

for those also who have long since died.

May the spirit of this conference, the spirit of truth, the spirit of liberty and of fairness, go abroad in the world. May the spirit of faith, of courage and integrity rest down upon our people, and find place in their hearts, that we shall not set our feet in forbidden paths, that our faces shall not be turned away from the light, but that we shall follow after the worthy example of our sires, and emulate the virtues of our mothers, until our Father shall say, "Enough, my son, or my daughter, come home, for you have kept the faith, you have finished your course, you have fought a good fight, and henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness, and not for you only, but for all those that love the Lord Jesus Christ." Amen.

The choir sang the hymn:

O God, Thou God who rules on high,
Bow down Thine ear to me:
O listen to my humble cry,
O hear my fervent plea.

ELDER CHARLES H. HART.

One of the quorum of the Twelve expressed himself the other day, that it seemed to him a very short time indeed since our last general conference; and so it seems to me at this time. Since that conference in addition to visiting the Northern States mission, as referred to by President Ellsworth this afternoon, it was my privilege to accompany Elder Hyrum M. Smith through the Central States mission, and I had an opportunity of noting the excellent conditions of missionary work in both of those missions. We

had an opportunity to observe missionary life in various stages of development. There was the young missionary, fresh from the field, or from the forge, with hardened, calloused hands, but with determination written upon every feature of his face, that, with the help of the Lord, he would make a success of his missionary work. There was the sick elder, who was trying partially to conceal his illness, lest it might result in an untimely release.—the missionary who was willing to take his chances on laying down his life in the missionary field rather than to return home before having fulfilled what is generally considered to be a full missionary term. Then there was the older missionary, the family man, who had left his wife and little ones at home praying for his safety and anxious for his return only after he had filled an honorable mission; the strong man weeping for joy at receiving an honorable release, realizing that he had fought a good fight as a soldier of the cross, had received an honorable release and was about to return home to his loved ones. The sight of fifty missionaries coming in almost as it were by magic, at a set time, from all points of the compass, walking in, some of them a distance of hundreds of miles, to attend the conference and, strange to note, not one of them appearing to be the worse for wear, neatly dressed, cheerful and joyous, not speaking of any hardships they had suffered, but rejoicing in the opportunity of bringing souls unto Christ. And then I remembered that, formidable as the number appeared to be in a small village, the missionaries in the world number more than thirty-five times such a band as this, and that here at home

there are tens of thousands of elders who have performed similar unselfish service in behalf of mankind, and there are thousands of others at home waiting to receive the call, and that those numbers are duplicated by faithful wives and mothers who are content to remain at home, some of them, perchance, enduring toil and privation, that their husbands, sons and brothers might perform this act of self-sacrifice for the good of mankind. As keenly as they might miss the company of the husband or the brother, they would not have him return before having fulfilled a faithful mission. And all this in a commercial age, an age of greed and graft, when men generally are seeking, exclusively almost, "the almighty dollar." Surely here is something new in the world—a system such as this, a people such as this, in an age when newspaper and magazine writers, and preachers, are commenting upon the lack of faith that exists in the world, the falling off of church attendance, people ceasing to read the Bible, the spirit of skepticism, the spirit of graft and greed and unrest; when preachers concede that the middle class of people are losing interest in religion, debating the question whether it is a loss of faith in the church or whether it indicates something more deep-seated than that, and means the loss of faith in God Himself. Surely in an age such as this, when special programs of classical music have to be advertised in order to induce people to attend a short service of sermonizing, to have the interest that is now shown by the Latter-day Saints in meeting together, in proselyting—it is certainly in strange contrast to the

conditions I have mentioned as existing in the world.

In visiting, recently, a number of the stakes and a large number of the wards I have been fully convinced of the accuracy of the report that was made by President Smith at the opening of this conference. There is a lively interest taken by the people in religious matters, in meeting together and in observing the laws and ordinances of the Church. In one town the Bishop was able to report that not one young person in that town was a breaker of the Word of Wisdom, boy or girl; and that the men who broke the Word of Wisdom, or at least, who used tobacco or liquor, could be counted upon the fingers of one hand, and then there would be fingers to spare. In a number of settlements every person could be accounted for, those who were not sick or absent from town were at the meetings.

