

session of the 143rd Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie directing and Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will sing "Still, Still With Thee."

Following the singing, Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of Seventy will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang
"Still, Still With Thee."

President Lee

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of Seventy will now address us.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

Of the First Council of the Seventy

The Lord closed section 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants with these words: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." (D&C 1:38.)

We have just heard the voice of his servant, and it is the same! President Lee has done what all prophets in all ages have done. He has testified that God, our Father, lives; that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, the head of this church. He has testified that Joseph Smith was the prophet of the restoration. Like all the prophets before him, he has declared that the way to peace is found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ; that only by keeping God's commandments, as revealed through the living prophets, can we find eternal life.

Characteristics of a prophet

What is a living prophet? His age? He may be young or old. He need not wear a tunic nor carry a shepherd's staff. His physical features are not important. A prophet need not have advanced educational degrees nor come from any special social class. He may be

rich or poor. He needs no credentials from men.

What is it, then, that qualifies a man to be a prophet?

Foremost, God must choose *him* as his prophet! This is entirely different than for man to choose God. The Savior, speaking to his apostles, said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit. . . ." (John 15:16.)

"We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof." (Article of Faith 5.)

A prophet, then, is the authorized representative of the Lord. While the world may not recognize him, the important requirement is that God speaks through him. A prophet is a teacher. He receives revelations from the Lord. These may be new truths or explanations of truths already received.

A living prophet

It is an easy thing to believe in the dead prophets. Many people do. For some mysterious reason there is an aura of credibility about them. It is not so with the prophet who lives among us, who must meet life's

everyday challenges. But it is a great thing to believe in the living prophets. Our salvation is contingent upon our belief in a living prophet and adherence to his word. He alone has the right to revelation for the whole Church. His words, above those of any other man, ought to be esteemed and considered by the Church as well as by the world. One day this truth will be understood.

Someone has said, "That person is not truly converted until he sees the power of God resting upon the leaders of this church, and until it goes down into his heart like fire."

Some may wonder at such power and authority being vested in one man. "Could he not lead us astray?" they ask. President Wilford Woodruff once said, "I say to Israel, the Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as president of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so he will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty." (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff* [Bookcraft, 1946], pp. 212-13.)

Mouthpiece of God

President Henry D. Moyle has said, "The older I get and the closer contact I have with the President of the Church, the more I realize that the greatest of all scripture which we have in the world today is current scripture. What the mouthpiece of God says to his children is scripture. It is his word and his will and his law made manifest through scripture, and I love it more than all other." (BYU tri-stake fireside, January 1963.)

The Lord has given this promise to his servants: "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture,

shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation." (D&C 68:4.)

Revelations for specific times

President John Taylor said, "We require a living tree—a living fountain—living intelligence, proceeding from the living priesthood in heaven, through the living priesthood on earth. . . . And from the time that Adam first received a communication from God, to the time that John, on the Isle of Patmos, received his communication, or Joseph Smith had the heavens opened to him, it always required *new revelations*, adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which the churches or individuals were placed. Adam's revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah's revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations, for themselves, and so had Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, and Joseph. And so must we, or we shall make a shipwreck." (*The Gospel Kingdom*, [Deseret Book Co., 1944], p. 34.)

Orson Pratt has said, "The very moment that we set aside the living oracles we set aside the revelations of God. Why? Because the revelations of God command us plainly that we shall harken to the living oracles. Hence, if we undertake to follow the written word, and at the same time do not give heed to the living oracles of God, the written word will condemn us. . . ." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 373.)

Counsel to Saints

It is the right and responsibility of the prophets to counsel the Saints.

President Wilford Woodruff said, "We, as a people, should not treat lightly this counsel, for I will tell you in the name of the Lord—and I have watched it from the time I became a member of this Church—there is no man who undertakes to run counter to the counsel of the legally authorized leader of this people that ever prospers. . . . you will find that all persons who take a stand against this counsel will never prosper. . . ."

"... We have been governed by counsel instead of commandment in many things, which has been a blessing to the saints. . . ." (*JD*, vol. 14, pp. 33, 36.)

President Stephen L. Richards comments on counsel: "... a moment's reflection will convince you of the rather serious regard in which we hold counsel. While it is true that we characterize infraction of the law as sin, and we do not apply quite that drastic a terminology to failure to follow counsel, yet in the Church, under the priesthood, counsel always is given for the primary purpose of having the law observed, so that it does occupy a place of standing and importance, almost comparable to that law of the gospel." (*BYU Speeches*, February 26, 1957.)

Listening ears

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., pinpointed today's need: "What we need today is not more prophets. We have the prophets. But what we need is more people with listening ears. That is the great need of our generation."

"There are those who insist that unless the Prophet of the Lord declares, 'Thus saith the Lord,' the message may not be taken as revelation. This is a false testing standard. For while many of our modern revelations as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants do contain these

words, there are many that do not." (*Church News*, July 31, 1954.)

President Marion G. Romney clarified the responsibility of those who hear the witness of a servant of God: "We who are his present witnesses are but discharging our responsibility when we bring these testimonies of the prophets and our own testimonies . . . to your attention."

"To the extent we do bring them to your attention, the responsibility passes from us to you to determine the credibility of the witnesses and their testimonies. Let no man underestimate the importance of his decision concerning this matter." (*Improvement Era*, December 1967, p. 100.)

It is a privilege to follow the President of the Church.

There will be other General Authorities and prophets and apostles who will counsel us during this conference. May we listen and hear the voice of the Lord, for—

"What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same."

"For behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever" (*D&C* 1:38-39.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Following Elder Tuttle's sermon, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Hallelujah, Amen" without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of Seventy has spoken