

Eternal purposes roll on

To the truth of this scripture which we have considered, I bear personal witness. I know that he who spoke it was and is the Son of God, the Creator and Redeemer of the earth and the inhabitants thereof; that he knows, and knew from the beginning, all things; that he spoke eternal truth.

I bear witness that the fullness of the everlasting gospel is in the earth. The predicted light has broken forth. Many others of the predicted signs of Christ's coming have been given. Others are now visible. The rest are imminent.

I testify that God is not dead. He is at the helm. His power—his priesthood—is in the earth; his programs are on schedule; his "eternal purposes shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled." (Morm. 8:22.)

To this I bear solemn witness as a special witness of Christ, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Following Elder Romney's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Thanks Be to God."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of Twelve has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Thanks Be to God." They will now sing "Jesus Name of Wondrous Love," and Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will then be our concluding speaker.

The song, "Jesus Name of Wondrous Love," was rendered by the Tabernacle Choir.

President Tanner

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

About a month ago I was sent by the First Presidency to hold a series of Church conferences in South America. Frankly, I didn't know quite what to expect of that land. I had thought of South America as a rather primitive jungle area. I expected the people to be a little backward, perhaps in need of education and training in the ways of modern civilization. When I saw those countries and their people, I couldn't have been more astonished.

I saw great cities there with ultra-modern, high-rise buildings and

modern conveniences on every side. Traffic was as heavy as in our great cities in North America. They were building apartment houses, offices, subways, roads, and factories with feverish haste to try to meet the needs of an expanding economy.

People of South America

Frankly, I fell in love with the people of South America. When I first went there I knew no one, but I was received with such warmth and hospitality that when I left a few weeks later I found myself with

many new and choice friends, giving them a brotherly *abrazo* or hug of affection as we parted.

In talking with Church leaders, I found that South Americans face the same problems people generally face in other areas of the world. My friends in South America told me that people there are so intent on filling their material needs that their spiritual needs are being neglected. Churches are losing their hold on their members. People are not interested in present-day religions, and church influence is declining. People are finding neither comfort nor solace in religious teachings and philosophies.

Men speaking for God

The same thing is true in Europe and the United States. I suppose it is true all over the world. Churches in many areas are becoming centers of political activism. Ministers and priests are leading protest marches for political causes. Pastors are turning to psychology, psychiatry, and social science in an attempt to serve and fill the emotional and spiritual needs of their parishioners. When sermons are given, they are intellectual masterpieces of learned men trained in schools of divinity as orators, but the heart has gone out of their words. They give messages full of man's wisdom, but not of God.

Church leaders feel and know this. As a result, they are seeking to reform their churches. Great changes in doctrine and church procedures are being proposed, and some of these changes have actually been put into practice. Conferences and synods are called into session to try to define points of doctrine, methods of procedure, or the wording of gospel ordinances, etc. It appears to me that

men are trying to speak *for* God in stead of letting God speak *for himself*.

Voice of God needed

It has been said that what is needed most today is not the voice of man, but the voice of God. Which generation of men and women have ever needed more the voice of a prophet of God to guide them than we do today? In a time in history when we are beset by a clamor of voices from every side saying "Lo, here is truth" or "No, here is truth," where can we find an authoritative voice saying "Thus saith the Lord"? Where is a Moses, or an Isaiah, or a Peter, or a Paul who can speak from personal knowledge of God?

I see, as you see, ideological dissension throughout the length and breadth of the earth. We read in papers and magazines and books various proposals of men who seek to solve moral and ethical problems by the passing of legislation. We see men and women turning to political theory or to science in an attempt to solve the spiritual and moral problems of today's civilization. We are trying to solve our problems by man's philosophy and learning and by human wisdom. I again hear Isaiah's words as he spoke the mind and the will of God:

Isaiah's words

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:7-11.)