An elder reported to me during this conference that he had almost secured a choice convert to the Church, a learned man, educated for the ministry, a practicing lawyer, a man who took an interest in religious affairs; that he had been converted in reference to the principles of the Gospel, and that the only thing lacking was that he was not yet convinced that an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, the Prophet; that he was not convinced of the angelic visitations or the revelations upon which the Church is founded. Certainly a very important element was still lacking for his complete conversion, for Mormonism with angelic visitations and revelations omitted would be in the religious world what in the drama of Hamlet that play would

be with the character of Hamlet omitted.

An elder told me a short time ago of a visit that he made to Kirtland, in the late seventies. A venerable guide showed him through that temple, the different apartments, the pulpits, etc., and during the time he was complaining somewhat concerning Brigham Young, who was then president of the Church. The guide was no less a person than Martin Harris, and the elder said to him, "How is it, Mr. Harris, that you now complain of the Church? How about that visitation of an angel that you claim to have had? At that the old gentleman straightened up, new life seemed to come into him, and he said, "Just as sure as there is a God in heaven, just as sure as that sun is shining in the firmament, just as sure as the moon and stars give their light by night, just so sure I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, just so sure I know that I saw the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and that I handled them with my own hands, and saw the angel and heard his voice." And he said, "So long as I live I shall bear the same testimony, and when I die I shall die bearing the same testimony." And, strangely enough it so happened, that after Martin Harris came to Zion and re-joined the Church, and received his blessings in the temple, at his death-bed the same elder was present, and the last audible words of Martin Harris that could be distinguished were words of testimony, supporting the statements that he had always made as to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

I have sometimes wished that I might have had from some of these witnesses a less formal statement

than the beautiful one which is printed on the fly leaf of the Book of Mormon, signed by the three witnesses, and which carries with it the spirit of inspiration under which it was given; that we might have something more in detail, more particulars from some of those brethren. I chanced to find recently, a statement from Oliver Cowdery, in a letter to W. W. Phelps, and with your forebearance, I will read that statement, as it seems to me to have the true ring, and should have an effect in convincing individuals who have not already been converted, that the man who wrote these words was a sincere man, and that every word he uttered is the truth. In this letter dated September 7. 1834, after telling about the desire for a manifestation from the Lord and how he and Joseph, apart from the abodes of men, had fervently asked the Lord for this condescension, he goes on to say:

"On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously-looked-for message and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld—our ears heard, as the "blaze of day," yes more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, 'I am thy fellow servant' dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired. 'Twas the voice of the angel from glory—'twas a message from the Most High, and as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls, and we were rapt in the vision of the Almighty. Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty

had fled, doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever.

"But, dear brother, think further, think for a moment what joy filled our hearts and with what surprise we must have bowed (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hands the Holy Priesthood, as he said: 'Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.' I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as it was delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit. Man may deceive his fellow man; deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave, but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind. The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth un sullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior's goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry, and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore, in that day which shall never cease."

How strange, after a man had been given such a glorious visitation and testimony as this, that he should afterwards grow lukewarm in his adherence to the principles of

the Gospel. But at the same time these witnesses never faltered in their adherence to the first testimony that they gave. There may have been a design in this circumstance of their departing from the faith, all three of these great witnesses, in order to strengthen the testimonies that they gave; for do not their testimonies stand stronger and more convincing today, from the fact that they parted from the faith but never departed one iota from the testimony that they gave as to the divine restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this dispensation?

I pray that the blessings of the Lord may be with you, and that we may be able "to pray always, keeping our lamps trimmed and burning and oil with us, that we may be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom." I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ANDREW JENSON.

I have a few reflections in regard to what has been said here today and a few historical dates and facts which I would like to give in connection with the missionary reports that we have listened to on this occasion. Nearly all those who have been appointed to address you this afternoon in this hall may be said to represent the missionary department of the Church, and it is very interesting to note the missionary work that has been accomplished by the Elders of the Church so far; and yet the great missionary work that lies in the future to be accomplished is of incalculable dimensions.

Christ commanded His Disciples, just before ascending into heaven,