

Prophets on the earth

There is a prophet of God and apostles on the earth today to assist and help you; you can follow their example and counsel.

You can be baptized for the remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by those holding the priesthood of God.

You can repent and be forgiven and be free of sin. Jesus Christ said, "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more." (D&C 58:42.) Repentance is the God-given principle to perfect your life. When used, it cleanses away sin, weakness, imperfection, and brings progress, peace, love, righteousness, and eternal life.

Jesus said, "... Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17.)

Repentance will lift you from darkness and cloudiness to the light of godliness. Preparation for the kingdom of heaven through repentance is available to you today.

Temple marriage

Young people, you can be married for time and eternity in a temple of God by one holding the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood. You can live the God-revealed Word of Wisdom and have the destroying angel pass you by.

You can pay your tithing and offerings and have the Lord open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. You can do the will of God and help build his church and kingdom on this earth.

All of the accumulated knowledge of man is also available to you today. It is estimated that we have twice the knowledge available today that we had a few years ago. As young people, all of the evils of the world are also available to you.

The power of choice

Our Prophet opened this conference with these words in his message: "God gave to man part of his divinity. He gave man the power of choice, and no other creature in the world has it, so he placed upon the individual the obligation of conducting himself as an eternal being."

Young people, when you pray, pray for wisdom, pray for faith, pray for love, pray for strength and forgiveness. Ask to be helped through the temptations of this life and be sure you ask to be delivered from evil.

I testify that Jesus Christ lives today, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that you can come unto the fullness of life by following him, and so pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

ELDER JAMES A. CULLIMORE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● My beloved brethren and sisters: This is a choice experience to be with you here today.

Passing of John Longden

The passing of Brother John Longden has been referred to at least twice during this conference. I would also like to refer to this and let you know how very much we miss our fellow worker and associate, and how he is missed in the Church because of his untimely death. It has saddened us all. We miss him greatly, and I am

sure you will agree with me that he will be missed all over the Church. Brother John has earned a great reward, and I am sure that in the kingdom of our Father he will receive this reward.

I was greatly impressed by the peace and understanding with which Sister Longden accepted the passing of John. Only she will know, of course, of the real sorrow, the pangs of loneliness, that he will not return in this life. But the understanding of the gospel and the plan of salvation can greatly ease the sting of death.

God's plan of salvation

Knowing the beauty of God's plan for the salvation of his children sometimes makes even death beautiful. We understand that death is a very necessary part of the great plan of salvation and that it is the means of the separation of the body and the spirit, in which the spirit returns to God and the body returns to the earth. As the scripture says: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccles. 12:7.)

Death is just as necessary as birth in this great plan. Birth into this life is the means by which the spirit and the body are joined together for their great mission on this earth. Resurrection is the process whereby the spirit, which separated from the body in death, is again reunited with the body, which has been purified, glorified, and immortalized, never to be separated again.

Yes, even death can be beautiful as we understand the plan of the Lord and know that in life we have lived well. Even the pangs of sorrow, because of separation and the many memories, are momentarily overshadowed by this understanding.

Passing of parents

I shall never forget one such beautiful occasion. My parents had lived a good life. They had celebrated their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. To them had been born 12 children; six boys filled missions; all the family is active in the Church. Father filled a three-year mission. He was a bishop for nearly thirty years. Mother had completely sustained my father in all his Church activities and had held many responsible positions in the ward herself. When father left on his mission, they had one child and were expecting another. In her eighty-fourth year, mother broke her hip and was quite ill in the hospital. My father, at 86, was still very active and drove to work each day. He came from work that day, visited with mother in the hospital for a while, then went on to the house. That evening he passed away peace-

fully. Mother never knew of his passing, for the next day she passed away also. A double funeral was held. As we all visited during the evening of the viewing, realizing the beautiful, full lives both had lived, and knowing the kindness of the Lord in sparing either of them the loneliness of being alone, there could be no real sorrow—yes, momentary grief in separation, but otherwise beautiful peace in knowing they were together.

The meaning of death

Not long ago a noted scholar wrote a book entitled *The Meaning of Death*. The contents of his work were taken from several case histories of individuals who were suffering from terminal cancer. These people were faced with the immediate problem of dying.

"The object of the study was to assess the feelings of those who were about to die. Almost universally the patients agreed that the inevitability of death was not the issue. The real issue was how to live a full life. They all seemed to agree that the problem of dying is the regret of not having lived." (Max W. Swenson, "Living Life Abundantly," *Impact*, Winter 1969, p. 8.)

