

is at the head of the Church today, is also a prophet of God. I thank My Father in heaven for this testimony, because I have received it from Him, through inspiration; and for that testimony, my brethren and sisters, I am ready not only to spend six years in the mission field, but to devote my life in order to show Him my thankfulness.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters; God bless our missionaries, and those who have returned, that they may remember always that they are missionaries, representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ. God bless you all. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

I would just like to bear my testimony to you that the testimonies of my brethren, which have been so impressively spoken here today, and at other times, with reference to the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of the gospel of Christ, and of the Son of God are true—for I know they are true.

The choir sang the anthem "Daughter of Zion."

President Smith read a telegram from John W. Young, expressing good-will to the Church and its leaders.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Stephen L. Chipman.

Conference adjourned until 2 p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Conference was resumed at 2 p. m.

President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

The choir rendered a sacred chor-

us, entitled "Adoration," by Beethoven.

Prayer was offered by Elder Edward J. Wood.

A bass solo, "Within the Holy Temple," was sung by Brother Alva Woodward.

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

The Power of Testimony — Joseph Smith's Account of his first Vision—How he saw God—The Gift of Seership—Other Instances of its exercise—The Church on Earth a Reflex of the Church in Heaven—The Speaker's Testimony.

"The pure testimony poured forth by the Spirit.
Cuts like a keen two-edged sword."

So runs the old hymn, and I have been forcefully reminded of that declaration during the meetings of the conference; in fact, it has fallen to my lot recently to hear more than one powerful testimony from the servants of God, not only in this conference but in other places, and it has set me to reflecting upon the conditions that surround us at the present time. It has more than once been pointed out that most of our missionaries, traveling in the world, are not men of experience, of eloquence and argument, but mere boys who can only testify, or who mainly testify and exhort. Some have deplored this condition, and have thought they saw in it one reason to justify in part a prediction said to have been made by Andrew D. White to Count Tolstoy, to the effect that the third generation of Latter-day Saints would turn from the faith. Their grandparents and fathers and mothers might be firmly rooted and grounded, but the third generation would

fall away. Some have feared that the Church would be weakened from the fact that our missionaries, most of them, are not men of experience, of learning and scholarship, but are the striplings of the community. These are the ones who are preaching the Gospel; they do not reach the scholars, the learned men; they are not capable, it is thought, of impressing men and women of maturity; and it is argued that this bodes no good to the cause of Christ.

I was led to reflect that it was the testimony of a boy, a mere lad, that opened the dispensation of the fullness of times, and I know of nothing more powerful, more searching, more beautiful, more sublime, than that plain and simple testimony of the boy Joseph. I thought it might be well to recall that testimony, and to read it in part—the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of 1820. * * * After I had retired into the place where I previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me and it seemed for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

“But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to des-

truction,—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being;—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the Sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me, I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other, ‘This is My beloved Son, hear Him.’

“My object in going to enquire of the Lord, was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, and which I should join.

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; * * * and many other things did He say unto me which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

“Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement, and conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he

treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there never would be any more of them.

"I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a hot persecution, and this was common among all the sects, all united to persecute me.

"I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul when he made his defence before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light and heard a voice, but still there were but a few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad, and he was ridiculed and reviled; but all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise.

"So it was with me, I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak unto me, or one of them did; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me and speaking all manner of evil against me,

falsely, for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, Why persecute for telling the truth? I had actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God? Or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision. I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I to do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation."

I have never heard an argument or an oration equal to that; and so long as we have boys, striplings, who can speak by the power of God, who can testify by the Holy Spirit, we need not despair. Mormonism has in its hand the mightiest weapons that man can wield, divine authority and the power of pure testimony that cuts like a keen two-edged sword. Argument has its mission, and God can inspire an argument just as readily as He can a testimony; but there is something peculiar about the power of testimony. It is a pioneer. Argument may come afterwards and fill up the gaps, build the bridges and the cities; but testimony goes before into the wilderness blazing a trail, and marking out the way. Joseph Smith said, "I saw and I heard," and who can gainsay it, especially when the words are accompanied by the mighty power, the convincing power of the Holy Ghost? No argument can stand against it, and there is enough force and virtue in such a testimony to bring the whole proud world under condemnation if they reject it.

