

SECOND DAY.

In the Tabernacle, Saturday, April 6, 1918, 10 a. m.

The assembly was called to order by President Joseph F. Smith.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn: "Come let us anew our journey pursue."

Prayer was offered by President Edward H. Snow, of the St. George stake of Zion.

The hymn, "Guide us, O thou great Jehovah," was sung by the choir and congregation.

ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH.

Meditation on the passing of Elder Hyrum M. Smith—Love of the brethren—Gratitude for the restoration of the gospel—Men and women prone to turn away from righteousness and listen to the promptings of the evil one who minimizes sin and urges justification for committing just a little sin—Illustrations—to preserve men from Satan and his insidious ways, the gospel has been restored—God has said, "This is the path, walk ye in it"—Admonition to the Saints to do their duty—A prayer for the leaders and people of the Church.

I crave an interest in your faith and prayers, that the Lord will direct what I may say, that it may be profitable to the thousands of faithful Latter-day Saints who are assembled here in the worship of the Lord. My heart is very tender this morning. While sitting here yesterday and today I thought of how little we know of what awaits us or how long we will be here on earth. But for a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I would be

filled with sorrow, remembering as I do that one of our beloved brethren who occupied this position just six months ago this Saturday morning has been called home. It seems but a few days since Elder Hyrum M. Smith stood here where I stand, about this hour in the day, and delivered to us, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, his message to the Latter-day Saints. It is true that his voice is stilled as far as we are concerned here, but the teachings that he advocated on that day are not stilled, and no doubt there are many in this audience who will remember the very topics that he touched upon on that occasion. If you do not remember, let me refresh your minds just a little. He referred to the fact that Solomon did not pray for riches, did not pray for honors, but he prayed for an understanding heart, and God told him that because he had prayed for that desirable thing, that he had not only given to him an understanding heart, but that he had given him, in addition, honor and riches, and that not any of the kings of his time would be like unto him. Another thing Brother Hyrum referred to was the teaching of Moses, wherein, after advising the people and admonishing them, he said, "And teach these things to your sons and to your sons' sons." I think that is a splendid precept for Israel to remember today, that we explain in kindness and love the gospel of our Lord, not only to our sons, but to our sons' sons, and I would like to add, to our daughters, to our

neighbors' sons and to all that it is possible for us to reach. Then Elder Hyrum referred to the teachings of the greatest of all men who have lived upon the earth, Jesus of Nazareth, wherein he said, "Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," and he also taught them "By their fruits ye shall know them." Now, these instructions have been handed down in holy writ and were repeated by our esteemed associate just six months ago. Do you suppose that the teachings of that good man will be forgotten by Israel? I think not, and he will be held in loving remembrance. We honor and respect him and love and appreciate him for the good that he did and the example that he set us. There is no occasion for us to mourn his calling away, on his account, for his work was done, and our Father will give to him the things that he has labored for. I feel this morning to say that the splendid work he performed could not have been done so acceptably but for the noble woman who stood by his side and who assisted him and encouraged him and labored with him and kept his home and taught his children. But for her, the work that he performed could not have been accomplished; and I thank God this morning that he has a son who gives promise of walking in the footsteps of his father, that he has children who, because of their love and esteem for the good man whose work is done, will delight in honoring his name. I am thankful, I say, for them, and pray God to bless them, that the name of Hyrum M. Smith may re-

main and be remembered in love among the Latter-day Saints because of the family that he leaves to represent him in the world.

Now, my brethren and sisters, perhaps you will understand when I tell you that my heart is tender this morning. I love my brethren, and I am grateful for the privilege of standing at the side of men such as have led and now lead this Church. I am grateful for my membership in this organization, and thankful for your companionship, as I travel among you in the stakes and wards of Zion. God bless you, my brethren and sisters, who minister to us who are so much of the time absent from our homes.

