

THE ADVANTAGES AND BLESSINGS OF CHURCH GATHERINGS

Now, brethren, I am afraid my voice doesn't reach you all. I am glad to see this congregation. I know that you came to learn more of the ways of the Lord and to worship him. What a splendid thing it was that the Lord in the very opening revelation in April, 1830, gave us the command, that we should meet in conference every three months, or at times appointed. We come together, we meet friends, we talk over past times; those who are a little wayward get strengthened and encouraged to take a right course, and the Saints rejoice in learning what the Church is doing, and to know that they are in accord with the spirit of the work.

When the tribes of Israel rebelled in the days of Rehoboam they followed Jeroboam, who led them into idolatry. A few years before, they had helped to build that beautiful temple, Solomon's temple, and they had rejoiced in going there. It was a command of God that they should go every year and make an offering in the temple of the Lord. Jeroboam realized what that meant. If his subjects should go to Jerusalem, they would soon go back again and join with the two tribes in their worship, and his power over them would be lost, so he established places of worship on mountains in his own country to keep them away from the temple of God in Jerusalem.

Now, we love to see our people come here to our conferences, and we know that they feel blessed in coming, and that when they return home the spirit of the conference will follow them.

God bless you, brethren and sisters, help us to be faithful and true in our covenants with the Lord, and to so live that when life is ended we may feel that we have done the best we have understood, I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT CHARLES W. PENROSE.

It would be very difficult for me, and I believe for any one of our brethren to express the joy and gratitude which well up in our hearts this morning in beholding the form and features and hearing the voice of our beloved president.

THE PEOPLE'S LOVE FOR PRESIDENT SMITH

We have sympathized with him in his affliction, and have earnestly desired that he might be touched by the healing power of God, so that his days might be prolonged on the earth, and that he might be spared to be with us again to give us instructions, to preside over the Church and all its affairs, as he has done so well in the past; and the Lord has heard our prayers, to the extent, at least, that he is present with us this morning. This has been the desire of the Latter-day Saints everywhere, I believe also, the desire of many people who are not members of our Church. They have learned to love and respect President Smith, and I have heard from many of them the earnest wish that he might

fully recover. We value him not only as a man clothed upon with the Holy Priesthood and holding the keys of the kingdom of God on the earth, but we love him for himself; and those of us who have been with him so much in the past and know of his labors from boyhood up to the present time, feel very thankful this morning to God that he is with us, and hope and desire that his days may be still prolonged, that he may be able to accomplish all that he has in his heart to do, and that we may be blessed with his presence and teachings.

A REPRESENTATIVE CONGREGATION

This congregation this morning and those who will be here during the sessions of this conference are representative people. We represent the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in all the world. We have people here from all the stakes of Zion, from the various missions abroad, acting in different capacities where they dwell, and they are here to represent those among whom they live as well as being present themselves. And this is a very important gathering. I hope we will all hear with prayerful hearts and recipient souls, so that we may receive the word of the Lord through our faith, and that what we hear we may remember, and that the spirit of it, if not the actual words, may be carried to every part of the Church where these representative people reside.

OUR WORK DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

This work in which we are engaged is altogether different in many respects from any other religious organization in the world. This we should feel in our hearts, and the testimony we have received concerning it should have weight upon our minds. Every person who has been baptized into this Church and confirmed as a member, and especially those who have been ordained to any office in the priesthood, have a mission to perform in the world. This gospel is to be sent to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. This was the voice of the angel that came to the Prophet Joseph in his boyhood in revealing the place where the plates were, the language of which has been translated into English and called the Book of Mormon. We have the gospel to present to the world, to all nations, to every class and kind of people, to the Christian world and to the heathen world, to the preachers as well as to the people. While we do not despise the teachings of good men in the various Christian sects or in the various sects in heathendom, when they endeavor to enlighten the minds of mankind, when they desire to benefit the people, but feel in our hearts to bless them so far as they are sincere and earnest in their work; at the same time, we must not lose sight of the fact that this organization to which we belong, of which we are members and should be active workers in, is the only Church upon the face of earth with which the Lord has declared he is pleased, well pleased, when the people do right, that this is the only Church of Jesus Christ on the face of the earth. There could not be a dozen or even two different churches of Christ. There could not be two different religions from God, the

