

eral session of the 149th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the overflow congregation in the Salt Palace and the many throughout the world who make up the unseen audience of radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir has just rendered "Lo, the Mighty God Appearing."

Seated on the stand are all of the General Authorities of the Church except Elders F. Enzio Busche and Gene R. Cook who are excused because of illness, and Elders Franklin D. Richards and Loren C. Dunn, who are presiding in the Salt Palace.

Present also are Regional Representatives, stake and temple presidencies, patriarchs, bishops, other general and local officers of the Church, and members of the Church from many foreign lands. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

Inasmuch as this session is broadcast more widely than any other, we wish to announce at this time that with the rapid growth of the Church and the expanded role of the First Quorum of the Seventy in administrative affairs, it has been felt desirable to appoint members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to head the Sunday School and Young Men organizations. Accordingly, we have released, with a vote of thanks, President Russell M. Nelson, William D. Oswald, and J. Hugh Baird as the presidency of the Sunday School; and Presidents Neil D. Schaerrer, Graham W. Doxey, and

Quinn G. McKay as the presidency of the Young Men. To replace these able brethren, we now present for your vote, Elder Hugh W. Pinnock as the president of the Sunday School with Elder Ronald E. Poelman as first counselor and Elder Jack H. Goasind, Jr. as second counselor. We also present for your sustaining vote Elder Robert L. Backman as the president of the Young Men with Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone as first counselor and Elder Rex D. Pinegar as second counselor. All in favor, please signify. Any contrary by the same sign.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Jerold Ottley, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ, will begin this session by singing "I Will Lift up Mine Eyes." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "I Will Lift up Mine Eyes."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell offered the invocation.

Following the invocation, the Choir sang "And the Glory of the Lord," without announcement.

President Tanner

We are all most thankful, I am sure, to have President Kimball with us. We will have the privilege of listening to him at this time.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brethren and sisters all over the world, this morning I express our greetings to Elders Gene

R. Cook and F. Enzio Busche, who are ill at this time. I greet you this morning with deepest feelings of love

and gratitude at this, the opening session of the world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Many things have happened, personally and in the Church, in the interval since our April conference six months ago. I have twice been hospitalized and am most thankful that I am alive and well and able to meet with you today. I thank you for the many prayers offered in my behalf and am grateful that our Heavenly Father answered those prayers with blessings upon me in such rich abundance.

Observe Sabbath day

Brethren and sisters, once again I call to our attention the fourth commandment given by the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). Let us observe it strictly in our homes and in our families. Let us refrain from all unnecessary labors. Sunday is not a day for hunting or fishing, nor for swimming, picnicking, boating, or engaging in any other sports. The stores in areas where we are more numerous would not long remain open on Sunday if the Saints refrained from shopping on that day. Remember, the Lord has said:

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

"For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High" (D&C 59:9-10).

And then comes the glorious promise:

"And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance—

"Verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours" (D&C 59:15-16).

Gardens and clean-up

Once again I express pleasure with the response that has come from our urging the planting of fruit trees and gardens. Surely as the harvest season comes to a close, there is satisfaction as we garner and preserve and store the bounty with which the Lord has blessed our efforts.

In this same vein, we appreciate the labors of those who have cleaned up, fixed up, and painted homes, fences, barns, and places of business, as we suggested some time ago. Please keep up this good work.

Importance of prayer

I love our hymn which, among other things, reminds us that "prayer is the soul's sincere desire" (*Hymns*, no. 220). Prayer is such a privilege—to speak to our Father in Heaven. It was a prayer, a very special prayer, which opened this whole dispensation! It began with a young man's first vocal prayer. I hope that not too many of our prayers are silent, even though when we cannot pray vocally, it is good to offer a silent prayer in our hearts and in our minds.

Never hesitate to gather your family around you for your prayers, especially in those times when more than morning and evening family prayer is needed. Extra needs require extra prayers.

Your little ones will learn how to talk to their Father in Heaven by listening to you as parents. They will soon see how heartfelt and honest your prayers are. If your prayers are a hurried and thoughtless ritual, they will see this too.

Difficult as it seems, I have found when praying, other than in private and secret, that it is better to

be concerned with communicating tenderly and honestly with God, rather than worrying over what the listeners may be thinking. The echoing of "amen" by the listeners is evidence of their accord and approval. Of course, the setting of prayers needs to be taken into account. This is one reason why public prayers, or even family prayers, cannot be the whole of our praying.