Need for true prophet

God's way is the way to solve our political, moral, ethical, even our financial problems. The way of the Lord can eliminate wars, riots, discrimination, suffering, and starvation. What the world then needs is direction from a true prophet who, knowing the will and the mind of God, can speak in his name with power and authority and say, "Thus saith the Lord!"

That day has come! Old Testament prophets made predictions that in the last days God would reestablish his kingdom upon the earth never again to pass away. Daniel spoke of a stone that God would cut out of the mountain by his own hand that should roll forth to fill the whole earth. Micah said this was to transpire in the last days when the earth would be filled with commotion and upheavals. Malachi foretold the coming of Elijah and the restoration of all things. Jesus said that a messenger, or Elias, would be sent before his second coming to restore all things in preparation for that coming event. Peter testified that in the last days a time of refreshing would come and

that Jesus would remain in heaven "until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.)

Answer to simple prayer

This restoration, foretold in advance, began so quietly and so unostentatiously that the world was not even aware that it happened. It came as quietly and unobtrusively as "a thief in the night." (1 Thess. 5:2.) It came not by man's wisdom, but in answer to a simple prayer by Joseph Smith, a young boy in New York State who went into the woods near Palmyra to ask God a simple question: "Which church is right?" That young man had no idea that a new dispensation of God's mercy and kindness was about to begin. At that time there was no prophet living on the earth who could answer Joseph's question. There was no way for God to have that question answered, except for God to answer it himself.

The true knowledge of God had been lost during the centuries following the death of Christ. When Joseph Smith went into those woods to pray, he knew no more about God than did his contemporaries. Up to that time every Christian church believed and taught of a Godhead fused into one. They believed in a God of spirit, unknown and unknowable. You can well imagine the astonishment of Joseph when not one, but two Personages appeared to him in answer to that simple prayer. As the one Personage spoke and pointed to the other, he introduced him with these words: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.) It was the living, resurrected Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, who instructed Joseph and who thus opened

a new dispensation of the true knowledge of God. He told Joseph that no church then existed on the earth authorized to speak in his name. He told Joseph that after proper preparation and the bestowal of priesthood authority, Joseph was to be the first of a line of living prophets in this day and age who were to instruct and bless mankind, even as did the prophets of old.

Priesthood power bestowed

Just as foretold by Jesus Christ, heavenly messengers holding the keys of the holy priesthood came to earth and bestowed that priesthood power upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. They gave those men authority to know the mind and the will of God for these latter days. That same power has continued to this very day.

Additional scriptures were given so that in the mouth of two or more witnesses the truth of all things might be established. New revelations were given to restore proper priesthood procedures and to reestablish ordinances as they had been used and practiced in the days of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ was restored again with the same powers, gifts, and authority as in former days. Again God had spokesmen upon the earth who had the gift to know the mind and will of God and who had authority to say, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Counsel of living prophets

When Joseph Smith rose from his knees in that sacred grove, he knew more about the nature, the power, and the attributes of God than learned scholars could find out through a lifetime of study. This is the genius of the Church of Jesus

Christ today. It is the testimony and power of the Holy Ghost that distinguishes this church from others. We need not convene councils of learned men to debate the mind and will of God. We have living prophets and apostles to direct us. If we will follow their counsel, we can avoid the evils of today and have tranquillity of faith and peace of mind.

For this reason there is great inherent power in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to influence men's lives for good. Men and women who know they are doing the will of God will be ready to sacrifice, to share, to serve, and to live in peace one with another. Peace cannot come by legislation or through affiliation with any political philosophy. Man's methods of solving his problems are subject to the misuse of power and the errors which come from inexperience and lack of knowledge. Peace, joy, and happiness can come only through an acceptance of God's revealed plan of life.

