of those whose fathers may be absent. It was in a stake priesthood meeting with a format very much like this one that the then twelve-year-old Gordon B. Hinckley stood in the back of the old Salt Lake Tenth Ward building—his first such stake priesthood meeting as a newly ordained deacon—feeling just a bit lonely and a little out of place.

"But upon hearing the men of that stake sing W. W. Phelps's stirring memorial tribute "Praise to the Man," this young boy, who would one day be a prophet himself, had it borne upon his soul that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God, that he had in truth "communed with Jehovah," that "millions shall know Brother Joseph' again" (Hymns, 1985, no. 27). Yes, some part of the preparation for this morning's solemn assembly began when a twelve-year-old deacon heard faithful, experienced, older men sing the hymns of Zion in a priesthood meeting.

"Now, very few twelve-year-olds will live to become the President of the Church, nor do we need to in order to prove our faithfulness, but let us never forget that "in every place a man now stands, a boy once used to be," and all of you young men have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to be just as faithful in gaining a testimony and standing for the truth as did the men we have sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators down through the dispensations. Indeed, this is one of those things history calls out to us—that the future may be daunting, but you young men are more than equal to the task." (Our Priesthood Legacy: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (April 1995)

"Much will be said, written, and recorded about President Hinckley during the time he presides over the Church. Much less will be recorded about his dear companion, Marjorie. For you who have not had the

opportunity of meeting Sister Hinckley, I would like to tell you something about her. What an example she has been and will continue to be to the women of the Church and to all the world. She is such a loyal, supportive companion to our President.

"Sister Hinckley's roots sink deeply into rich pioneer soil, leaving an indelible imprint on her life and character. She wrote this about her great-grandfather:

"On a beautiful Sunday morning in the fall of 1841, my great-grandfather, William Minshall Evans, then sixteen years of age, was walking down the streets of Liverpool, England, on his way to church. Suddenly he heard singing that thrilled him beyond anything he had ever heard before. He followed the sound down an alley and up some rickety stairs into a room where a few people were holding a meeting. John Taylor, who later became president of the Church and who had a beautiful tenor voice, was the singer. The song he sang was so beautiful that William remained to hear the sermon.

"Upon returning home, William was reprimanded by his elder brother, David, for being absent from his accustomed place in the choir. Asked to give an account of himself, William replied, 'I have been where you should have been, and I shall not be satisfied until you all hear the wonderful truth I have heard this morning.'

". . . William and David were converted to the gospel, and then helped convert other members of their family" (ENSIGN, July 1981, p. 48).

"Sister Hinckley commented, "I never sing the hymns of the Church without remembering that it was the singing of a hymn that opened the door to the gospel for my family and made it possible for me to enjoy all the blessings that have followed" (p. 48). (An Elect Lady: Elder L. Tom Perry, April 1995)

"Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord. "Some of the greatest sermons are preached

by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end" (Hymns, 1985, p. ix).

"The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to put ourselves in tune with the Spirit of the Lord. I wonder if we are making enough use of this heaven-sent resource in our meetings, in our classes, and in our homes...

"The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel...

"The Apostle Paul advised the Colossians that they should be "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16; see also Alma 26:8).

"Modern revelation reaffirms the importance of sacred music. In one of the earliest revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord appointed Emma Smith "to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church.

"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 25:11-12).

"In a revelation given through another prophet a generation later, the Lord commanded his people to "praise the Lord with singing, [and] with music" (D&C 136:28)...

"Many have difficulty expressing worshipful feelings in words, but all can join in communicating such feelings through the inspired words of our hymns."...

"I believe some of us in North America are getting neglectful in our worship, including the singing of hymns. I have observed that the Saints elsewhere are more diligent in doing this. We in the center stakes of Zion should renew our fervent participation in the singing of our hymns.

"There are a few conventions all of us should observe as we worship through music. As we sing we

should think about the messages of the words.

"Our hymns contain matchless doctrinal sermons, surpassed only by the scriptures in their truth and poetic impact.

"We depend on our choristers and organists to lead us at the prescribed pace. Too slow or too fast can detract from a worshipful mood.

"We should be careful what music we use in settings where we desire to contribute to worship. Many musical numbers good for other wholesome settings are not appropriate for church meetings."...

"Our sacred music prepares us to be taught the truths of the gospel."

"We need to make more use of our hymns to put us in tune with the Spirit of the Lord, to unify us, and to help us teach and learn our doctrine. We need to make better use of our hymns in missionary teaching, in gospel classes, in quorum meetings, in home evenings, and in home teaching visits.

"Music is an effective way to worship our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. We should use hymns when we need spiritual strength and inspiration.

