

all men everywhere. May our lofty institutions, our matchless Constitution, our love of freedom and liberty be noted by other nations and, insofar as they can be made applicable, be adopted by them that all men everywhere may join us in singing what might well become an international anthem, "Our fathers' God to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing. Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light. Protect us by thy might, Great God, our King!" (Samuel F. Smith, "America.") That all may become the special concern of

providential care, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Choir sang "God Bless America."

President N. Eldon Tanner:

We have just listened to President Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency, followed by the lovely number, "God Bless America," by our Tabernacle Choir.

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

ELDER HOWARD W. HUNTER

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

The scholars of ecclesiastical history cannot date the time of the commencement of the Church of Christ. There is no specific event or any certain occurrence in the writings of the New Testament upon which they can agree as being the definite beginning. The Church came into existence over a period of time in which there were many important events. The groundwork was laid by a ministry which changed the lives and thinking of those who became the body of Christ. After the commencement of the ministry of Jesus, his followers were many. Mark said, "And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee." (Mark 1:28.)

The Time of Christ

He went from place to place teaching in the cities and in the synagogues, and the people gathered to hear him. They were impressed by his teachings and astonished by his power to heal the sick. He taught them as they came to ask questions, and he conversed with them in small groups along the way-side. On many occasions great multitudes gathered to hear the one who often called himself the Shepherd. Many believed upon him, and some he called to follow after him. Groups of believers sprang up in Jerusalem and in many other places.

This period of time becomes the focal point of history. We measure time by the years that have preceded Christ and by the years that have come after him. His life, teachings, death, and resurrection in the center of time have had a profound effect upon all those who have lived since his ministry and all those who died prior to his resurrection. The establishment of his Church has blessed all Christendom.

**"Some say that thou art John,
Elias, Jeremias"**

Some writers, seeking a doctrinal beginning rather than a specific event for the commencement of the Church of Christ, give great weight to the reply of the Lord when Peter bore his testimony that Jesus was the Christ. It was on the occasion when they were near Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matt. 16:13.) It doesn't seem reasonable to suppose that he didn't know what people thought and were saying about him. He was giving his disciples the opportunity to express their faith and to be strengthened. "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." (*Ibid.*, 16:14.)

"Thou Art the Christ"

The Pharisees believed, of course, that the soul is imperishable and the soul of a good person passes into another body while the soul of the wicked suffers eternal punishment. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" (*Ibid.*, 16:15.) The Master may have been prompted to ask this question because of their surroundings. Caesarea Philippi is near the grotto and the temples of the Greek god Pan, a center of pagan worship, and he may have wanted his disciples to think about the contrast between pagan gods and the true God. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (*Ibid.*, 16:16.) In answer to this positive testimony of Peter, ". . . Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (*Ibid.*, 16:17-18.)

"Upon this rock, I will build my Church"

This is a very significant statement. The Lord in effect said to Peter that this knowledge that Jesus was the Christ did not come to him from mortal men or from the reasoning or learning of men, but by revelation from on high, that is, direct, divine revelation of the divinity of the Master. In answer to the statement "Thou art the Christ," Jesus replied, ". . . thou art Peter," in friendly acknowledgment of his disciple. The Lord then added, ". . . and upon this rock I will build my church." Upon what rock? Peter? Upon a man? No, not upon a man, upon the rock of revelation, the thing which they were talking about. He had just said, ". . . flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This revelation that Jesus is the Christ is the foundation upon which he would build his Church.

Pentacost

There are others who, searching for the commencement of the Church of Christ, point to the day the apostles were engaged in the devotions of the Pentecost. This was only nine days after the ascension of the Savior of the world. The date becomes important because it was on this occasion that the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles as had been promised by Jesus. They began to speak in other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. When the Jews heard of this, a crowd gathered and Peter, the president of the Twelve, stood before them and delivered that great sermon condemning them for the sin of disbelief that the one crucified by them was the Christ. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37-38.)

