

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The third session of the conference convened in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Saturday, April 7, 1973, at 10 o'clock a.m.

President Harold B. Lee presided and conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the music for this meeting. Richard P. Condie directed the choir. Alexander Schreiner was at the organ.

President Lee made the following opening statement:

President Harold B. Lee

To all assembled here in this historic Tabernacle and to the many tuned to these proceedings by radio and television, we extend our blessings and warm greetings at this the third session of the 143rd Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are pleased to welcome special guests here in attendance—educational leaders, regional representatives and mission representatives, stake and mission presidencies, temple presidencies, bishoprics, members of the general auxiliary boards, and others.

Sessions of this conference will be received by millions in the United States and Canada over hundreds of radio and television stations cooperating to provide the extensive coverage of this conference.

President N. Eldon Tanner

First Counselor in the First Presidency

One of God's greatest gifts to man is freedom of choice.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Richard P. Condie with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will now sing that stirring hymn, "Carry on, Carry on," following which Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, Assistant to the Twelve, will offer the invocation.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Carry On."

The invocation was offered by Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, Assistant to the Twelve.

President Lee

The Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with "Behold, The Lamb of God," after which we shall hear from President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency.

The choir sang the song, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

President Lee

It shall now be our privilege to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, our devoted and loyal first counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

At an early period in the journey through life, man finds himself

at a crossroad where he must choose one of two great highways—the right, leading to progress and happiness; and the wrong, leading to retardation and sorrow. There exists this eternal law that each human soul, through the choices he makes, will shape his own destiny. Our success or failure, peace or discontent, happiness or misery, depend on the choices we make each day.

According to the scriptures, the first and most important question pertaining to the individual was that of freedom of choice. Before the world was, and in a great council in heaven, God the Father presented his plan to organize and people the earth.

He explained that his spirit children would go to earth, gain bodies of flesh and blood, be tried and tested in all things to see if they would keep all of his commandments, and prepare to come back to his eternal presence.

Two plans presented

Lucifer, a son of the morning, came forth with his plan to redeem all mankind by force, that not one soul would be lost, for which he wanted the honor. Then Christ presented his plan, which was to follow the will of the Father and allow all men to choose for themselves, and the glory would go to the Father. Christ's plan was accepted, and all who come to dwell upon the earth in bodies of flesh and blood elected in that great council to follow Jesus Christ. Satan rebelled and influenced a third of the hosts of heaven to follow him.

As recorded in Moses, God said:

"Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of

mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

"And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto *my voice.*" (Moses 4:3-4. Italics added.)

Satan's plan to destroy

At that time, Satan, with his followers, committed himself to destroy our free agency and the cause of righteousness. He began his nefarious work in the Garden of Eden by successfully tempting Adam and Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. God had said:

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of *it*, nevertheless, *thou mayest choose for thyself*, for it is given unto thee. . . ." (Moses 3:16-17. Italics added.)

While Satan is determined to destroy us, the Savior says: ". . . this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

He gave his life so that all mankind might enjoy immortality; and through his gospel and the teachings of the prophets, both ancient and modern, we are given a clear understanding of the purpose of life and how to distinguish right from wrong, with promises of salvation and exaltation to all who keep the commandments. But remember that Satan has committed himself to destroy mankind and is continually at work to accomplish this one thing. The scriptures tell us:

"Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

"And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; . . .

"And . . . he . . . leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; . . .

"And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men." (D&C 10:22-23, 26-27.)

Examples of Satan's influence

The reality of Satan and the power and influence he wields have been evident since that first temptation in the Garden of Eden. He influenced Cain to slay his brother Abel, which resulted in great suffering and sorrow. The Book of Mormon is replete with examples of the destruction of individuals and groups who refused to follow the teachings of the Lord and instead succumbed to the influence of Satan.

Now, in the Bible we have the story of the great flood, when, because of the wickedness of the people, none but Noah and his family were spared. We know what happened to the great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because the people chose to follow Satan. In secular history we read of the fall of the Roman Empire; and accounts are too numerous to mention of the destruction of other civilizations, cities, and individuals who chose to turn away from the Lord.

In a recent challenging speech, which was titled "Who Is Tampering with the Soul of America?" Jenkin Lloyd Jones said the pathway of history is littered with the bones of dead states and fallen empires. He points out that Rome did not fall because its walls were low, but because Rome itself was low. The sensuality, orgies, and gradually weakened fibre of a once self-disciplined people brought Rome down. (Speech delivered to the American Society of Newspaper Editors.)

As we sow, so shall we reap

With all of these examples, what more or greater evidence do we need to convince us that when we choose evil rather than good, we lose our freedom and become the slaves of those who would destroy us and deprive us of the blessings attendant upon righteousness? As we make our choices each day, we must keep in mind that as we sow, so shall we reap. We cannot sow seeds of iniquity and reap a harvest of blessings. Let me relate a story to illustrate.

