

flow meetings in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square and the newly erected Salt Palace auditorium, Salt Lake City.

We extend a welcome also to the vast television and radio audience throughout the world in this, the third session of the 139th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will open these services by singing: "Awake The Trumpets Lofty Sound," following which the invocation will be offered by Elder Sylvan Wittwer, president of the Lansing Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir sang as an opening number "Awake the Trumpets Lofty Sound," following which the

opening prayer was offered by President Sylvan Wittwer of the Lansing Stake.

President Hugh B. Brown

The Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with: "Give Ear, O Lord." Following the singing President Nathan Eldon Tanner, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "Give Ear, O Lord."

PRESIDENT N. ELDON TANNER

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

● Last month we mourned the passing of our beloved friend, colleague, and brother, John Longden, who had spent many years of his life in the service of his Maker and his fellowmen. He contributed greatly to the community, the Church, and industry. He was a good friend and neighbor. At his funeral we heard one of his favorite songs, which he had sung so well and so often:

"I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives! . . .

He lives, he lives, who once was dead.

He lives, my ever-living head. . . .

O sweet the joy this sentence gives:

"I know that my Redeemer lives!"

—Hymns, No. 95

Questions answered in scriptures

The passing of loved ones has always caused us to stop and ponder such questions as:

"Who am I?"

"Where did I come from?"

"Why am I here?"

"When I die will I live again?"

"Where am I going?"

"How can I best prepare myself?"

I am sure that thousands and thou-

sands have said, "If I knew the answers to these questions, I would know better how to govern my life." It is impossible for any of us, including philosophers, astrologers, astronomers, and scientists in any field, with our finite minds, to answer these questions pertaining to the infinite without referring to the word of God as contained in the scriptures.

We mortals have never experienced death and the resurrection, nor do we remember our preexistence. Therefore, it is not commonly believed or understood that we had a premortal existence, that we are the spirit children of God, the Eternal Father, and that when we have finished our life here upon the earth we will enjoy a literal resurrection and may continue on in eternal progression. In fact, many who question this say that if someone would return from the dead as a witness of these things, they would believe. This is not so.

Let us remember the parable of the rich man who prayed that Lazarus be sent from the dead to his father's house to testify to his brethren, saying that if one went to them from the dead, they would repent. Abraham said unto

him: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31.)

How fortunate we are that the Lord God, from the time of Adam, down through the ages to the present time, has given us the answers to these very important questions, and we have them recorded in Holy Writ. Yes, God has seen fit to talk to his people through his chosen prophets, and those who have heard and believed and followed have been blessed.

Ignorance of the truth

It is sad but true that many, many people are not acquainted with the words of the prophets, and many refuse to believe, and others often scoff and ridicule the teachings of the Savior. It is extremely sad that many, through their own learning and their sensuous knowledge, become self-satisfied and think that they are sufficient unto themselves and need not heed the word of God; and often, because they have not heard, seen, touched, or talked to God, they deny even his very existence, and use their influence to dissuade others.

But all of this ignorance, derision, scoffing, and ridicule does not destroy the truth, which finally will triumph. We must learn to live by faith and believe in the words of the Lord, especially in those things which we mortals do not and cannot fully comprehend. Probably the greatest evidence of the fact that God speaks to his prophets is the fulfillment of the prophecies made by them. Many of these prophecies and their fulfillment are a matter of historical and scriptural record.

This is life eternal

As I was pondering the questions to which I have referred, and their answers, and in turning to the scriptures I read again this significant and most important statement:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

Many ask: "How can a man know God and Jesus Christ, whom he has

sent?" The answer must be clear that it is through prayer and faith and study of the words of God as given through his prophets and by Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Let us refer to some revelations received and prophecies made by both ancient and modern prophets that tell us about God and our relationship to him, and that will help us to know and understand the purpose of our mission here on earth.

Premortal existence

Probably the very earliest scriptural account we have of man and his relationship to God, and which shows beyond doubt that we had a premortal existence in the spirit world with God, is the record of the council in heaven as revealed to Moses and Abraham.

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; . . .

"And God . . . 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 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 here, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

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

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (Abr. 3:22-26.)

Lord's word to Moses

And the Lord told Moses:

"And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so. . . .

"And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them." (Moses 2:26-27.)

God told Moses that Christ was chosen as the Savior of the world and that Satan rebelled, and God said:

"Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; . . . I caused that he should be cast down;

"And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice." (See Moses 4:1-4.)

Spirit children of God

We, as spirit children of God, were all present at that council and voted to sustain Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. In Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, in Ecclesiastes, in Jeremiah, and in many other accounts in both the Old and the New Testaments, and in modern scripture, we have further evidence that we are the spirit children of God and dwelt with him in the spirit world.

There is also further indisputable evidence that Jesus was with God before he came here. Just before his crucifixion, he went into Gethsemane, and in his agony he prayed unto the Father in these words:

"Father, the hour is come; . . .

"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 17:1, 4-5.)

Mission of only begotten Son

How comforting and encouraging it is for us to know that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

The coming of the Savior was fore-

told to Adam right after he and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden. They were told by the Lord to offer sacrifice, and they were obedient. After many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam and explained:

"This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

"Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore." (Moses 5:7-8.)

Then we have the writings of many Old Testament prophets, including Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi, as well as Nephi and other American prophets, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, who foretold of the birth, teachings, persecution, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Savior. We all know that these prophecies have been fulfilled.

