

may accomplish this, and restrain our children from the possibilities of immorality and crime, more care and thought must be bestowed upon these matters than we have been wont to give them in the recent past. Not that I would deny any boy or girl those proper pleasures which relieve them from the toil and struggle that some may have to undergo in life; but when they break out in open rebellion against every principle of good government, when they propose to mingle with the vile and the impure, when they find companionship pleasurable with those whose lives are to be censured by every thoughtful father and mother, we shall be under condemnation if we permit them without effort on our part to drift in the line of that destruction, and our regrets will be great at no distant day, for it may be your boys and my boys, your girls and my girls, that will by their misdeeds bring to us sorrow and heartache.

I bear my testimony to the truth of the Gospel, and to the wisdom of the Apostle Paul when he appealed to the people to guard against becoming more the lovers of pleasure than the lovers of God. I commend the spirit that has been manifest in this conference, in the instructions that have fallen from the lips of the elders from first to last. Reformation is requisite among the Latter-day Saints in the care we bestow upon the children which God has given to us. May the Lord bless you with understanding and faith. May the good work move forward in the accomplishment of its great destiny, that as our boys and girls shall go into the world they shall be entrenched in the moral virtues of the Gospel of Jesus, and be clean and sweet

among the children of men, in the fulfillment of the great destiny He designs they shall accomplish; that they shall indeed not be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, but that they shall be lovers of God and enjoyers of legitimate pleasures, under the influence of the good Spirit that comes from on high, designed for their uplifting and betterment. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sister Emma Ramsey Morris sang, as a solo, the hymn, "Come, come ye Saints."

#### ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

Priesthood and people are one.—Prominence provokes criticism.—President Joseph F. Smith.—Government by consent of the governed.—What it means to "sustain" our leaders.—Union the price of safety.

A great many good things have been said during this conference, and a great many good things remain unsaid. The main care of a speaker at such times, is, not to find a subject, but to select one, to choose the thoughts and ideas that will best suit the occasion, and then have the power to impress them upon the minds and hearts of the hearers. No man can do this of himself. The Holy Ghost is the great teacher, and all that God's servants can do, all that they are expected to do, is to put themselves in a position and keep themselves in such a state of heart and mind that they can be acted upon by that divine Spirit which makes manifest the things of God. I hope I shall have this Spirit during the few minutes that I shall stand before you.

Many of the texts dwelt upon

and elaborated in the previous meetings have been drawn from the Declaration that was read here upon the opening day. Lingerings in my memory are a few lines of that Declaration, which, it seems to me, we might profitably reflect upon. They run something like this: "The effort to differentiate the 'Mormon' priesthood and the 'Mormon' people, by allowing that the latter are a good, honest, though misguided folk, while alleging that their leaders are the personification of all that is bad, is a most futile one. The great majority of the male members of the Church hold the priesthood, and though constituting the official body of the Church, they are a portion of the people. Priesthood and people are inseparable, and, vindicated or condemned, stand together." I invite your attention to these lines.

Why should it be thought that there is a great gulf of difference between the priesthood and the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Who are these men that have been chosen to be the General Authorities of the Church, to be the Presidencies of the Stakes of Zion, and the Bishoprics of the Wards? Who are the men and women that stand prominently before the people in our auxiliary organizations? Have they come from outside the Church? Are they angels from Heaven, or demons from Hades, immortal beings, sent here to preside over a mortal Church and its departments and institutions? Why, no. They have come up from the ranks of the people. True, their spirits came down from God; but so did the spirits of all the members of the Church. The spirits of all men have come from God, and

have taken upon them mortal bodies, to undergo experiences that will prepare them for honor and glory and eternal lives in the worlds to come. But the men who have been chosen to preside over the Church, over the Stakes of Zion, over the various Wards, and the men and women who are officers in the auxiliary organizations—are only a portion of the people. They have the same faults and weaknesses, and the same virtues, as their fathers and mothers, and are no better and no worse than the average of the people from whom they came.