"We who have "felt to sing the song of redeeming love" (Alma 5:26) need to keep singing that we may draw ever closer to him who has inspired sacred music and commanded that it be used to worship him. May we be diligent in doing so is my humble prayer, which I offer with a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the divine calling of those we have sustained today." (Worship Through Music, Elder Dallin H. Oaks, October 1994)

"Make wholesome music of all kinds a part of your life.

"Then learn what sacred music has to do with revelation. The Lord said, "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)

"Secular music may be inspiring in a classical or popular sense, but it will not prepare your mind to be instructed by the Spirit as will sacred music.

"The Apostle Paul counseled the Ephesians to "be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:18-19) (Boyd K. Packer, "Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," Ensign, Nov. 1994)

"Prelude music, reverently played, is nourishment for the spirit. It invites inspiration. That is a time to, as the poet said, "go to your bosom . . . and ask your heart what it doth know." (William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, act 2, scene 2, lines 136-37.) Do not ever disturb prelude music for others, for reverence is essential to revelation. "Be still," He said, "and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10) (Boyd K. Packer, "Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," Ensign, Nov. 1994)

"I thank the Lord for the knowledge He has given me that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God. I have spoken before of the experience I had as a twelve-year-old boy, a newly ordained deacon. With my father I went to our stake priesthood meeting. He sat on the stand as a member of the stake presidency, and I sat on the back row of the chapel. The men of that large congregation stood and sang, 'Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah! Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer. Blessed to open the last dispensation, Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.' (Hymns, 1985, no. 27) As I heard them sing that hymn with power and conviction, there came into my heart a witness of the divine calling of the boy Joseph, and I am grateful that the Lord has sustained that witness through more than seventy years since then. I am happy that my faith has not been shaken by the writings of critics who never seem to recognize that knowledge of things divine comes by the power of the Spirit and not of the wisdom of men." (My Testimony, President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 1993)

"...I know also that we can keep this commandment if we will organize ourselves and prepare "every needful thing." I am grateful that my parents and grandparents provided such traditions of learning for

our family. My father wrote this account of how his parents taught their children: "The musical, cheerful voice [of my mother] called, 'Come, children, it is the singing and story hour.'... She seated herself in a well-used rocking chair, admonished us to listen carefully, to sing well, and to ask questions

"We learned the words of the song by rote, and the meaning or story of each song was made clear to us. 'Joseph Smith's First Prayer' brought to us the story of the restoration of the gospel and the story of his life was made most impressive. 'Come, Come, Ye Saints' opened the door to the richness of pioneer achievement, faith, and loyalty

"A testimony of Joseph Smith's divine calling, of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and above all, the reality of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, were the blessings derived from the family song and story hour." My father further wrote: "My heart is filled with gratitude to my angel mother for... teaching me the doctrines of repentance, faith, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. She taught me the power and blessing of prayer, of the actual existence of the Father and the Son, and that Joseph Smith saw and talked to them when a boy fourteen years of age.

"We knew from her teaching that our Prophet saw other heavenly messengers..., and that through them the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth." (Spiritually Strong Homes And Families: Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 1993)

"I am grateful for the power of the choir, the power of music to introduce a spirit of reverence and worship." (Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign, November 1992)

"Our sacrament meetings should be worshipful and healing, restoring those who attend to spiritual soundness. Part of this healing process occurs as we worship through music and song. Singing our beautiful, worshipful hymns is food for our souls. We become of one heart and one mind when we sing praises to the Lord. Among other influences, worshiping in song has the effect of spiritually unifying the participants in an attitude of reverence." (Spiritual

Healing: Elder James E. Faust, April 1992)

"Music is of enormous importance in our worship services. I believe that those who choose, conduct, present, and accompany the music may influence the spirit of reverence in our meetings more than a speaker does." (Boyd K. Packer (Ensign, Nov. 1991, p. 22)

"Music is of enormous importance in our worship services. I believe that those who choose, conduct, present, and accompany the music may influence the spirit of reverence in our meetings more than a speaker does. God bless them.

"Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites that spirit of revelation, of testimony. We are told in the handbook that "music and musical texts are to be sacred, dignified, and otherwise suitable for a Latter-day Saint meeting" (General Handbook of Instructions, 1989, p. 2-5) and that "organs and pianos are the standard instruments used in sacrament meetings. Other instruments, such as orchestral strings, may be used when appropriate, but the music must be in keeping with the reverence and spirituality of the meeting. Brass and percussion instruments generally are not appropriate" (Handbook for Church Music, p. 17).

"An organist who has the sensitivity to quietly play prelude music from the hymnbook tempers our feelings and causes us to go over in our minds the lyrics which teach the peaceable things of the kingdom. If we will listen, they are teaching the gospel, for the hymns of the Restoration are, in fact, a course in doctrine!

