

brethren and sisters, that reforms will never be accomplished until you strike at the *root* of the evil, and make it impossible, under the law, for these things to exist.

God bless you; keep us in the way of virtue, rectitude and righteousness, I ask, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

PATRIARCH JOHN SMITH.

My brethren and sisters: I am pleased to be with you on this occasion. I always feel best when in the line and discharge of duty, but it is with peculiar feelings that I stand before you here today, because, as I have said so often, preaching is not my forte.

I bear testimony that I have listened attentively to all that has been said during the conference thus far, and I can indorse every word that has been uttered. I ask God our Father to let His blessings rest upon us, His people; that we may profit by what we have learned during this conference; that when we return to our homes we shall go in peace, remembering the instructions and striving diligently to carry out the same; that we may live according to the laws of our heavenly Father and keep His commandments, that we may be worthy of His blessings.

All Latter-day Saints have certain duties to perform; and, in so doing, if they will follow the promptings of that still small voice, they will never err in their judgments, but will be able to fulfill their missions in that way and manner that shall be pleasing to our heavenly Father.

I ask God that His blessings may rest upon us, that He may guide us

in the true path, qualify us for every duty, that when we have finished our course here we may be worthy of the blessings which He has promised us, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sister Erma Pendleton sang the soprano solo, "The Lord is my Light."

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS.

These conference days are rather anxious times, I believe, for at least two classes of people: those who, in the ordinary course of things, may be expected to address the conference, and those who have to listen to them. I am sure I do not know which suffers most. A very long time ago we had a Bishopric in the ward where I lived, and the Bishop, as perhaps is fitting for a Bishop, was not particularly gifted in giving expression to his thought—he was not a "preaching Bishop;" and he had a counselor who had pretty much the same kind of a gift. However, there were occasions when both of them were under the necessity of speaking in the ward meeting; and one day, in conversation with the counselor upon this subject, he confidentially imparted to me the information that he really did not know which distressed him most—to try to say something himself or listen to the Bishop try to say it. I have been living, the past few days, in the fancied security that it was not likely that I would be called upon to speak during this conference; but since the brethren have desired it, I feel honored in being called upon to address you. I most earnestly pray that I may be given right inspirations, and may say only those

things that will be proper to say, and that ought to be said; for I have no desire in my heart other than to help in this great latter-day work to which, up to the present time, I have given my life and thought and my love—although I may not always be equal to the task of expressing my love for this work in a perfectly ordered life, yet I love it.

There have been many interesting things brought to our attention during this conference, and especially the references that have been made to the remarks of the President of the United States, who recently was Utah's most honored and welcome guest. I listened to his so-called "sermon" from this stand, with a very great deal of pleasure, and I thought that he presented to the community here in Utah—non-Mormon as well as Mormon—a most excellent thought and sound advice. For my own part, however, I feared that it was a sermon that would fall on stony ground, and I doubted a little in my heart as to whether it would achieve the good the executive of the nation hoped to achieve by it, because—as remarked by Elder Whitney in his discourse a day or two ago—each of the parties to the controversy, the President had in mind, would most likely think he meant the "other fellow." You know we are all anxious for reform—in the "other fellow!" and we overlook the great principle that in any common need for reform, if each would reform *one*, then all would be reformed. I was sitting near Elder Whitney, on the occasion referred to, and with him I thought the President meant me; and so far as he meant me, in his advice, the matter is perfectly easy, because I am

a man of peace. When it really does become necessary to say things that seem harsh, I always believe in saying them in the very pleasantest manner possible—not that it gives one the same degree of satisfaction that might come to one if he "let himself go" in the matter, but it pleases the other fellow so much to have the harsh things said pleasantly. But now, I do not believe that the President addressed himself to me as an individual, but he addressed himself to a condition that exists here, a controversy that is on, and to which there are two parties—"Mormon" and non-"Mormon." Now, I have been wondering whether those who represent the "Mormons" in that controversy are willing to sit down and seriously take into account the question whether or not there is any fault in us; whether in any respect we give color of justification for the controversy that is on; and if there is fault in our methods of conducting the controversy, or if there exists real faults on our part that give in any degree justification for the opposition we experience—in that event—are we ready to make such corrections as may be necessary on our part to reduce, somewhat, the bitterness of the strife? Of course, I do not expect the "other fellows" to do anything of that kind; but I am wondering if we ought not to do it, and trust that the example we might set in that direction shall at least sweep out of existence every vestige of excuse for the bitterness with which warfare is waged upon us.