Some things are best prayed over only in private, where time and confidentiality are not considerations. If in these special moments of prayer we hold back from the Lord, it may mean that some blessings may be withheld from us. After all, we pray as petitioners before an all-wise Heavenly Father, so why should we ever think to hold back feelings or thoughts which bear upon our needs and our blessings? We hope that our people will have very bounteous prayers.

It would not hurt us, either, if we paused at the end of our prayers to do some intense listening—even for a moment or two—always praying, as the Savior did, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

I love the wisdom of Benjamin Franklin when he said, "Work as if you were to live a hundred years, pray as if you were to die tomorrow" (John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968, p. 422).

And when the day is done, as well as when it begins, let us not forget to pray, for as George Herbert observed, "[He] who goes to bed and does not pray, maketh two nights to every day" (*Familiar Quotations*, p. 323).

Power of prayer

I always have very tender feelings about prayers and the power and blessings of prayer. In my lifetime I have received more blessings than I can ever adequately give

thanks for. The Lord has been so good to me. I have had so many experiences in sickness and in health that leave me with no shadow of doubt in my heart and mind that there is a God in heaven, that he is our Father, and that he hears and answers our prayers.

Again, let me express to all of you publicly my deep and heartfelt sense of gratitude for the many prayers that have been offered in my behalf during my recent illness. They have been a wonderful source of peace and comfort and healing of body and spirit to me and my beloved Camilla. The Lord has heard your petitions, and, as a result, I am privileged to be present with you in this great conference.

Personal journals

On a number of occasions I have encouraged the Saints to keep personal journals and family records. I renew that admonition. We may think there is little of interest or importance in what we personally say or do—but it is remarkable how many of our families, as we pass on down the line, are interested in all that we do and all that we say. Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us—and as our posterity read of our life's experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us. And in that glorious day when our families are together in the eternities, we will already be acquainted.

From time immemorial the Lord has counseled us to be a record-keeping people. In Exodus we read, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Ex. 24:4).

And further: "And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak" (Moses 2:1).

Nephi said to his brothers as they journeyed from the wilderness back to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass: "Behold, it is wisdom in God that we should obtain these records, that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers" (1 Ne. 3:19).

When the Savior visited this continent following his resurrection, he commanded the Nephites to bring their records up to date, saying:

"Therefore give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you. . . .

"And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing. . . . ?

"And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded" (3 Ne. 23:4, 11, 13).

And in our day the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "And again, let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives of my holy temple" (D&C 127:9).

Let us then continue on in this important work of recording the things we do, the things we say, the things we think, to be in accordance with the instructions of the Lord. For those of you who may not have already started your books of remembrance and your records, we would suggest that this very day you begin to write your records quite fully and completely. We hope that you will do this, our brothers and sisters, for this is what the Lord has commanded.

Virtue

As we look about us, we see many forces at work bent on the destruction of the family, both in America and abroad. Family ties are being destroyed by an ever-increasing divorce rate, by increased infidelity of spouses, by the abominable sin of

abortion, which bids well to become a national scandal and is a very grave sin. Another erosion of the family is unwarranted and selfish birth control.

The strengthening of family ties should become a rallying cry for Latter-day Saint families everywhere. So also should a return to chastity, our most valuable possession. Chastity and virtue are "most dear and precious above all things" (Moro. 9:9), more valuable than rubies or diamonds, than herds and flocks, than gold and silver, or than automobiles and land. But, sadly, in many cases they are on sale at the cheapest shops and at the cheapest prices.

These virtues cannot be purchased with money, but may be enjoyed by all people, even those of humble birth and humble circumstances as well as the rich, as much by the high school student as by those who are the professors of the universities. Everyone may enjoy these great blessings by living for them.

The lack of chastity, fidelity, and virtue—fast becoming great, worldwide sins which need to be repented of—causes rivers of tears to flow, breaks numerous homes, deprives and frustrates armies of innocent children. Loss of virtue, as you know, has toppled many nations and civilizations. Moral decadence is a villain, and his forehead is branded with the words *dishonesty, bribery, irreverence, selfishness, immorality, debauchery, and all forms of sexual deviation.*

Each of us is a son or daughter of God and has a responsibility to measure up to a perfect, Christlike life of self-mastery, finally returning to God with our virtue.