How did Joseph Smith see God? Many attempts have been made to explain away this wonderful mani-

festation, the latest and most grotesque attempt being one that would ascribe the glorious vision and all that has sprung from it, to a fit of epilepsy! I suppose this theory rests partly upon the fact that the boy according to his own statement, found himself "lying on his back, looking up into heaven." Because he knelt to pray, and then, after the vision, found himself upon his back, it is inferred that he underwent some paroxysm, that changed the posture of his body, and that this change was the result of an epileptic fit. But Joseph explains it all—he tells what he passed through. The power of the evil one fell upon him,—pounced upon him, and endeavored to destroy him. Is it any wonder that the posture of his body changed?

While wrestling with that dreadful power, which tied his tongue so that he could no longer speak, he continued to pray in his thoughts; for "prayer is the soul's sincere desire," and men can pray secretly as well as orally.—Joseph continued to pray, in secret, and at the moment when he felt that he must abandon himself to despair, he was delivered, he saw a light, he heard the voice, and communed in vision with those heavenly Beings. He received more than he asked for. His only desire, apparently, in going to the Lord at that time, was to ask which of all the churches was the right one, in order that he might join it. His question was answered, but it was not the greater part of that glorious manifestation. The part that was greatest was the part that did not speak. What he saw was greater than what he heard. He beheld the Father and the Son, and they were in the form of man—were

personages, to whom he spoke, and who spoke to him; and there and then was restored to earth, after ages of absence, the lost knowledge of the true God. But the skeptical say he only thought he saw these things—he imagined he beheld these personages; and the commentator already quoted made the profound discovery that it was during a fit of epilepsy that the boy became possessed of the idea that he had communed with heavenly beings. Anything but to receive the simple truth! Anything but to accept the word of a prophet, inspired by the Spirit of the Most High.

Did Joseph Smith see the Father and the Son with his natural eyes? No; Joseph Smith was a man like unto Moses, for just as Moses brought to the ancient world the lost knowledge of God, who commanded that men should have no other Gods before Him—so Joseph Smith brought back that same knowledge to the modern world. While translating the Book of Moses, Joseph rendered with his own mind this passage, in which Moses describes the manner and means by which he beheld Deity:

"But now, mine eyes have beheld God, yet not my natural but my spiritual eyes; for my natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in His presence." Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses, Chapter 1, Verse 11.

Joseph Smith being the interpreter of these words of Moses, we may reasonably conclude that the way in which he saw the Lord was the same way in which Moses had beheld him.

Moreover, Joseph himself, with Sidney Rigdon, thus testifies:

"We, Joseph Smith, Jr., and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the 16th of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened, and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God * * * And the record which we bear is the fulness of the Gospel of Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision." Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76, verses 11, 12 and 14.

There is the explanation of it. No imagination, and no epilepsy; it was an actual vision, but one seen with spiritual eyes. Were we not all spirits before we took these bodies? Did we not walk by sight while in the spirit world, keeping our first estate, proving our right, demonstrating our worthiness to come here and walk by faith, and keep, if possible, our second estate?

It must not be forgotten, either, that Joseph Smith had the powers of a seer—that he was "a choice seer," one doubtless prepared from the foundations of the world, to do the work he did, and to see what he saw. There may be such a thing as inherent power of seership, inherent in the spirit, for aught I know; but at all events we may reasonably conclude that this man came into the world to see, and was endowed with power by the God of heaven for that purpose; and there need be no strained attempt at explanation.

There is something so marvelous about it, however, and this is a day that questions marvels and miracles—that men would fain do away with it. It is too wonderful for modern

thought. Just as they would discard the divinity of Christ and do away with His miracles, so would they do away with the wonders that lie at the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

And yet, it was "a marvelous work and a wonder" that Isaiah predicted, when he foretold the work of the Lord as pertaining to these days—a work before which "the wisdom of the wise" should "perish," and "the understanding of the prudent" should "be hid." Then why marvel when the miracles begin, or rather, why reject those miracles? After reading the Bible for centuries, why is not the Christian world prepared for God's marvelous work and wonder, and why does it reject the testimony of his servants in relation to it? It was by the gift of seership, and by the power of the Holy Ghost that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son. And he beheld the angel Moroni by the same gift and power, and received from him the record plates of the Book of Mormon. He saw in like manner John the Baptist, and Peter, James and John, and received from them the Priesthoods of Aaron and Melchisedek, under which authority this Church was organized on the sixth of April of the year 1830.

