

Sister Olea Shipp then sang, "The Bright Beyond."

ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH.

Men in all dispensations have rejected revelations from God—Responsibility of conducting the work of the Father rests upon the Saints as a whole—Sublime position taken by the Prophet Joseph.

My brethren and sisters, I esteem it a privilege and an honor to be called upon to occupy this position, and while I do so, I trust I may be inspired of our Heavenly Father, that the words I utter may be words of instruction and edification to all of us. I have enjoyed the spirit of this conference, and have been edified by the remarks of the brethren who have been called upon to address us. It is an inspiration to one who loves this latter-day work to look into the faces of a large congregation such as this. It inspires him with additional love of the work that our Father in heaven has given to the earth in the day and age in which we live. When we realize that this is but a representation of the people who are members of the Church, that we come here semi-annually to receive instruction, and that the words of life and salvation which flow from the servants of God here are disseminated throughout the world, and are also communicated to the children of the Latter-day Saints by the newspapers and those who come to conference, we can comprehend to some extent the far-reaching influence of these gatherings.

We are considered by the world a peculiar people. By the unbeliever, the members of the Church of Christ in all ages of the world have been considered a peculiar people. When the Lord has spoken through His servants, there have been at different periods of time people in the earth who have said, "I do not believe in revelation." This age is no exception to the rule. The thousands, aye, the millions, of our Father's children who live in the earth are but repeating the history of the past when they deny that God has revealed again His will to the children of men, and say that they have no need of any further reve-

lation. To demonstrate this we may refer to the experiences of the people in the days of Noah. Noah was a prophet of the living God, inspired with a desire to save the souls of the children of men. He had no disposition to destroy those who lived around him, but, receiving a commandment from our Father in heaven, he warned the people to repent of their evil ways, and declared that unless they did repent, destruction would follow and our Heavenly Father would visit them with His displeasure. What was the result? They said to Noah, "What right have you to instruct us? Who are you that you come and speak to us in the name of the Lord? You are only a man like other men." And they rejected his testimony, not because it was untrue, but because they would not believe it, not possessing the spirit which he possessed. Then the Lord told him to build an ark, and to gather therein those who believed his message, and then He would visit His displeasure upon the inhabitants of the earth. It was not because Noah had said these things that the deluge came; it was because Almighty God had spoken through him to the people. When our Father in heaven speaks to the world, no matter how feeble or weak the servant may be who carries the message, that word will be vindicated, even if it involves the destruction of many souls. You no doubt remember the experience of Jonah when he was called to warn the people of Nineveh. Our Father in heaven commanded him to go and call them to repentance. He tried to avoid this responsibility, and it resulted in his being thrown into the ocean. But the same power that had called him to this mission preserved his life, and rebuked him for avoiding what was his plain duty. Then he went and warned the people of Nineveh, and they repented in sackcloth and ashes. You will remember the Lord promised that if they did not repent they would be punished; but they did repent, and He removed from them the curse that otherwise would have been visited upon them for the violation—of what?

Not because they failed to listen to Jonah as a man, but because they failed to heed Jonah, the prophet of God. And when they did listen to the voice of the Lord through that inspired man, they received a blessing instead of a cursing.

When our Savior in humility came upon earth, the people said, "Who are you, that you should claim to be the Son of God? We know your father; he is Joseph, the carpenter. We know your mother; she is Mary. We have Moses and Abraham for our prophets, and we have no need of a man like you to come and speak to us in the name of the Lord." He went among them and ministered to the sick, healed the afflicted, unstopped the ears of the deaf, restored the blind to sight, cleansed the leper by His magic touch, raised the dead to life. Then they said He performed these wondrous works by the power of Beelzebub. Yet He was indeed the Son of God. He labored among them in love and kindness; but they cast His name out as evil. They even cast reproach upon the city from which He came, and said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But He was the Son of God, and He did have the right to speak in the name of the Father. The truths He brought to the earth came from the Father; and though they nailed Him to the cross, though they placed upon His head the plaited crown of thorns, and put the mock scepter in His hands, though they spilled His blood with the cruel spear, yet the word that He delivered to them was the word of the Lord, and He was indeed the Son of God.

The same feeling that was entertained, to some extent, against the Savior has continued in the earth. People who do not understand the things of God because they have not the Spirit of God, reviled and cast them out as evil, when in fact the evil is in themselves. But the promises made by the Savior to His Apostles when He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is bap-

tized shall be saved," have been verified upon the children of men, when they have complied with that requirement under the ministration of authorized servants of God. In the wisdom of our Father, He revealed in the olden times that the Gospel would be taken away. He revealed in the time of Daniel, by means of a dream, that in the days of certain kings He would set up His kingdom, and that it would not be taken away or given to another people. He revealed to John, upon the Isle of Patmos, that an angel would fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to men that dwell upon the earth. Other prophets also prophesied concerning the day in which we live. In fulfillment of these predictions, our Heavenly Father, in the century that is just passed, chose and commissioned Joseph Smith, as He had done other prophets, to go forth among the people and speak in the name of the Lord. Through this humble instrument, the Gospel was restored to the earth again and he preached the same doctrines that our Savior taught while He was upon the earth. Under the Lord's direction, he organized the Church of Christ, with apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc., as the Church should be organized, to continue thus until all should come to a unity of the faith. He ministered unto the people, he healed the sick; he loved the souls of the children of men. But, as had been the case with prophets whom the Lord had raised up before, it seemed necessary in this case that the testimony of His servant should be sealed with his life's blood. No more pathetic page will be found in the history of the world than that upon which is inscribed the last sayings of our beloved Prophet Joseph Smith. He knew that his time was near at hand; he realized that his life's mission had been fulfilled. He had given the keys for the gifts and blessings of God unto the people, and the Father had continued to bless him; finally he realized that his labor was about done. You remember when he was first raised up

