

their efforts to build God's kingdom, to enhance and strengthen the missionary system at home and abroad, and to enlighten the minds of those who are searching for the truth.

Man, a child of God

The restored gospel declares that man is a child of God, and that he lived before his advent upon the earth. A human being is therefore more than a physical creation; he is also a spiritual being endowed with the attributes of his Heavenly Father. He moves toward perfection as he honors and obeys divine commandments, which is the only way to perfection.

Life is full of purpose. Man's career on earth is an opportunity for growth and development, an opportunity for him to acquire knowledge, power, and experience, and to prepare him for eternal life in God's kingdom.

No substitute for God's plan

Teaching the principles of truth is an obligation resting upon the Church. There is no substitute for the plan of life taught by the Savior. This plan did not originate with man. It came from God through holy men, called prophets. They were foreordained to do their work. Their object was to bring sinners to repentance and to provide safeguards against the destructive influences rampant in their day.

Jesus and his apostles assailed the corruption and hypocrisy existing among the scribes and Pharisees, and rebuked sin in high places. His denunciation of the religious hypocrites has no parallel in the world's literature.

A modern prophet

God has spoken to the modern world through Joseph Smith, a farmer's son. Through him a new dispensation of revealed knowledge has been ushered in. Prophecies concerning the latter days are being fulfilled, and man's responsibility to God is clearly outlined.

The mission of this modern prophet was to set in order the things which pertain to God's kingdom. He was a humble man and came from the common ranks. He had no worldly background, no scholarly attainments, and no social standing to justify his selection. His mind was free from the traditions, superstitions, and fallacies of the past.

He had little to unlearn, few prejudices to overcome, and no man-made theories to lay aside. He was pliable in the hands of God and impressionable to the Spirit's promptings.

He was chosen before he was born, and came to the earth at the appointed time. He was foreordained to do his work. His capabilities had been determined before his earthly advent.

He was the "chosen of God and the friend of man." (John Taylor, "The Seer, Joseph the Seer," *Hymns*, 296.)

I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just listened to Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop.

Elder Eldred G. Smith

Patriarch to the Church

During this coming week, Christians throughout the world will be celebrating the death, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Savior, Jesus Christ. We in this Church at this conference also gather in remembrance of his birth.

Might we ask, "Who is he whom we call Jesus the Christ, our Savior?" Let's reflect for a moment on this question, and together call to mind a few known facts.

Moses called upon God and was shown in vision "many lands; and

each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof." (Moses 1:29.)

Jesus Christ the creator

The word of God the Father, declared to Moses: ". . . by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

"And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten." (Moses 1:32-33.)

Some astronomers now say that in this galaxy of which we are a part, there are about one million worlds like this one on which we live. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., put it this way: ". . . if you think of this galaxy of ours having within it from the beginning perhaps until now, one million worlds, and multiply that by the number of millions of galaxies, one hundred million galaxies, that surround us, you will then get some view of who this Man whom we worship is." (*Behold the Lamb of God*, p. 17.)

He was no amateur, no novice in the art and skill of a creator. "Worlds without number" he has created.

Literal Son of God

In that great council in heaven when the creation of this earth was planned, it was he who answered to the call of the Father: "Whom shall I send? . . ." (Abr. 3:27.)

It was he then who came to this earth, in the meridian of time, born of the virgin Mary. He was the literal Son of God the Father, "the Only Begotten Son."

He declared who he was. Throughout his life on earth, he repeatedly declared that he was the Son of God. At the age of 12, he was found in the temple, conversing with the doctors. In answer to his mother's reproof, he said, ". . . wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.)

At the baptism of Jesus by John, as also at the transfiguration of Jesus, a voice from heaven declared: "This

is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17; 17:5.)

Before Abraham was I Am

Jesus was talking with the Jews about Abraham, and they said to him: "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?"

"Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

"Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

"Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:53-58.)

The resurrection and the life

When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

"Jesus said unto her, 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. Believest thou this?"

"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." (John 11:24-27.)

Jesus asked a Samaritan woman to draw water for him, and a conversation followed. The Samaritan woman at the well said to Jesus, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." (John 4:25-26.)

Thou art the Christ

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 16:13-17.)

Dominion over creations

On numerous other occasions, he declared that he was the Son of God, the Christ. Is it any wonder then that when the request came for him to provide wine at the wedding feast, he, the great Creator, changed water to wine?

With a few loaves and fishes, he fed five thousand plus women and children on one occasion, and four thousand plus women and children on another. (See Matt. 14.) At his suggestion, the nets were cast into the sea where the disciples had had no success, and the nets were filled to overflowing.

In the midst of storm, he commanded the sea to be still, and there was calm. (See Mark 4:37-41.)

He cursed the fig tree that did not bear fruit, and it died. (See Matt. 21:19.)

He healed all manner of illness and disease. At his command the evil spirits departed, they too declaring who he was. He made the blind to see, the lame to walk. Yes, he even controlled life itself, for he restored to life Lazarus, who had been declared dead for four days. There were others too.

Yes, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (1 Cor. 10:26.) He had dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth—in the earth, on the

earth, and in the heaven above the earth. All he did was for others—a life of service. There was not one selfish act.

Christ's great mission

Approaching the finish of his mission here, he prayed to the Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:4-5.)

He took upon himself the sins of all who shall repent, and gave his life that all might live. He brought about the resurrection for all.

Finally, in preparation for the restoration of his kingdom on the earth in these the last days, he said: "Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

"Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power. . . ." (D&C 19:15-20.)

Our Savior and Redeemer

Do you so think of him when partaking of the sacrament, and covenant to keep his commandments? To know him is to keep his commandments. Do you know him who is called Jesus?

Yes, this is he whom we worship. He is the Son of God, the Great

Creator. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He is our advocate with the Father. It was he who made possible universal resurrection. It was he, with his Father, who appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove.

I testify that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that it was under his direction that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in this dispensation for the last time, and that President David O.

McKay is his living Prophet today. I so testify these truths in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just listened to Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will be our concluding speaker.

Bishop John H. Vandenberg

Presiding Bishop of the Church

A few years ago I read a story of a mother who was running and playing with her three-year-old daughter. The mother told her daughter that when she was a little girl her mother had played with her in a very similar manner.

Upon hearing this, the little girl looked up with inquisitive eyes and said, "Mother, where was I when you were a little girl?"

From the lips of this small girl comes a question that reaches beyond the understanding of most of mankind. This touches on the questions of "Who are we?" and "What are we doing here?"

William Wordsworth presents to us his inspiration in this excerpt from his poem, "Intimations of Immortality":

"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!"

Pre-existence of man

These thoughts reiterate what the prophets have told us in the scriptures. The Lord told Jeremiah, "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. 1:5.)

The testimony of Abraham sheds further light on the questions, "Who are we?" and "What are we doing here?" He said:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

"And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell." (Abr. 3:22-24.)

This disclosure by the Lord gives significant meaning and purpose to life. Life, then, is not just a period isolated between birth and death. The Lord further disclosed to Abraham:

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;