

President Hugh B. Brown

Of the First Presidency

My dear brothers and sisters (and I use that salutation despite the fact that our audience this morning is made up of people from many countries, many tongues, many creeds): We are all children of the same God, and therefore we are brothers and sisters.

The fact of immortality

I should like to bear witness of the Master and to the fact of the immortality of the soul. In fact, recent poignant experiences have reminded some of us that a foundation stone of all religion is entwined with the thought of life beyond the grave, of the immortality of the soul, and man's relationship to Deity. Sooner or later life's vicissitudes bring each of us to grips with this important subject, giving us cause to reevaluate our convictions, to reexamine our faith in this essentially spiritual aspect of our religion. Each of us, regardless of color, creed, or nationality, has a rendezvous with the experience that we call death.

The question of the immortality of the soul is the most persistent, the most universal inquiry of all time. It has in every age attracted the attention of the learned and the unlearned, the religious and irreligious, the rich and the poor. No other subject touches human welfare and human happiness so intimately.

Hope universal

The belief that the road of life merges into an endless freeway that leads to a more beautiful home and more fruitful life than any experience in mortality has been the inspiration of the great souls in all ages. This belief, older than the pyramids, antedating the first record of man's thoughts, has been firmly established in the minds and consciousness of the human race. There is a remarkable unanimity on this subject among the leaders throughout the ages, regardless of their adherence to other aspects of religion. This almost universal belief inspires hope, faith, and fortitude as we approach our turn to join that in-

numerable caravan and take our place in the sacred halls of death.

Revelation is unfolding truth whether in the test tube, the human mind, or message from the Creator. It is the infinite becoming known.

Death is not extinguishing the light, but is putting out the lamp, because the dawn has come. Night never has the last word. The dawn is irresistible.

Both religion and science teach us that nothing is ever annihilated; forms change and patterns are altered. We do not even attempt to anticipate the details, but it is unreasonable to conclude that a law that operates everywhere else in life ceases to operate only in life's highest, noblest form—human personality.

The human spirit shrinks from extinction. It refuses to believe that the departed have vanished like the flame of a burnt-out candle. There has never been an age in which the hope of life, immortal and eternal, has not flamed brightly.

In this world of indestructibility, each of us is a timeless, spaceless unit of energy. Is it not absurd to assume that the infinitesimal electron is of more import in the economy of the universe than the creative consciousness that is I?

If there are permanent values in the universe, it seems that human sympathy, love, mutual service among mankind, intellectuality, and spirituality—the highest and noblest qualities of which the human mind can conceive, qualities which have been produced at tremendous cost and sacrifice—must be permanent.

The Savior conquered death

That the Savior conquered death, after having taken upon himself mortality, gives us the divine assurance that our spirits also transcend death and that our loved ones who have gone before still live. Our spirits are divine, for they are the offspring of Deity; therefore, our spirits cannot be touched by death. It was this transcendent thought that inspired the Apostle

Paul to say: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55.)

The real world is spiritual

Faintly we are beginning to discern the fact that the real world is the spiritual world, and that a spiritual civilization must spring from ruins of the old if man is to keep his place in the universe. Life is the absolute power that overrules all else. There can be no cessation. Man does not have the power to destroy life.

Our world is an interesting, beautiful, wonderful, increasingly intelligible place, and in many ways a delightful home, but the question will not be repressed: Does it have some significance beyond what is seen and temporal? Dare we think of a design connecting the antemortal, the mortal, and the post-mortal?

The supreme appetite of man is for life—harmonious, eternal life. Nature provides for the complete fulfillment at some time or place of all of the appetites of man. The desire for immortality is the supreme, the eternal, the everlasting desire.

When I consult my own inner consciousness I find a deep-seated—in fact, an instinctive—feeling of immeasurable oldness, an echo of time immemorial, as well as a feeling of necessary endlessness. No logical reasoning can dispel these feelings. I did not put these feelings in my inner self; I found them there when I grew old enough to introspect my mind. In spite of recurring doubts and criticisms, there they have remained. If we believe in man's divine origin, we must conclude that mankind has a mission that cannot be encompassed in mortality; that power had a divine purpose that cannot be fully employed or utilized during earth life; that every faculty has a function, even though some are not in evidence in our earthly environment.

Each of us must someday face the question propounded by Job: "If a man die, shall he live again?" In other words, is the death of the body the finality of human existence? What becomes of the soul, the self—that intangible but very real essence we call personality? Does it vanish into nothingness?

Heart-hunger after immortality

The heart-hunger of mankind after immortality is instinctive within him, and like all other normal instincts is grounded in the structure of his being. The human spirit, by its very nature, has a passion for life—continuous life. It has eternity stamped upon its inner constitution, and it reflects in its hopes and dreams that which eternally is.

With the tremendous strides that science is making in our day, there is dawning upon this age what might be termed a scientific spirituality—a new type of mind that studies the truths of faith with the care and caution and candor of science, yet keeping the warmth and glow and power of faith.

Spiritual insight is as real as scientific insight. Indeed, it is but a higher manifestation of the same thing. The saint as well as the scientist has witnessed the truth of reality. One may deem his knowledge revelation, and the other, intellectual conclusion, but in both cases it is insight—the conviction of reality.

That which impresses one most strongly in the teachings of Jesus is the fact that he did not argue. He stated the sublime truth of immortality of man as though it were an elementary fact that needed no argument to justify its acceptance.

Mortal life, a pre-natal state

Man, in his mortal state, is not a being completed and perfect. Rather, mortal life is a prenatal state, awaiting birth. As Franklin so truly said, "Life is rather a state of embryo, a preparation for life. A man is not completely born until he has passed through death."