The concern of living a good life and keeping the commandments in preparation to meet our Maker has been the concern of mankind from the beginning. Unto Cain the Lord said, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. . . ." (Gen. 4:7.)

A code of living

Unto Moses the Lord gave a code of living that was reaffirmed in the meridian dispensation by the Savior and again in this dispensation in which he said:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

"Honour thy father and thy mother.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness.

"Thou shalt not covet. . . ." (See Exod. 20:2-17.)

The Lord exhorted the children of Israel to obedience when he said, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day:

"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God. . . ." (Deut. 11:26-28.)

The Savior promised, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16:27.)

Proper conformity in life

Possibly one of the most direct answers as to proper conformity in life was given by Peter on the day of Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Ghost, he delivered a powerful sermon and bore witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Many were pricked in their hearts and wanted to know what they should do to be saved. He said, "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 2:38-39.)

Paul, who found the Galatian saints believing false doctrine, called them to repentance, saying, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8.)

In this dispensation the Lord has said: "If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater

than the gift of salvation." (D&C 6:13.)

Divine instructions

But the Lord has not left us alone. In every dispensation of the gospel, he has administered unto his children—instructing them as to how they can regain his presence. He walked and talked with the ancient prophets. The prophet Alma tells how the Lord sent angels to converse with men in his time and reveal the plan of redemption. ". . . he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

"Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory.

"And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works." (Al. 12:28-30.)

Peace from conviction

Possibly one's concern about not having lived well is really in not knowing what his real purpose in life is. Real peace of mind comes from a firm conviction of the plan of salvation as revealed to us of the Lord; that we are the children of God, created in his image; that he is the Father of our spirits; that we lived with him in a glorious spiritual existence before this temporal existence; that this mortal state is probationary; that through death and the resurrection, having lived a worthy life, having complied with the ordinances of the gospel, we might enter again into the presence of God. Peace comes as we know the gospel and live it, as we develop a strong testimony of its divinity, as we are vindicated by the Holy Spirit in our good works.

A new gospel dispensation

In this dispensation God has also visited the earth and sent his messen-

gers to reveal unto us his plan of redemption, that we may know of his will and feel his sustaining spirit as we do his bidding. He has said, ". . . Repent, repent, and prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;

"Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost." (D&C 33:10-11.)

It is our witness to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, contains the direction and understanding of eternal life, that by abiding by its principles and teachings and by complying with its ordinances, one might have peace and satisfaction by the vindica-

tion of the spirit, and whether in life or death they will know all is well—death will have no sting.

I leave you this witness, my brothers and sisters, and witness unto you that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that this is his church, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

The congregation and MIA Girls Centennial Chorus will now join in singing, "High on the Mountain Top," after which Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy will be our speaker.

The congregation and chorus sang the hymn, "High on the Mountain Top."

ELDER HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

Of the First Council of the Seventy

● It is intended that man is to be like God. The scriptures declare that man was made in the beginning in the image and likeness of God.

Paul, speaking of Jesus Christ, said that he (Christ), "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Phil 2:6.) He further declared that he (Christ) was "the brightness of his [Father's] glory, and the express image of his person. . . ." (Heb. 1:3.)

God, the Father of the spirits of all men, is in all respects like his Son Jesus Christ, whom we, at least to some extent, know; for he has revealed himself to us, and although we may not understand all things about Jesus Christ, we know what manner of man he was from records that were kept of his exemplary life. What is more, in the words of John we understand "that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." (1 John 3:2.)

Man to be like God

From these and other scriptures, it becomes clear that it is intended that man is to be like God. In fact, the

Master made this a central part of his teachings when he walked in mortality among men. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) This was his commission to us. Then, the question of questions becomes: What is God like?

I have often felt the reason we don't understand God is because we are so unlike him. By that, I mean that even though man is like God physically, spiritually man is far from God. Fortunately, the Lord has given us specific direction and guidance to get us into condition so we grow closer to him spiritually also.

However, regretfully, though men draweth nigh unto God with their mouths, and honoreth him with their lips, their hearts are far from him. (See Matt. 15:8.) This is true primarily because we are concerned with what we want to do rather than with what God wants us to do.

Root cause of problems

If we face facts, we will realize we are all afflicted with the same malady.