

President Kimball receives revelation

Who is the prophet of the world today? I testify that the prophet upon the face of the earth today is President Spencer W. Kimball.

We desire our friends to know that every devoted person of any faith, anywhere in the world, who is obedient and righteous and who sincerely prays may receive answers and inspiration from God.

We are certain that salvation in God's presence requires acceptance of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We bear solemn witness that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's church upon the earth.

Why has this Church grown so dramatically over these 150 years? Why does it continue to grow at an ever-increasing pace? It does so in large measure because of divine revelation and inspiration.

I pray that we may so live as to enjoy the companionship of the Holy

Ghost, for the Holy Ghost, under the direction of Almighty God, has led this people and its leaders for 150 years since its restoration from its humble beginnings to the great spiritual force it is today. This is my prayer and testimony which I leave in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Following Elder Faust's address, the Choir sang "Song of Praise" and "Turn Back O Man" without announcement.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Song of Praise" and "Turn Back O Man."

President N. Eldon Tanner

During my many years of service as a Church official I have been asked by brides- or grooms-to-be if I would perform their marriage ceremony. This I have always been pleased to do when possible, and so I have united in the holy bonds of matrimony many couples—some civil marriages for this life only before I become a General Authority of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and some marriages in the temple of God for time and for all eternity. I shall comment later on the difference.

I suppose one of the happiest times in a person's life is when contemplating marriage—particularly if the person feels that the choice of mate is the one and only. It is safe to

assume that at the time of marriage most couples are sure they are making the right choices; but all too often the honeymoon ends, and trouble begins, and the marriage terminates in divorce.

Purpose of earth's creation

The frequency of divorce has led some to a life-style where they feel inclined to escape from the seemingly meaningless rituals, without benefit of clergy or other legal sanctions. I often wonder how well-informed they are about the purpose of the creation of the earth on which they dwell, and how fully they have researched the scriptures to learn why

God created man and woman and instituted the sacred ordinance of marriage.

Let us consider first the purpose of the creation of the earth. The scriptures make it clear that it was for no other purpose than to provide a place for the sons and daughters of God to dwell in mortality and prove themselves worthy, through keeping the commandments, to return to the presence of God from whence they came.

Following the creation of the earth, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-28).

When God created woman and brought her to the man, he said:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

Marriage ordained of God

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, and following that first reference to husband and wife, we find recurring scriptures as evidence that men and women became husbands and wives in marriage ceremonies followed by wedding feasts. We are not here just to "eat, drink, and be merry" (2 Ne. 28:7). We have been given an earth to subdue, and instructions to multiply and replenish it. It is interesting to note that God said "multiply" and not just "replenish" the earth (see Gen. 1:28).

Eternal marriage

It is important for us to under-

stand, as we can learn from the scriptures, that God is eternal, that his creations are eternal, and that his truths are eternal. Therefore, when he gave Eve to Adam in marriage, that union would be eternal. Marriage as ordained of God and performed in his holy temples is eternal—not just until death. In Ecclesiastes we read:

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccl. 3:14).

When Christ asked Peter to tell him who he was, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus gave Peter the assurance that he knew this by revelation from God the Father, and that it would be upon this rock of revelation that he would build his church. Then he said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (see Matt. 16:15-19).

When the Pharisees came to Jesus, tempting him, to ask about divorce, his answer included the following: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:4-6).

These scriptures indicate that celestial marriage, ordained by God and performed by his authority in his holy temples, is eternal, and couples so united are sealed for time and all eternity, and their children are born in the covenant of the everlasting gospel. They will be an eternal family according to their faithfulness.

Preparation for celestial marriage

How does one prepare for such a marriage? All young people should consider very carefully and prayerfully the kind of mate they would like to have for eternity and for the father or mother of their children. Parents have a responsibility to teach their children the importance of keeping themselves clean and pure, with high moral standards, so they will be worthy of the kind of men and women with whom they want to associate and marry. Someone has said that a man breeding livestock is very careful about what he allows in the pasture with his prize animals, but he lets his son or daughter go with anyone without checking on their credentials.

Another example is given of a man whose daughter came to him one evening and said, "Dad, may I use the car tonight?"

He replied, "It isn't here."

"What do you mean, 'It isn't here.' Where is it?"