I am told that Joseph Smith had such power as a seer, that after he had received from the angel those plates, he could sit in his father's humble cottage, while the record was secreted at a distance, and could read what was on the plates and relate it to those around him.

President Joseph F. Smith, with the late Orson Pratt, the Apostle, had an interview with David Whit-

mer, I believe in the year 1877, and he related to them a wonderful experience of his own, when he was sent from Fayette, New York, to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to bring Joseph Smith and his scribe Oliver Cowdery to his father's home, where they might continue in peace the work of translation. David Whitmer said:

"When I arrived at Harmony, Joseph and Oliver were coming towards me, and met me some distance from the house. Oliver told me that Joseph had informed him when I started from home, where I stopped the first night, how I read the sign at the tavern, where I stopped the next night, etc., and that I would be there that day before dinner; and this was why they had come out to meet me. All of which was exactly as Joseph had told Oliver, at which I was greatly astonished."

Six months after the Church was organized, Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and other Elders started upon a mission to the Lamanites; and, coming to Kirtland, in northern Ohio, they preached the Gospel there, and gathered into the fold quite a number, among them Edward Partridge, who became the first Bishop of the Church; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, and my grandfather, Newel K. Whitney, with his wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitney. These disciples, hearing that the Church would probably move westward, began to pray for the coming of the Prophet. I have heard my grandmother and my father relate that when the Prophet came to Kirtland he drove in a sleigh and halted in front of the mercantile store of Gilbert and

Whitney. He sprang out, went into the store, walked up to the junior partner, and said: "Newel K. Whitney, thou art the man." Grandfather was astonished; he had never seen Joseph Smith till then—Joseph had never seen him with his natural eyes—and he answered: "Stranger, you have the advantage of me; I could not call you by name, as you have me." And the stranger then said: "I am Joseph, the Prophet. You have prayed me here. Now, what do you want of me?"

By what power did this remarkable man, Joseph Smith, recognize one whom he had never before seen in the flesh? Why did not Newel K. Whitney recognize him? It was because Joseph Smith was a seer, a choice seer; he had actually seen Newel K. Whitney upon his knees, hundreds of miles away, praying for his coming to Kirtland. Marvelous—but true!

Another incident in my grandfather's experience with the Prophet shows further this power of seership. In the year 1832, after Newel K. Whitney had become Bishop of Kirtland, they went down to Independence, Missouri, where Edward Partridge was Bishop in Zion, and while returning Bishop Whitney met with a serious accident. The coach upon which they were traveling had a runaway. The Prophet leaped from the coach and cleared the wheels, but the Bishop, attempting to do likewise was caught in the wheel and his leg broken in several places. As a result of this accident they were detained several weeks at Greenville, Indiana, where they put up at a public house; Elder Rigdon, their traveling companion, meanwhile going on to Kirtland. An attempt was made upon the Prop-

et's life by poisoning, so that he deemed it prudent to leave the place as soon as possible, and he proposed to the Bishop that they go at once. What followed is thus recorded in the History of the Church, as compiled and edited by Brother B. H. Roberts. This is the Prophet's own language:

"Brother Whitney had not had his foot moved from the bed for nearly four weeks, when I went into his room, after a walk in the grove, and told him if he would agree to start for home in the morning, we would take a wagon to the river, about four miles, and there would be a ferry boat in waiting which would take us quickly across, where we would find a hack which would take us directly to the landing, where we should find a boat, in waiting, and we would be going up the river before 10 o'clock, and have a prosperous journey home. He took courage and told me he would go. We started next morning, and found everything as I had told him."—Volume I, page 272.