Yesterday, as our beloved President began to address us, my heart was touched. I realized how he was suffering the weaknesses that are natural to men at this time of life, and as he continued his remarks I believe you, with me, offered a prayer that God would strengthen him and make him equal to the duty of presiding over this conference, and that he would feel no bad effects from that long and beautiful address; and this morning he is with us, and I am grateful he says that he feels much better than he did yesterday.

This is our Father's work that has brought us together here today. While this world is in confusion, here under the shades of this great dome we have met together to worship God and to honor him and to listen to the whisperings of his Spirit made manifest through those who may be called to address us. We are here not with doubt in our minds that there is a God in heaven, we know that there is, and we know, as we know that we live, that

this work with which we are identified is our Father's work; he began it and he sent his only begotten Son into the world to prepare the way, and that in this latter day he called the Prophet Joseph Smith and taught him, as a kind and loving father teaches a choice and favored son, the things that touch our hearts and that have inspired in us a desire to do our best. God lives, and his hand is over this world, and the conditions that confront us today will result in repentance and softening of the hearts of his children, and many will turn from the error of their ways and forsake evil and desire to know what he would have them do. As I see men and women everywhere groping for the wall, oh, how grateful am I that those who were my ancestors received this gospel of our Lord, knew the voice of the good Shepherd and followed it, and that my heritage has been to be reared among a people better than whom there are not in the world today. All these things soften my feelings and mellow my heart and I am grateful to the Lord this morning for his mercies. You know the people of the world, our brethren and sisters, many of them have been deceived by the cunning of the adversary, and they are led here and there and their time is wasted, while they live upon the earth, that might be profitably spent, not only to their own benefit, but to the benefit of their fellows, if they but understood and lived the gospel of Jesus Christ. The adversary does not take them forcefully and prevent them understanding the truth, but in an insidious and underhand way he whispers to them to do this thing and that. He poisons their minds against the things that are

true. He makes unpopular those things that are desirable to the children of men, and then, because of the habit of men and women to follow the fashion and custom of the world and listen to the sophistry of those who are prominent, he is able to lead them along a pathway that prevents them taking advantage of life and gaining the object of their creation in the world. It is not only now that this is the case, but it has been so from the beginning. When Abel was out with his flocks, and his brother Cain saw that he was favored of the Lord because he did right, the adversary whispered to Cain, "You can just as well have these flocks, nobody will know if you slay your brother," and he took his life. And what did he gain? He didn't gain anything, but he lost the blessing of his heavenly Father. He took that which he could not give and became a murderer and from henceforth his name is known in the earth as one who had departed from the right and had committed an awful crime.

So it has been all the way down from that day until now. When the Lord sent Noah among the children of men to warn them and to teach them and to encourage them to works of righteousness, they turned away from him, they didn't believe he was a prophet of God. The adversary whispered in their ears, "Why, this man is only an ordinary man, he has no right to speak in the name of the Lord, surely you will pay no attention to him," and his mission was made unpopular by the cunning of the adversary. Men and women in their sins continued sinful and failed to listen to the warning voice of a prophet of God, and the result was that the Lord could do nothing with them until

they were repentant. He saw the futility of working with them because they were wilfully in the hands of the adversary, and so he covered the earth with a great flood, gathering just a little handful of people to re-people the earth, because it was necessary that good men and good women should transmit to posterity the virtues that they inherited when they were created in the spirit world. And so it has ever been. In the time of the Savior the adversary whispered to those people, he is not the Son of God, surely you will not accept him, he is just an ordinary man, he is only the son of Mary and Joseph and he is not any more the Son of God than you are, and the people listened to that insidious, wicked one and crucified the Redeemer of mankind. The condition of the world today is predicted in the Book of Mormon, the same thing exactly that I have just referred to. When Nephi was teaching the people and trying to show them the necessity of living near to the Lord, not to surrender to the promptings of evil, teaching them the necessity of keeping all the commandments of God, pointing out to them that the thing that encouraged good always came from our heavenly Father, and that anything that enticed them to evil came from the adversary and they were not safe the moment they went into the devil's territory. This is what he says, referring to the time when the Book of Mormon should be brought forth, when the record should be taken out among the children of men, when the things that were in the book that were of great worth to the children of men should begin to be made known, and he speaks very plainly in this the 28th chapter of II Nephi:

"For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other, Behold, I am the Lord's, and the other shall say, I am the Lord's. And thus shall everyone say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord."