Followers of the Messiah

Even though this event may be accepted by some as the origin of the organized Church, it has deeper meaning. The power of the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles as the Savior had promised, bringing to them a dynamic conviction that they were the followers of the Messiah of whom the prophets of old had spoken, who had come to earth in fulfillment of these prophecies, completed his mission, had been crucified and resurrected as the Savior of all mankind.

The Church of Christ

It might be best said that the Church was founded as the result of the personal ministry of Christ and also by the testimony of the apostles who made the person and divine work of Christ known to men. This testimony on the day of Pentecost touched the hearts of those who listened. Apparently all of the apostles preached

on that occasion, some in one language and some in another, so that all understood. They bore witness of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and out of the great multitude which had been taught on that day, three thousand were baptized.

The earliest account of communal church life in the New Testament describes those who were baptized on the day of Pentecost in these words: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (*Ibid.*, 2:42.) People of a common belief are drawn together because they enjoy a community of interest, and the church becomes the center of this life because there is comfort and support in the association of those who share the same understanding.

"He ordained Twelve"

During his lifetime the Master selected the apostles, and Mark states, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

"And have the power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." (Mark 3:14-15.) God the Father had sent his Son into the world to bring salvation to the world. The Son chose apostles, conferred upon them authority, and said to them, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19-20.) The atoning sacrifice of Christ brings redemption from the grave to all men, but in addition to this it is necessary that there be witnesses to the divinity of Christ and his death and resurrection. To be such a witness was inherent in the call and the ordination of the Twelve.

Authority Over the Whole Church

The apostles were not local officers of the Church. Their authority extended over the whole Church and to

all of the world, to the Jews and to the gentiles. In the same manner that the apostles were clothed with authority, they empowered other officers of the Church to carry forward the work as it grew and spread. Elders were ordained in the branches as local officers. The record is not clear as to when the first elders were ordained, but we find reference to this office in the Jerusalem Church at an early date. In the missionary tours of Paul and Barnabas they ordained elders in the branches they established. Paul makes reference to his meeting with the elders in Ephesus as he was traveling to Jerusalem. The government of the local branch was in the hands of a body of men called elders, and they were charged with the instruction and the leadership. The term elder is also used in the New Testament in a general way and refers to any ecclesiastical function such as apostles, pastors, bishops, or other church officers. In his exhortation to the elders of the Church, the Apostle Peter refers to himself as a fellow elder. (See 1 Peter 5:1.)

The Call of the Seventy

Another step in the organization of the Church was the selection and call of the seventy who were sent two and two as missionaries into the world. (Luke 10:1-24.) Mention is also made of the priests of the Levitical order and high priests after the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 5:1-6; 7:11.) Until the time of Christ there appears to have been no other office in the Levitical Priesthood than that of priest, but in the writings of Paul he includes the office of teacher. (Eph. 4:11.)

One of the important ministers of the early Church was the deacon. The name comes from the Greek verb meaning to minister or to serve. Although his duties are not fully set forth, it appears that he was the assistant to the bishop and received his assignment of duty from the bishop. The deacons were the ones who received the offerings of the members and served to the Church the bread and wine of the consecrated sacrament.

Sunday, October 3

Third Day

Bishops Preside Over the local Church

The bishop in the Church of Christ was the one who presided over the local church community. He was the chief pastor of the flock. He was ordained to his office by an apostle in the usual manner by prayer and the laying on of hands. He was responsible for the preaching and teachings in his church, although he could delegate many of the functions to others. All things were done under his authority and direction, and the officers and those holding the lesser priesthood were subordinate and took their instruction and direction from him. He administered the offerings of the people and the charity to those in need. As the judge he determined the standing of the members of the Church and had the power to excommunicate. In short the bishop was the chief priest, pastor, and presiding officer of his church.