I may not lay claim to the title of historian, because that is a very high title, a very honorable one; it ranks with artist, with poet, with philosopher; and I may not pre-

sume in my halting and narrow and imperfect labors in that kind, to think of myself as a historian. Yet, as you know, my labors have fallen into historical work to a limited extent, and that begets the habit of considering all the factors that enter into an event or series of events. Necessarily the critical sense is cultivated, and one forms the habit of balancing one fact against another, with a view of arriving at the exact truth. Following this line of work in connection with the history of the Church, truth would compel me to say, as to events in the past, that our people have not always been blameless in their attitude as a community as to the things we have done. God has given us a system of truth that constitutes the Gospel of Jesus Christ—to my mind this Gospel is invulnerable; it is perfect, and unassailable with truth and reason. To defend it is a joy, and always a success. But our history—which is but another name for our conduct—is not always defensible at all points. While the Church in Missouri and Illinois never did anything that warranted the cruelty practiced upon them by the people of those states; and in the course of which there were violations of constitutions and the infringement of law—while all that was and is absolutely unjustifiable—yet there was much of fanaticism, much of narrowness, and bigotry, and unwisdom on the part of individuals among the Latter-day Saints. It has become a truism that some men cannot endure prosperity. A hundred men fall away from the service of God when they are prosperous, as against one when they have to struggle with adversity. As the Lord says: "In the day of their

peace they esteem lightly my counsel; but in the day of their trouble, of necessity, they feel after me." (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 101). We overlook the fact, sometimes, that we need the Lord in the day of our prosperity. A sectarian hymn recognizes this truth, wherein it says:

"Come near me, O my Savior,
I need Thee in my joys,
No less than when the direst ills
My happiness destroys;
For when the sun shines o'er me
And pleasures throng my way,
Without Thy wise and guiding hand,
More easily I stray."

It is a dangerous thing, almost, for a people to feel that they are the especial favorites of heaven, and that God has marked them off from the rest of mankind by giving to them a special mission, and exalts them by making them the depository of His law, of His truth, and the executors of His will in the earth, in relation to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For a people to sense this is to have them feel that they are all powerful, within the law of God, and that God will support them against all opposition. In the state of Missouri, for example, some of our brethren under the sense of being the chosen of God, gave way to fanatical expressions and boastfulness, as to what God was going to do as to giving them the land of Missouri for an inheritance. Their boastfulness angered the people by whom they were surrounded. If you analyze strictly all the causes that led to the disasters that befell our community in Missouri, you will find that over-zeal, fanaticism, unwisdom on their part, was among the factors; and if you are not disposed to take my statements in relation to it, you have only to review our own history and the reve-

lations of our Doctrine and Covenants and hear the word of the Lord in reproof of His people for these things; and because of them, He declares that He permitted their enemies to prevail against them; because by their not adhering strictly unto the law of God as He delivered it unto them, He was not bound to give them the victory over their enemies. It is well to be frank with ourselves, and make a little introspection; indulge in a little self analysis, and put ourselves right in respect to these things, not only as individuals but as a community, also.

Let me read to you from a revelation, a passage connected with a little history that it may be well to remind you of. In his early experiences the Prophet Joseph Smith made his mistakes and was several times reprov'd of the Lord because of them. When the Lord delivered to Joseph by the hand of Moroni the Nephite records, He gave him a strict injunction that they were not to be exhibited to any but those whom the Lord would designate, the translation of the record was to be a sacred transaction. However, when with the help of Martin Harris, Joseph had succeeded in translating enough of the plates to make about one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript, Martin Harris began to be over-anxious to exhibit the manuscript to his friends. He was so convinced by this translation that the Prophet had the record, that he desired to show his friends, members of his family especially, the product of their labors. The matter was referred to the Lord, and the Lord said, No. But Martin Harris continued his importunity, and Joseph continued to inquire of the Lord,

until at last the plates were taken from Joseph as were also the associated sacred things. After this was done, then permission was given to Martin Harris to take the manuscript of the translated part under a very sacred covenant, to keep it secure, and naming those to whom he was to show the translation. Martin Harris broke his covenant with the Prophet and the result was that this precious document was lost to the Prophet and to the Church, and remains so lost up to this day. The Prophet lost possession of the sacred things as well as the record. The Urim and Thummim was gone, and the distress of that man, under these circumstances, it would be difficult to appreciate. He was bowed down in humiliation and the most poignant grief. Finally, however, the angel appeared to him and presented him, once more, with the Urim and Thummim; and the Prophet made immediate use of it to inquire of the Lord, and this was the opening of the revelation unto the Prophet, namely:

"The works and designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught; for God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth He turn to the right hand nor to the left; neither doth He vary from that which He hath said; therefore His paths are straight, and His course is one eternal round. Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated but the work of men."

