

Session of the One Hundred Twenty-seventh Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

For the benefit of those standing in the doorways we are pleased to announce that overflow meetings are being held in the Assembly Hall, and in Barratt Hall, where a public address system and television are operating. These services, for those who are listening, are also being televised over KSL-TV, Channel 5, of Salt Lake City, and broadcast over Radio Station KSL, and also over 11 radio stations in Utah, Nevada, and Idaho, and by special arrangement over two television stations in Utah and Idaho.

We are pleased to note the attendance this afternoon of prominent national and state officials, leaders in educational circles. We extend a hearty welcome to these, especially to the wives of the mission presidents who have been in attendance here by special invitation to the dedicatory services of the Relief Society building, and we welcome our boys who are here who are enlisted in the Military Service, and all who are listening in.

The singing for the afternoon session will be by the Combined Scandinavian Choirs, with Elder R. Hulbert Keddington conducting, and Elder Roy M. Darley at the organ. We shall begin these

services by the Combined Choirs singing, "How Lovely Are the Messengers." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Heber J. Heiner, Jr., president of the Ben Lomond Stake.

Singing by the Combined Choirs, "How Lovely Are The Messengers."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Heber J. Heiner, Jr., president of the Ben Lomond Stake.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation just offered was by Elder Heber J. Heiner, Jr., president of the Ben Lomond Stake in Ogden. The Combined Scandinavian Choirs will now favor us with "Almighty God, We Humbly Bow Before Thee." Following this, we shall hear from Elder Harold B. Lee.

Selection by the Combined Scandinavian Choirs, "Almighty God, We Humbly Bow Before Thee."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Sterling W. Sill.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

THIS AFTERNOON I am encouraged by the impressive discourse of President McKay at the opening of this conference to give humble expression to some thoughts that I have had on what I consider to be one of the most important matters which concern the Latter-day Saints today.

In the *Documentary History of the Church*, Volume IV, there is recorded an incident, and there is copied a letter which was prepared by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the request of the editor and publisher of a newspaper, who had asked the Prophet to write an article

telling of the rise, the progress, the persecutions, and the faith of the Latter-day Saints. The Prophet agreed to do so on one condition, and that condition was that they would take his article in its entirety, with no deletions or no changes. There appears then, in this letter, or this article which was written for the paper, one of the most important historical documents which we have in Church history.

In that letter the Prophet Joseph Smith told about an experience that he had on the evening of September 21, 1823. While he was engaging in hum-

ble prayer unto God, suddenly he discovered that the room in which he was praying was being filled with light, a light brighter than the brightness of the sun, and as he marveled at this brightness, he was aware that a personage had entered the room with a consuming brightness even greater than that which he had beheld in the room.

As he recovered from the shock of the appearance of this personage, who introduced himself to the Prophet as a messenger sent from God, the messenger announced four things, which are declared in this document to which I have made reference and which are of great significance to the work today and as it was to be established under the instrumentality of the boy prophet, Joseph Smith. I shall only make brief reference to three of these announcements of the heavenly messenger:

The first thing that the messenger said was that the covenant which God had made with ancient Israel was at hand and about to be fulfilled. This undoubtedly made reference to that covenant which was announced to Abraham, who because of his faithfulness, was promised that through him and his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed: and God would make of Abraham's seed a great nation. We need only to be reminded that the Savior of the world came through that lineage; and while his personal ministry was only to the house of Israel, before he left his disciples he declared to them that they were "to preach repentance and remission of sins unto all the earth, beginning at Jerusalem." From this lineage a chosen people was to be prepared to set up the kingdom of God in these last days, and it was over this kingdom which the Christ was to reign when he came on earth for the second time.

The second announcement that was made by this heavenly messenger was that a preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence. You will recall that just before the Master's crucifixion he told his disciples that he would come again, and they said to him, as they sat upon the mount with him, perhaps for one of the last times, "Master, tell us when these things shall be." And then there

came from his lips a train of happenings which he said would be the sure foretelling that the time was nigh at hand when his second coming was drawing near, when he should appear in the clouds of heaven with great power and great glory.

