

you my witness that the gift of salvation is possible through this, the gospel of Jesus Christ, as we continue faithful, and I say it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

Following Elder Ashton's talk, the Choir sang "How Lovely Are the Messengers" without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing from Mendelssohn's St. Paul, "How Lovely Are the Messengers."

The Choir and congregation will

now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

The Choir and congregation sang "The Spirit of God."

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 third session of the 142nd Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy will now address us. Following Elder Rector we will hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Good morning, my brothers and sisters and friends. I deem it a privilege and a great honor to greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We meet in his name. It is because of him that we are here, and everything we do in this life, if it is really worthwhile, comes through him.

Christians

We are Christians. We want the whole world to know that we are. Sometimes we are accused of not being Christians, but such is not the case. In the words of the great prophet Nephi, ". . . we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins." (2 Ne. 25:26.) We look to Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is our Redeemer.

Apostles and prophets

In the meridian of time, his church was established upon a foundation of apostles and prophets, holy men whom he knew in the flesh while he walked upon the earth. They received his teachings. He ordained them and gave them authority to act for him in all things with respect to the salvation of mankind. He knew he was not going to remain upon the earth for very long, for he so stated: ". . . the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28.)

Therefore, he needed men to remain here upon this earth who could receive communication from him from heaven, where he would be. This kind of communication is known as revelation, and those who receive it are designated prophets by God. In the beginning of his ministry, he chose

twelve special witnesses, who were with him in mortality. But after his crucifixion, he chose others by revelation, who may not have known him in mortality. Certainly Paul was one of these.

The dark ages

For a time, these men presided over the church and handled problems, set the affairs of the church in order. But over a time the church became corrupt. The members refused to follow the inspired counsel of the apostles. Paul wrote many letters trying to bring them back to the fold. Persecution became intense, and the apostles, who were prophets, were killed or otherwise taken from the earth. And when they were gone, the light of revelation went out. Even secular history records this period as the dark ages.

A new day

But as had been prophesied by the apostles and the prophets of old, a new day dawned and God once again spoke from heaven and called a new prophet in this day and time. He was but a lad in his fifteenth year. His name was Joseph Smith, Jr. God called upon him in a great vision in the year 1820. He spoke unto him from heaven and gave him commandments, and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the whole world, and all this that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets:"

The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh—

"But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;

"That faith also might increase in the earth;

"That mine everlasting covenant might be established;

"That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and

the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers." (D&C 1:19-23.)

And so we have a new witness for God in modern America.

We are not Protestants, because we are not protesting against any person or group or organization. We have no quarrel with other churches. We do not write tracts nor propaganda against other churches, and we never will, because we are not in the business of tearing down men's faith and belief, but rather of building it up.

To Protestant friends

To our Protestant friends, and we have many, who believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, we say, "We understand your emphasis on faith. We believe it too. Without faith it is impossible to please God, but there is more to it than just faith. There are certain ordinances you must receive, and certain authority that you must possess, and there are certain works that you must perform, so come, let us reason together. Let us share with you the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

This was in accordance with the teachings of the Master. To the Jews who were sure he had come to condemn and tear down their religion, he said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Matt. 5:17.) And again, he found no fault whatsoever with their *righteous* acts, for he said: ". . . these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matt. 23:23.) And so we say to our Protestant friends.

To Catholic friends

To our Catholic friends who believe in salvation by grace through the sacraments of the church, we say, "We understand your emphasis on the sacraments or the ordinances of the church. We believe it too. Did not the Master say, 'Except a man be born of

water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3:5)? Baptism by one who holds authority to act is essential to salvation.

"But there is more to salvation than just the ordinances of the gospel. There are certain acts of faith that you must manifest. There are certain works you must perform, and certain authority that you must possess that gives you the right to act in the name of the Lord, which can come only through a living prophet. So come—let us share with you the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We won't take anything from you that you have that's true; we will just add to what you have, and we will do it in love, with no compulsion, no force; only love and sacrifice can bring people to a knowledge of the truth."

Principles revealed

And now it would seem that we have sorted through the many different religions of the world and taken from them the very best parts of each of the churches. It would seem this way, but such is not the case. We can show that each principle that we teach is taught in the Holy Bible, which is a record of God's dealings with his people, particularly the Hebrews and the Jews, generally speaking. But if all the Bibles on earth had been destroyed in the year 1830 (when this church was organized), it would still be organized exactly as it is organized today.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is distinguished from the church that the Master organized in the meridian of time by the phrase "Latter-day Saints." These principles did not come from the Bible, but they came through revelation from God through a modern prophet, Joseph Smith.

Message for honest in heart

We have a message for all good men everywhere. To those who are honest in their hearts, the Lord has commanded us to declare glad tidings. ". . . yea," he has said, "publish it upon the moun-

tains, and upon every high place, among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see."

Further, the Lord has commanded that "thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers.

"And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost." (D&C 19:29-31.)

And so we go forth in love, for God, for our fellowmen, pleading with them to listen, and offer in sacrifice the message of the restoration. There are in the mission fields of the Church today throughout the world over 15,000 full-time missionaries from this church who are giving of their time and talents and substance freely, paying their own way, to carry this message to their fellowmen.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them." (D&C 1:5.)

And again he said, ". . . the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated." (D&C 1:2.) It is a message of hope, for we declare that God our Heavenly Father lives, that he hears and answers prayers, that Jesus is the Christ, and that he lives.

Church reestablished

He has reestablished his Church upon the earth in our own day and time, and it is for all men, for all who will. And he has called special witnesses, ordained them, and sent them forth to preach the gospel of truth, to gather out the elect, those who would hear this message.

We have the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is so generous and kind to us in this day and time when we so desperately need it. He has given us a living prophet of God, who still makes the important decisions in the church and kingdom of God, under

the direction of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose church it really is.

And we bear this witness to you in all soberness, leaving you our love and our blessings, and our most fond affection. We love you, we want you, and we do it in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer. Amen. □

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us.

Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My dear brothers and sisters, this has indeed been a wonderful conference—another inspiring spiritual experience. I have been deeply impressed and strengthened by the prayers, the music, and the spoken word.

We have prayed that the Spirit of the Lord would be with us, and our prayers have been answered. Prayer plays a vital part in our worship, our religious thinking, and our daily lives.

Importance of prayer

In the time allotted to me today I would like to further consider with you the importance of prayer.

Implanted in the heart of every person, regardless of his or her race or color, is the desire to worship, in some manner, a divine being. The Prophet Joseph Smith observed that "it is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another. . . ." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 305.)

With the knowledge that we can converse with God as one man converses with another, we also understand that we not only have a divine spark within us, but that we are actually spirit children of our Father in heaven.

Prayer, being the primary method of communication between God and man, plays an important part in practically

every religion, whether Christian or otherwise. This is particularly true in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Prayer opened new dispensation

Prayer opened the heavens to the Prophet Joseph Smith and thus opened the dispensation of the fulness of times. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is truly a monument to prayer.

I am most grateful to the Prophet Joseph Smith for his simple belief in prayer. The answer to his prayer restored light and truth to mankind regarding the Godhead and many other great truths.

I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, and that through him the power to act in the name of God has been restored to the earth.

I likewise bear witness that President Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God and directs The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the earth today.

I have, throughout my life, had my prayers answered very directly many times. Prayer has been a great blessing to me and to my family.

The Lord has repeatedly told us to pray always and that he will pour out his Spirit upon us and bless us greatly. (See D&C 19:38.) I have frequently con-