"I have noticed that an increasing number of our leaders and members do not sing the congregational songs. Perhaps they do not know them or there are not enough hymnbooks. We should sing the songs of Zion—they are an essential part of our worship. We must not neglect the hymns nor the exalted anthems of the Restoration. Read the First Presidency's introduction in the hymnbook. The Lord said, "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). Do not let

our sacred music slip away from us, nor allow secular music to replace it. (Reverence Invites Revelation: Elder Boyd K. Packer, October 1991)

"Revitalize your weekly worship. When you sing the hymns, for instance, ponder the meaning of the words, enjoy the spirit of the music. Sing with enthusiasm without regard to your tones. You will have a good feeling, and your spirit will be enlivened; and as you join with the Saints in the songs of the heart, the Lord promises to answer this with blessings upon your head (see D&C 25:12). (The Voice Is Still Small: Elder Graham W. Doxey, October 1991)

"...Sing enthusiastic praises to God. As we sing wholeheartedly, reaffirming our love for the Savior, we can feel the Spirit. I must admit that I'm the world's worst singer. In junior high school, my music teacher said to me, "Mack, do us a favor and just move your lips when you try to sing." But I still try, and I feel the Spirit when I sing. It's a blessing available to all of us." (Sunday Worship Service: Elder W. Mack Lawrence, April 1991)

"Use music. Using recorded hymns or singing the songs of Zion with or to the Saints in their homes, as prompted, will always bring the Spirit of the Lord (see D&C 25:12, Matthew 26:30, Colossians 3:16, 1 Samuel 16:23). For example:

A priesthood leader said with a smile, "I could never sing, I have a terrible voice. But we were prompted to do so. My voice was as the voice of an angel." The less-active man wept and returned to the Church.

A home teacher said, "I sang with his children. The crusty old fellow cried and humbled himself for the first time in years." (Inviting Others To "Come Unto Christ": Elder Gene R. Cook, October 1988)

"As deacons and teachers we sat on the first row, prepared to pass the sacrament. I recall how shiny the bread trays appeared, and the individual glass cups for the water sparkled. Everything about the sacrament

table, including the linen, was immaculate and ready on time.

"Everyone was expected to sing the special sacrament hymn. Everyone did sing. Children were trained not only to be reverent but to know some of the words of the most familiar sacrament songs. I can still see Sister Ella Jack, who led the music, standing in full view between the sacrament table and piano, as she would pause and look over the congregation to be sure everyone had a songbook and was ready to sing. She gave special attention to see that the Aaronic Priesthood boys had songbooks. We would all sing. We were learning in our youth that to feel of the Spirit we must experience a change in our hearts, and to be in harmony on this sacred occasion required our singing the sacrament hymns. As we personally sang the words, our souls were better prepared to understand this sacred ordinance. At the Last Supper the early Apostles joined with the Savior in singing. Matthew records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." (Matt. 26:30.)

"And as we would sing in that sacrament meeting

In humility, our Savior,
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray;
As we bless the bread and water
In thy name, this holy day.
Let me not forget, O Savior,
Thou didst bleed and die for me
When thy heart was stilled and broken
On the cross at Calvary.

Fill our hearts with sweet forgiving;
Teach us tolerance and love;
Let our prayers find access to thee
In thy holy courts above.
Then, when we have proven worthy
Of thy sacrifice divine,
Lord, let us regain thy presence;
Let thy glory round us shine.
(Hymns, no. 49.)

"These words would be impressed upon our hearts because we had actually sung them. There come to one's soul heavenly thoughts as he joins in heavenly expressions coupled with heavenly melody." (The Sacrament: Elder David B. Haight, April 1983)

 "Every sacrament meeting ought to be a spiritual feast. It ought to be a time for meditation and introspection, a time for singing songs of praise to the Lord, a time of renewing one's covenants with him and our Eternal Father, and a time for hearing the word of the Lord with reverence and appreciation.