After he administered forty days among them after his crucifixion and resurrection, he was caught away from them in the clouds of heaven, and two angelic personages dressed in white said to those who were witnesses of the Master's ascension,

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11.)

The third thing that the messenger announced to the Prophet was that the time was at hand for the gospel in all its fulness to be preached in power unto all the nations. This was in fulfilment of that which had been promised to John when the angel would fly in the midst of heaven, "having the [fulness of the] everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth." (Rev. 14:6.) The restoration of that fulness of the gospel was accomplished when the Book of Mormon, which was declared to be a record in which the fulness of the gospel was contained, was restored to the world through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

That the gospel might be "preached in power" required something else. Preceding the organization of the Church it was necessary that the keys of the priesthood be committed again unto men so that the gospel could be preached with power, and its ordinances administered unto men.

But the final and fourth thing which was announced is the thing about which I wish to address the few remarks that I make this afternoon. That was that a people might be prepared for the millennial reign. The meaning of that term was understood, apparently, from the prophets down from Enoch's time to the Prophet Joseph Smith's time, when the Lord spoke of a thousand year period in the world's history which

would be called a millennial reign, which would commence with the second coming of the Savior. John saw in vision the resurrection of the just who would reign with Christ for a thousand years. He saw that during this period Satan would be bound, that there would be peace upon the whole earth. Heaven and earth would be closely associated, and all unfinished work pertaining to this world would be completed. Injustices would be righted, and at the end of that reign would come a final judgment.

Now, I have asked myself, this being the time to prepare for the millennial reign, how shall we set about to prepare a people to receive the coming of the Lord? As I have thought seriously about that matter, I have reached two or three sure conclusions in my own thinking. This preparation demands first that a people, to receive the coming of the Lord, must be taught the personality and the nature of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Someone has said this: the demand of our modern age is not "for a God who once was, but for a God who now is." As I read that, I thought, how can one meet a person whose identity is unknown? How can one be prepared to meet a person about whom he has no knowledge? How can one be prepared to meet a being whose personality he cannot comprehend?

Great thinkers have long since recognized this need in religion if it is to become a vital force. George Harris, in his book *A Century of Change in Religion*, said this: "The thought of God as a personality is a necessary condition of everything that is contained within the field of religious experience."

Professor Hacking of Harvard in his "Meaning of God in Human Experience," made even a more significant statement when he wrote: "The alternative to the thought of God as a person is the thought of Him as a substance, as mere energy, and chiefly as law. Just stop and consider for a moment what it would mean for us to try to obey the will of substance, of love, of energy, or worship law, and you will have some idea at least of how near this question

of the personality of God comes to the heart of true religion."

When the Apostle Paul spoke of the organization of the Church, he said that one of the prime purposes of its organization was

... for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. (Eph. 4:12-13.)

And you will remember in that last memorable prayer, the Master said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

Eternal life is God's life, or life with God. In other words, it seems to me, they are trying to tell us that the worthiness to abide in his holy presence can be obtained only by knowing God and by knowing Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

To my thinking, another requisite of that preparation to receive the Lord at the beginning of his millennial reign demands that the people be taught to accept the divinity of the mission of Jesus as the Savior of the world. Why was the Savior sent into the world? The Master himself answered that question during his ministry when he said: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (*Ibid.*, 3:17.)

In a revelation in our day he said it again:

For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance. (D & C 18:11-12.)

Saved from what? Redeemed from what? Well, first, saved from mortal death through the resurrection of the dead. But in another sense we are saved likewise by his atoning sacrifice. We are saved from sin. Here is what the Prophet Alma explained to his people concerning this matter:

Saturday, October 6

Second Day

And he shall come into the world to redeem his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else. (Alma 11:40.)

... he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins. (*Ibid.*, 11:37.)

That last declaration of the Prophet Alma points to still another requirement, as I see it, for a people to be prepared to receive the Savior's coming. We must be cleansed and purified and sanctified to be made worthy to receive and abide that holy presence. The Prophet Mormon put it this way:

Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. (Mormon 9:4.)