But because they are prominent, because they have been placed on high, their weak points are more manifest than they would be if they had remained where they were. They are not one whit more perfect for having been lifted into prominence, although they are expected to set an example to the people. President Heber C. Kimball was once conversing with a friend, when he stopped in his talk and picked up a twig or stick from the ground. It had been raining, and adhering to this little stick were particles of mud, and he held it up to illustrate the conversation. He said to his friend, "If that stick had remained upon the ground, you would not have noticed that it was covered with mud, but when I lift it up, the mud is about all that you can see; you can hardly recognize anything else. So it is with men and women when they are singled out for positions in the Church." How true this is. Such men and women become targets for criticism; their faults are more apparent, or are more dwelt upon, than their virtues, because of the positions they hold.

Who is now the President of

this Church? He was a "Mormon" boy, born at Far West, Missouri, in the midst of trials and tribulations, eleven days, I believe, after his father had been torn from his wife and children, cast into prison and condemned to death. His home was sacked and pillaged by a mob, who, in their efforts to rob the helpless family whose husband and father had been taken from them, tore to pieces a bed and tossed it upon the sleeping form of an infant child, almost smothering him out of existence. That child was President Joseph F. Smith, born in the midst of persecution, cradled in peril, enduring from childhood the hardships and privations of a pilgrim and a pioneer, manifesting his faithfulness and integrity in the midst of the people; his whole life an open book. Finally he becomes the head of the Church, chosen of God to be His prophet, and sustained by the people as their president. A "Mormon" boy!

And who are the Twelve Apostles? Who are the First Council of the Seventies? Who are the Presidents of Stakes, the High Councilors and the Bishops? They are mostly the sons of Latter-day Saints. They are the boys who have grown up among you. Chosen from the ranks of the people, they have all the virtues and all the failings of their ancestors. Why look for perfection in them? Why expect the priesthood to be better than the people, or the people to be better than the priesthood? "As with the priest, so with the people." They belong to the same class; they are inseparable, "and vindicated or condemned, stand together."

Nevertheless, there is a difference between the people and their

leaders; it is not a physical difference, it is not a moral difference, it is not a spiritual difference; it is simply this: these men who hold authoritative positions in the Church have been chosen for those positions, not only by God Himself, but also by the people of God. That is the difference. Joseph F. Smith is God's prophet, because God wants him to be; and he is our President because we want him to be. And he could not be the one nor the other a moment past the time when he would cease to be acceptable to God and to His people. Neither could any man, nor any woman, in this Church, perpetuate their power and authority beyond the time that God and the people were willing to sustain them.

You saw yesterday an exhibition of the doctrine of common consent, which prevails in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The great principle enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, permeates this Church and lies at the foundation of its government, determining the manner of the choice of men and women to hold office therein. This has always been the rule of the Church. There is no room in it for tyranny, for usurpation, for the exercise of unrighteous dominion. As our President has often informed us, this work is not only the work of God, it is also our work; every man, woman and child in the Church has a personal interest in this cause and is a joint proprietor with God in all that pertains to it.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, who was sustained in the beginning as the President of this Church, did

not make himself the President. God chose him to be His Prophet, and the people sustained him as their President. Yes, this man who had looked upon the face of the Father and the Son, who had communed with angels, who had had revealed to him the "sacred record" long "concealed," concerning which we have been singing, who had received the imposition of hands by holy angels, conferring upon him the priesthood—the Aaronic priesthood, which empowered him to preach faith and repentance and to baptize for the remission of sins, and the Melchisedek priesthood, which empowered him to bestow the Holy Ghost upon those who had been baptized,—after all these wonderful exhibitions of the power of God, this man and his associate, Oliver Cowdery, were required to submit their names to a little congregation on the 6th day of April, 1830, when this Church was organized, that it might be seen whether or not those assembled—a little over thirty in number—would sustain them as their leaders. They were sustained, and thus became the first and second elders of the Church. But the query arises, Suppose they had not been sustained? Suppose that little flock had voted against, instead of for, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, what would have been the consequence? Would it have taken from those two elders the priesthood which God had conferred upon them? Would it have taken away the gifts which He had given them? Would it have blotted out the fact that the dispensation of the fulness of times had been opened by the personal appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith? Would it have re-consigned that sacred record to