"If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving." (D&C 136:28; italics added.) (The Priesthood Of Aaron: President Gordon B. Hinckley, October 1982)

 "I must admit that my heart beat a little faster with spiritual emotion as the choir was singing..." ("Feed My Sheep", Elder David B. Haight, April 1979)

 "It has been said that the poets stand next to the prophets in their ability to lift us up. I have never heard of Eliza R. Snow being sustained as a prophet, and yet she wrote "O My Father." Sometimes we merely read these great lyrics out of the hymnbook instead of memorizing them and loving them and frequently saying them over to ourselves. Just think what would happen in the world if each person made his own selection of those ninety great poems of faith that most thrill him." (The Poetry Of Success: Elder Sterling W. Sill, April 1978)

 "The hymns that we sing have an influence for good upon our lives. The music of the Tabernacle Choir has a faith-promoting and cultural influence upon the listeners. The spirit with which the Choir sings the words and melodies of our own hymns and of compositions by other inspired people creates a desire upon those who listen or participate to serve the Lord. The inspired hymns that we sing in our congregations are prayers and songs of rejoicing unto our Lord." (Being "Anxiously Engaged": Elder Joseph Anderson, April 1978)

 "When I was a boy, twelve years of age, my father took

me to a meeting of the priesthood of the stake in which we lived. I sat on the back row while he, as president of the stake, sat on the stand. At the opening of that meeting, the first of its kind I had ever attended, three or four hundred men stood. They were men from varied backgrounds and many vocations, but each had in his hand the same conviction, out of which together they sang these great words:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!
 Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer.
 Blessed to open the last dispensation,
 Kings shall, extol him, and nations revere.
 (Hymns no. 147.)

"Something happened within me as I heard those men of faith sing. There came into my boyish heart a knowledge, placed there by the Holy Spirit, that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of the Almighty. In the many years that have since passed, years in which I have read much of his words and works, that knowledge has grown stronger and ever more certain. Mine has been the privilege of bearing witness across this nation from sea to shining sea, and on continents north and south, east and west, that he was and is a prophet of God, a mighty servant and testifier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Great is his glory and endless his priesthood:
 Ever and ever the keys he will hold.
 Faithful and true, he will enter his kingdom,
 Crowned in the midst of the prophets of old.
 (Hymns, no. 147.)

"That testimony I reaffirm to you this day, as I also affirm that he who presides at this conference is the legal successor to him of whom I have spoken. I know that, and I leave my testimony in the name of him of whom Joseph Smith was a witness and of whom I also am a witness, even the Lord, Jesus Christ." (Joseph The Seer: Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, April 1977)

 "This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical

training, you can think through a hymn.

"Now, use this hymn as the place for you thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. Whenever you find these shady actors have slipped from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this record, as it were. As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light.

"In due time you will find yourself, on occasion, humming the music inwardly. As you retrace your thoughts, you discover some influence from the world about you encouraged an unworthy thought to move on stage in your mind, and the music almost automatically began. (To Young Men Only, Boyd K. Packer, October 1976)

 "Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed. (See 1 Sam. 16:23.) Elder Boyd K. Packer has wisely suggested memorizing some of the inspiring songs of Zion and then, when the mind is afflicted with temptations, to sing aloud, to keep before your mind the inspiring words and thus crowd out the evil thoughts. This could also be done to crowd out debilitating, depressive thoughts." (Do Not Despair: President Ezra Taft Benson, October 1974)

 "This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. Remember President Lee's counsel; perhaps "I Am A Child of God" would do. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a hymn.

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"As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light." (Inspiring Music—worthy Thoughts: Elder Boyd K. Packer, October 1973)

 "My beloved brothers and sisters, I am so grateful to my Heavenly Father for the spirit of this day and especially that I have been preceded by these lovely Primary sisters. The Primary has meant so much to me in my responsibilities of the past few years, and their singing has given me the peace and feeling that I need at this moment." (Courts Of Love: Elder Robert L. Simpson, April 1972)

 "I was touched by the story of one highly successful business executive who recently responded graciously and humbly to a call to serve in his elders quorum presidency. Upon being asked the direct question: "What brought you back?" he responded, "Well, I have never told anyone before, but this is what happened:

"One morning while shaving, I overheard my six-year-old son singing from the next room. He was singing a little song I had heard him sing dozens of times before, 'I Am a Child of God'; but somehow that morning when he came to the part that says, 'Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, Help me find the way,' I had the feeling that he was singing directly to me. I just stood there and listened. Within seconds, my whole life seemed to pass in review; and it really came home with full force that some changes had to be made, especially when he came to the part, 'Teach me all that I must do. To live with him some day.'"

"This good man confesses today that these simple words from the lips of his own child reached his heart

as a personal plea. The plea was from a child of God who had been placed in his custody to be delivered back some day into Heavenly Father's presence. He concluded his answer to this question by stating that he decided then and there that he had something important to do, something more important than anything else in the world for a little fellow who still loved his daddy in spite of many personal failings....

