

President Hugh B. Brown:

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just tuned in we again announce that the Church is

assembled in the historic tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City.

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

ELDER THOMAS S. MONSON*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Spring has returned to the community of Franklin, Idaho. One can hear the ever-welcome chirp of the robin and see the beauty of the first daffodil. Seemingly overnight, the drab brown grass of winter turns to a verdant green. Soon plows will turn the earth, seeds will be planted, and a new cycle of life will commence. Tucked away from the bustle of activity and snuggled against the friendly hills is the town cemetery.

Just three weeks ago a new grave was opened—not a large one—and a tiny casket was lowered into mother earth. Three lines appear on the attractive headstone:

MICHAEL PAUL SHUMWAY

Born: October 24, 1965

Died: March 14, 1966

May I introduce you to the Shumway family. They are my neighbors here in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mark and Wilma Shumway and each of the children always greet you with a friendly smile or a wave of the hand. They brighten a neighborhood. They are good people.

Can you imagine the happiness in the family home on that 24th day of October when little Michael was born. Father was proud, brothers and sisters were excited, Mother was humble, as they welcomed this sweet new blossom of humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home, to flower on earth. Happy months followed.

Then came that fateful night in March when little Michael was called to his heavenly home and the breath of life was gone. As I visited with Mark and Wilma, so bowed down with grief from the loss of their precious son, I noticed one of Michael's

tiny toys as it rested near the crib. I remembered the words of Eugene Field's masterpiece, "Little Boy Blue":

"The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with
rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was
new,
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little
Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"'Now, don't you go till I come,' he
said,
'And don't you make any noise!'
So toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamed of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue,—
Oh, the years are many, the years are
long,
But the little toy friends are true.

"Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they
stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face.
And they wonder, as waiting the long
years through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy
Blue
Since he kissed them and put them
there."

There are many toy dogs and many toy dolls that belonged to many boys and girls who lived and then were taken from us. And while the toys may wonder while they wait, anxious parents need not wonder. The revealed word of a loving Heavenly Father pro-

vides answers to questions of the heart.

Mark and Wilma, could you gather your little ones around as we discuss some of these answers. There are many hundreds of thousands of others, perhaps millions, listening in, but they may benefit from our conversation; for who hasn't lost a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a son, or a daughter?

"If a man die, shall he live again?"

Every thoughtful person has asked himself that question best phrased by Job of old: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14.) Try as we may to put the question out of our thoughts, it always returns. Death comes to all mankind. It comes to the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons is heard by those who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and often it hushes the laughter of little children.

In Paul's message to the Hebrews, he declared: "... it is appointed unto men once to die. . . ." (Heb. 9:27.) While death is inevitable, it can best be understood when we learn of life, even eternal life.

Life on earth does not mark the beginning of our existence. The poet William Wordsworth wrote:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The soul that rises with us, our life's
Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!"

("Ode on Intimations of Immortality
from Recollections of Early Childhood.")

And who can fail to be sobered by the declaration of the prophet Jeremiah: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. 1:4-5.)

In the wisdom of God, an earth was created upon which man might dwell. Genesis records that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Then God said, "Let there be light: and there was light."

"Let there be a firmament . . ." and there was a firmament.

"Let the earth bring forth grass. . ." and the earth brought forth grass. (Gen. 1:3, 6, 11.) He made the fowls of the air, the creatures of the water, the beasts of the earth.

And then "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:27.) To man was given dominion over every living thing. Earth became a proving ground, a testing station, a provider of needed experience.

We laugh, we cry, we work, we play, we love, we live. And then we die. And dead we would remain but for one man and his mission, even Jesus of Nazareth. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, his birth fulfilled the inspired pronouncements of many prophets. He was taught from on high. He provided the life, the light, and the way. Multitudes followed him. Children adored him. The haughty rejected him. He spoke in parables. He taught by example. He lived a perfect life. Through his ministry blind men saw, deaf men heard, and lame men walked. Even the dead returned to life.

Though the King of kings and Lord of lords had come, he was accorded the greeting given to an enemy or a traitor. There followed a mockery that some called a trial. Cries of "Crucify him, crucify him," filled the air. (John 19:6.) Then commenced the climb to Calvary's Hill.

