

missionaries and members of the Church in Samoa. They extend greetings and thanks for inspiring Conference messages. "We are enjoying excellent reception by special KSL rebroadcast." President and Sister J. Philip Hanks.

Another from Albuquerque: "Reception of the Conference television broadcast is great and tremendous in Albuquerque. Members of four stakes and Western States Mission received the broadcast over KGGM-TV." I. F. Munson, Publicity Director.

We welcome all present this morning in the Tabernacle, which is crowded to the doors, those in the Assembly Hall, and particularly the vast television and radio audience in this, the Sixth Session of the 133rd Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Frank W. Asper at the organ, will open these services by rendering "With A

Voice of Singing," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Lloyd R. Hunsaker, president of the Logan Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir sang, "With A Voice of Singing."

Elder Lloyd R. Hunsaker, president of the Logan Stake, offered the opening prayer.

#### President David O. McKay:

The invocation just offered was by President Lloyd R. Hunsaker of the Logan Stake. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Blessed He That Comes in the Name of the Lord." Our first speaker, following the singing, will be President Hugh B. Brown, First counselor in the First Presidency.

Singing by the Choir, "Blessed He That Comes In The Name Of The Lord."

### PRESIDENT HUGH B. BROWN

#### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

As one beholds the thousands who are assembled here and is aware that hundreds of thousands are listening by means of radio and television, the responsibility of directing the thinking of so vast an audience would be overwhelming were it not for the knowledge that divine assistance is available through prayers of faith.

During recent months, both in Salt Lake City and across the nation, considerable interest has been expressed in the position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the matter of civil rights. We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed.

We say again, as we have said many times before, that we believe that all men are the children of the same God, and that it is a moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportu-

nity, and to every privilege of citizenship, just as it is a moral evil to deny him the right to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

We have consistently and persistently upheld the Constitution of the United States, and as far as we are concerned this means upholding the constitutional rights of every citizen of the United States.

We call upon all men, everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children. Anything less than this defeats our high ideal of the brotherhood of man.

Attending a Mormon conference is, no doubt, to some a new experience. Perhaps some may wonder, as did Nathanael in the days of Christ regarding Nazareth, and ask, "Can any good thing come out of 'Mormondom'?" For the moment we reply in the words of Philip, who simply said to Nathanael, "Come and see." (See John 1:46.) We welcome all of you and hope the time

you spend with us will be enlightening and profitable.

In this fantastically changing world, where old methods, old models, and old ideas are being replaced by new and revolutionary substitutes, it is well that church leaders everywhere re-examine and reappraise their creeds and courageously seek for the causes of the waning interest in religion.

We are passing through a period of radical intellectual reconstruction and spiritual unrest. We must think about religion in order to formulate an intellectual understanding of it. And intellectual understanding is just as needful in religion as anywhere else. We must not permit the surface of the waters of religious life to become fixed and crystallized by the freezing of religious thought.

For a moment may we consider the divine and historic basis of the Church of Jesus Christ, its present status, and its prophetic destiny.

On biblical authority we affirm that a divine plan for man's salvation was formulated by God the Father before the foundations of the earth were laid when all the sons of God shouted for joy at the prospect of mortality. (See Job 38:7.)

At a time far antedating Eden, the spirits of all men had a primeval existence and were intelligences with spirit bodies of which God was universal Father. In the Bible we read, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto the God who gave it." (Eccles. 12:7.)

The Lord told Jeremiah that he knew him before his body was formed and sanctified him and ordained him a prophet unto the nations. (Jer. 1:4.) And the Apostle Paul testified:

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9.)

During this antemortal existence in a council in the heavens with God the Father on the throne, there was one who challenged God, desiring to usurp his power and force all men to do his bidding. He coveted Godhood and said to the Father, "Give me thy glory." He

would have had a dictatorship in heaven ruled by tyrants with all spirit children bondmen.

Chief among that vast assembly was Jehovah, the same who would become the Christ Child, the Redeemer. He was the Firstborn among the spirits, and by birthright was both heir and leader. He opposed the plot to rob men of their freedom and espoused the counter proposition with free agency as the watchword.

All who favored the Messiah would be given mortal bodies with the seeds of death implanted in them. They would have the right to choose their course in life and accept responsibility for their conduct. Their bodies would return to the dust from which they came. Through the voluntary atonement of Christ, a member of the Godhead, resurrection from the dead was guaranteed to all. Another blessing of mortality would be the Godlike power of procreation.