"While on the subject of church songs, let me tell you briefly about a man who was attending a patio party one Sunday afternoon at the home of a business associate who happened to live next door to an LDS meetinghouse. As the sacrament meeting got underway, the strains of the organ could be clearly heard over the back fence and seemed to be somewhat incongruous to the tinkle of ice being placed in the cocktail glasses. There were some uncomplimentary jokes and the usual snide remarks about religious fanatics, when all of a sudden the strains of the opening song broke the warm summer afternoon air. It was "Come, Come Ye Saints." The party tempo was warming up, and by now, the church music was all but unnoticed—unnoticed by all but one, a man whose grandmother had walked across the plains pulling a handcart. His mind withdrew from the party. For the first time in many years, he spent some minutes in sincere reflection concerning his birthright.

"About ten minutes later, the sacrament song came drifting across the back fence. Unknowingly, a chorister, inspired in her calling, I am sure, had selected, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." And way down deep, he knew it, too, but it had been a long, long time. From that moment on, he was attending a patio party in body, but mentally and spiritually he was far above and beyond his environment of the moment.

"It was almost an hour later, just about the time that he had lapsed back into the party mood, when the closing song, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet," reached his ear and mellowed his heart to the point of submission. Isn't it odd that a man should start his way back while attending a cocktail party? "The Lord moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Incidentally, that man is probably here in this meeting today, a fine leader in the church, doing what the Lord would have him do." (Bishop Robert L. Simpson,

October 1969)

"The other day while walking down the street I met a good friend of mine. We shook hands and engaged in a little pleasant small talk. We laughed, visited, joked, and had a pleasant few minutes together. Then as I went on my way I thought how much better I felt than I had previously done. One of the best ways to feel the faith and enjoy the friendliness of our fellow human beings is in church. In church the talk is very important, and we can shake hands, feel the Spirit of God, and be uplifted by each other as we listen, pray, and sing together out of the depths of worshipping hearts." (Elder Sterling W. Sill, October 1969)

"I would like to say right here that it delights my heart to see our people everywhere improving their talents as good singers. Everywhere we go among our people we find sweet voices and talent for music. I believe that this is a manifestation to us of the purpose of the Lord in this direction toward our people, that they will excel in these things, as they should excel in every other good thing. I can remember, when I was a young boy, hearing my father sing. I do not know how much of a singer he was, for at that time I was not capable of judging as to the quality of his singing, but the hymns he sang became familiar to me in the days of my childhood.

"When we listen to this choir, we listen to music, and music is truth. Good music is gracious praise of the Lord. It is delightful to the ear, and it is one of our most acceptable methods of worshipping. And those who sing in the choir and in all the choirs of the Saints should sing with the Spirit and with understanding. They should not sing merely because it is a profession, or because they have a good voice; but they should sing also because they have the spirit of it, and can enter into the spirit of prayer and praise the Lord who gave them their sweet voices. My soul is always lifted up, and my spirit cheered and comforted, when I hear good music. I rejoice in it very much indeed." (President Joseph Fielding Smith, October 1969)

"My dear brethren and sisters, I made a few notes and thought I would present them here on this occasion, but I have changed my mind after what we have heard, and I hope the Lord will help me.

"The singing of the choir has called my attention to the fact that there is a divine Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ..." (President Joseph Fielding Smith, October 1967)

"A few days ago the Deseret News carried an article about Mr. J. C. Penney. In part it said: "One night, for example, at age 56, I [Mr. Penney] was broke, discouraged, ill in a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. I felt that I would never see the dawn of another day," said Mr. Penney. "I got up and wrote farewell letters to my wife and to my oldest son. I sealed the letters. If I did sleep, it was not a sound sleep. I rose early, went down to the mezzanine floor, and found the dining room was not open.

"Suddenly, over in one corner of the mezzanine, I heard the singing of gospel hymns. The song was the old favorite, 'God Will Take Care of You.' You can imagine how heavy my heart was when I went in. Yet, I came out of that room that morning a changed man. Within just a few moments my life was transformed. It was almost as if I had had a new birth. God did take care of me. . . . And ever since, I have been trying to fill that obligation.

"When I finally got back on firm ground, I had much less in a material sense than I enjoyed before. But I had gained immeasurably in spiritual wealth, for I had learned to turn to God for guidance in all the acts and decisions of my life." (Bishop John H. Vandenberg, October 1965)

"My brethren and sisters, I have been deeply impressed by the stirring and sublime messages which have come to us during this conference, also by the singing of the choirs—for singing, after all, is surely a part of divine worship." (Elder Alma Sonne, April 1958)

"Brethren and sisters, I want to join with President McKay in expressing appreciation for the very fine singing to which we have listened today. I have often thought that we take for granted the singing and the uplift which come to us from our choirs, and yet we know that singing is an essential part of worship and that we can get nearer to God when we hear these songs of Zion than we can in any other way." (Elder Alma Sonne, October 1953)

