

Friday, October 4

First Day

furnished the choral numbers for this session.

Florence Jepperson Madsen conducted the singing. Frank W. Asper was at the organ console.

President David O. McKay:

Members of the Church are convened in the second general session of the 133rd Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

Through the generous cooperation of their owners and managers, a total of 161 television stations and 24 radio stations will carry to practically every state in the Union and to many foreign countries the proceedings of some sessions of this Conference. These stations are located from coast to coast. The names of the stations carrying the proceedings of this session were announced to the television and radio audience just prior to the opening of this meeting. We appreciate the courtesy of these owners and managers in broadcasting the progress of this Conference.

These services are also being broadcast in the Assembly Hall by television. Those who are standing in the doorways may possibly find seats in that building. The Tabernacle is filled to overflowing and probably many thousands are tuned in on their radios and televisions. To all we extend a hearty welcome—to our unseen audience and to all who are gathered in this great Tabernacle.

We acknowledge again with appreciation the presence of our stake presidencies, high councilmen, bishoprics, temple presidents, general auxiliary officers, patriarchs, and others. We extend also a hearty welcome and express satisfaction and pleasure in the attendance of special guests and prominent men in the nation and state.

We have received the following telegrams:

From the London Stake "Greetings

and best wishes to all at Conference."

From President A. Theodore Tuttle in South America: "The mission presidents, members, and missionaries of South America send greetings to all. We join in praying for an inspirational and successful Conference."

Again, we are favored this afternoon by the presence of the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the Phoenix-Mesa (Arizona) area, with Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting and Frank W. Asper at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the Relief Society Singing Mothers rendering, "The Lord's Prayer." The invocation will be offered by Elder Victor Bowen, president of the Great Falls Stake.

The opening selection by the Relief Society Singing Mothers was "The Lord's Prayer." (By Robertson)

Elder Victor Bowen, president of the Great Falls Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation just offered was by Elder Victor Bowen, president of the Great Falls Stake.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now favor us with "Great Is Jehovah, The Lord," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen.

After the singing President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve, will give the opening address.

An anthem, "Great Is Jehovah, The Lord," was sung by the Singing Mothers Chorus.

President David O. McKay:

President Joseph Fielding Smith will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters:

The first time it was my privilege to speak to a congregation in this building

it required an effort to have my voice carry to all parts of this Tabernacle and be heard. Now when we are privileged

to speak, we are conscious of the fact that our voices may go forth to various parts of this mortal world. This makes the speaker conscious of a grave responsibility which rests upon him and the need of weighing every word. I am grateful for the coming of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in this the greatest of all dispensations—the greatest, because it is the last. I am also made aware of the responsibility which rests upon us, the elders of Israel, to proclaim the words of eternal life as they have been revealed from the heavens for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the world. We are sending missionaries to practically every country on the globe, except perhaps one where the lives of missionaries would be in grave danger and their message misunderstood. This obligation of declaring the words of eternal life devolves upon us by divine decree, given by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith in November 1831 in the following words:

“Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

“For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

“And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.

“And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

“And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.” (D&C 1:1-5.)

It is because of this commandment which the Lord gave to the Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith that our missionaries are sent to all parts of the world. We are fulfilling the edict of the Son of God. Moreover, this

is in fulfilment of the promise he made to his apostles just preceding his crucifixion, when he declared to them:

“And again this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked;

“And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

“Verily, I say unto you, this generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all I have told you shall be fulfilled.” (Joseph Smith 1:31-34.)

The Lord has made great promises through his servants concerning these times. To Jeremiah the Lord said in speaking of this dispensation:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them saith the Lord:

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34.)

In order that this prophecy may be fulfilled, many members of the Church will need to repent and be more diligent in the study of the scriptures and in their prayers and obedience to the laws and commandments of the gospel. If they fail to do these things they will be cut off from the presence of the Lord in that great day when he shall descend

as Lord of lords and King of kings to take his place and sit on his throne to rule and reign.

The Prophet Joseph Smith once said: "The great plan of salvation is a theme which ought to occupy our strict attention, and be regarded as one of heaven's best gifts to mankind. No consideration whatever ought to deter us from showing ourselves approved in the sight of God, according to His divine requirement. Men not unfrequently forget that they are dependent upon heaven for every blessing which they are permitted to enjoy, and that for every opportunity granted them they are to give an account. You know, brethren, that when the master in the Savior's parable of the stewards called his servants before him he gave them several talents to improve on while he should tarry abroad for a little season, and when he returned he called for an accounting. So it is now. Our Master is absent only for a little season, and at the end of it he will call each to render an account; and where five talents were bestowed, ten will be required; and he that has made no improvement will be cast out as an unprofitable servant, while the faithful will enjoy everlasting honors. Therefore, we earnestly implore the grace of our Father to rest upon you through Jesus Christ his Son that you may not faint in the hour of temptation, nor be overcome in the time of persecution." (*DHC* 2, 23-24.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith in one of his discourses said the following:

"... If God should speak from heaven, he would command you not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to covet, nor deceive, but be faithful over a few things. As far as we degenerate from God, we descend to the devil and lose knowledge, and without knowledge, we cannot be saved, and while our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good, or studying good. Is not God good? Then you be good; if he is faithful, then you be faithful. Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and seek for every good thing.

"... A man is saved no faster than

he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (*Ibid.*, 4, 588.)

How true this statement is. Today we are troubled by evil-designing persons who are endeavoring with all their power to destroy the testimonies of members of the Church, and many members of the Church are in danger because of lack of understanding and because they have not sought the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord. Every baptized member of the Church receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands. This, however, will not save them unless they continue in the spirit of light and truth. Therefore it is a commandment from the Lord that members of the Church should be diligent in their activities and study of the fundamental truths of the gospel as it has been revealed. The Spirit of the Lord will not continue to strive with the indifferent, with the wayward and the rebellious who fail to live within the light of divine truth. It is the privilege of every baptized person to have an abiding testimony of the restoration of the gospel, but this testimony will grow dim and eventually disappear unless we are constantly receiving spiritual good through study, obedience, and diligent seeking to know and understand the truth.

May the Spirit of the Lord be our constant companion, and may we one and all be true to our covenants and obligations devolving upon us through our membership in the Church. May the Lord bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Twelve. Elder Romney will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr.