

The Tabernacle Choir sang first the hymn, "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," which was followed by the singing of "Sing Unto God."

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Of the Council of the Twelve

● What a glorious thing is life, surrounded by the beauties of the world in which we live. There is beauty in the mountains, the woods, and the lakes. There is beauty in the sea with its never-ceasing tides; beauty in the skies filled with fleecy clouds, in the sunshine and in the rain; beauty in the morning, the day, and the night. As the seasons come and go, we find beauty in the freshness of spring bringing new life to all nature, and beauty in the glory of the summer. Autumn ushers in an array of color before the silent winter brings its blanket of white. There is beauty everywhere if we look for the beautiful.

Order in universe

There is an exactness of order in the universe of which we become conscious. The days come and the nights follow. The tides rise and fall with regularity, the recurring lunar cycle of the moon is exact; the seasons come and go in the sequence of nature. The stars in the sky follow exact repeated orders; the planets and their satellites perform precisely in their relation to their suns. The biologist sees the wonders and the beauty of plant and animal life, and the chemist discovers the mysteries of the elements of the earth; but with or without scientific training, every person becomes aware of a vast universe in which there is intricate exactness in all nature.

When we observe the phenomena of the heavens and the earth, we can come to only one conclusion: these are the effects of some great cause. There can be no design without a designer and nothing built without a builder. For every effect there is a cause. There

must be a guiding hand to regulate the universe in its precise order. Are we compelled to admit the reality of a Supreme Being? Millions of people in the world have this deep and abiding conviction.

Finding God as a reality

Is God a creation of man's mind, or is man a creation of God? Men struggle with many fundamental questions, but the question as to whether or not God is a reality should take precedence. The approach to the solution of this query differs from that given to scientific research. We are not dealing with a subject of the material realm, but rather of the spiritual.

In order to find God as a reality, we must follow the course which he pointed out for the quest. The path is one that leads upward; it takes faith and effort, and is not the easy course. For this reason many men will not devote themselves to the arduous task of proving to themselves the reality of God. On the contrary, some take the easy path and deny his existence or merely follow the doubter's course of uncertainty. These are the atheists, infidels, free thinkers, skeptics, and agnostics.

Research of history

The approach to the study of most subjects consists of the research of its history and all of the known facts. If we start with history and turn to the commencement of the best known of the ancient records, we read these words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1.) This statement forms the basis of the

Hebrew belief in the creation, that earth did not come about by chance; neither was it created by accident. It is the intentional creation of a Supreme Being for a definite and meaningful purpose.

Must we accept blindly this statement of creation? The writer of these words in the Pentateuch did not witness the Creator at work but had the same conviction of faith as expressed at a later time by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in these words: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1.) Sometimes faith means believing a thing to be true where the evidence is not sufficient to establish knowledge. We must continue the probe and follow the admonition: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. 7:7-8.)

Communication with God

After announcing that God created the heaven and the earth, the Old Testament relates that God conversed with our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. He gave them commandments and he conversed with them. No doubt Adam instructed his descendants, through eight generations to the father of Noah, in the things he had received from God by direct manifestations. Noah had direct communication with God and taught ten generations of his descendants. God appeared personally to Abraham, who followed, as well as to Isaac and Jacob. Moses became the leader of their descendants, and we remember the direct communion between God and Moses, the record of which has been preserved for all following generations.

The New Testament also has recorded appearances of God. At the baptism of Jesus by John, there was a manifestation; "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) And again at the transfiguration on the high mountain: "...

a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

"And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." (Matt. 17:5-6.)

These are only a few instances of the many appearances of God to his children as recorded in the Old and the New Testament. The scriptures of the western hemisphere also record communications of God. History amply documents the reality of God by his personal dealings with men from generation to generation from the beginning.

Reason gives evidence

We need not rely upon history alone for evidence of the existence of a Supreme Being; reasoning will also give us such evidence. One of the ancient arguments of the marketplace, put in syllogistic form, is this: Everything that is created has a creator. The earth was created; therefore, the earth has a creator. Referring again to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer states in these words that God is the creator of the earth: "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." (Heb. 3:4.) The moving universe and all of its beauties and wonders are trying to teach us of the existence of God as the great creator.

Truth-seeker seeks cause

A scholar has said, "... though science has done all these things for man it cannot do for him what he only can do for himself. Science can teach but the individual only can learn, that is, learning is an individual process that a person must apply to himself, no one can do it for him. No person can learn for another. Science generally teaches there is a God, does it not? but to discover him is a problem for the individual to solve. The declaration of the atheist that there is no God proves nothing. He may sincerely believe we have no Father in Heaven, but certainly cannot prove there is none. Yes, we know that he does not know because there are individuals who posi-

tively testify they do know." (Joseph F. Merrill, *The Truth-Seeker and Mormonism*, pp. 104-105.)