Now, I pray you, hold that declaration in your thought. Let me emphasize it, if I can,—"God does not walk in crooked paths;" and when men represent Him as varying from truth, or as walking in crooked paths, they blaspheme His name. And what the Lord Him-

self declares He will not do, He does not inspire men to do; therefore, God and His Church are anchored to the truth. The angel took the Urim and Thummim again into his possession. In a few days the angel appeared, brought with him the records and the sacred associated things, and the Prophet was reinstated in the full favor and acceptance of the Lord; but He refers again, in the revelation, to this matter of adhering to the truth. After explaining to the young Prophet the plot that had been laid by his enemies to destroy the work, and the justification they urged for their attempts at destroying it, He said:

"Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

"And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God, but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment.

"Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work.

"Yea, he saith unto them, deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy: behold, this is no harm, and thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie, that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him.

"And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare.

"And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive, because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God."

That gives me to understand that though my enemy may lie, and deceive, and traduce and slander, that does not warrant me with using against him the same weapons.

Neither God, nor His servants, nor His Church are out on a fencing match with Lucifer, using as weapons untruth, and chicanery. God is not going to win His victory over evil by such means. He is going to win by truth gaining a victory over falsehood. So that if a man tells us that God is varying from His own law, that He has spoken a word to the ear to break it to the hope, or that He has announced a law for His Church and after that men may disregard it and practice falsehood—by acting contrary to that law, or to the position that God's Church has taken, then we may know that that man is certainly mistaken, because we have God's word for our warrant that He does not walk in crooked paths, nor justify lying to meet lying.

How jealous we ought to be of the honor of God's Church—God's Church! I wonder, sometimes, if we have the true vision of how magnificent that Church is. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews, tells us that the whole family of heaven and earth are named after Christ. The whole family of heaven and earth! The Church of the living God! At the head of it, the God-head! After that all the worthies who have received dispensations of the Gospel for this earth, coming through the grand patriarch of the race—Adam, our honored patriarchal head; and through him to Enoch, and to Moses, and to the prophets in Israel, to John the Baptist, and to the Christ, in the meridian of time, who came to make the great sacrifice, and give the manifestation of God's love for men, so that all men might know from thence forward, how great, indeed was the love of God. Then came the dispensation to the apos-

bles and to the Saints of the early Christian centuries; followed by the period of spiritual darkness; and yet God, not willing that the truth should be all obscured, permitted fragments of it to live even through the dark ages in some of the doctrines of men, even as the clouds, sometimes, after the sun has sunk behind the western horizon, still reflect somewhat the glory of a departing day. Then, at last, came the dispensation of the fulness of times, with God's great Witness and Prophet of that dispensation, Joseph Smith. The Church of Christ then exists both in earth and in heaven, and its history includes all these great dispensations and the ages yet to come. Loyalty to the Church means loyalty to the Godhead, to all the great prophets who have stood as God's representatives in the earth, through all ages; loyalty to the truth; loyalty to the history of the truth and its consistency. You know how jealously men guard the honor of a kingdom—how much more binding is it upon the members of this great spiritual empire of the Church of Christ to be jealous of the honor of that institution! Earthly kingdoms have had their patriots: Richelieu loved France; and Bulwer Lytton represents him as saying, as he viewed the work which his hands and brain had achieved in bringing France from anarchy to the first rank of the nations of Europe,—“France, I love thee! Not all earth shall pluck thee from my heart. My mistress, France! My wedded wife! who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me?” Frederick the Great loved Prussia; Bismark loved united Germany; Garibaldi loved Italy; Cromwell and the Pitts, and Burke, and Disraeli, and Glad-

stone loved England. In our own country, Washington loved the United States; so, too, did Jefferson, and Webster, and Lincoln. Worthy, indeed, was the patriotism of these men, but how petty, mean and small seems the things that challenged their love, in comparison with this empire of the Christ, the Church of God. Men, I say, hold dear the honor of an earthly kingdom, how much more ought we to hold the honor of the spiritual empire of Christ. The archpatriot of this spiritual empire is the Christ Himself; and as His empire is more glorious than earthly kingdoms, so too His patriotism exceeds the patriotism of men; for He not only died for His empire, He lived for it! and in addition to living for it and dying for it, He gathered up into His own soul all the sorrows of the members of the empire, and bore their sins Himself, that they might not suffer for sin, if only they would observe His law, and keep His commandments. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. xix).

Such is the Church of Christ to me. Love it? Why, what man, who even in a small degree catches a glimpse of the glory of this kingdom of Christ can fail to love it? Who, seeing its excellence, would not love it, and desire to see it honored among the children of men? Its honor and its word, when pledged, is the most sacred thing that can be plighted.

I fear I am trespassing upon the time, but there is just one other circumstance I would like to use as an illustration, exhibiting how sure the word of the Lord must stand, and how He regards an oath and covenant to which He or His people are pledged. It arises out of an experience of ancient Israel.