"My brothers and sisters, I should like to say just a word in appreciation of this magnificent music that we have heard, yesterday the Singing Mothers, today the singing German Saints, and tomorrow we shall have the great Tabernacle Choir. We are a singing people, and I am sure that the Lord loves a singing people. God bless our singers, sweeten their voices even more sweet than they are now, that they may sing his praises." (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr, October 1952)

"Yours is a singing religion and I believe that words of religion dissolved in music soak into the human soul better than any other way. A good hymn is a good spiritual tonic to a sick or frightened soul. What singing I have seen here among the Mormons, you seem to need no books. It is as if when you open your mouths to sing the spirit entered in." (Mr. E. Kent Kane, great-grandson of General Thomas Kane, October 1947)

"Brother LeGrand Richards has spoken for the Southern States Mission. Many years ago, two humble Elders laboring in that mission were walking through the woods and finally came out into a clearing where nestled a humble cottage, the home of friends. Overlooking this clearing was a hill covered by large trees. It had been a warm day. When the Elders arrived, instead of sitting in the house they took their chairs out on the shady porch to visit with the family. They didn't know that they were being watched or that danger threatened. They were there as servants of the Lord. They had come through a section of the country that was unfriendly and having found a home where the family was friendly they were grateful to the Lord for

it.

"They were asked to sing and they selected one of our hymns, "Do What is Right." You know the hymn. And as they sang it, even as they started to sing it, there arrived on the brow of the hill above them a mob of twenty horsemen. They had come there with the determination to drive those missionaries out. As they came to the top of the hill they heard those missionaries singing. The leader of the mob got off his horse. He looked down among those trees and saw the roof of the house. He could not see the Elders. They continued to sing. One by one the men got off their horses. Gradually they removed their hats, and when the last note had died away and the Elders had finished their singing the men mounted their horses and rode away, and the leader said to his companions, "Men who sing like that are not the kind of men we have been told they are." (Elder George Albert Smith, April 1935)

"I missed this morning, speaking personally, the broadcast of the choir. It has seemed to me, in the times that I have been here, that nothing has given us more of the Spirit with which to begin a session than their beautiful singing." (President J. Reuben Clark, Jr, October 1934)

"Having been handicapped somewhat in this Conference in the earlier sessions—as I recently had my tonsils removed, in fact a little over a week ago—I was unable to participate with the audience in singing the hymns. I love to take part in singing the Latter-day Saint sacred hymns. They surely contain Gospel sermons and I love the beautiful harmony in them. As I stood listening to those hymns my faith and my testimony were increased and I felt well repaid for having attended these services. I rejoice in having this opportunity of meeting here with you people in a General Conference. It has been some time since this has been my privilege." (Elder Leonidas Devon Meham, April 1932)

"One day my father-in-law said to me: "Heber, for twenty long years I have listened in vain for our choirs

to sing the fourth verse of 'Come, come ye Saints.' I believe the rising generation know nothing whatever of the comfort and cheer which we received, while crossing the plains, from singing that pioneer hymn or they never would be guilty of leaving off the fourth verse, which we looked upon as a prayer." In one of the revelations to our Church we are told by the Lord: "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." My father-in-law said that hymn was a blessing to every one who sang it, and particularly the last verse, which they sang, and meant every word of it:

And should we die before our journey's through,
Happy day! all is well!
We then are free from toil and sorrow too;
With the just we shall dwell.

(President Heber J. Grant, April 1921)

"Let me say, in conclusion, and I think very likely I am voicing the feeling of the entire congregation, when I say it, that I appreciate fully the effort put forth here by the Ogden tabernacle choir, led by Brother Joseph Ballantyne. They have done most excellent service today, and have helped to make this meeting a splendid success. Of course, our meetings are always successful when they are conducted under the direction of the Spirit of God, but we could not get along without the singing. We must have good singing. We must have singing that is tuneful, we must have singing that breathes forth the Spirit of God; we must have singing that is in harmony. And in the singing today we have had perfect harmony. The Lord bless the Ogden tabernacle choir, and may he bless us all, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ." (President Rudger Clawson, April 1920)

"Now just one minute more. I would like to encourage the idea in our wards and stakes of this Church, and also outside of the Church, of that which is being encouraged in the east very extensively, and that is community singing, congregational singing. I do not object to solos. We had some here this morning—never any better anywhere in the world. They were

very fine. I love to hear them. But solos may be overdone. As a rule people love to sing. There is something in the spirit of song when you can get the people to join in it, even though some of us can't sing so well, that gives forth an inspiration which cannot be otherwise found. When we all sing together there is a spirit, an influence and a power—an inspirational power—that goes with it, that fires the soul in a way that it can't otherwise be touched or fired. So this spirit of comradeship, which the war is very largely responsible for in the east, has taken hold of the people, and they are getting together all classes of nationalities, blending together their voices and singing patriotic songs and other songs.

