

Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph is a Prophet of God, and that this is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I sustain the Church. I support as best I know how the Presidency of this Church, the Council of the Twelve, and the general authorities of the Church.

The Lord bless you. Amen.

### ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS.

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

That man must be accounted fortunate who in this presence, within the limited time allotted to the speakers, can present just one idea, clearly and distinctly, to the congregation. Whether I shall be able to do that or not, I cannot say, but certainly I shall attempt to do no more than that.

When Joseph Smith was about fourteen years old, in the year 1820, he was much confused by reason of the disagreement that existed in his own neighborhood, between the various sects of religion; and in the midst of it, his attention was called to that splendid scripture which says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." He resolved to put that doctrine to the test, and retired to a secret place in the woods, where he called upon the Lord in earnest and fervent prayer. In response to this petition, a most splendid vision was opened to his mind, and he was taken into the presence of God, the Father, and Jesus, the Christ, and beheld them in the midst of a glory that surpassed the brightness of the sun at noonday. He saw that they, in form, were like men, that each was

distinct from the other. They made known to him that men had departed from the truth, as originally taught by the Christ, but they gave him to understand also that the time was at hand when the Church of Christ would be re-established in the earth, that the gospel would be restored to men, and told him that he was to be a chosen instrument in the hands of God to accomplish some of His mighty purposes in the earth. A most wonderful revelation, correcting the errors that existed and, at the same time, giving promise that there should be, and that soon, a revelation of the truth in its fulness. How glorious that is—if it is true! How many theological questions it would settle. How it would clear the field of theology of error—if, only, it be true!

Subsequent to this, the Prophet was visited by an angel, not some phantom, a creation of the fancy, but a real personage, a man of flesh and bone, raised from the dead, a man who came from the presence of God and made known the existence of the American volume of scripture, by which I mean a volume of scripture which was brought into existence through the revelations of God to the ancient inhabitants of this land—the Book of Mormon—wherein is described the visit that the Christ made to this western world. After His resurrection from the dead and His ministry in Judea, the Christ came here, according to this record, and established His Church, gave authority to men to teach the truth, and gave that same fulness of the gospel to the inhabitants of this western world that He had given to the people in the East. This gives an enlarged view of the earthly mission of the Christ, and

of the justice of God in dealing with the children of men, in that He gave to the inhabitants of this western world the same opportunity to know the truth concerning man and man's salvation as He did to the inhabitants of the eastern hemisphere. How splendid all that is—if only it is true!

The Reverend Doctor Watson, in his most beautiful treatise on the "Life of the Master," says this in relation to Messiah:

"Were a parchment discovered, in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing forty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century."

I believe that is true. Mr. Watson continues:

"If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from the catacombs, and the world could see with its own eyes what like he was, it would not matter that its colors were faded and that it was roughly drawn,—that picture would have, at once, a solitary place amid the treasures of art."

And that also is true, such is the world's hunger to know something further concerning the Christ. Now, this revelation which came to the Prophet Joseph Smith brings a whole volume of scripture to testify of the Christ. Not only fifty words, but fifty pages and more of words, that come direct from the Christ; and the whole book is permeated by His Spirit. What a Christian treasure is this, and how the world ought to rejoice at such a revelation—*if, only it is true!*

Subsequent to this, Joseph Smith testifies that an angel from heaven came to himself and Oliver Cowdery and bestowed upon them divine authority, restored the priest-

hood by which men were authorized to act in the name of God, in the authority of the Lord, and to have it of binding effect in matters pertaining to man's salvation. Subsequently, the apostles, to whom the Lord Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom, saying to them that whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, these apostles, Peter, and James, and John, came and conferred apostolic authority, a fulness of priesthood, upon these men, which priesthood holds the keys of all the offices in the Church, and the right to administer in all things pertaining to the salvation of man, and to bring into existence and set in order the true Church of the living God,—an instrumentality through which the Lord designs and does communicate His mind, and His will, and His truth to the world; a great teaching institution for the enlightenment of the world, in which also God has deposited a divine authority to speak and act in His name, and administer the ordinances of the gospel for the salvation of men. What a splendid thing this must be acknowledged to be—*if, only, it is true!*

Again, the Lord revealed the great truth, through the Prophet, and lodged the truth with the Church, that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and men are of the same race; that there is something divine in man, an Intelligence that is not created or made, but is in the very essence of it akin to God; and that in that divine Intelligence there are infinite possibilities. Development may take place from that germ, that shall expand into all that is great, and noble, and wise, and pure, and powerful! There is in that Intelligence such

possibilities of development that we may hope as eons of time shall pass by, to see it rise to something that is truly great and dignified, and worth while to preserve. How splendid that truth is—*if, only, it is true!*

So I might continue to go on, step by step, through the whole catalog of those great and true principles that God has revealed to His Church—the doctrine of resurrection from the dead—the reality and tangibility of it I mean; salvation for the dead; the eternity of the marriage covenant, and so following, if time would permit; but the one thought, the one idea, only, that I hope to suggest in these remarks is simply this: Since, admittedly, these things are splendid and glorious, if true, why will not men approach an investigation of them from that standpoint? From the standpoint that it is desirable to have them established as true, if possible—these several events in which the Church had its origin, and these splendid doctrines which would mean so much for the uplifting of the race—if true? Why not start the investigation of this wonderful message which we proclaim to the world from that standpoint? It seems to me that there is opportunity for more headway to be made in solving these matters, if approached from that standpoint, than to approach them in the spirit of antagonism—since, admittedly, they are glorious things, if, only, they are true. That is the thought I wanted to advance to this congregation.

In conclusion, I want to say this about it, for the Latter-day Saints, and that is, so far as we are concerned, it is solemn conviction with us, that these several circum-

stances in which Mormonism had its origin are absolutely true. These principles that I have briefly alluded to, and many more that will naturally suggest themselves to your minds—many more principles that we accept, and which minister to the dignity and to the uplifting of men, are absolutely true. They constitute the center of truth on which we stand, and from which we take our outlook upon the world. From this coigne of vantage we interpret the meaning of the universe; we interpret the meaning of human life. This is our orientation with respect of things past, things present, and things to come. Who is there that can say that we do not occupy a most magnificent position from which we may interpret the meanings of human life, the relationship of individuals to the race, and the race to God, and the relationship of the individual to God? To my mind it presents a position of advantage the like of which is not equalled in all the philosophies and other religious systems of the world.

A soprano solo, "In Thee, oh God, do I put my trust," was sung by Sister Irma Pendleton.

#### ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH, JR.

The sin of criticising or fault finding.—Wrongful accusers in danger of God's judgment.—Revelation an individual privilege.—The man quick to censure is often himself a transgressor.

I rejoice with you, my brethren and sisters, in the counsel and instruction that have been given unto us at the various sessions, so far, of our semi-annual conference.

I desire to refer to one expression