Instances might be multiplied, if necessary. Not only by the gift of prophecy, but by the power of seership, Joseph Smith was able to forecast the future. It was by that miraculous power that he saw the Father and the Son. It was by that wonderful power that he and Oliver Cowdery saw Jehovah, Moses and Elijah in the Kirtland temple; and by which also Joseph and Sidney gazed upon the glories of the celestial, terrestrial and teletial worlds. By that marvelous power the Prophet, in all probability, beheld the great organization of the Church of God in heaven; for while organizing the councils and quorums of the Priesthood, he said:

"And it is according to the vision, showing the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the Seventy."—Doctrine and Covenants, 107:93.

Now, if he saw the Seventies in vision, why not the Apostles? Why not the First Presidency? Why not the stakes and wards, with their presiding officers, and even the auxiliary organizations? Who can say that he did not see them? Who can say that these quorums of the Priesthood, these auxiliary societies and associations, the Church of God in its entirety as it exists upon the earth, is not a reflex of the Church of God in heaven, so far as it is adapted to our present conditions; so far as it has been found necessary to organize it here; the eventual outcome to be a perfect Church, corresponding in every particular to the Church of the First Born; and this that the will of God may be done upon earth even as it is done in heaven?

Now, my brethren and sisters, I have never seen Joseph Smith; but I believe in him just as firmly and fervently as if I had seen him; I love him and revere his memory just as much as if I had known him in the flesh. I never saw Jesus Christ as Joseph Smith saw him. My gifts are different. I am not worthy, perhaps, of such an honor. If I have seen the Lord, it was in a dream; but it was enough—it was powerful enough for me. I saw Him, and I conversed with Him, and He told me what to do—but it was only a dream. I used to think that if any good boy would go and pray, the Lord would show Himself and speak to him just as freely as He did to Joseph. It was a

childish thought, and when I became a man I put away childish things. We all have access unto God. We can all receive revelation from Him, as President Smith has assured us; but men are not all the same; they do not all possess the same gifts, the same powers, the same privileges. There is one Spirit, but a diversity of gifts and manifestations. And when the Lord answers your prayers and mine, He will give to us, or send to us, or speak or otherwise manifest to us, according to our gifts, our capacities—and not those of someone else. But we can all have a testimony that this is God's work. I have that testimony. I believe this to be the work of the Lord. My name may be cast out as evil for that belief; I accept the issue; I believe this to be God's work; I know it is God's work; and I know that God knows that I know it; and I cannot and would not deny it for all the world. Amen.

Brother Leslie Hickman sang the sacred selection "Hosannah," as a tenor solo.

ELDER DAVID O. M'KAY.

Simple faith of the child should be emulated.—Surprising continuation of canards against the Church.—Utah publicity movement commended.—Advantages of residence in Utah enumerated.—Tribute to high character of Utah's "Mormon" citizens.—Futility of efforts to destroy the Church.

My heart is filled with joy for the rich outpouring of the Spirit of God during these meetings. Seldom if ever have I been more deeply impressed with the glorious and beautiful possibilities of the gospel of

Jesus Christ than I have during the sessions of this most successful conference. Oh, I am thankful to the Lord for my membership in the Church. I appreciate the fellowship and brotherly love of the servants of God. I have rejoiced at the glorious truths so eloquently portrayed to us by my beloved brother Whitney. I was particularly impressed with the simple remark that he used to believe, as a child, that he could go to God and talk to Him as he could talk to his earthly father or to an associate. In my soul I said, "and you could." I know that the simple faith of a child is answered by our kind Father in heaven in blessings and comfort to the little child. I will bear my testimony to that before this vast congregation. I know that God hears and answers the prayers of the child. I remember lying one night, trembling with fear. As a child I was naturally, or unnaturally afraid of the darkness, and would frequently lie wondering about burglars "bug-a-boos" and unseen influences. So I lay this night completely unnerved; but I had been taught that God would answer prayer. Summoning strength I arose from the bed, knelt down in the darkness, and prayed to God to remove that feeling of fear; and I heard as plainly as you hear my voice this afternoon, "Don't be afraid nothing will hurt you." Oh, yes, some may say—"simply the imagination." Say what you will, I know that to my soul came the sweet peace of a child's prayer answered. That is the faith which is inculcated into the minds of the Mormon boys and girls in every Latter-day Saint home throughout the land. I submit that where children are brought up in