"I don't know. I let a man borrow it."

"Well, who is he?"

"I don't know."

"I don't understand. When will he bring it back?"

The father then explained, saying, "You seem to be quite concerned about my car, and yet you don't seem to appreciate my wanting to know about your dates—with whom and where you are going and when you will come back. I have far more interest in you and your welfare than in my automobile, and I hope you can understand *now* why I ask you those questions."

Children should understand and be made to feel the love and concern their parents have for them. If the proper relationship exists they will willingly confide their plans and be happy to have their friends and parents meet.

Selecting a marriage partner

When young people come to me for advice about courtship and marriage I usually suggest that they ask themselves the following questions:

What kind of mother or father do I want my children to have?

What kind of parent am I prepared to be?

Do I want to associate with someone because of his or her popularity only, or do I look deeper for spiritual and moral qualities?

Am I analyzing our similarities and differences in background, culture, and intellect?

Am I prepared to adjust to these differences?

Do I realize that such adjustments need to be made *before* marriage?

These considerations will certainly help in making a proper choice for a companion with whom one is prepared to spend eternity. Then after the marriage there are many responsibilities that cannot be taken lightly; but with each contracting party assuming his or her full share of the responsibility, there is nothing in this life that will bring greater satisfaction and happiness.

Four specifics for establishing a happy home

As I have performed marriage ceremonies for young couples, I have talked with them about their future and the things that will go into building an increase of love for one another and into the establishment of a happy home. There are four specific things, among others, which I always include.

First, I remind them to keep the covenants which they make as they are married.

Second, addressing myself to the young man, I tell him to make her happy. If he will do all he can to

make her happy, she cannot help but want to reciprocate and do everything she can for his comfort and welfare.

Third, I stress the importance of clearing up any misunderstandings they may have. I remind them that it does not matter *who* is right, but *what* is right. They should never retire at night with any differences between them. As they kneel together in prayer and ask the Lord to bless them and help them overcome their difficulties, the sweet spirit of forgiveness will come into their hearts, and they will forgive one another as they ask the Lord to forgive them.

Fourth, and very important, I remind them to continue to love one another.

I tell them too that marriage is not a fifty-fifty proposition. Each must go the extra mile so there is no contention about the halfway mark. They must keep private matters confidential, and I advise them to solve their own problems without interference from family or friends.

Sometimes young people do not have the patience to wait for material comforts and luxuries which they may not be able to afford. Wanting too much too soon can be a hardship on both husband and wife, and financial burdens brought on by careless management are often a source of contention. It is far more important to build an atmosphere of love and harmony and spirituality in the home than to concentrate on material possessions which can be accumulated in time as financial ability permits.

Importance of children

Into this happy home and pleasant atmosphere will eventually come the children for which the marriage was consummated, and who will add immeasurably to the joy and fulfillment which God the Father intended when he instructed Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth.

When parents understand the purpose of their existence, that they are literally the spiritual offspring of their Father in Heaven and that they have a responsibility to provide mortal bodies for others, then they rejoice in the miracle of birth as they realize they are copartners with God in the creation of each child who comes into that home.

In keeping with the revelations on this subject, one of our early leaders, the late Melvin J. Ballard, said this:

"There is a passage in our Scriptures which the Latter-day Saints accept as divine: 'This is the glory of God—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' [see Moses 1:39]. Likewise we could say that this is the glory of men and women—to bring to pass the *mortality* of the sons and daughters of God, to give earth-life to the waiting children of our Father. . . . The greatest mission of woman is to give life, earth-life, through honorable marriage, to the waiting spirits, our Father's spirit children who anxiously desire to come to dwell here in this mortal state. All the honor and glory that can come to men or women by the development of their talents, the homage and the praise they may receive from an applauding world, worshipping at their shrine of genius, is but a dim thing whose luster shall fade in comparison to the high honor, the eternal glory, the ever-enduring happiness that shall come to the woman who fulfils the first great duty and mission that devolves upon her to become the mother of the sons and daughters of God" (*Sermons and Missionary Services*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1949, pp. 203-4, italics added).

Birth control

We reaffirm today what U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt said in 1917:

"What this nation vitally needs is not the negative preaching of birth control to a submerged tenth, and the tenth immediately adjoining, but the positive preaching of birth encouragement to the eight-tenths who make up the capable self-respecting American stock which we wish to see perpetuate itself" (*Metropolitan*, Oct. 1917).