Now, the Prophet Nephi, hundreds of years ago, saw what would occur, that the people were to contend with one another and deny the power of the Holy Ghost and the Holy One of Israel, and were to teach for doctrine the commandments of men. An influence is in the world today trying to make people believe that by their own intelligence and by their own power they can gain eternal life. Let me continue to read from Nephi:

"And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink and be merry, nevertheless fear God, he will justify in committing a little sin."

I want you to note that: "He will justify in committing a little sin." That cunning adversary knowing that if he could only get a man or woman to do a little wrong, that far they had gone into his territory, that far they were in his power.

"Nevertheless, fear God, he will justify in committing a little sin, yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this. And do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the Kingdom of God."

Isn't that just exactly what the devil says to the children of men today as plainly as it is written here? Oh, commit a little sin, that won't do any harm, lie a little, that won't do any particular damage, the-

Lord will forgive that and you will only be beaten with a few stripes and at last you shall be saved in the kingdom of God. That is what he says to the man or the woman who has been taught the Word of Wisdom when he says, oh, drink a little tea, that won't hurt you; use a little tobacco, that won't make any difference; a little liquor won't do any harm. These are little things; he always does it a little at a time, not all at once. That is what I would like us to remember, my brethren, this morning. It is these insignificant insidious whisperings that betray mankind and that place us in the power of the devil. I want to say to you, in my judgment, that the use of tobacco, a little thing as it seems to some men, has been the means of destroying their spiritual life, has been the means of driving from them the companionship of the Spirit of our Father, has alienated them from the society of good men and women, and has brought upon them the disregard and reproach of the children that have been born to them, and yet the devil will say to a man, Oh, it's only a little thing! And Nephi says further:

"And others will he pacify and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea Zion prospereth, all is well; and thus the devil cheateth their souls."

Now, I want you to note that: "And thus the devil cheateth their souls and leadeth them away carefully down to hell." And that is the way he does it, that's exactly the way he does it. He does not come and grab you bodily and take you into his territory, but he whispers, "Do this little evil," and when he succeeds in that, another little evil and another, and, to use the ex-

pression quoted, "He cheateth their souls." That's what he does. He makes you believe that you are gaining something when you are losing. So it is every time we fail to observe a law of God or keep a commandment, we are being cheated, because there is no gain in this world or in the world to come but by obedience to the law of our heavenly Father. Then again, that peculiar suggestion, "And he leadeth them *carefully* away down to hell" is significant, that is his method. Men and women in the world today are subject to that influence, and they are being drawn here and there, and that whispering is going on and they do not understand what the Lord desires them to do, but they continue in the territory of the evil one, subject to his power where the Spirit of the Lord will not go. He says further:

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell."

Isn't that what the world is taught today? These higher critics, these agnostics, who do not believe in God, man, nor the devil, as far as that is concerned, except what they see. Are they not saying, "There is no hell?" And Nephi here tells us it is the devil that teaches them that.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none; and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance."

Now, my brethren and sisters, that is the condition of the world today. Nephi could not have stated it plainer if he had been right here