Against this plan the proud, defiant Lucifer led a great rebellion, and one-third of all the spirits followed him. John tells us in the book of Revelation: ". . . there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. 12:7-9.)

The Prophet Isaiah knew of this when he wrote:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isa. 14:12-14.)

Adam, because of disobedience, was evicted from the Garden of Eden; the

door was closed behind him and his posterity, and the tree of life was guarded by a flaming sword as we read in Genesis. (Gen. 3:24.) Mortal birth erases recollection of that spiritual pre-existence and the memory of premortal life is as a feeble echo, and yet, as we sometimes sing, "a secret something whispers you're a stranger here, and we feel that we have wandered from a more exalted sphere."

The fate of all seemed hopeless when sin and death joined hands to shut them out forever, and Satan leered in triumph at what seemed to be Christ's failure. Men had no power to conquer death, and without divine assistance would sleep forever in their graves.

The atonement was foreshadowed when Adam offered sacrifice, and each prophet who succeeded him was told about Christ's mission. The scene of battle shifted, but the war between good and evil still continues among the sons of men.

Christ had power to conquer death by himself becoming mortal. He would reach across the valley and build a straight and narrow highway by which men could pass from death to life. He built a bridge, one end of which was anchored in mortality and the other fixed in heaven. ". . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," he said (John 14:6); and again, "I am the way and the life."

So Christ was born in Bethlehem and entered the world of mortal men which Beelzebub had thought belonged to him alone. The battle lines were drawn again with the Messiah and the loyal sons of God on one side and Lucifer and his cohorts on the other.

At the moment of Christ's birth, Satan plotted his destruction and tried by force to thwart his divine mission. But the rule of force, so far as his Son was concerned, had been vetoed by the Father. The devil has always had willing tools on earth, and at this time Herod was his agent. He was cruel and wily like his master; he sought to kill the Christ Child, and in his slaughter of the infants, he set a new low mark for even Satan.

But this Babe of mortal mother was

also the Son of God the Father and could not be defeated by mortal men or devils. Satan, failing in his vile attempt, cunningly decided to bide his time until the Child had grown to manhood, and then he hoped to win by artifice where force had failed him.

But here again Satan blundered in thinking Christ was only mortal. He thought his own power would more than equal that of his young opponent.

After forty days of fasting, Jesus met this wily tempter who suggested that he satisfy his hunger by making bread of stones and thus manifest his power. He tried to sow seeds of pride and arrogance, two vices of his own. But Christ disclaimed dependence upon bread alone. He lived "by every word proceeding from the mouth of God."

Having failed to make appetite and pride a strong temptation, Lucifer thought promise of power would be appealing—love of power, the very rock on which he himself had foundered. But Christ disdained this offer, too, and refused to flaunt his matchless power. The third and last attempt to lure him was to offer worldly wealth in exchange for his allegiance. And Satan heard the final words:

" . . . Get thee behind me, Satan: . . ." (See Luke 4:4-8.)

Satan found his next ally among those who followed Jesus. Judas thought, like many since, that worldly wealth is gain, no matter how procured. He sold his Master for a price and transferred his allegiance for which he received full pay in Satan's coin of misery and death.

The fight went on, and Christ was crucified, but he was not defeated, for he held power over death. He yielded to physical death of his own volition that, dying, he might conquer death and thereby open the door which Adam had closed in Eden. But in death Christ was victorious, for he achieved the purpose of his earth life, viz., to break the bonds of death, to come forth from the grave and insure man's resurrection.

His little band of loyal followers continued faithful unto death, and death it was for most of them, including the apostles. Apostasy became universal, and Satan reveled throughout

the Dark Ages when it seemed that his sovereignty was established.

But special messengers were sent to earth to effect a reformation and prepare the way for the final scene and the promised restoration.

The message of Mormonism is that the plan of salvation of which we've spoken is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was taught in every dispensation from Adam to Malachi and reached its climax in the Meridian of Time when Christ was resurrected from the dead. From the beginning he had been the central figure of salvation's plan. The Jews had looked forward through the centuries to the coming of Messiah, to a deliverer of the line of David sent of God, but despite the prophecies and the signs that were given them, they failed to recognize, and therefore they rejected him when he came.

