

passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) as you look upon your sons and daughters, who likewise have known that sacred and wonderful peace. Such is my humble prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Carry On."
Elder H. Bryan Richards offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 170th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 8, 2000. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop directed the choir, and John Longhurst was the organist. To begin the session, the choir sang "The Morning Breaks." President Hinckley then made the following remarks.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you to this, the fourth general session of the 170th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, the Internet, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the facilities who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and members of the Church

who have assembled to worship together in many places.

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop, with John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened this session by singing "The Morning Breaks" and will now favor us with "Sabbath Day." Following the singing, the invocation will be given by Elder James O. Mason of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Sabbath Day."
Elder James O. Mason offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will address us.

The choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President James E. Faust

Testimony—the cornerstone of my life

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, I have lived a long time. As I look back over my life, I recognize one source of singular strength and blessing.

It is my testimony and knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. I am profoundly grateful that all of my life I have had a simple faith that Jesus is the Christ. That witness has been confirmed to me hun-

dreds of times. It is the crowning knowledge of my soul. It is the spiritual light of my being. It is the cornerstone of my life.

As one of the least among you but in my calling as one of His Apostles, I testify of the Christ as our Savior and the Redeemer of the world. Since this testimony has been forged by a lifetime of experiences, of necessity this requires my relating experiences which are very personal in nature. But this testimony is mine, and I feel that the Savior knows that I know that He lives.

Early experiences confirming testimony

The first cornerstone of my testimony was laid a long time ago. One of my early recollections was having a frightening nightmare as a small child. I still remember it vividly. I must have screamed in fright during the night. My grandmother woke me up. I was crying, and she took me in her arms, hugged me, and comforted me. She got a bowl of some of my favorite rice pudding that was left over from dinner, and I sat on her lap as she spoon-fed me. She told me that we were safe in our house because Jesus was watching over us. I felt it was true then, and I still believe it now. I was comforted in both body and soul and went peacefully back to bed, assured of the divine reality that Jesus does watch over us.

That first memorable experience led to other strong confirmations that God lives and that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Many of these came in response to earnest prayer. As a child, when I lost things such as my precious pocketknife, I learned that if I prayed hard enough, I could usually find it. I was always able to find the lost cows I was entrusted with. Sometimes I had to pray more than once, but my prayers always seemed to be answered. Sometimes the answer was no, but most often it was positive and confirming. Even when it was no, I came to know that, in the Lord's great wisdom, the answer I received was for my

best good. My faith continued to grow as building blocks were added to the cornerstone, line upon line and precept upon precept. There are far too many of these to be chronicled individually; some are too sacred to utter.

Effects of David Whitmer's testimony

These early seeds of faith sprouted still further when, as a young Aaronic Priesthood boy, I received a firsthand confirmation of the remarkable testimony of the Three Witnesses concerning the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. My stake president was President Henry D. Moyle, and his father was James H. Moyle. In the summertime Brother James H. Moyle would visit his family, and he would worship with us in our little ward in the southeast of the Salt Lake Valley.

One Sunday, Brother James H. Moyle shared with us a singular experience. As a young man he went to the University of Michigan to study law. As he was finishing his studies, his father told him that David Whitmer, one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, was still alive. The father suggested to his son that he stop on his way back to Salt Lake City to visit with David Whitmer face-to-face. Brother Moyle's purpose was to ask him about his testimony concerning the golden plates and the Book of Mormon.

During that visit, Brother Moyle said to David Whitmer: "Sir, you are an old man, and I'm a young man. I have been studying about witnesses and testimonies. Please tell me the truth concerning your testimony as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon." David Whitmer then told this young man, "Yes, I held the golden plates in my hands, and they were shown to us by an angel. My testimony concerning the Book of Mormon is true." David Whitmer was out of the Church, but he never denied his testimony of the angel's visitation, of handling the golden plates, or of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Hearing with my own ears

this remarkable experience directly from Brother Moyle's lips had a powerful, confirming effect upon my growing testimony. Having heard it, I felt it was binding upon me.

Testimony strengthened during mission

One of the foundation stones of my testimony came when I served my first mission in Brazil as a young man. At that time our labors were unfruitful and difficult. We could not envision the great outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord that has come in that country and its neighboring countries of South America, Central America, and Mexico in the intervening years. Sixty years ago there was only one stake in all of these countries. Now there are 643 stakes in Latin America. I believe it is only the beginning. What has happened is beyond my wildest hopes and dreams. It is one of the many miracles we have seen. It is my witness that all of this could not have happened without the divine intervention of the Lord, who is watching over this holy work, not only in Latin America but in all of the countries of the world.

Blessings of marriage and children

In my long life I have found peace, joy, and happiness beyond my fondest hopes and dreams. One of the supreme benedictions of my life has been my marriage to an elect daughter of God. I love her with all my heart and soul. Upon the wind of her spirit have my wings been carried.¹ We were married in the Salt Lake Temple 57 years ago when I was a soldier in World War II and did not know if I would come back alive. Her unwavering faith and support have strengthened my own testimony in times of challenge and difficulty. My inevitable eternal journey, if I am so favored, will be wonderful with her at my side.