Father. Our common sense tells us this, if there were no particular revelations to that effect.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We should understand that we are called of God to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow in his footsteps as far as we are able to do so; that we should embody his character, that we should observe the law of obedience to God as he observed it; understand that we came here not to do our own will unless it be like God's will, in conformity therewith, in harmony with him and his purposes; that we came here for this purpose, to learn the ways of God and to walk in the path that he marks out for us. And the Church is organized to that end, to carry and to send forth the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of salvation, to all peoples upon the face of the earth, to every country, to the islands of the sea, the continents, and every part of this globe where there are people dwelling. This is our mission, and those of us who cannot go there should do everything in our power with all our hearts to send the gospel there; and, as President Lund has intimated to us this morning, when able men, men who are able to carry this gospel and to preach it in plainness, by authority and in the power of God, are not able financially to perform this duty, they should be aided by their brethren and sisters at home. We have proven how easy it is comparatively to raise funds for different purposes, worthy purposes. Israel has responded to the call of the Nation. This is right, part of our duty, but it just shows to us what we can do when we get the spirit of a work; and there are means enough that can be raised from the ranks of Israel to send just as many elders as we are able to send in these times at any rate, abroad in the world and sustain them or sustain their families at home while they are away.

THE DUTY OF THE SEVENTIES

I might say that this work ought to, in my opinion, devolve largely upon the different quorums of seventies in the Church. This is a wonderful organization in every respect, and the seventies, those elders who are called to compose quorums of seventies, elders presided over each one by seven of its number, should have it in their hearts to send this gospel to the ends of the earth. That is what they are for; that is their special calling. Every elder has received authority from God to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and to be a minister of the Most High, whether he be a standing minister in the stakes of Zion or is sent forth by proper authority to different parts in the world; but especially the seventies in the Church are called and appointed and ordained to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth under the direction of the Twelve apostles.

This is part of the system to which we belong. What a beautiful system it is! Provision made in it for carrying the gospel abroad and for preaching to the people at home, and for setting in order the people in all the different parts of Zion, and for the establishment of the purposes of the Almighty, all in perfect order. If you would all keep in the order that is appointed by revelation from on high, there would be no

trouble among us, all the powers and authorities vested in different callings in the Church, but all would work in perfect harmony, and it does to a very large extent. We only have a little ripple now and then from persons who are either not fully informed or become ambitious, wish to step out of their place and do that for which they have not been appointed.

OUR AUTHORITY DIVINE

Now, my brethren and sisters, this morning I rejoice in the testimony in my heart of the divinity of this work, and of this great fact that we are representing the only Church under the direction personally of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, which is recognized on high. The power and authority has come from on high to the leaders of this Church to seal on earth, and what they seal in the way appointed will be sealed in heaven; to loose on earth when it becomes proper and necessary, and it shall be loosed in heaven. We work together with the powers on high. The authority given by the Lord to us is divine authority. It is not the authority of men although it is given to men. Men are called and ordained to different offices in the holy priesthood that they may labor for the salvation of souls, not only for the living but also for the dead.

THE DUTY OF THE PRESENT

Our work goes back to our ancestry, to former generations as far as we can extend it. It also goes forward for the benefit of our posterity, and we stand here on the earth between these two seas, not "unbounded" seas, as we used to sing in one of the old sectarian hymns—"On two unbounded seas I stand" was one of the songs that used to be sung in the old Dissenting churches; of course that is an absurdity—but we do stand between the past and the future. We, who are here today in the present, not only have a duty to perform in carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ as it has been restored in the latter days, to all the world, but to labor for the salvation of our ancestors by attending to ordinances for them which they could not now perform, being in the spirit world; also to lay a foundation for our posterity to walk in our ways as far as we do right, to learn to keep God's commandments and, when we pass away, to bear off this kingdom and carry it to a consummation under the direction of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who is perfect in his obedience to the great Eternal Father whom we worship.

DOCTRINES REVEALED FROM GOD

The doctrines of the Church that have been given to us have been revealed from God. The doctrine of faith—real faith, not mere belief, but real, whole-souled faith in the Supreme Being, the Father of us all in our spirit state; to have faith in him and in his Son Jesus Christ, who represents him fully and completely in personality, in appearance, in form, in feature, in spirit and in power, and is appointed to be the manifestation of God in the flesh. He has ended his mission on earth; he is

filling it on high; he kept every commandment of God before he came into the world; he kept the commandments of God while he was here, and has continued to be subservient to his Father in heaven, so that they two are one, and the Holy Ghost, the third person in the holy Trinity—a personage of spirit—is one with them; and by the power that emanates from Deity the worlds are created and peopled and led on from stage to stage in progress towards perfection, all to be obedient to the eternal principles of right embodied in the personages of the Trinity, our Father, our Elder Brother, and the Holy Ghost. From them proceeds that universal essence or spirit, the Holy Spirit, which is “in all things and through all things and round about all things,” and as we are told in God’s revelation to us, “is the law by which all things are governed.”