"Especially in our congregations of the Saints, we should have more of congregational singing. We should bring our hymn books to meeting with us and then sing, have everybody sing, and everybody will feel the better for it. And let me advise our leaders of choirs—if I may presume that much—to try when they do have selections in "Mormon" meetings, that they choose such selections as fit the occasion. A number of the leading brethren attended a meeting some time ago, at which meeting I was present, and the brother who was presiding had a slip of paper in his hand. I happened to sit next to him. There were these prominent brethren of the Church at a Latter-day Saint meeting, although there were quite a number present who were not Latter-day Saints, but it was a "Mormon" meeting for "Mormon" purposes. I looked over his list of songs on the paper that he held in his hand, which had been handed to him by the choir leader, and not one of them had the least reference to "Mormon" thought, "Mormon" ideas, or "Mormon" anything about it. Well, I don't believe that is just right.

"I have seen, too, some of our brethren, leaders of choirs, select a soloist who will come forward—someone with a good voice, who is capable of good singing—who will get up in a "Mormon" meeting and commence to sing "My Rosary." Well now, "My Rosary" is fine music and a good song for a Catholic meeting, but it is entirely out of place in a "Mormon" meeting. That song recites how "I count my beads and kiss my cross," and all that sort of thing. Well, I don't do either, I don't believe in doing either, and you don't

believe in it. So a song like that is entirely out of place in a "Mormon" meeting, as much so, I think, as it would be to sing "We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet, to guide us in these Latter days," in a Catholic meeting.

"Then I have heard a soloist brought in who would sing a song entirely at variance from our religious thought. Perhaps it would be the song "Without One Stain," the idea being that "Jesus has done everything; he has cleansed me; I haven't done anything myself, but I am going right up without one stain." I have thought: Yes, you will! Not if He knows it, you won't. There are too many stains on people who have not by sincere and heartfelt repentance cleansed themselves from stains. Such a song, therefore, is entirely out of place in a "Mormon" meeting. And you will hear, as one of the brethren suggests, the song about "The Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." Well, yes, that is in line with the same thought. They do not belong and should not have place in our meetings.

"Now, my brethren and sisters, my time is up, I see, and this is my third sermon. Let us have more of community singing, congregational singing. Let us sing songs of Zion. They carry with them a spirit and an influence, not only in "Mormon" meetings, but in others, that cannot be found anywhere else, and they thrill the soul as nothing else will touch it and thrill it. Invite our neighbors to our meetings that they also may enjoy the spirit of song with us. God bless you. Amen." (Bishop Charles W. Nibley, October 1917)

 "It is wonderful to stand in the presence of this great gathering of Latter-day Saints. It is wonderful to hear the united voice of the congregation in the songs of Zion, singing as they do with such spirit and power." (Elder Rudger Clawson; April 1917)

 "How can we make our meetings attractive? Why, by going there and filling up the meetinghouse. Let there be no empty benches, for they are very discouraging to the speaker. Let us feel that every one of us owes it to his fellow worshipers to go to the house of prayer and occupy his seat there, thus helping to make a large meeting, and by doing so giving more

support to him who shall address us. Again, we open our meetings by singing, and singing is elevating and refining, it encourages us to faithfulness, especially when the music is accompanied by words of godliness, such as are contained in our hymns. We want to encourage good singing in our meetings. We have a great many excellent choirs throughout Zion, and I wish to say to the bishops, encourage good choirs; have men that can lead them, and get some of your good singers together in the choir, thus giving joy to the Saints, and at the same time making the meetings more attractive. In the larger settlements it is not so difficult to have a choir, but in smaller settlements it is, perhaps, not so easy to get together brethren and sisters who can sing, or to get a competent leader; yet the bishops ought to do what they can along this line. If you haven't a chorister, try to induce such a one to move into your ward, even if you have to give him, some advantages. It may be that you have a school teacher who can teach music and thus help you to make a choir; but, by all means, try to have good singing in your meetings." (President Anthon H. Lund, October 1916)