Another great blessing in my life has been to have children come into our fam-

ily even though we thought we might never have any. Our joy has increased with our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Only by the power of a priesthood blessing did this come about.

Adversity has nurtured testimony

Along with the blessings, however, I have known some difficult challenges and heartaches. I am grateful for the lessons learned in these adversities. As a young man, I lived through the Great Depression, when banks failed and so many lost their jobs and homes and went hungry. I was fortunate to have a job at a canning factory that paid 25 cents an hour. That may have been all I was worth! But it helped me get my education. I served three long years in the military in World War II. One time when we were in peril of our ship capsizing in a horrendous storm in the Pacific, I put myself in the Lord's hands and fervently promised Him that if I survived I would try to serve Him all of the days of my life.

At times I have stumbled and been less than I should have been. All of us experience those wrenching, defining, difficult decisions that move us to a higher level of spirituality. They are the Gethsemanes of our lives that bring with them great pain and anguish. Sometimes they are too sacred to be shared publicly. They are the watershed experiences that help purge us of our unrighteous desires for the things of the world. As the scales of worldliness are taken from our eyes, we see more clearly who we are and what our responsibilities are concerning our divine destiny.

I humbly acknowledge that these many experiences have nurtured a sure knowledge that Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer. I have heard His voice and felt His influence and presence. They have been as a warm, spiritual cloak. The wonder of it is that all who conscientiously strive to keep the commandments and sustain their leaders can receive this

same knowledge in some measure. The privilege of serving in the cause of the Master can bring great satisfaction and inner peace.

Testimonies move the work forward

The united testimonies and faith of the early Church members brought them from Palmyra to Kirtland, and from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley. Eventually that faith will establish this work all over the world. That strength of testimony and faith moves the work of God forward in such a marvelous way. The power of the Lord is in this work, as evidenced in the wonderful happenings of our time.

President Gordon B. Hinckley presides over what is possibly the greatest number of faithful people who have ever lived upon the face of the earth. I testify that he is a truly great prophet. He needs faithful followers. The great strength of this Church comes from our collective and individual testimonies, born of our own trials and faithfulness. The faithfulness of the Saints has permitted this great Conference Center to be built and dedicated in the name of the Lord on this historic day. It is unique in all the world. So wondrous and great are the works of the Lord in our time. As a people, we are not as yet what we ought to be—far from it. However, I hope we will strive harder to become a more righteous people, worthy to continue to receive the blessings of heaven.

Temples are a testimony

The acceleration of temple building in our time has been marvelous. Through the prophetic vision of President Hinckley, we now have many temples that dot many lands on the earth. This remarkable achievement has been made possible because of faithful tithe payers. This in turn has caused the Lord to redeem His promise spoken through Malachi:

“And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”² All of these exquisite holy edifices are a testimony of our belief that the Savior broke the bonds of death and opened up the way for us to enter into covenants which will be binding in another world.

“All things denote there is a God”

Like Alma, I can testify, “All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator.”³

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith that I know to be true, the Savior testified of Himself in these words:

“I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;

“. . . I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one.”⁴

The Lord has promised that “every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am.”⁵

A certain witness

When I was called to the holy apostleship many years ago, my sure witness prompted me to testify on that occasion in these words:

“I understand that a chief requirement for the holy apostleship is to be a personal witness of Jesus as the Christ and the Divine Redeemer. Perhaps on that basis alone, I can qualify. This truth has been made known to me by the unspeakable peace and power of the Spirit of God.”⁶

Since accepting that call many years ago, my certain witness has been greatly magnified. This is because of my undeniable testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

My greatest desire is to be true and faithful to the end of my days on this earth. That we may all do so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See 2 Nephi 4:25.
2. Malachi 3:10.
3. Alma 30:44.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 93:2-3.

5. Doctrine and Covenants 93:1.

6. In Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 20.

President Hinckley

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Sister Virginia U. Jensen, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Cleaning the hidden corners of our lives

My mother was a great delegator. Each Saturday morning as my brothers and sisters and I were growing up, we received housecleaning assignments from her. Her instructions to us had been learned from her mother: "Be certain you clean thoroughly in the corners and along the mopboards. If you are going to miss anything, let it be in the center of the room."

She knew very well if we cleaned the corners, she would never have a problem with what was left in the center of the room. That which is visible to the eye would never be left unclean.

Over the years, my mother's counsel has had enormous application to me in many different ways. It is especially applicable to the task of spiritual housecleaning. The aspects of our lives that are on public display usually take care of themselves because we want to leave the best impression possible. But it is in the hidden corners of our lives, where there are things that only we know about, that we must be particularly thorough to ensure that we are clean.

Keep thoughts clean

One of those corners of our lives is in the special attention we give in the area of thoughts. We must continually look out for those idle times when our minds are allowed to wander into territory that should be avoided. In Proverbs we read, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). And Jude has written, "Filthy dreamers defile the flesh" (Jude 1:8).

Inescapably our thoughts shape our lives. James Allen has expressed it this way in his book *As a Man Thinketh*:

"As the plant springs from, and could not be without, the seed, so every act of a man springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. This applies equally to those acts called 'spontaneous' and 'unpremeditated' as to those which are deliberately executed. . . ."

"In the armoury of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. . . . Between these two extremes are all the grades of