It has been said that God cannot be found with the instruments of science or in modern-day electronics. The truth-seeker, however, cannot overlook an underlying power so overwhelming to the conscience that the existence of a Supreme Being becomes evident if he seeks for the cause of the effect.

Innate urge to worship

Man has an innate urge to worship. In early times God spoke to Israel: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exod. 20:2-3.) There is profound truth in the doctrine that runs all the way through sacred history that no man can worship more than one God. To worship one God is to have one supreme loyalty in one's life. If we had a consciousness of one God, the Eternal Father, we would have a consciousness of one world and one mankind under God, all being brothers.

What causes people to have the urge to worship? There seems to be something inborn into the soul of man that causes him to seek communion with God. In the Book of Job it is put this way: "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." (Job 32:8.) This statement appears to be an allusion to man's creation. By this spirit he becomes capable of understanding and reason, and consequently of discerning divine truth. By this spirit he comes to know God.

Knowledge through revelation

In addition to the historical evidences of God and the human reasoning of his existence, the surest knowledge of him comes through his revelations. From the beginning and throughout Old Testament and New Testament times, God manifested himself to men; first to Adam, then the patriarchs of his posterity to Noah, with whom he spoke and conversed. After Noah, he revealed himself to those who followed: Abra-

ham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets down to the ministry of Christ. He spoke at the time of the baptism of Jesus and also at his transfiguration.

God revealed himself to the leader of the group of people who left the old world at the time of the Tower of Babel and came to the western hemisphere. Six hundred years before Christ, he spoke to Lehi, directing him and his family to journey to the American continent. God has revealed himself in the present dispensation to the youth, Joseph Smith, who was privileged to behold God the Eternal Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Thus there have been revealed to man through the ages the personages comprising the Godhead: God the Eternal Father, Jesus Christ, his Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three are referred to in Christendom as the Trinity, yet they are three distinct personages, as demonstrated on the occasion of the baptism of Jesus, when the voice of the Father was heard and the Holy Ghost descended.

Learning requires effort

It is the general rule that we do not get things of value unless we are willing to pay a price. The scholar does not become learned unless he puts forth the work and effort to succeed. If he is not willing to do so, can he say there is no such thing as scholarship? Musicians, mathematicians, scientists, athletes, and skilled people in many fields spend years in study, practice, and hard work to acquire their ability. Can others who are not willing to make the effort say there are no such things as music, mathematics, science, or athletics? It is just as foolish for man to say there is no God simply because he has not had the inclination to seek him.

History tells us there is a God. Science confirms the fact there is a Supreme Being. Human reasoning persuades us that there is a God. His own revelations to man leave no doubt as to his existence. In order for an individual to obtain unwavering knowledge of the reality of God, he must live the commandments and the doctrines announced by the Savior during his

personal ministry. "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.) In other words, those who are willing to make the search, apply themselves, and do God's will, will have the knowledge come to them of the reality of God.

A divine plan

When a man has found God and understands his ways, he learns that nothing in the universe came by chance, but all things resulted from a divinely prearranged plan. What a rich meaning comes into his life! Understanding which surpasses worldly learning is his. The beauties of the world become more beautiful, the order of the universe becomes more meaningful, and all of God's creations are more understandable as he witnesses God's days come and go and the seasons follow each in their order. If all men could find God and follow his ways, the hearts of men would be turned in love toward their brothers, and nations would be at peace.

I bear my witness that God lives, that he is our eternal Heavenly Father. I know that Jesus is the Christ, his Son, and Savior of the world. I know too that God reveals his will to his prophets today as he did in the dispensations of the past. May we seek God with a true desire to know him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● My dear brothers and sisters, I appreciate the opportunity of speaking to you and approach the responsibility with a humble heart, praying that the Lord will direct me in the things that I say.

I rejoice with you in the wonderful spirit of this conference and the in-

Following Elder Hunter's address, the Tabernacle Choir in a musical interlude sang the following two numbers: "I Will Give Thanks" and "We'll Sing All Hail to Jesus' Name."

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. He was followed by the singing of the Tabernacle Choir, "I Will Give Thanks," and "We'll Sing All Hail to Jesus' Name."

Following a brief organ interlude the congregation will join with the choir in singing "Come O Thou King of Kings."

The congregation and the choir sang the hymn, "Come O Thou King of Kings."

President Lee:

For the benefit of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we again announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the first session of the 140th Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

spirational music and messages to which we have been listening.

A remarkable age

We are living in a remarkable age—the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fullness.