"I could not help but think of this part of the revelation in listening to the beautiful hymns that have been sung during this conference. I believe that we can worship in song as acceptably to Him as in any other way. In reading the history of the world we find that music has been conspicuous, in all ages and among all nations. There are but few religious denominations that do not avail themselves of the sweet influence of music. It is not only a custom to worship God by singing His praises in song, but we find the power of music manifest in almost all the great affairs in life. It is made use of to encourage and inspire men in battle. It is depended upon on occasions when there is necessity for inspiring in the hearts of men enthusiasm or loyalty. The history of nations is, in part, told in song. I know of no people on earth who have written into their songs the principles of the gospel they believe in more than have the Latter-day Saints. It is true there are many beautiful hymns written by men that all Christians love to sing, and we sing them in devotion to our Maker. We often sing the hymn

composed by Charles Wesley entitled, "Jesus Lover of My Soul." It is said that Charles Wesley was inspired to write this greatest of his hymns by a bird, frightened by a thunder storm, flying into his room, preferring to risk its life indoors with him than outside where the elements were disturbed. As it sat quivering on his mantel, frightened nearly to death, Wesley was inspired to write that hymn. Henry Ward Beecher, speaking at his father's funeral, referred to the hymn that had been composed by Charles Wesley, "Jesus Lover of My Soul," and made the statement that he would rather have been the author of that song than to have the wealth of the greatest millionaire, for in it was inspiration, in it was power. While wealth would perish and its possessor be forgotten, the memory of Wesley would live for ages to come, because the words of the song would be perpetuated." (Elder Reed Smoot, October 1912)

"Just a word of criticism in relation to singing, although I do not pose as a musician or a singer. In my traveling among the Saints, I have observed in some quarters that there is a disposition to displace the Latter-day Saint hymns with sectarian songs, which have been composed by those who know not the gospel, and not, in every instance, are the sentiments expressed in those songs in harmony with the truth. It is a matter of embarrassment to call our peoples' attention on such occasions to the necessity for culling out those hymns which do not express the truth, in which we can pour out our souls and sing with meaning and heart to the Lord, such as will meet with His approval and call down a blessing upon us. I suppose that some of our brethren, choir leaders, would say that these hymns are old, that we want something new, something full of life and vim. I want to call attention to the fact that that which is dearer to us than all else, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not new. There is nothing with which we have to do that is older than the gospel; there is nothing dearer. Do we love our fathers and our mothers less because of their age, because they are getting old? No; and I tell you that these hymns, which have been selected by inspiration from the Lord, they are never tiring to the Latter-day Saints. They contain valuable sermons, and the people

like to hear them, and we ought not to tire in singing them. Even in vocal solos there are some in our hymn books, such as "O, my Father," "The Seer," "Come, come ye Saints," and others that cannot be outdone or improved upon. I think it would be nice for our singers to try and arrange beautiful music to these beautiful words of praise and prayer to God. I know it would be edifying and appreciated by the Latter-day Saints, especially since we are adopting as a practice in the Church, more universally, congregational singing.

"I desire to call attention of the bishops of the wards, and the choir leaders, to the fact that there is much talent among the Latter-day Saints which is dormant, which ought to be developing, and which should be encouraged among the young people. That is the time, while people are young, to develop the talent, and to utilize the abilities of those who are specially gifted. They should be encouraged to use, to a greater degree, the talent which God has given to them. I recognize that all talents are God-given. This would enable the Saints more universally to join in congregational singing. Unto the people I would say, when you are solicited to join with the choirs of the Church to sing these hymns, you ought to feel that it is a mission, and feel that you are honored, to be called to sing in the congregations of the Saints the hymns inspired of the Lord. This is a very important feature of the worship of the Latter-day Saints." (Elder George F. Richards, October 1911)

"I want to say to you that I believe we are most profoundly influenced by the songs which we sing. Some writer has said, in substance, that if you will show me the songs which a people or a community

sing, then I will tell you the character of that community. There is much truth in this statement." (Elder Rudger Clawson, April 1907)

"I will tell you how I have done in Cache Stake. For the past year we have not had one High Council trial. We have selected brethren and sent them to parties having difficulty and trouble, and I have said to the brethren, Go and sing the songs of Zion to them. "Well, how many times shall we sing?" "Well, sing once, and then pray; sing again, and continue to sing until the Spirit of the Lord is there, and you can feel that there is a softening." I tell you, it has had excellent results. The difficulties have been settled by the parties themselves. Their hearts have been softened, and they have concluded to arrange their own troubles...

"While it is proper for the Presidency and High Council to meet, and to sing and pray together, the same rule will apply to the Bishopric of every ward. Have these meetings weekly; and do not let some trilling thing keep you from them. One Bishopric said to me that not one of them could sing. I suggested that they call in somebody who could sing; and if they could not get anybody let them sing the best they could themselves. Do the best you can, and the Lord will accept it. Sing and pray, and talk over the affairs of the ward. Just as sure as you will adopt this policy and carry it out, you will be benefactors to the ward and a blessing to the people. Your minds will be led out in the interest of the people; and when they see you have their welfare at heart they will be willing to come to you for counsel." (Elder Marriner W. Merrill, April 1901)