Even the best of men, when they come to the end of their days, feel a keen sense of incompleteness. They have been unable to do what they dreamed and resolved they would do. May this not be a confirmatory suggestion that there is a design still to be carried out?

The mind of man is never satisfied with its accomplishments; it seems to be built upon a scale that only life eternal can satisfy. Perhaps this is what Browning meant when he said:

Saturday, April 8

Second Day

"... a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" (Robert Browning, "Andrea del Sartor.")

There may be and doubtless will be new conditions, new laws, new methods; but the essential soul will still have its faculties unimpaired—in fact, heightened and clarified—to pursue its quest for truth.

No bodily change, no earthly vicissitude affects the integrity and the permanence of the self. The spirit does not age with the body nor does it perish with the body. It is a divine effluence of reality, and as such must always persist. The self, by its very nature, transcends mortality.

Victor Hugo left us a challenging reflection not long before he died. He said, "The nearer I approach the end the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the world which invites me. It is marvelous yet simple. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and in verse; history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode and song; I have tried all. But I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I can say like many others,—'I have finished my day's work.' But I cannot say, 'I have finished my life's work.' My day's work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is an open thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight, it opens on the dawn. My work is only beginning; my work is hardly above the foundation. I could gladly see it mounting forever. The thirst for the infinite proves infinity."

When those eleven downhearted men suddenly become aware that Jesus was in their midst—the Jesus who only hours before had been scourged and stabbed on the hill—they, as Luke said, "believed not for joy." (See Luke 24:41.) It was too good to be true, and then came his marvelous challenge and demonstration as he said: "... handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

"And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." (Luke 24:39-40.) They saw; they touched, and were touched by his glorious resurrected body. That was

the great revelation—Christ was real and touchable.

What I say here now reflects not only Bible study and prayerful meditation, but also actual experience that defies a thousand and one traditions and assumptions. I would not be standing here if it had not come to life within me when I was on the edge of my own abyss.

The hands, feet, and side of Christ had bled in the awful turning of his solitary winepress before they were pierced at Golgotha. His whole body bled in the midst of his vicarious pain. This was an actual experience; it was not a myth.

When the eleven apostles were celebrating an extended Easter at Jerusalem, they were overwhelmed by the implications of his final instructions and seemed moved by an endowment of the Spirit, for they witnessed not only his own unforeseen immortality but also their own immortality. It was the reality of reunion of their lives with his life; it was knowing him again, in their midst, being with them. It was his ministering, dining, sharing with them. It was being close—closer than ever before. They became aware of his great power—indeed, all power both in heaven and in earth had been given unto him.

We bear witness to these New Testament insights, the newest of which is his present touch. To be in touch with Christ means today what it meant to John and Peter and Paul: to see, to receive, and to prize the actual ministrations.

We witness that his voice, his person, has been manifested today in our time and culture. And more: that he will now, as then, manifest himself to those who will come as John came, not counting the cost. He can be and is touched by the power of his divine Sonship.

Christ, the revelation of God

We bear witness that Christ was the revelation of God, the Father, and I dare proclaim what some creeds have forbidden us to say: that when the disciples knelt at Jesus' feet, embraced his knees, looked into his face, they were beholding and touching a per-

sonality who had become absolutely like the Eternal Father.

We bear witness that the touch of Christ, as he is presently glorified, is the touch of the highest nature of God. When he entered the presence of God, the Father, he was transformed into the express image of his person. He became not only the revelation of the Father but also the revelation of redeemed man.

Behold the vibrant Christ who manifests a love that does not flourish on distance, on utter unlikeness, on the removal of similitude! Union and communion—real kinship—are the sharing of all levels of experience.

Behold the Christ who knew all human sickness, that he might have compassion; who was healed and lifted up, that he might have healing and lifting power; who was glorified in the presence of the Father, that he might glorify the Father by glorifying us!

For this cause came he into the world; for this cause he voluntarily offered his life, broke the bands of death, was resurrected from the dead, vouchsafed to all men the blessings of the resurrection, and was glorified by the Father.

Attestation of the resurrection

One of the best-attested facts in history is the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He said, “. . . I go [to] prepare a place for you, . . . that where

I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:3.) Paul tells us that “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:22.) Hear Christ’s inspiring message to Martha and to all the world:

“. . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26.)

With Job of old and with the apostles I humbly bear witness that I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the last day upon the earth. I bear this testimony humbly and faithfully, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Following a brief organ interlude, the Tabernacle Choir will sing “Hallelujah, Amen.”

To those who have just tuned in on this conference we wish to extend a hearty welcome.

Organ interlude.

Singing: “Hallelujah, Amen,” Tabernacle Choir.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

Of the Council of the Twelve

My brothers and sisters: Since our last conference Elder Marion D. Hanks and I have been in Vietnam and other areas in Southeast Asia. In that troubled part of the world we have had many inspiring and sobering experiences, as we have met with our brethren in the armed forces—not only American, but also a few British and Australian.

A visit with Mormon boys in Viet Nam

Particularly sobering were our meet-

ings in South Vietnam. Our first stop was the great military base at Da Nang. There in the base chapel we were greeted by our brethren, most of whom looked so young. Their automatic rifles were stacked along the rear pews, and they sat in their battle fatigues, many of them with a pistol on the right hip and a knife on the left.

They had come down from the Rock Pile, Marble Mountain, and other hot and deadly places whose names are only words in our newspapers, but which to them are battlegrounds where