Growth in South America

I found in South America the same rapid growth of the Church that I had experienced during the past three years on the west coast of the United States and Canada. Our problem is not the problem of empty churches, but of church buildings filled to overflowing. We are building as rapidly as we can to fill those needs, but it is a continuing struggle. I was pleasantly surprised to find our buildings in South America used not only on Sundays, but also on weekdays. Our young people were busy almost every day of the week using the buildings and grounds like a social club. They were playing football on the grounds. They were holding theatrical and musical re-

hearsals in the cultural halls. Youth seminaries and children's Primary classes were being held in the classrooms. I attended a banquet for young people in Buenos Aires. I visited a beginning Deseret Industries operation in Montevideo where our sisters were learning how to sew, to remodel clothes, to knit, to weave, while building fellowship one with another. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, young and old alike were working together without any generation gap to build a new athletic playing field.

Evidence of brotherhood

You might well ask, "How was it that you, a stranger, should find such a warm reception in those lands when you couldn't even speak their language?" The reason is that I was accepted as their brother in Jesus Christ. We spoke the same language of the heart. We had the same ideals, the same desires, the same goals. I attended a conference in Brazil where the people of the Church were having such a good time talking and visiting together that it was a little difficult to call the meeting to order. Those people loved one another. They were the smilingest, handshakingest, happiest people I saw in all of South America. With that kind of brotherhood, is it any wonder that the three stakes in Sao Paulo are growing at such a rapid rate that each year about a thousand new converts are absorbed into the Lord's family in each of those stakes?

Power of restored gospel

When I saw those people so happy together and enjoying each other's company so much, I thought how powerful the restored gospel can be. When a man is convinced that he is truly a son of God or a woman is

convinced that she is truly a daughter of God, there are no limits to the growth of that person. This is a fundamental concept of our Church membership. As members of a royal family, no longer will we be content to be like other men and women. We feel different. We realize that nothing can keep us from success when we are doing the Lord's work. We are willing to work harder, to sacrifice more, and to share our talents and blessings with others because we know who we are. As Peter taught the members of the church in his day:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Pet. 2:9-10.)

A prophet's voice

If you are discouraged, if you are puzzled, if you are seeking for greater light, greater joy and happiness, investigate these revealed truths. Find out for yourself. Come and listen to a prophet's voice. Join with the people of God to become a covenant son or daughter of the true and living God. Obtain your inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, be assigned your lineage rights, and obtain a knowledge of the real purpose of life. To the people already members of the Church of Jesus Christ, let us develop those gifts which are within us. Let us practice that kindness one for another, and let us show that love for our fellowmen which comes through

wholehearted acceptance of the principles of truth.

I bear you my sacred witness that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his living Son—our Savior, our Lord, our King. I testify to you that Jesus Christ now speaks to the inhabitants of this world in this day and age through living prophets. I testify to you that the Melchizedek Priesthood is again upon the earth in all its majesty and power and that true apostles and prophets now live who can and do say, "Thus saith the Lord!"

I bear you this personal witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Following Elder Burton's address the Choir sang "He Who Would Valiant Be."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of Twelve Apostles, has given us the concluding address. This has been followed by the Choir singing "He Who Would Valiant Be."

We are most grateful for the warm response from the managers and oper-

ators of over 300 television and radio stations in offering their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to millions throughout many areas of the world.

These proceedings are being broadcast over stations in countries of Latin America by means of satellite transmission.

Through special arrangements of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network this session will be televised to bases of the Armed Forces throughout the Pacific and heard by radio in Vietnam.

We shall conclude this session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Crossing the Bar." Following the singing, the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Milton E. Smith, former president of the Central America Mission.

This conference will then be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "Crossing the Bar."

The benediction was given by Elder Milton E. Smith, former president of the Central America Mission.

The conference was then adjourned until 2 o'clock p.m.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square on Saturday, October 2, 1971, at 2 o'clock p.m.

President Joseph Fielding Smith was present and presiding. President N. Eldon Tanner, second counselor in

the First Presidency, conducted the meeting.

The special music for this session was rendered by the Ricks College Combined Choir and Choruses, with Richard Robison and Clyde Luke conducting. Roy M. Darley was at the organ.