There are various arguments for curtailing the birth of children or the size of families, but they are contrary to the laws of God. Our early citizens who were patriotic and God-fearing, and in many instances lacked for material possessions, believed in large families; and from that stock came some of our greatest statesmen and finest lawyers, scientists, and educators. They were self-made men reared in humble homes where spirituality abounded.

Love expressed through actions

The happy home is one where the family lives together, works together, plays together, and prays together; where the parents show love and courtesy and demonstrate it to each other. Love is expressed often through actions and by the spoken word. We should not be like the Scotsman who, at the death of his wife, was receiving expressions of sympathy from his friends. One neighbor commented on what a fine person she was. Jock replied, "Aye, she was a good woman, and I came near telling her so once or twice."

In a recent publication of a small pamphlet called *Family Matters*, the opening sentence was, "Will your family survive the '80s intact?" It mentions economic conditions and inflation, then says:

"Inflation isn't the biggest concern for many. . . . Moral decay will be the key threat to family life in the '80s. That's what a majority of your neighbors told *Better Homes and*

Gardens in a survey with a huge response. They blame inattentive parents and lack of a spiritual foundation.

"Today's trends give a parent much to be concerned about." The article goes on to list shocking statistics on divorce, teenage pregnancies, use of drugs and alcohol. Then the question is asked, "What can be done to help children live happy, fulfilling lives?" Dr. Paul Glick, the Census Bureau's chief demographer, gives this answer:

"Caring, attentive parents give children their best start in life. There's no real alternative for their optimum growth" (*American Family Society*, vol. 4, no. 1).

Dr. Sydney Harris, in a recent syndicated newspaper column, reached the same conclusion. He said people asked him why he didn't write about the energy crisis, and he responded that he didn't have enough solid facts to make a judgment about that subject. He went on to say that he also felt it was not important enough, because mankind can solve its technical problems, but what concerned him was the greater problem, we have which is moral, not technical. He concluded by saying that if we fail as a species it will have nothing to do with energy or any other technological obstacle, but with the way we regard ourselves and others as threats and enemies rather than as members of the same family. He said that until we know who we are and what we are supposed to do, all our other knowledge cannot save us.

Gospel plan of life and salvation

Jesus Christ came to earth to give us that very message—who we are and what we are supposed to do. He gave us the gospel plan of life and salvation and said there was no other name under heaven whereby we could be saved (see Acts 4:12).

We have that same gospel restored in these latter days, with the living prophet today, even Spencer W. Kimball, to speak for God, as has been God's method of communication with man through the ages. The answers to all life's problems are to be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Continuous revelation keeps us advised on current problems.

To strengthen the weakening family structure, the Church has instituted the family home evening program, where at least one night each week the entire family meets together to solve problems, enjoy recreation, and learn to better know and love one another. Here is opportunity for the parents to lead out as examples of love, kindness, courtesy, and support as father and mother together take their places as patriarch and matriarch of the family. In such a home are taught the moral principles and other virtues which will help those family members to be the future leaders of their communities and countries.

From such homes come children who will eventually establish their own homes founded on righteousness and morality. They will enter into their marriage covenants in purity of body and mind, so they too can be examples of virtue to their own posterity. ✎

Making home heaven on earth

I conclude by reading from a letter I received from a convert to the Church who, after the required waiting period, took his family to the holy temple of God for a sealing ordinance. He wrote:

"We love this church and we love the Lord and our Heavenly Father. We were on the verge of a total family failure when some of our LDS friends here began to work with us.

"Even now as I sit here and think back to Saturday, I have to be amazed at the way the Church has changed our lives, from almost total family loss to an eternal family! . . .

"Nothing can compare to seeing my wife and child dressed in white, with a radiant glow around them, and feeling the very Spirit of God whisper in my ear, 'John, they're yours for all time and all eternity.' "

I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and through keeping the commandments of God and the covenants we make with him, we can each make of our home a heaven on earth while we prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. I bear testimony to the truthfulness of the things I have said this day, and I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this session of the conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing "Lead Me into Life Eternal." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay Area.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Lead Me into Life Eternal."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Robert E. Wells.