the Hill Cumorah? Would the work have gone backward from that hour? Not at all. It would have had this effect, and this only: that little congregation would have been without the gifts and powers that God had conferred upon those men. It could not have been the Church of God. It would have been a body without a head. The priesthood would have been separated from the people. The Prophet, just before going to his death, speaking to the Nauvoo Legion and denouncing mob violence, said to them, "Will you stand by me in the vindication of these great principles which God has committed to my care?" And they threw up their hands and shouted "Yes!" The Prophet replied, "It is well. You are a good people, and I am willing to lay down my life for you. Had you done otherwise, I should have gone out there (pointing to the west) and should have raised up a mightier people." This shows what would have resulted had that little flock, the Church of God, on the 6th of April, 1830, rejected Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as their leaders. They could have gone anywhere on earth, where men and women would have been willing to receive them, and could have built up the Church and Kingdom. But God recognizes the rights of His people, along with the rights of His priesthood, which are His own rights. God and His people constitute this Church, and these men who have been chosen to be the teachers, the counselors, the leaders are the Lord's servants, His representatives, the instruments and agents through whom He acts, to guide and bless His people.

I want to remind this great con-

gregation that you who raised your hands to sustain these men in their positions, made a solemn covenant with God that you would sustain them in very deed. In effect, you covenanted that you would pray for them, that you would uphold and defend them, that you would exercise your faith for them, and would listen to their counsels; and that you would not go forth from this conference to tear down these men, to stab them in the back, and seek to weaken their influence among your brethren and sisters and among the children of men. You made that covenant. See that you keep it; for it was a covenant with God, and cannot be broken with impunity. You had the power to reject any and all but you chose to sustain them. Now see that you do it.

There is little danger to this work from the outside. The worst perils that threaten us are always from within. God has pledged His word that this kingdom shall never be thrown down nor given to another people. But if there ever was a time when this work was really in danger, it was because there was something wrong within, and not because the powers of earth and hell were arrayed against it. A captain of a ship in a storm was approached and asked if there was any danger. The tempests had been beating upon the vessel for days; she had been driven out of her course; the waves were rolling mountain high; the appearance of things was perilous, and the passengers were fearful. "Captain, is there danger?" asked one. The Captain smiled reassuringly, and replied, "Not one particle, so long as conditions remain as they now are. I have been down be-

low; I have examined the machinery; every wheel is moving as it was ordained to move; every pin is in its place; every man is at his post; everything is working well, and as long as this continues, there is no danger whatever; but," he added, "if a single wheel refused to move, if a single pin were out of place, if a man were to rebel and mutiny, there would be danger that we might all go to the bottom of the sea." I think this an apt illustration of the Church of God, of the good ship Zion, plunging her way majestically through the billows of tribulation in this world of pain and trouble and tears. So long as we serve God, and are one with each other, the storms that come from without and spend their fury upon us, pass harmlessly over; they only have the effect of driving us together, making us feel for one another, love one another, and strengthen one another. But let there be one traitor in the camp; let there be disobedience, treachery, indifference, or division in the Church, and the danger is great until that condition is removed. But God has pledged His word that this work shall never be thrown down, and it is my faith and my testimony that if we remain united, if we refuse to listen to those insidious voices that would introduce schism and dissension between the people and their leaders; if we present an unbroken front, and are one in faith and practice of the principles of the Gospel; if the priesthood and the people stand together, then shall the good ship Zion weather every storm and land her precious cargo of souls in the harbor of eternal peace. Amen.