

## ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

That I may have your sustaining prayers and the Spirit of the Lord to be with me, as it has been with the brethren who have spoken this morning, is the desire of my heart.

Today we have heard President George F. Richards and President Milton R. Hunter talk to us about the nature and kind of being that God the Eternal Father is, and about our relationship to him. If he will sustain me I would like to bear you my witness and tell you what I understand to be the doctrine of this Church and kingdom with reference to his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

## "WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST"

When Christ was among men, in one of his last conversations with the Pharisees, he asked: ". . . What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" He received the answer, "The son of David." Thereupon he asked:

How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,  
The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make  
thine enemies thy footstool?  
If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? (Matt. 22:42-45.)

Because those Jews had lost the knowledge of God and of Christ, they were unable to answer. The world by wisdom knew not God. Like many devout people today they had inherited from their fathers lies, vanity, and things in which there was no profit. They did not know that God the Eternal Father was the Father of Christ, and that Christ was of the seed of David through Mary, his mother. People in that day needed, just as did the people in Joseph Smith's day, a new revelation of God and of the plan of salvation.

As I understand it, our mission to the world in this day, is to testify of Jesus Christ. Our mission is to bear record that he is the Son of the Living God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world; that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through his atoning blood; that by virtue of his atonement all men will be raised in immortality, and those who believe and obey the gospel law both in immortality and unto eternal life.

And the position which Joseph Smith holds in the scheme of things is that he is the chiefest witness of Christ that there has been in this world since the Son of God personally walked among men and bore record of himself saying, "I am the Son of God!"

## FIRSTBORN IN SPIRIT WORLD

We believe, and I certify that Jesus Christ is the Firstborn Spirit Child of Elohim who is God, our Heavenly Father. We

believe that while he lived in the pre-existent world, by virtue of his superior intelligence, progression, and obedience, he attained unto the station of a God. And he then became, under the Father, the Creator of this world and all things that are in it, as also the Creator of worlds without number.

We believe that he was the Jehovah of the Old Testament; that it was through him that God the Father dealt with all the ancient prophets, revealing his mind and his will and the plan of salvation to them.

Christ gave the gospel to the ancients beginning with Adam and going on down, dispensation after dispensation, until this present time. And everything that has been given in the gospel and everything that has been in any way connected with it has been designed for the express purpose of bearing record of Christ and certifying as to his divine mission.

#### IN THE SIMILITUDE OF CHRIST

From Adam to Moses and From Moses to Christ, God's prophets and priests offered sacrifices. Such were in the similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father who was to come. When Moses lifted the serpent on the pole in ancient Israel and told the Israelites that those who would look would live when they were bitten by poisonous serpents, it was in similitude of the fact that the Son of God would be lifted up on the cross and that all who would look to him might live eternally.

Every ordinance of the gospel is designed to point and center the attention of men in Christ. We are baptized in similitude of his death, burial, and resurrection. We honor Sunday as the Sabbath because it was on that day when he arose from the grave, breaking the bands of death and becoming the first fruits of them that slept. The ancients honored the seventh day as one of rest and worship because it was on that day that he rested from his labors after working under the direction of his Father in the creation of this world. In fact, as Jacob says:

... all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him. (II Nephi 11:4.)

Every prophet that there has been in the world has borne record that he is the Son of God, because in its very nature that is the chief calling of a prophet. The testimony of Jesus is synonymous with the spirit of prophecy.

#### CHRIST'S EARTHLY MINISTRY

We believe that Christ was born into the world, literally and actually, in the most real and positive sense as the Son of God, the Eternal Father. He was born with that Being as his Father

just as certainly and just as actually, just as literally and definitely as he was born with Mary as his mother. It was by virtue of that birth that he was able to say that no man took his life from him, that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it up again, and had been so commanded of his Father.

We believe that he came into the world with the express mission of dying upon the cross for the sins of the world; that he is actually, literally, and really the Redeemer of the world and the Savior of men; and that by the shedding of his blood he has offered to all men forgiveness of sins conditioned upon their repentance and obedience to the gospel plan.

Our revelations say that when he came into this life he received not of the fulness at the first, but that he continued from grace to grace—which, I take it, means from intelligence to intelligence, from a low degree to a higher one—until he received a fulness of the glory of the Father. Then the revelation recites that if you and I keep the commandments of God and walk in the paths of truth and righteousness, we, too, shall go from grace to grace until we receive of the fulness of the Father and are glorified in Christ as he is in the Father.

We understand that he was in all points tempted as we are, and yet remained without sin. We accept Paul's statement that

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Heb. 5:8-9.)

In his ministry he preached the gospel of salvation, revealed to men his Father who must be known if men gain life eternal, and went forth working many mighty miracles. He raised the dead, caused the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, the deaf to hear, and cured all manner of diseases. He suffered temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death.

In the Garden of Gethsemane when he took upon himself the sins of the world, conditioned upon the repentance of men, his agony and suffering were so great that he sweat drops of blood from every pore. Then it was he suffered for all that they might not suffer if they would repent, which suffering, he says, caused himself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit, and would that he might not drink the bitter cup that the Father had given him.

"Nevertheless," he says, "glory be to the Father, and I partook." It was the spirit, "Thy will, O God, not mine be done." It was exactly the stand he had taken in the counsels of eternity when the Father had presented the plan of salvation and explained the need for a Redeemer. In answer to that call for a

Redeemer he had said: "Here am I, send me." And also: "Father, thy will be done and the glory be thine forever." And such, to my way of thinking, is the perfect answer, the one we should all give in all things pertaining to life and salvation and to all of our affairs during this mortal probation, and then on in eternity. It is the will of the Father that you and I want to follow, not the will of anyone else; we want to rise above our own wayward courses.