It is most reassuring to know that the prophets in different climes and in different dispensations were in complete harmony, and that their prophecies have been fulfilled to the letter. And always they gave us this assurance, as did Nephi, that "all those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God." (See 2 Ne. 25:13.)

Testimony of Paul

Though we should need no further evidence of the Savior's divinity and of the importance of his mission as it pertains to us, let us recall the strong and stirring testimony of Paul, who was a great persecutor of the saints. He records that as he was going to Damascus to bring saints unto Jerusalem to be punished, "suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

When he asked who was speaking, the voice said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Then Saul said: "What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things

which are appointed for thee to do." (Acts 22:6-10.)

You will remember that he was blinded by the glory of the light, so he had to be led to Damascus and to Ananias, who said, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight," and he could see. From that time Saul, who was also called Paul, became one of the most valiant and strong of the Christian preachers and defenders.

Defense before King Agrippa

Then we find him falsely accused and forced to defend himself before the governor and other officials, and finally before King Agrippa. Think of his boldness and courage as he stood in chains before the king and recounted the story of his conversion, after which he said:

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

"But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

"For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

"That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

"And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

"But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

"For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

"King Agrippa, believest thou the

prophets? I know that thou believest.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

"And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (Acts 26:19-29.)

The strength of his deep conviction had been previously manifest when he said to his friends who were trying to protect him and persuade him not to go to Jerusalem: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13.)

Prophets bear witness

I would that we, as Paul, could all feel and show our deep love and devotion to Jesus Christ, who, because of his great love for us, was prepared to suffer and give his life to redeem us from the grave. All through the scriptures we have the words of the prophets, bearing witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he came and gave his life for us. He also gave us the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the whole plan of life and salvation—the blueprint of life—which if lived will not only bring joy to us here on earth but will prepare us for immortality and eternal life, where we can dwell with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and our loved ones who have gone there before us.

Our Heavenly Father, knowing our weaknesses and our need for constant direction, sends us prophets to continually teach us and keep us reminded of this plan of life and salvation. Just yesterday we sustained David O. McKay as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our salvation and that of our loved ones depends on our listening to and heeding the words of the prophets, realizing that we must believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Gospel teachings benefit mankind

To those who question these things, I should like to emphasize this one fact: Everything that was taught by the prophets and by Jesus Christ himself, as recorded in Holy Writ, is for the benefit of mankind, and if accepted and lived will make for better individuals, better communities, a better world where we can live in love and peace with one another.

Man by his own formula has failed to accomplish these things. He has no effective plan, and any failure is not because the gospel has failed, but because man has failed to live its teachings. To those who doubt or question, but have no answers, and who look for hope out of the midst of their despair, I urge that they accept the word of God the Eternal Father and believe in the gospel, which is uplifting and beautiful and will bring peace and contentment to their souls. How much better to hope than despair, and the words of hope and everlasting life with the Father and the Son are to be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The great commandment

He summed it all up and gave a simple formula when he answered the lawyer who asked, tempting him:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40.)

The Lord also said that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. These are the teachings of all the apostles and prophets. Let us heed the words of Peter as he was speaking to and answered the multitude:

"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.

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:37-39.)

Choices determine happiness

It is important to understand that we are here to prove ourselves, to prepare ourselves to go back into the presence of our Heavenly Father, and the choices we make will determine our future happiness. Hear the words of the American prophet Lehi to his sons, which message has been given repeatedly to the children of men through the ages:

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

"And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;

"And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom." (2 Ne. 2:27-29.)

Jacob, Lehi's son, taught: "Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life." (2 Ne. 10:23.)

To summarize, we read from Ecclesiastes: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep

his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccles. 12:13.) I bear testimony that these things are true, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Hugh B. Brown

We express appreciation to President Nathan Eldon Tanner for his inspiring address.

Following a brief organ interlude

the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars." Following the singing President Alvin R. Dyer of the First Presidency will speak to us.

After an organ interlude, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars."

PRESIDENT ALVIN R. DYER

Counselor in the First Presidency

● My dear brothers and sisters and friends, both here and those of the television and radio audience, I call your particular attention this day to the divine direction given to Joseph Smith, the latter-day prophet, who gave utterance to this direction concerning the ills of the people of the world. Plans and programs are being offered here and there as a means of correcting dangerous behavioral trends that are creating changes in our way of living, that are threatening moral and spiritual values.

The statements are often heard, "Where will it all end?" and "Why isn't something being done to check these dangerous trends?"

Panacea for dangerous trends

The panacea to all this, as declared by the Prophet Joseph Smith, must go right to the heart of the individual; mass control in the final analysis cannot succeed without individual control.

Commandments were given to Joseph Smith by revelation which, if obeyed, could divert and frustrate the dangerous trends of behavior among the people this very day. The first of these to which I refer concerns the principle of virtue. Here are the words of the Lord:

"... let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter . . . of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion . . . , and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever." (D&C 121:45-46.)

Think of what the effects of having a virtuous mind would have upon the spreading of immorality, with all of its carnal aspects.

Reference is made to a second harmful thing, that of harmful indulgence, concerning which the Lord has warned us against with this commandment: "Strong drinks . . . and tobacco are not for the body." (See D&C 89:7-8.)

No one today needs to be misinformed of the ravaging and deadly effects that the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other narcotics have upon the human body, as well as the indirect effects on the spiritual and moral character of the individual, which often are more detrimental even than the physical effects.

And again, the Lord has spoken of the need of understanding the principles of freedom and agency in human relationships, for, said he:

"... when we [seek] . . . to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man." (D&C 121:37.)

And amen to the influence of the