How can this cleansing take place? The answer is: through holy ordinances which the Lord has established for that purpose. We are saved by grace, yes, through the atonement of the Master, but Nephi taught this other principle: "... for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Nephi 25:23.)

Now the nature of that ordinance by which salvation can be obtained is explained clearly also by the Prophet Nephi:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the

end, the same shall be saved. (*Ibid.*, 31:13, 15.)

And now, finally, there is still one more thing that is necessary, to my thinking, before that preparation is made for the millennial reign. We must accept the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith as the instrumentality through which the restoration of the gospel and the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ was accomplished. Each member of the Church, to be prepared for the millennial reign, must receive a testimony, each for himself, of the divinity of the work established by Joseph Smith. It was this that was taught plainly by the Saints after the advent of the Savior upon the earth, and one of the leaders in our day has said it again, when he declared, I suppose with reference to the parable of the five foolish and five wise virgins in the Master's parable, "The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself." (*Life of Heber C. Kimball*, pp. 449-450.)

These things being true, then it must become our object and our whole desire to teach these fundamental things to prepare our people for his coming. As Brother Romney delivered his very excellent address on the subject of the perfecting of the Saints, I remembered what a prominent commentator said about the quotation from the writings of Paul to the Ephesians. He said there should be no comma after the word saints. He said it should read "for the perfecting of the saints in the work of the ministry," stressing the importance of perfecting all who are called to positions of leadership in preparing the people to receive a knowledge of the Son of God. Whether or not this is the correct interpretation, it is certain that in our homes, in our seminaries and institutes, in the auxiliary organizations, in the priesthood quorums, we must teach the knowledge and nature of the Godhead. We must teach the mission of the Savior of the world. We need to teach the purifying principles and ordinances of the gospel. We need to teach the need of and the restoration of the gospel through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I suppose some might think it presumptuous if I were to plead with the teachers of youth in secular as well as in religious education not to tear down the foundation stones upon which a human soul can build faith necessary to prepare to meet their Redeemer. I would from my humble station invite those who would fight against the truth as taught in the restored Church to think seriously of what a wise counselor said to the enemies of Christ in the day of Peter and his associates. This counselor admonished:

Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God. (Acts 5:38-39.)

Perhaps today is the time for us to hear again the rallying call that was put into words by W. W. Phelps:

Awake! O ye people, the Savior is coming;
He'll suddenly come to his temple, we hear;
Repentance is needed of all that are living,
To gain them a lot of inheritance near.
Today will soon pass and that unknown
tomorrow

May leave many souls in a more dreadful
state

Than came by the flood, or that fell on
Gomorrhah—

Yea, weeping and wailing when grief is too
late.

Be ready, O island, the Savior is coming;
He'll bring again Zion, the prophets declare;
Repent of your sins, and have faith in redemption,

To gain you a lot of inheritance there.

A voice to the nations in season is given,
Prepare, oh, prepare for the kingdom's new
birth,

To call the elect from the four winds of
heaven;

For Jesus is coming to reign upon earth."

May the Lord bless us as his children to recognize that call, and may we say and be able to say it with power, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, (the God of this land,)" (Josh. 24:15) and prepare for the coming of the Savior, which may not be too long delayed, to cut short for the reign of righteousness the wickedness that well nigh seems to engulf a wicked world; when those who are righteous at his coming will be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet him, and those who are asleep in their graves, who are righteous likewise, will be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet him.

I bear you my solemn witness that I believe these things to be true with all my soul. This is the day for us to prepare that people ready to receive the coming of the Lord, and I bear that testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve. We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young.

ELDER STERLING W. SILL

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

A GREAT AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER ONCE said that we should thank God every day of our lives for the privilege of having been born. And then he went on to speculate on the unique question of how unfortunate it would have been if we had not been born, and he pointed out some of the wonderful things that we would have missed.

Really to understand the tremendous value of life as revealed by the gospel

multiplies by many times the importance of this thought. Life is our most valuable possession. Just to live is a marvelous blessing, especially to live in these days of wonder and enlightenment known as the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

In the days of Job it was said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." (Job 2:4.) For a very wise purpose, God has implanted in every hu-