

ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH.

Operations of the Spirit of truth—No need to be Ashamed of "Utah and the Mormons."

My brethren and sisters, I desire an interest in your faith and prayers, that during the few moments I stand before you I may be inspired by our heavenly Father to give utterance to those words of instruction or admonition that He would have me give you, occupying the position that I do. I have enjoyed the testimonies that have been borne. It has been meat and drink to me to mingle with my brothers and sisters in this semi-annual conference and to partake of the Spirit of the Father that has characterized the meetings. I sense the responsibility that rests upon the presiding authorities of the Church, when I look into the eager, upturned faces of the thousands assembled in this building and realize that you are but representatives of tens of thousands, yea, of hundreds of thousands, desirous of knowing the mind and will of our Father. We realize that the words uttered from this pulpit by those who are designated to speak to you are carried home to many who are unable, by reason of circumstances over which they have no control, to assemble with us. I have enjoyed more than I can tell the testimonies of our brethren, that wherever they have gone the Spirit of our Father has been there in abundance. It is a strength to me to know that the brethren in California find the influence of the Lord there; that from the Eastern States comes the testimony that the same Spirit is there also; that the testimony of the president of the Southern States mission is that our heavenly Father pours out His blessings upon them there, and that from every Stake of Zion, and from every mission field which has been represented here, the same good word comes, that they have received the benediction of the Almighty upon their labors.

When I heard one of the brethren make the statement that one of our sisters (and I desire to emphasize that

she was a sister, though not a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) had said that the young and rising generation were ashamed of Utah and the "Mormons," I felt constrained to ask the question, And for what reason? Even allowing that it were possible to find within the borders of this great state, son or daughter of the patriotic, noble men and women, who have reared this commonwealth, who is ashamed of the labors performed by those whom our Father has honored—I say, granting that some such may be found; for what are they ashamed? Is it because in early days men and women imbued with a desire to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences bade farewell to father, mother, and loved ones, denied themselves home comforts and the blessings of social life, and turned their faces westward into this great wilderness, to take up their abode with the wild beasts and the still more savage red-man? Is it because the spirit that characterized Israel when Moses led them out of bondage filled the hearts of the early pioneers to this western land? Is it because men and women, imbued with a testimony of the divinity of this work felt that they could leave the comforts they had enjoyed from childhood and partake of the privation of pioneer life, and that they could afford to accept the reproach of parents and loved ones in many cases, and have their names cast out as evil, in order that they might worship their heavenly Father in spirit and in truth? Is it because these brave men and women, struggling with privation and want, marked their pathway across the great plains by the bloody prints of their lacerated feet, in the frozen snow, or because when they came down out of the canyon to the east of us, looked on the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and saw the sun's rays scintillating upon the western sea and the barren soil of the desert cracked open in great seams under the burning heat of summer, and they said, "We are outcasts from the place which should have been our home, but God being our helper,

we will rear a commonwealth here, and raise sons and daughters that shall give glory to His name?" Is it because where not one blade of grass grew before, there are luxuriant fields of green today? Is it because where only the shadscab, sagebrush and greasewood covered the land, that today we have beautiful farms and gardens, the sustenance of thousands of our Father's happy children? Is it because the men and women whose lives have been dedicated to the service of our Father have passed away with their faith still strong, and have left their dying testimony with their sons and daughters that they know this is the work of the Master? Is it because the wilderness has been made to blossom as the rose? Is it because the proportion of convicts and those who disobey the law of the land is less in Utah than in any other place in the wide world? Is it because the proportion of children in the schools is greater to the number of inhabitants than in any other state or territory of our great Union? Is it because there are more boys and girls who can stand upon their feet in the presence of a congregation, and bear their testimony to the divinity of the work of our Father than can be found among any like number of people anywhere else? Is it because there is a greater amount of virtue, kindness, and loving, tender care manifest in the homes of the Latter-day Saints than can be found in most places on our Father's footstool? Is it because today we are considered a peculiar people? Is it because we believe that Jesus is the Christ? Is it because we believe the Old and New Testament to be the revealed word of our Heavenly Father? Is it because boys and girls who go from these grand mountains to the colleges of the east, almost without exception, return covered with honor? Is it because of the success they have attained in their ministry? Is it because we have from fifteen hundred to two thousand men who have left their fathers and mothers, their wives and children, have turned their backs upon the comforts of this life, and gone

