

session. The Choir opened these services by singing, "Praise to the Man" and will now sing, "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright," following which Elder Bernard P. Brockbank of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The Tabernacle Choir rendered the number, "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright."

Elder Bernard P. Brockbank offered the invocation.

Following the invocation, the Choir sang without announcement, "Come Sing to the Lord."

President Spencer W. Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has sung, "Come Sing to the Lord."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brethren and sisters and friends everywhere, I have in mind saying a few words about the two most important mediums of communication known to man. First, prayer—the means by which men address God—and, second, about revelation—the means by which God communicates to men.

Prayer

I suppose that when we speak of prayer most of us think about the prayers we offer as we gather around our tables, kneel beside our beds, or hear in our church meetings.

In addition, however, it may properly be said that prayer includes other means by which men address God.

Nephi doesn't use the word *prayer* in introducing his account of his great vision. He simply says:

"After I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain." (1 Ne. 11:1.)

There is no doubt in my mind but

that Nephi's pondering was in essence a prayer.

The Lord said to Emma Smith, "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me." (D&C 25:12.)

Frequently, prayers are requests for specific blessings. They may, however, and should, include expressions of thanksgiving, praise, worship, and adoration. As James Montgomery has so beautifully written:

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.*

*Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.*

*Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.*

*Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.*

*Oh, thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.*
(Hymns, no. 220.)

The importance of prayer is emphasized by the fact that the most oft-repeated command given by God to men is to pray.

The first commandment God gave Adam and Eve was "that they should worship the Lord their God."

And later "an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: . . .

"Thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore." (Moses 5:5-6, 8.)

Importance of prayer

The Lord took occasion to personally instruct the brother of Jared as to the importance of prayer. When he, with the Jaredite colony, reached the great sea, "the Lord came . . . unto [him]. . . . And for the space of *three hours did the Lord talk with [him] and chastened him* because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord.

"And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and *did call upon the name of the Lord.*

" . . . And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and thy brethren . . . but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord." (Eth. 2:13-15; italics added.)

Amulek admonished the backsliding Nephites in these words:

"May God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you;

" . . . cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save.

" . . . humble yourselves, and con-

tinue in prayer unto him."

He thus instructed them what to pray about, and where, and how often they should pray.

"Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.

"Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening.

" . . . cry unto him against the power of your enemies.

" . . . cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.

"Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them.

"Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase.

"But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

" . . . And when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you." (Al. 34:17-27.)

As Jesus after His resurrection administered among the Nephites, He taught them how to pray by giving them the Lord's Prayer as a pattern. And thereafter, He thus instructed His Nephite disciples:

"Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name."

As to promised rewards, He said:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

"Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." (3 Ne. 18:18-21.)

"Pray always . . ."

In this last dispensation, almost two

years before the Church was organized, the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may escape Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work." (D&C 10:5.)

Later He said to Martin Harris:

"I command thee that thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private." (D&C 19:28.)

He directed the priests of the Church to "visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret." (D&C 20:47. See also D&C 20:51.)

He admonished Joseph Knight, "You must *pray vocally before the world* as well as in secret, and in your family, and among your friends, and in all places." (D&C 23:6; italics added.)

And to Thomas B. Marsh: "Pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward." (D&C 31:12.)

To others He said, "*Pray always . . . that you may abide the day of his coming, whether in life or in death.*" (D&C 61:39; italics added.)

"What I say unto one I say unto all; pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place." (D&C 93:49.)

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

Speaking of the Church members in Zion, the Lord said, "He that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him be had in remembrance before the judge of my people." (D&C 68:33.)

Purpose of prayer

The purpose of prayer, however, is not to appease a vindictive Deity; nor is it to court favors from an indulgent Father. It is to attune oneself with the spirit or light which "proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the im-

mensity of space." (D&C 88:12.) In that light is to be found sure answers to all our needs.

Prayer is the key which unlocks the door and lets Christ into our lives.

"Behold," said He, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20.)

Revelation

Just as prayer is the means by which men address the Lord, so revelation is the means by which God communicates to men. In doing so, He uses various means. The spoken word, for example, was the method He used to answer Adam's prayer. Adam and Eve "*heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them.*" (Moses 5:4; italics added.)