in the world now. And the adversary is at work, and because our heavenly Father desired to preserve his children from the evil of that teaching and of that belief he sent the boy prophet, Joseph Smith, into the world, commissioned him with divine authority, organized his Church, and began again to teach the truth to the children of men, that they might be led from the error of their ways. That mission evolves upon you. You have received the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, most of you; you have been commissioned by divine authority, and the Lord will hold us—I myself am with you in that, I realize—will hold all men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood in this Church responsible for the treatment of that priesthood and for the care with which we exercise it among the children of men. Now, my brethren and sisters, was there ever a time in the history of the world when there was greater need for men and women to serve the Lord and keep his commandments? Look at the world today; millions of men arrayed against each other striving to destroy life. Why? Because the adversary is whispering to them, "This is the thing to do." I want to tell you that this war will not cease and the strife in this world will not end until the children of men repent of their sins and turn to God and serve him and keep his commandments; and in the words of Patrick Henry, "Men may cry peace, peace, but there is not peace" until the children of men conform their lives to the teachings of the Father of us all, who gave us our being and who placed within our reach wholesome advice and counsel from the creation until now, and

has said to us, "This is the path, walk ye in it."

Now, my brethren and sisters, surely we will do our duty as elders in Israel and as members of the fold of Christ. Our Father in heaven has given us the knowledge, has given us the authority, has called us together in the valleys of these grand mountains, and has given us shepherds after his own heart. Let us live as we ought to live, let us honor each other as we ought to do, let us sustain this Government that has been so generous to us as we ought to sustain it; and if we are not required to give of our family, if we have not sons to send, then let us give part of our substance to comfort the sons of other men and to make it possible for liberty to be in the world.

I pray that the blessings of our Father may remain with the Latter-day Saints, and they will if we will be faithful. I pray that our Father will bless the man who presides over this Church, that he will rebuke the weaknesses that the flesh is heir to and that have taken possession of him, that he will make him well and strong and continue to him the joy and the satisfaction that he has had in ministering to us, all these years. I pray that his counselors may be similarly remembered and that they may rejoice together to preside over us and direct us as long as they desire to remain with us. And may peace and comfort and satisfaction be upon all the hosts of Israel because of their faith and devotion, and may we repent of our sins that the Lord may minister to us in a greater measure in the future than in the past; that our sons and daughters, growing up under our influence, may become a valiant

army prepared, by reason of their faith and knowledge, of the power of God, to carry his message to the nations of the earth and promulgate it where it has not been heard before, and establish it to the honor and glory of God, and to the salvation of the children of men, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER SAMUEL O. BENNION.

(President of the Central States Mission)

I esteem it a great privilege, my brethren and sisters and friends, to have the honor of attending this conference. It looked a few days ago as if I should not be able to be here, but through the prayers of faith, I have been permitted to attend thus far. I have listened with interest to the remarks of my brethren who have preceded me, and was greatly impressed by the exhortation and teaching of President Smith that men and women should provide for themselves and produce many things that they need so that they will not have to buy them; also that they should patronize home industries.

In the mission field where I labor we encourage the people to grow the crops that are necessary to produce a living. Our people in the south usually grow cotton; it is the cash crop. They have been there for many years as renters, and as their landlords have generally prescribed the crop they are to raise, they have been forced to raise cotton, using all the money they could get out of that cotton to buy food-stuffs for their families and forage for their animals, paying high prices for it, when they might have

produced these things themselves. But while this custom in the past has brought great hardships on them it has been a great labor to induce them to change their method of farming. However, in the past year, notwithstanding the great drought in the south, hundreds of people there raised their own forage, and have not had to buy the hay that has cost so much money and kept them so poor. They have yielded to the law of obedience and they have found that therein lies the only safety. That has always been my belief. I have learned in my experience that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. I also believe that the scriptures the Lord has revealed unto us in this dispensation are more essential for us to become acquainted with than anything we may think of in temporal ways. I believe that men and women ought to prepare themselves—that they ought to know something about the gospel of Christ, and why they are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or "Mormons," as we are commonly called in the world. We ought to take advantage of opportunities that are offered us from time to time to learn more of the gospel and to become acquainted with the truths contained therein. It is just as necessary for us to learn the words of life that will bring us spiritual glory and exaltation as it is to labor hard for temporal things. We need the temporal things of life as taught in this Church, but we ought not to let the spiritual side of life go undeveloped. I believe that men and women can be led and are led too much into the ways of money-making and accumulating of means, to