The Lord, as you remember, gave Palestine as an inheritance to ancient Israel, and a commandment was given to Joshua to go in and take possession of it. Of course, the taking possession of it meant a war of conquest. There was nothing else for it, and as the peoples that were to be displaced had filled to over-running the cup of their iniquity, there was nothing but the justice of God involved in moving them from their lands. So Joshua followed his war of conquest. It was a cruel warfare in some respects, as all wars are; and he won—so secular history tells us—the title of the “Scourge of God.” The Gibeonites were a people living just north of Jerusalem, and they desired to retain their possession in the land, and escape the severity of Joshua. They hit upon this strategy: They took a certain delegation, dressed them in old clothing, gave them worn out and fatigued animals; their tents and equipment were worn and travel-stained; their wine bottles were old, and the wine sour and unwholesome. This delegation came to the camps of Joshua, representing themselves as coming from a far country; from a people, however, who had heard of Joshua and his conquest; and who feared that he might be tempted even to take possession of their land, and hence they wanted to enter into a league of peace with Israel that they might not be disturbed. So Joshua, in one of his moments of mercy, I suppose, entered into covenant with them; when, lo, the disguises were thrown off, and here were representatives of a people right at the door of his encampment, and who, doubtless, would have been the next victims

of his war of conquest. But he had entered into covenant with them, and he remembered that from olden times in Israel the principle held good that though a man swear to his hurt, yet he should change not (Psalms 15:4); and so, the covenant being made, the Gibeonites lived in peace with Israel for a number of generations. In the days of Saul, however, we are informed by the Bible that the covenant was violated, and Saul broke loose upon this people and shed their blood, and went far towards destroying them. In the days of David, a famine occurred, and it persisted. The efforts of the priests, the efforts of the king to stay the famine, seemed to be all in vain. The famine continued year after year for three years; until finally the word of the Lord came to David, saying, “It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.” So David, knowing the sacredness of a pledged word, sent for these Gibeonites, and said, “What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?” They in reply, said: “We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. * * * The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul.” Did David halt and say: You obtained your covenant by deceit and fraud, and by misrepresentation, and we are not bound by it? No, he did not, but he found among the family of Saul the required sacrifice, the

seven and they were brought forth and delivered into the hands of this wronged people, and they led them outside, upon a hill, and hung them before the Lord, says the historian; and then, mark this language, "And after that God was entreated for the land," that is, the famine stayed. (II Samuel xxi). I am not responsible for this story; it is in the record that you accept as the word of God; and it shows us how sternly God holds to the pledged word. But one will say, "was not this stern old law set aside—this law demanding an eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth; this law that said thou shalt not foreswear they self, but thou shalt preform unto the Lord all thine oaths. Was not all this set aside by the Christ, saying, 'swear not at all?' And does not this indicate that God, though having given a commandment, may change it or modify it?" Bless your heart, the Lord, so far as I am concerned, can and will do as He pleases, and I for one, if I know that will, shall do what I can to carry it out; but, mark you, these examples I cite to you are taken at a time when one law was being displaced by another, when the law of Moses had completed its purpose and was put aside for the law of the gospel. I do not think you can find a place in holy writ where the Savior holds that while the law of Moses was yet in force, you could violate it with impunity. He may displace the law of Moses by the law of the gospel, as He did, but you cannot find Him counseling violation of the law of Moses while that law is in force. The Jehovah of the Jews, who gave the law unto Moses, is the Christ of the New Testament, and you could not imagine such an inconsistency as His giving a law and

then permitting violations of it; for God, we have seen, does not walk in crooked paths.

Now, my brethren and sisters, perhaps these things are not proper for me to discourse upon; but I cannot help thinking about them; and if called upon to speak, I must needs speak that which seems to me the most important thing to be considered. If I have overstepped any bounds of propriety, in referring to these matters, most humbly I beg the pardon of the brethren; for I assure you there is no desire in my heart to assume any function that does not properly belong to my ministry. I speak only because always before my vision is the Church of God, as I have tried to present it in thought to you, an institution that I am sure will prevail; and I am sure that God will inspire His servants to do that which is essential to the salvation of the people and to the honor of the Church of Christ. I have the fullest confidence that whatever may be erratic or sporadically wrong among us will be corrected; and the presiding brethren will find me, heart and hand, with them in maintaining the honor and the glory of this great empire of the Christ.

May the Lord bless you, is my prayer. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

O, say, what is truth? 'Tis the fairest
gem
That the riches of worlds can produce;
And priceless the value of truth will
be when
The proud monarch's costliest diadem
Is counted but dross and refuse.

Benediction was pronounced by Bishop David A. Smith. Conference adjourned until 2 p. m.