out into the world to testify that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and to depend for their daily bread upon the kindness of the people? Is it because these sons and, in some cases, these daughters have the courage, in face of the opposition of the world, to testify that they know that Jesus is the Christ and that the Gospel He has given to the earth is the power of God unto salvation? Is it because all over our broad land there are happy homes, and sons and daughters who have been reared to respect and honor the great ones of our nation, and the men our Father has raised up to guide the destinies of His people in the day and age in which we live? I say, is it for these things that anyone should be ashamed of Utah? No place upon our Father's footstool will you go today where you will find more patriotic, home-loving, God-fearing people in proportion to the inhabitants than you will find among the valleys of these everlasting hills. We have been taught to honor our fathers and our mothers. We have been taught to keep the commandments given by the creator to Moses on Mount Sinai. We have been taught to uphold the government of the great country in which we live. And Utah's sons have already brought honor and glory to this state by their valor and patriotism in the Philippines. We have been taught that the Constitution of the United States was inspired of Almighty God, and that it is the duty of every boy and every girl of "Mormon" birth to uphold and sustain it, if need be, with life itself. We have been taught that this great country of America is the promised land, and that here our Father has given an opportunity for His children to worship Him according to the dictates of their consciences. We have been taught to love our enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use us and speak evil of us. We have been taught that it is our mission in the world to preach Christ and Him crucified, and to teach the same Gospel that He gave to the world when He ministered among the children of men. I say, instead of being ashamed of Utah

and "Mormonism," any boy or girl who will examine the splendid record of the people of this State will be grateful for it, and they will be able to hold up their heads and say, "I am proud of the country whence I came," and I do not believe there are many who would be recreant. I do not believe, with fathers and mothers such as I see before me today, that their children would give voice to such a sentiment as that, but I do believe that with a knowledge of the character of the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints, one could not have such a feeling. And I take it for granted that the sentiment so expressed was a wish that was father to the thought.

I rejoice, my brethren and sisters, to be numbered with you. Our Father has given us a great mission among the children of men. And while our brothers and sisters of other faiths are doing, in most cases, what they believe to be right and proper, the Creator has given us a special calling, and He has admonished us to perform that duty with kindness, love and charity. When you are reviled, do not revile again. When others speak evil of you, pity them, and pray for them. Remember the example of the Divine Master, who, when suspended upon the cruel tree, said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The efforts of your missionary sons and daughters who are scattered in the world today are characterized by that spirit. They are finding the honest in heart wherever they go. The Gospel is being preached to the poor, as the Master said it would be, and hundreds and thousands of His children have been brought to understand the teachings that have been given to the earth in the day and age in which we live. After we have performed our part by preaching the gospel to the children of men, if we have done it painstakingly and carefully and been exemplary our duty has been done, and the result is in the hands of the Master. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase." No matter how gift-

ed we may be, or how choice our language, it is the Spirit of our Father that reaches the heart and brings conviction of the divinity of this work.