A certain man, well up on the ladder of success, had great prospects for a very bright future. Then one day at a businessmen's luncheon he decided that social drinking would make him more popular and successful. He soon began looking forward to the cocktail hours, and then found they didn't come often enough. Finally he became an alcoholic, lost his job, his wife, and his friends. Because of the wrong choice at a moment of decision, he had lost everything he once so hopefully and diligently set out to accomplish.

On the other hand, we have the examples of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt; of Moses, who led the Israelites from bondage; of Daniel, through whom the Lord gave marvelous prophecies and predictions and of whom it was said, as he was taken from the lion's den: ". . . no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." (Dan. 6:23.) They, with many others, had the courage to say no to temptation and to choose the right, and thereby save themselves and their people from destruction.

Self-discipline

Self-discipline is essential in helping us make proper choices. It is much easier to drift than to

row, to slide downhill than to climb up. Satan is constantly at work to drag us down by placing temptations in our way in the form of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pornography, deceit, dishonesty, and flattery, always waiting to catch us in our misdeeds.

How can we combat the evil that surrounds us and which is so prevalent in the world today? Satan is trying harder than ever before to claim souls for his own domain. We must and we can thwart him, but only by choosing to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and making our influence an active and positive force. As leaders, as parents, as teachers, and as neighbors, all good people everywhere who are striving for liberty and freedom, peace, success, happiness, and for eternal life with our Father in heaven must by example and precept be actively engaged in fighting against those forces which are threatening us and endangering our well-being and that of our children.

Child discipline

Don't let us be fooled or misled by the claim extant in the world today that restraints and conventions are damaging to the psyche of a child. In promoting a permissive and unrestricted society, they would have a child undisciplined for misbehavior. This is a false premise, and we are better advised to heed the counsel of the Lord when he said:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:25, 28.)

Children do not learn by themselves how to distinguish right from wrong. Parents have to determine the child's readiness to assume responsibility and his capacity to make sound decisions, to evaluate alternatives, and the results of doing so. While we are teaching them, we have the responsibility to discipline them and to see that they do what is right. If a child is besmudged with dirt, we do not let him wait until he grows up to decide whether or not he will bathe. We do not let him wait to decide whether or not he will take his medicine when sick, or go to school or to church. By example, persuasion, and love we see that he does what we know is best for him. We cannot overemphasize the importance of example. The late J. Edgar Hoover said that if fathers and mothers would *take* their children to Sunday School and church regularly, they could strike a felling blow against the forces that contribute to juvenile delinquency.

Choosing the right

Parents also should teach their children early in life the glorious concept and fact that they are spirit children of God, and that choosing to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ is the only way to enjoy success and happiness here and eternal life hereafter. They must be taught that Satan is real and that he will use all agencies at his disposal to tempt them to do wrong, to lead them astray, make them his captives, and keep them from the supreme happiness and exaltation they could otherwise enjoy.

To meet the serious issues facing us in our respective communities today, we must be examples of virtue

and righteousness ourselves and choose today to take our stand on the moral issues which threaten us. We do not want our civilization to decay and fall because we failed to keep it on a high spiritual plane and allowed it to sink to the level where the animal instincts and passions dominate.

Collapse of moral standards

Let me refer again to Jenkin Lloyd Jones. He said that we are suffering from a collapse of moral standards and the blunting of our capacity for righteous indignation. Then, referring to our Puritan ancestors, he said: "For all their exaggerated attention to sin, their philosophy rested on a great granite rock. Man was the master of his soul. You didn't *have* to be *bad*. You *could* and *should* be *better*. And if you wanted to escape the eternal fires, you'd well better be."

Then concerning our present-day entertainment he said:

"Can anyone deny that movies are dirtier than ever? But they don't call it dirt. They call it 'realism.' Why do we let them fool us? Why do we nod owlishly when they tell us that filth is merely a daring art form, that licentiousness is really social comment? Isn't it plain that the financially-harassed movie industry is putting gobs of sex in the darkened drive-ins in an effort to lure curious teenagers away? . . . Last week the screen industry solemnly announced that henceforth perversion and homosexuality would no longer be barred from the screen provided the subjects were handled with 'delicacy and taste.'" What nonsense!

"We are drowning our youngsters in violence, cynicism, and sadism piped into the living room and even the nursery. The grandchildren of the kids who used to weep because The Little Match Girl froze to

death now feel cheated if she isn't slugged, raped, and thrown into a Bessemer converter. . . .

"The quick-buck boys have apparently convinced our bumfuzzled judges that there is no difference between a peep show and a moral lecture.