He was ridiculed, reviled, mocked, jeered, and nailed to a cross amidst shouts of "Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (Mark 15:32.) "He saved others; himself he cannot save." (Matt. 27:42.) "If thou be Christ, save thyself. . . ." (Luke 23:39) His response: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they

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do." (Luke 23:34.) ". . . into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus: he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:46.) His body was placed by loving hands in a sepulcher hewn of stone.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came unto the sepulcher. To their astonishment, the body of their Lord was gone. Luke records that two men in shining garments stood by them and said: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

"He is not here, but is risen. . . ." (Luke 24:1, 5-6.) Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" had just been answered.

The sacred scripture records the events following his ascension. However, today, as always, the skeptic's voice challenges the word of God, and each man must choose to whom he shall listen. Clarence Darrow, the famous lawyer and agnostic, declared, "No life is of much value, and every death is but a little loss." Schopenhauer, the German philosopher and pessimist, wrote: "To desire immortality is to desire the eternal perpetuation of a great mistake." And to their words are added those of new generations as foolish men crucify the Christ anew. For they modify his miracles, doubt his divinity, and reject his resurrection.

Robert Blatchford, in his book *God and My Neighbor* attacked with vigor the accepted Christian beliefs, such as God, Christ, prayer, and immortality. He boldly asserted: "I claim to have proved everything I set out to prove so fully and decisively that no Christian, however great or able he may be, can answer my arguments or shake my case." He surrounded himself with a wall of skepticism. Then a surprising thing happened. His wall suddenly crumbled to dust. He was left exposed and undefended. Slowly he began to feel his way back to the faith he had scorned and ridiculed. What had caused this profound change in his outlook? *His wife died.* With broken heart, he went into the room where lay all that was mortal of her. He looked at the face he loved so well. Coming out he said to a friend: "It is

she and yet it is not she. Everything is changed. Something that was there before is taken away. She is not the same. What can be gone if it be not the soul?"

Later he wrote: "Death is not what some people imagine. It is only like going into another room. In that other room we shall find . . . the dear women and men and the sweet children we have loved and lost." (*God and My Neighbor* [Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company].)

Testimony against the skeptics

Against the philosophy rampant in today's world—a doubting of the authenticity of the Sermon on the Mount, an abandonment of Christ's teachings, a denial of God, and a rejection of his laws—we seek a point of reference, an unimpeachable source, even a testimony of eye witnesses. Stephen, doomed to the cruel death of a martyr, looked up to heaven and cried: ". . . I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56.) Saul, on the road to Damascus, had a vision of the risen, exalted Christ. Peter and John also testified of the risen Christ.

Who can help but be penetrated by the stirring testimony of Paul at Corinth? He declared "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

"And . . . was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve;

"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present. . . .

"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

And ". . . he was seen of me. . . ." (I Cor. 15:3-8.)

To the agnostic, the skeptic, the reviler, I ask, "Agnostic, can you answer?" "Skeptic, can you save?" "Reviler, can you redeem?"

God the Eternal Father spoke to the multitude on this continent and said: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.

“. . . as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven, . . .

“. . . he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

“. . . I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world. . . .” (3 Ne. 11:7-11.)

“Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

“And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

“Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.” (3 Ne. 11:14, 16-17.)

God so loved the world . . .”

This loving God who introduced his crucified and resurrected Son was not a God lacking in body, parts, or passions—the God of a man-made philosophy. Rather, God our Father has ears with which to hear our prayers. He has eyes with which to see our actions. He has a mouth with which to speak to us. He has a heart with which to feel compassion and love. He is real. He is living. We are his children made in his image. We look like him and he looks like us.

This is the God who so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son that we might have everlasting life.

To you, Wilma and Mark Shumway, and to all who have loved and lost a dear one, he provides the courage to say, “. . . the Lord gave, and the

Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21.) As you and your children journey to the family home in Franklin, Idaho, where tenderly and lovingly you will place the flowers of springtime on that tiny grave, your eyes may be moist with tears, but your hearts will burn with the knowledge that the bands of death have been broken and that members of your family, though now separated by death, will one day be reunited to share the blessings of eternal life.

With all my heart and the fervency of my soul, I lift up my voice in testimony today as a special witness and declare that God does live. Jesus is his Son, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He is our Redeemer; he is our Mediator with the Father. He it was who died on the cross to atone for our sins. He became the first fruit of the resurrection. Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives, “I know that my Redeemer lives!” and may the whole world know it and live by that knowledge, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing “Ye Now Are Sorrowful,” with JoAnne Ottley as soloist, and following an organ interlude, Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

The Choir sang, “Ye Now Are Sorrowful,” JoAnne Ottley, soloist.

Organ interlude, Alexander Schreiner, organist.

President Hugh B. Brown:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will give the concluding address.