I am one of the sons who is proud of Utah, whose ancestors have given to this land examples of noble manhood and womanhood, whose lives have been dedicatèd to the blessing of their fellow creatures. I rejoice in my lineage and in that I am considered worthy to be one, even of the humblest in Israel. I pray that the Spirit of the Redeemer may burn in our hearts, that our children may never prove recreant to the great opportunity our Father has given them, but day by day, as they give evidence in their lives of the purity of their home teachings and chastity of their natures, the beauty of the Gospel will be more appreciated by our fellow men. Oh! that we might be able to give mankind an understanding of our feelings, that they might realize that we do not desire to curtail their opportunities, but that they might feel that our hearts reach out to them in love and kindness, not with any desire to hurt. Our mission in the world is to save souls, to bless them, and to place them in a condition that they may go back into the presence of our Father, crowned with glory, immortality and eternal life. If they do not understand it in this world, we have the witness from our Father that they will understand it in the life to come. Let us day by day so minister in the flesh that men seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven, that when our life shall go out it may be said of us that the world is better for our having lived in it. Let the kindness, joy and peace that characterizes our efforts be a blessing to our Father's children wherever it may be our privilege to roam, so that when we go to the other side it may be said to us by Him who rules and reigns on high, "Well done, good and faithful servant." I testify to you that this is the work of our Father, and it will roll forth until He comes again in the clouds of heaven, when He shall direct whose right it is to rule and reign. Then those who

have not understood this work will understand it, and, thanks be to the testimony that we have received, they may yet have an opportunity to partake of the blessings our Father has in store for His children.

That the influence of this conference may be disseminated throughout Israel and the world, and that the Spirit of love and peace may be with all our Father's children, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER C. W. PENROSE.

Praise for the Worthy—The voice of the true Shepherd—Terms of Mission work—Effortlessness the strength of the Saints—Their Special Mission—Testimony of the Truth—Treatment of Enemies.

My brethren and sisters, as this building is overflowing at this time with the sons and daughters of the Lord anxious to hear His word and to worship before Him in the beauty of holiness, so my soul today is overflowing with gratitude to our Heavenly Father and with joy and thanksgiving that I have the privilege of assembling with this vast congregation to take part in the exercises of this conference. I have no language to express the feelings that well up in my heart today. When I look upon this congregation of Latter-day Saints and realize how many they represent in the various parts of the Church, in this and other lands, I am led to exclaim like one when the electric telegraph was first thoroughly understood and utilized, "What hath God wrought!" This is the work of God, it is true, the Lord has had to call to His aid on earth many of His sons and daughters to assist in the establishment of the latter-day kingdom, and that He now has on Mount Zion many who will be saviors of men. Yet the kingdom is the Lord's, the work is His, and to Him be the praise and the glory. However, I would not detract in the least from the praise that is due to the faithful laborers in this cause. I can join heartily in our popular hymn, "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah: Jesus anointed that prophet and seer." It is right to give words of praise and to recognize the labors of the faithful servants of God

who have lived for the truth and died in its defense, and also to express our faith in the men who have succeeded the Prophet as the leaders of Israel in the latter days. And I do not believe that any man who ever stood at the head of the Church had more of the love, faith, confidence, prayers and support of the Latter-day Saints than our present leader, President Joseph F. Smith, who is of the blood of the prophets, as well as being imbued with the spirit of his calling. I believe that the Latter-day Saints have full confidence in him as the leader of the Church, and his Counselors, and in the men who are associated intimately with him in carrying on this great latter-day work.

I have enjoyed every meeting of this conference. I have watched carefully the remarks that have been made by those who have spoken, and I can bear testimony to their truth, and in them I recognize the voice of the Lord. When Jesus was on earth He declared Himself to be "the good shepherd," and He said: "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me; and a stranger they will not follow, because they know not the voice of a stranger." I hope that the sheep of Israel who are here today, and those whom they represent, are able to distinguish between the voice of the good shepherd and the voice of the stranger, and that they will never be led aside from the path in which they should walk, but that they will keep their eye upon the prize of the mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus, and press forward on the strait and the narrow way that leadeth unto eternal lives, and that they will not be turned to the right hand nor to the left by the voice of the stranger. We have heard from several of our brethren. The tones of their voices, their complexions, their stature, their physical development, their intellectual powers, are all different; but the one voice has been heard through this conference, and that is the voice of the Lord, the voice of the good shepherd, through His agents whom He has appointed to carry on His work in