". . . We have reached the point where we should re-examine the debilitating philosophy of permissiveness. Let this not be confused with the philosophy of liberty. . . .

"It's time we hit the sawdust trail. It's time we revived the idea that there is such a thing as sin—just plain old willful sin. It is time we brought self-discipline back into style."

Fight against evil

It is also time we realized that these are all Satan's ways of destroying mankind. Now, what must we do? If there is pornography or obscenity in bookstores, on television or radio, or in places of entertainment, if there are those who would make more easily available to the young and inexperienced alcohol and its attendant evils, including drunken driving, highway fatalities, broken homes, and if we are threatened with the passage of laws which violate the commandments of God, it is our duty and responsibility as individuals to speak out, to organize, and to protect ourselves and our community against such encroachments. We have seen how people react to the high price of food. It is far more important that we react effectively against the immorality and evil in our communities which threaten the morals and the very lives of our children. As President Nixon has said, the only way to attack crime in America is the way crime attacks the people—without pity.

Stand firm

People who argue that they

have constitutional rights and want to use what they call their free agency to accomplish unrighteous ends abuse the idea of free agency and deprive others of *their* constitutional rights. While many of our problems are caused by those who are deliberately trying to further their own selfish and devilish interests, there is also a vocal, misled minority which is responsible for other problems as they exist in our country and in our communities. We must be equally vocal and firm in our efforts to maintain the quality of our surroundings, where we can enjoy family solidarity, which is the strength of any nation. We must take a firm stand against the concerted efforts in many areas to destroy the family unit.

Opposition in all things

As we contemplate these devastating conditions rampant in the world today—the wars, death, suffering, poverty, and disease—and while many question why God permits such troublous conditions to plague us, let us remember that man himself is responsible. Even though the innocent suffer with the wicked in many instances, all the strife and contention and wickedness abroad in the land today is because man has chosen to follow Satan instead of accepting and living according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. From the beginning we have been told that there must be opposition in all things in order that we might progress according to God's plan for us. Again we turn to the scriptures:

"For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. . . .

"Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not

act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

"Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself." (2 Ne. 2:11, 16, 27.)

The restored gospel

Men are not created to be miserable, for "men are, that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25.) To assist us and guide us in our choices, to counteract the forces of Satan, and to give us the joy and happiness for which we are all seeking, God has seen fit through his Son Jesus Christ to reestablish upon the earth in these, the latter days, his church and kingdom, with the restored gospel in its fullness. He has reestablished the priesthood, which is the power to act in God's name, with a prophet through whom God speaks to direct us. I join with thousands of others in bearing witness to all the world that the gospel alone offers the only true way to happiness and peace which passeth understanding, and eternal life to all who will accept it and *keep the commandments*.

Daily choices

Yes, every day of our lives we are determining by our choices whether we shall reap good or evil, whether salvation or destruction, whether eternal life with our Father or the utter despair at being cast out from his presence. Each day we choose whether or not we believe in God the Eternal Father and in his Son Jesus Christ, and whether or

not we will accept their teachings and *keep the commandments*.

We choose whether or not we will accept President Harold B. Lee as a prophet of God, listen to his voice, and follow him, in the sure knowledge that he is the mouthpiece of the Lord and the leader of God's children on the earth today. We choose whether or not we are prepared to accept and live by the Articles of Faith and be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, honorable and upright in our dealings with our fellowmen, showing our love for them by being good neighbors. As we choose to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we can know that all other things for our good will be added unto us.

We cannot go astray if we listen to the prophet's voice and follow him, and as we do so we will be led in the path of truth and righteousness and enjoy the love, respect, and confidence of our fellowmen, and eventually enjoy eternal life with our Father in heaven. Or we may refuse and lose all these great blessings.

"Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself."

May we choose wisely, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the song, "Souls of the Righteous," following President Tanner's address, without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

We have just heard from President N. Eldon Tanner, first counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, who has delivered one of the most timely messages, to set the tone and course this Church should take, and all other righteous people, to combat the permissiveness that is to be found in the world today. I would hope that everybody listening would apply the wisdom that he has given to us.

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung "Souls of the Righteous."

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Of the Council of the Twelve

Some 23 years ago I was called as a young man to serve as the bishop of a large ward in Salt Lake City. The magnitude of the calling was overwhelming and the responsibility frightening. My inadequacy humbled me. But my Heavenly Father did not leave me to wander in darkness and in silence, uninstructed or uninspired. In his own way he revealed the lessons he would have me learn.

Legacy of Kathleen McKee

One evening at a late hour my telephone rang. I heard a voice say, "Bishop Monson, this is the hospital calling. Kathleen McKee, a member of your congregation, has just passed away. Our records reveal that she had no next of kin, but your name is listed as the one to be notified in the event of her death. Could you come to the hospital right away?"