Modern Church Organizations

Modern Christian churches have not found it important to have the organization or officers as existed in the primitive Church as founded by Christ and those he called and ordained for this purpose. This is evidenced by the fact that the original organization and officers are lacking in these churches today. If modern Christian churches claim to follow after the Church established by Christ, it would seem that they would follow the same organization. They assert, however, that it is not necessary that there be continuation of the organization of the primitive Church.

Apostolic Succession

This same argument is used with respect to the subject of apostolic succession. Those who make this claim say that there cannot be apostles except those chosen by Christ during his ministry. This is based on the premise that an apostle must be a witness of the resurrected Savior and because there have been no appearances since

his ascension, there cannot be such a witness. This gives rise to the belief that no new apostle could succeed one who died. We remember, however, that Matthias was called to take the place of Judas. The answer of the proponents is that he did not take the place of one who died, but rather one who had forfeited his office because he had been unfaithful by betraying Jesus. A succession is nevertheless admitted. As proof that there was no succession on the death of an apostle, the case of James the son of Zebedee is cited. The record does not state there was no successor, it is merely silent. There is some evidence that James the brother of the Lord may have been ordained a successor member of the Twelve, because he took a prominent part in the council at Jerusalem and was with Peter in the leadership of the apostles. And Paul said of him, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

"But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Gal. 1:18-19.) We have little information concerning the acts of some of the apostles, and there are a number of whom we have no information after the time of their calling.

Paul

Paul was not one of the named Twelve, and the writings of the New Testament make it clear that he was not a witness of the Savior prior to his ascension, yet Paul claimed the apostleship undoubtedly from his experience as he journeyed to Damascus. Paul referred in his writings to a number of other persons as apostles who were not named as the Twelve. Because the record gives no information concerning them, scholars cannot ascertain if they were successors or if the word "apostle" was used in another sense. In any event, it would be fallacious to argue that because the record is silent it must be inferred that there was no succession.

The last and perhaps the weakest argument of all is that there is no need for apostolic succession because their

testimony has been preserved for future generations by the writings of the New Testament. This of course violates all of the rules of evidence because the witnesses' lips have been sealed in death.

Today, the same organization as the primitive Church

There exists today in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the organization of the primitive Church of Christ with the same officers that have been mentioned: deacons, teachers, priests, bishops, elders, seventies, high priests, and apostles. Without taking into consideration revelation which reestablishes this organization, reason alone would dictate that Christ's Church should be the same today as when organized under his direction.

The principles embodied in the gospel of Jesus Christ are everlasting. It would logically follow that the Church founded upon these eternal and everlasting principles would have the same organization as that established under his direction, and it would be difficult to show good reason for the necessity of change or improvement. The historical facts themselves bear out that there has been a falling away, a corruption of the original, an unauthorized change of church organization in modern churches.

I have a personal conviction that after the long period of spiritual darkness in the world, the gospel has been restored in its fullness through divine revelation, and the Church of Christ has again been established on earth; that this restored Church has the same organization that existed in the original Church, including those of apostolic

calling who do bear witness of the divinity of Christ, his death, and resurrection, and that he is the Son of God. To their witness, I humbly add my witness in the name of the Savior of the world. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "Glory to God," from Handel's Messiah, with Richard P. Condie conducting and Alexander Schreiner at the organ. The congregation will then join with the Choir in singing, "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we will have a brief organ interlude.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn "Glory of God."

The Choir and Congregation joined in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Alexander Schreiner, Organist, played a brief organ interlude.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we again announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the sixth session of the 135th Semi-annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We shall now hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy. Elder Dunn.

ELDER PAUL H. DUNN

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brothers and sisters: this is most humbling, and I have been deeply impressed, with you, at the inspiring messages of this conference and at the great uplift that we have received this

morning from President Brown and Elder Hunter. It is my sincere prayer that I shall not detract from these edifying words as I share with you a few thoughts that I have been thinking