Importance of sisters

Tonight I plan to speak to the priesthood brethren, assembled in hundreds of locations around the world, and remind them that "we

have all been blessed with special women in our lives who have had a deep and lasting influence upon us. Their contribution has been and is important to us [brethren] and is something which will be of everlasting value to us." (See *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1979, p. 48.) I wish to emphasize that thought this morning. I cannot impress upon all of us too strongly the high place of honor and respect our wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters hold in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11).

Brethren, we cannot be exalted without our wives. There can be no heaven without righteous women.

Observe Word of Wisdom

Our generation, as well as past ones, has become a drinking people. The drinking craze is destructive of morals, causes poverty and distress, and is responsible for much of the death and carnage on our highways. How can this carnage be stopped? The gospel will do it. The message is from on high. It is the will of God and carries a promise.

The Lord has said: "All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:18-19).

The revelation also says: "I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

The tobacco habit can be cured by merely living the Word of Wisdom and the commandments of the Lord.

Living the completely chaste life, committing no adultery or

fornication, being completely true to one's spouse, and honoring the marriage covenant would rid the world of the ravages of the ugly, painful, and costly venereal diseases. It would strengthen the home, abolish the evils of divorce, and eliminate the necessity for the calamity of unwarranted abortions—one of the major evils of our day.

Follow counsel of living prophets

While addressing the Saints from this pulpit in 1948, the late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., spoke concerning having a prophet and a listening ear. He had read a pamphlet stating, "We need a prophet." In answer he said, "No, we have had modern-day prophets for more than a hundred years, and they have given us the word of the Lord." He continued, "The trouble with the world is they do not want a prophet teaching righteousness. They want a prophet that will tell them that what they are doing is right, no matter how wrong it may be." A prophet has spoken—the prophet is speaking. We do not need another prophet. What we need is a listening ear. (See Conference Report, Oct. 1948, pp. 79-80).

I pray that we may not only heed the words of President Clark, but that we may listen and follow the counsel that is now given as it comes by inspiration and revelation from the Lord himself to the prophets today.

Testimony

I close this message, bearing solemn testimony to all of you within the sound of my voice that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not only true but the only force that will be truly effective in combatting the evils and solving the ills of the world.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is for all the world. It is the message of salvation to all mankind. It is rolling

forth from this land of freedom—a land of divine destiny—to all the world, as the great stone which Daniel saw hewn out of the mountain without hands (see Dan. 2:45).

Brothers and sisters, this is the work of the Lord. It is true. May the Lord bless us all in our homes and families as we strive to draw nearer to him and keep his commandments. We extend the same prayer and blessing to our Father's other children everywhere and invite them to come and be one with us in the

Lord's true kingdom here upon the earth.

This is my prayer and my testimony in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Our beloved president, President Spencer W. Kimball, has just addressed us. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

We often sing in our congregations a favorite hymn—the words were written well over a century ago by Parley P. Pratt (see *Hymns*, no. 224). They represent his declaration of the miraculous coming forth of a remarkable book. Exactly 150 years ago this fall that book was first being set in type and run on a press in Palmyra, New York.

Parley P. Pratt learns about Book of Mormon

Permit me to tell you how Parley Pratt came to know of the book about which he wrote these words. In August of 1830, as a lay preacher, he was traveling from Ohio to eastern New York. At Newark, along the Erie Canal, he left the boat and walked ten miles into the country where he met a Baptist deacon by the name of Hamlin, who told him "of a *book*, a STRANGE BOOK, a VERY STRANGE BOOK! . . . This book, he said, purported to have been originally written on plates either of gold or brass, by a branch of the tribes of Israel; and to have been discovered and translated by a young man near Palmyra, in the State of New York, by the aid of visions, or the ministry of angels. I inquired of him how or

where the book was to be obtained. He promised me the perusal of it, at his house the next day. . . . Next morning I called at his house, where, for the first time, my eyes beheld the 'BOOK OF MORMON'—that book of books . . . which was the principal means, in the hands of God, of directing the entire course of my future life.

"I opened it with eagerness, and read its title page. I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

"As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 3d ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 36-37).

Parley Pratt was then twenty-three years of age. The reading of the Book of Mormon affected him so profoundly that he was soon baptized into the Church and became one of