#### LATTER-DAY APPEARANCES

We believe that Christ has appeared in this our day with his Father, as has been certified to from this pulpit this day. His latter-day appearances began when he and the Father came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the sacred grove. We believe that from the day of its organization, his hand has been guiding and directing and looking after the affairs of this Church. He has given us the spirit of revelation, and the Light of Christ, and also the Holy Ghost which bears record of the Father and the Son, to light our path and guide the destiny of the Church.

And it will not be a far-distant day when with power and glory and dominion the Son will return to reign a thousand years on earth with righteous men. And there will be a time appointed when you and I and every person who has lived from Adam to the last man will be called to stand before the judgment bar and be judged by him according to our works.

#### WITNESSES OF CHRIST

When we Latter-day Saints pass through the waters of baptism, it is with a covenant that we will stand as witnesses of Christ at all times and in all things, and in all places that we may be in, even until death, that we may be redeemed of God, numbered with those of the first resurrection and gain eternal life, by which we mean life in the celestial kingdom of heaven. One of our revelations says that it cometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor. That is our responsibility.

You and I are the most blessed and favored people on the face of the earth. God has actually spoken in this day and that through the men who have presided over this kingdom. We have that testimony, and the Holy Ghost bears record of its truth to us. And now our obligation is to carry that message to the world, to proclaim Christ's divine Sonship and the salvation which comes through him. He is the Savior of the world, and I think that every one of us ought to take every opportunity that comes to us to bear that witness.

Now it is not always a matter of just saying in so many words that these things are true. First of all, I think we bear witness of Christ in the life that we live, by letting our light shine

and by letting the gospel principles speak through us. If we can get the love, charity, integrity, humility, and virtue that are part of the gospel into our hearts so that others may see our good works, we are by that fact testifying of the fruits of Mormonism, of the fact of the restoration of the gospel, and of the divinity of Jesus Christ whose hand is in this work.

#### THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION

Having done that, it remains our responsibility, I think, to teach the doctrines of the kingdom, to expound the principles of salvation to the world. Our time is too important to teach ethical platitudes. We are expected to give all men to whom we have opportunity to give it, the message of salvation, the glad tidings of the restoration, the fact that God has spoken in this day, and the assurance that there is peace and joy and happiness by living the gospel here and now, and an eternal reward in the world to come.

Then after we have taught people the principles of the gospel, after we have let our light shine before them, it remains for us to seal that witness with pure testimony, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, that we as individuals know that these things are true.

Last Sunday I was in the Granite Stake. They have about 5500 members of the Church and sixty-three missionaries serving in the foreign field, nearly 1.2 percent of their stake population. Two weeks ago I was in the Juarez Stake. The Dublin Ward has 214 members of the Church and twelve foreign missionaries now serving. As President Smith said, there are 5000 missionaries out in the world today, which is one-half of one percent of the Church population.

I am not so sure but what we can increase our missionary force, but what the quorums of the priesthood can do more to assist in the support of worthy missionaries who cannot otherwise be supported in the mission field. By doing this they will be helping to roll forth the testimony of Christ in this day. Our ward teachers have the glorious opportunity of bearing testimony of Christ every month to the members of the Church, by teaching them the doctrines of the kingdom and urging them to righteousness.

The Lord has given us every opportunity. We have the promise that, if we are valiant in the testimony of Christ and keep his commandments, we will receive glory and honor and reward in eternity, but if we do not what the Lord says, we have no promise.

I know that this work is true. I know that God's hand is with this Church and that the men who now preside over it as prophets, seers, and revelators are giving the mind and will of the Lord to the Latter-day Saints, the things that will lead them to glory and honor and reward in the eternal world. I think every member of this Church who has arrived at the years of accountability is both

entitled to be and expected to be a witness for Christ. That you and I may stand valiant and firm in the testimony of Christ is my prayer, in his name. Amen.

**President George Albert Smith:**

The Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Salt Lake Region will now Sing: "Build, Thou, For Life's Immortal Goal," words and music by Florence Jepperson Madsen.

The closing prayer will be offered by President Cecil E. Hart of the South Idaho Falls Stake, after which this Conference will stand adjourned until 2:00 o'clock this afternoon. The afternoon session will be broadcast over KSL at Salt Lake City, and by arrangement through KSL over the following stations: KDSH at Boise, KSUB at Cedar City, KID at Idaho Falls; KEYY at Pocatello, K SVC at Richfield, KJAM at Vernal, and over KTYL at Mesa by transcription.

The audience should be seated not later than ten minutes before the hour for starting the meeting.

Any important messages and calls that have come to us for persons supposed to be in attendance at the Conference, will be announced at the dismissal of this meeting over the loud speaking system on the grounds. Everyone would do well to listen carefully to such announcements.

The choir music for this session has been furnished by the Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Salt Lake Region, Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting, and Elder Frank W. Asper at the organ. They will now sing, after which President Hart will offer the benediction.

Singing by the *Relief Society Singing Mothers*: "Build Thou, For Life's Immortal Goal."

Elder Cecil E. Hart, President of the South Idaho Falls Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

## FIRST DAY

### AFTERNOON MEETING

The second session of the Conference convened at 2:00 p.m., Friday, October 1.

**President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:**

This is the second session of the 119th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.