how the people of this country said, "We have no need of you. You are Joseph, the son of Joseph, and we know where you come from. You are not a strong and mighty man, and you do not come from an influential family. We have no need of new revelation. We have the Bible, and that is all that is necessary for the salvation of the children of men." Joseph Smith performed his mission; and when the time came that he was face to face with death, he said, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer morning. I have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward all men. If they take my life, I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall yet be said of me, 'He was murdered in cold blood.'" He was not afraid to stand before the pleasing bar of our Father in heaven and answer for the deeds done in the body. He was not afraid to meet the charge that had been made against him, that he was deceiving the people and dealing unjustly with them. He was not afraid of the result of his life's mission, and of the final triumph of the work which he knew was of divine origin, and for which he gave his life. Yet the people of the world, as before, judge this work by the spirit of man. They do not have the Spirit of God, which would enable them to understand that it came from our Father in heaven.

Now, my brethren and sisters, the commission that came to Joseph Smith, the boy prophet, has been given to you. "Go, preach the Gospel in the nations of the earth." The same authority that he had has been conferred upon your sons, and they will be required by our Father in heaven to minister in the ordinances of the Gospel. The responsibility that came to Joseph Smith has not been lost by his departure, it has fallen upon other shoulders. Our Father in heaven has raised up from time to time those who have had the authority to speak in His name, to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel, and to bless the children of men.

They have shared that honor with you and with your children. The responsibility for the conduct of this work does not devolve alone upon President Joseph F. Smith, nor upon his counselors, nor upon the quorum of the Apostles; but it devolves also upon every man and woman who has been baptized by the servants of God and become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Every man who has received the Priesthood must set his house in order, and so conduct his life that men, seeing his good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. We cannot shift the responsibility if we would; our Father has placed it upon our shoulders, and we must round them up and help to carry it off triumphant. When I look at large congregations of the Saints, such as we beheld last Sunday, this building filled to overflowing, the Assembly Hall and adjoining grounds also filled with multitudes of people, many of them sons and daughters of the sturdy pioneers who in early days came into this western country, or went into foreign nations of the earth and preached the Gospel, I cannot help but rejoice. Grateful should we be, my brethren and sisters, that our hearts have been attuned to the Gospel's harmony. Grateful should we be that our Father in heaven has given us a testimony of the divinity of this work; and it should be our life's labor to so conduct ourselves that we will not bring reproach upon it. Those who are beginning to pass the meridian of life, those gray-haired men and women who sit before me today, who have borne the burden in the heat of the day, who came into this country when it was a howling wilderness, have received from our Heavenly Father a testimony that burns in their hearts, and they know, as they know that they live, that the Gospel is true. And this same blessing has been given to their children when those children have sought it. Our Father in heaven has promised all His children that they will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or of man, if they will have faith and comply with the ordinances

Now, to those who are younger in this congregation let me say: Not very many years hence your fathers and mothers will go back to receive the reward of their faithful labors. I plead with you, boys and girls of Israel, to honor the names that you bear; love and revere the parents God has given you, and so conduct your lives that day by day you will give them joy in their declining years. If you will do this the same firm testimony that has been given to them will be bestowed upon you, and your sons and daughters in due time will be found numbered with the Saints of God, valiant for the cause of truth, and the dissemination of the Gospel in the nations of the earth. We need not fear the wrath of the adversary. We need not fear when men speak ill of us, when they cast out our names as evil, when they revile us and speak of us falsely; but we need to fear when the power of the adversary is arrayed against us if we have done that which is wrong. Our Father in heaven expects us to live up to the requirements of the Gospel; to fear Him and keep His commandments.

Now, as to our friends who are not of our faith, we should follow the admonition: pray for those who persecute you, and despitefully use you. Remember that you have a testimony of this work, which they have not. Some day, when we all present ourselves, as we expect to do, before the bar of God to answer for the deeds done in the body, then will our brothers and sisters of the world, who now think we are deluded and mistaken, find that our lives have been spent for the salvation of their souls, that our ministry has had in it only love and kindness for our fellow men, and that we would have given unto them a blessing had they been willing to receive it. Let us love the Gospel of Jesus Christ; let us comply with the requirements our Father has made of us; and then when we meet those who do not understand us, there will emanate from us a spirit that will testify to them we are sincere in the work in which we are engaged. Your

boys and girls are scattered among the nations of the earth preaching this gospel; there is no confusion with them; they understand it as you understand it. It is the same Gospel wherever it is taught, and it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear you my testimony today that it is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that will believe and obey. May we so conduct our lives that our Father in heaven will preserve us from the attacks of those who misunderstand us; and that our brothers and sisters of the world may be constrained to acknowledge we are a good people, because we do good to our fellow men. May we so conduct our lives that the children our Father shall bless us with may, by reason of the righteous teachings and the good example we give unto them, rise up and call us blessed. When the time shall come that we shall all be called to present ourselves before our Father in heaven to give an account for our actions here, may it be said of us that the world was better for our having lived in it, that we never harmed one of our Father's creatures, that we sustained the hands of His servants, that we understood the spirit of revelation, and that we listened to it as it came from God to His servants. My prayer is that our lives may reflect the purity of the Gospel, that our homes may be the abode of the Spirit of our Father in heaven, that our every action may be scanned in vain for any evil, and that when men shall look over our lives, they may be led to say we are consistent followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene. In the end, when our labors are complete, may we receive from our Father, who reigns supreme in the heavens, that welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in a few things, and I will make you ruler over many. Enter into the joy of your Lord," is my prayer for Israel, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang:

"Guide us, O Thou great Jehovah,
Saints unto the promised land."

Benediction by J. Golden Kimball.