

### Elder Alma Sonne

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My brethren and sisters, I believe in the prophets. "Where the Scriptures speak," said the Reverend Thomas Campbell, "we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Saint Augustine, who lived around the year 400 A.D., made a similar statement when he said, "Nothing is to be accepted save on the authority of the Scriptures."

These declarations, you will readily see, close the doors to continuous revelation from God and eliminate the holy prophets. Contrary to these expressed views, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declares to all the world: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (Ninth Article of Faith.)

The world is constantly looking for new knowledge, not only in science but also in religion. It is the keystone

**"All He has revealed; and will yet reveal"**

to progress. Herein lies the apostasy of the Christian Church established by Jesus and the apostles. In other words, they believed in the prophets dead, and rejected the living oracles. Spiritual knowledge comes from God through his prophets.

#### Prophets, revelators

Ancient Israel was a prophet nation. The prophets appeared from time to time as they were needed. Their messages were vital, for they were the inspired spokesmen of the Lord. They were not always popular. They were often ridiculed, persecuted, and held in disrepute. Stephen, the Martyr, in his last and solemn testimony, said to the mob, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them. . . ." (Acts 7:52.)

These chosen servants, misunderstood and maligned, devoted themselves wholeheartedly and constructively to the task assigned them. It was never an easy one. It was a chal-

lenge to strong men who put their service to God above all worldly aspirations. Their aim was always to rescue and fortify against the forces of evil, of moral and spiritual disintegration. Through these holy men God has given commandments to his children. But, generally speaking, their words were ignored and rejected. Had they been respected and accepted, the course of human history would have changed. They appeared as lighthouses to the generation in which they lived. When they were ignored and cast aside by unscrupulous leaders, as was often the case, the light was extinguished and darkness covered the earth. There were no prophets during the dark ages.

#### Divine messages come through the prophets

God's message to his children comes through his chosen servants, the prophets. These servants were chosen before they were born. They had a divine message that was not only timely but important. They gave evidence of their divine calling wherever and whenever they appeared. Spirituality is a consciousness of God, an awareness of his place and power in the universe. To know him is life eternal. When Israel was at its lowest ebb spiritually, Elijah, a great prophet, came to their rescue and converted a nation to the true worship of Jehovah. They had been reassured through a manifestation of God's power.

I have often said that the story of Joseph in Egypt gives the world its finest lesson on morality and clean living. It should be told and repeated frequently to every boy and girl during their adolescence. The example and teaching of the prophets will never become outmoded by a righteous people. Every page of scripture contains a directive for you and me as we move along in the journey of life. Where would we be today if all the idealism and morality taught by the prophets had been lost in the scramble for earthly and worldly recognition? International negotiations and all the

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controversies now going on, it seems to me, are tinctured with selfish ambitions. May I remind you there is no place for selfishness in God's kingdom or in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Someone has said that Moses was the first man in history who fought for human rights. He freed the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. He freed them from their own limitations and taught them the fundamentals of good government. He laid the foundation for law and order. Moses brought to the world the Ten Commandments. They are very fundamental. They are basic to every system of law made to govern humanity. To violate them means disaster and destruction. The road to wickedness begins when one of these mandates from God is broken. "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." (Deut. 34:10.)

#### Modern prophets bring divine guidance

Like the prophets of old, Joseph Smith, the modern Prophet, saw visions, received revelations, predicted the future, and interpreted the scriptures. The Church would not have come into existence without a prophet. There could have been no restoration without these holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Their powers and understanding went

beyond the limits of our finite comprehension of things. They looked beyond the veil that separates the seen from the unseen world. Had Joseph Smith lacked the insight, the power, and the enlightenment that came to him through his prophetic calling, the Book of Mormon could not have come forth.

Without the visions of Moses and Elijah, there would have been no gathering of Israel, and the temple building program characteristic of the Church would have had no beginning. The existence of these temples in the United States, in Canada, in Europe, and on the islands of the sea is a solemn testimony of the sincerity, the conviction, and the positive faith of the Latter-day Saints.

I believe in the prophets, modern and ancient. We have listened to their words during this conference. May we remember them and may we abide in the holy commandments that came from God to them, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Alma Sonne has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

#### Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the blessings of this day. I am thankful for my knowledge and testimony that God lives and that through the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we may enjoy eternal life as we are obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. We are blessed to be living in this dispensation when the gospel, the Church, and the power to act in the name of God have been restored through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, one of the greatest prophets of all time. Likewise we are blessed to be led and guided

today by another great Prophet, our beloved President David O. McKay. May the Lord bless and sustain him.

#### "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven"

William W. Phelps, an early convert to the Church and gifted hymn writer, wrote the inspiring hymn "Praise to the Man," a magnificent tribute to the Prophet Joseph Smith. This beautiful hymn not only incorporates the elements of rejoicing and prophecy but also contains choice bits of basic doctrine as well, as is evidenced by the statement: "Sacrifice