The same prophets who so accurately foretold the earthly advent of Messiah were also given visions and revelations regarding his second coming. Their warning messages are recorded in the Holy Bible, and they are the signs by which the people of the latter days might be forewarned and guided.

For instance, in Psalms we read that fire should devour before him, while Joel saw as signs of his coming that the moon should be darkened and the stars withdraw their shining. To Zachariah it was revealed that his feet should stand upon the Mount of Olives, which should cleave in the midst thereof toward the East and the West, and Malachi predicted that he would suddenly come to his temple and that he should be like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Job referred to our day when he said:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." (Job 19:25.)

While these and many other prophecies were made prior to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, certainly most of the events to which they refer did not occur before his birth, nor were they fulfilled during his lifetime.

Many men have tried to appraise Christ since his transcendent ministry began. Their estimates of him have

ranged from blasphemous denunciation to self-sacrificing worship. Some ask whether such a man ever really lived or was he just a myth; was he an opportunist, sentimentalist, or social revolutionist; or possibly a man of genius, a wise man, a doer of wonderful works, or a great teacher? But if we consult the men who were closest to him, the men who followed him onto the Mount of Transfiguration, we shall learn that he was "... the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.) We ask each and all who are listening today to make his own appraisal of Jesus of Nazareth and determine whether or not he is the Christ, the Son of God. For ourselves we humbly bear witness to this transcendent fact. In the gospel of John he is referred to as the Word, who was with God in the beginning, who was God, by whom all things were made. He was the life and the light of men who was made flesh and dwelt among us. (See John 1:1-3, 14.)

The Apostle Paul declared:

"God, . . .

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Heb. 1:1-2.)

And in the eighth verse of the same chapter he said:

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (*Ibid.*, 1:8.)

It is doubtful if his divinity, his power, and his leadership were ever challenged with such audacity and ferocity as they are being challenged now. Never in history have the common people of the world felt the need of divine leadership as they feel it in this bewildered world. There never was a time which needed him more, as false ideologies and scientific miracles are leading the world to the brink of annihilation.

There are men and nations today who are attempting to displace God, to ban religion, and to make this a godless world. The present war between Christ and anti-Christ is in fulfillment

of prophecy and is itself a harbinger or forerunner of the millennium.

We plead with all Christians everywhere to attest their faith in him by keeping his commandments. His work of redemption is not complete nor will it be until his gospel is written in the lives and hearts of men. The fact that he was resurrected from the dead—the best attested fact in history—assures us that he still lives. He has promised that he will come again. All who read the prophecies of scripture and note the signs of our own times must be convinced that we are living in the last days, that the great events foretold by the prophets have been and are being enacted on the stage of contemporary history. Let us recognize in current events the portents, or prognosis of the great finale.

John, while on the Isle of Patmos, saw in vision things to come; heard ten thousand angels singing praises to the Son of God. And they joined with every creature in earth and heaven—all with one accord were saying:

“. . . Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13.)

And he saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, saw him bring to earth the gospel for every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. He saw the lake without a bottom, and the dragon bound with chains, saw one thousand years of concord, peace, and rest. And he saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, with his earthly kingdom to be joined.

Then he saw the small and great ones

stand before the throne of God to be judged out of the records, each according to his merits. Death and hell released their captives, and the sea gave up its dead, while the angels sang hosannah to the Prince of Peace, their Lord.

We bear humble testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior and Redeemer of the world and that he will return and reign personally upon the earth. At that time the people on the earth will join with the hosts of heaven and sing: “The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: And He shall reign for ever and ever, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” (Handel, George Frederick, *The Messiah*.) This testimony we bear to all the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He who gave this address is President Hugh B. Brown, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

The Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with “Father In Heaven, In Thy Love Abounding.” Following the singing, Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson will speak to us.

The Choir sang the selection, “Father In Heaven, In Thy Love Abounding.”

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter.

## ELDER THORPE B. ISAACSON

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

President McKay, our beloved President and God's choice prophet, President Brown, President Tanner, brethren of the General Authorities, my dear brothers and sisters and friends everywhere. One cannot stand at this pulpit without feeling humble and very dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord. I can assure you that much fasting and

much praying precedes a general conference. I sincerely pray that what I might say will be helpful and I trust encouraging.

This beautiful choir this morning and every Sunday morning is a great pride and a blessing to the people of the Church and for the people of the world. What a great missionary group of won-