In addition to the spoken word, the Lord at times appears personally.

"Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face, as one man talketh with another." (Abr. 3:11.)

"And God spake unto Moses. . . .

"And . . . the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face." (Moses 1:3, 31.)

Joseph Smith the Prophet gives us this testimony of the personal appearance to him of both the Father and the Son:

"I saw," he said, "a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"[In it] I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son.*" (Joseph Smith 2:16-17.)

Sometimes the Lord sends personal representatives to communicate with men. He sent Moroni, for example, to visit and instruct the Prophet Joseph

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Smith several times. (See Joseph Smith 2:28-59.)

Introducing his account of these visits, the Prophet wrote:

"After I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God. . . .

"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air." (Joseph Smith 2:29-30.)

On other occasions the Lord has communicated with men by means of dreams and visions—Daniel's dream, for example, and Nephi's vision.

Enos says, "The voice of the Lord came into my mind again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments." (Enos 10.)

I can personally testify to this form of revelation because I have experienced it.

For example: I was once concluding a talk I had given at the funeral of a fine Latter-day Saint mother and was almost ready to say amen and sit down. There came into my mind the words, "Turn around and bear your testimony." And this I did. I thought no more about the event for several months until my sister, then living in a neighboring stake, paid us a visit and told us this incident:

She said: "There lives in our ward a woman who for many years has taken no interest in the Church. Our efforts to activate her have been fruitless. Recently she has completely changed. She pays her tithing, attends sacrament meetings regularly, and participates in all Church activities. When asked what caused the reformation, she said: 'I went to Salt Lake City to the funeral of my mother. During the services a man by the name of Romney spoke. After he had given an ordinary talk, I thought he was going to sit down; but instead he turned around to the pulpit and bore a testimony which greatly impressed me.

It awakened in me a desire to live as my mother had always taught me.' "

Revelation available to those who qualify and seek it

Now I know, my brothers and sisters and friends, and bear witness to the fact that revelation from the Lord comes through the spoken word, by personal visitation, by messengers from the Lord, through dreams, and by way of visions, and by the voice of the Lord coming into one's mind.

Most often, however, revelation comes to us by means of the still, small voice.

The importance and reality of this means of revelation is attested to and emphasized by the Lord himself.

Concerning the truthfulness of the Prophet's testimony about the gold plates containing the Book of Mormon record, the Lord said in a revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery: "Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind," and added, "Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?" (D&C 6:15, 23.)

With respect to Oliver's receiving "a knowledge concerning the engravings" on the plates which Joseph was translating (see D&C 8:1), the Lord said, "Behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart." (D&C 8:2.)

In making decisions, revelation from the Lord is available to everyone who will qualify and seek for it. And this is the divine formula:

"You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

"But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings." (D&C 9:8-9.)

To the truthfulness of these divine teachings concerning prayer and revela-

tion, I bear witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Following President Romney's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang without announcement "Onward Christian Soldiers."

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have heard from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers."

The Choir will continue now by singing, "O Lord Most Holy," following which Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The Choir sang "O Lord Most Holy."

President Kimball

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Of the Council of the Twelve

From the book of Psalms we read:

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

"And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment, as the noonday."(Ps. 37:3-6.)

The scriptures have always seemed to equate righteous living with a special light, spirit, joy, and happiness in the lives of those who so live.

Trust in the Lord

Many years ago when I was a retail executive, we had a night watchman in one of our stores whose teenage daughter had just joined our church. He would often comment on the change that had occurred in the life of his

daughter. Her baptism had brought a new spirit into their home. I was attempting to use this event as a base to teach him the gospel.

One evening as I was leaving the store, he was by the exit checking out the late customers who had completed their purchases after the store had closed. I stopped for a minute to visit with him. He immediately commenced to tell me about his daughter. He said, "You know, she just radiates since she joined your church."

I proceeded to tell him that having a trust in the Lord and conforming our life to the gospel plan does make a change, even in our countenance. Just at that time I noticed two ladies approaching the door with several other customers. They were neatly dressed, and their faces reflected a special glow. As if my eyes were directed, I immediately noticed a "Duty to God" pin on one of the lady's dresses, which many of our fine young men present to their mothers after achieving this special award. I