The Lord has revealed to us through the prophet Joseph that by the power of that Spirit he created all things, firstly spiritual and afterwards temporal. That is boundless; wherever there is space, that Spirit is, so that there are kingdoms everywhere, as the revelation says: “There is no space in which there is no kingdom, and there is no kingdom in which there is no space;” and this universal Spirit, which is the Spirit of life, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of truth, is the vital principle that animates all things organized under the direction of our Father and those associated with him, and is the one eternal Spirit by which things that are spiritual are manifest to those who are temporal. Now, that Spirit is with the Saints in its higher forms, in its higher gifts, in its higher manifestations. It is sealed upon us by the laying on of hands after we are baptized, as a heavenly gift, an abiding witness, and the doctrine of faith in Christ has to be taught to all the world as plainly as we can make it clear, to overcome the fallacies existing in the world—in the Christian nations and in the heathen nations—about an impersonal deity, about something which is nothing, a blank contradiction, that error may be dispelled, that darkness may be rolled away from the minds of the children of men, and the light of the everlasting gospel shall shine in, that they may learn something about God their Father, something about their origin, something about their duty, and something about their destiny.

EVERY MAN SHOULD LEARN HIS DUTY

This work belongs to us who are here today, and those whom we represent in the different parts of the Church; and every man should learn his standing in the priesthood which is given to him, learn his duties. He can read most of them from the Doctrine and Covenants, which God has given to us as a sacred book, one of the written standards of the Church, which with the Bible and the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price comprehends the written standards. And we are not bound to receive every book that somebody publishes with his own personal views and notions to lead people astray and to glorify himself. Every man should learn his duty from that which God has revealed, and there is plenty revealed to enable us to understand our callings, our duties, our powers in the priesthood, and its limits. We are to advocate the freedom of con-

science, and the freedom of speech and of good law. The freedom of speech should not be extended to license, whether it be by word of mouth or by the press, but that liberty which God designs for his children to have is embodied in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that our gospel is a gospel of liberty. It preaches liberty from sin, shows how people may repent, how they may turn away from evil doings so as to preserve their bodies as well as their spirits in purity before the Lord so that they may be quickened by his Spirit and learn of him, and come into sweet communion with him, and learn by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to them individually what they are required to do. Every man should understand that. Besides that, there is order in the Church, by which the law of the Lord can be made known to the members of the Church, and the man who stands at the head holds the keys thereof. If we would all do that it would save a great deal of trouble and would accomplish a great deal of good.

OUR CHURCH IS DIVINE

Now, I desire this morning in my heart that all persons who attend this conference shall go away feeling the fact to be clear to their minds and burning in their souls, that this Church to which we belong is a divine Church. It is not a church of men. It is a Church from God, revealed by Jesus Christ and by those whom he has appointed. He visited the Prophet Joseph, personally, and the priesthood itself came from on high, and was bestowed by the laying on of hands upon the Prophet Joseph, by beings who held the keys, and has come down from him to us and is the same to us as it was to him and the brethren associated with him in the early rise of the Church. It is called the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, because Melchizedek was a very great and effective high priest, and the priesthood after the order of Aaron is so named because he was in a large degree a leading faithful priest. Some things he did that were wrong, like Moses did, and they were chastised for their misdeeds and weaknesses, but this priesthood is that which they held, and it is the only authority that God has given to man on the earth to represent him and to administer the ordinances of the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, in those things that the Lord has specially required to be done in that order.

OUR DUTY UNDER THIS KNOWLEDGE

And, this work should be rooted in our hearts. We have a duty to perform. We are here to do it. That is what we are here for on the earth. The Lord kept our spirits back to this dispensation, that we might come here and aid in the building up of his kingdom and bringing about his purposes, which are all bound up in the redemption of the race, as President Lund has told us this morning, for the salvation of all mankind, with only a few exceptions. Everything is to be saved that can be saved, and only those who will utterly rebel against the principles of salvation will be ultimately lost and "go away with the devil and his

angels in eternity, to suffer the wrath of God;" they are to receive the penalty that is their portion, but all the rest are to come forth, every man in his order, and be judged according to his works, and when he has received the proper penalty or has been forgiven through deep and earnest and real repentance, and turns unto God and bows the knee and is willing to do all things that the Lord commands, then all these can be brought up into some place or position where they can glorify God, and enjoy their own existence, and unite with their kind in the kingdom or order to which they are appointed, and in which they receive a just degree of glory.

This is a great and mighty work because it is divine, and we should carry that knowledge with us. While we treat everybody in the world with proper respect, respecting their feelings, respecting their notions and ideas, as far as they are worthy of any respect—we do not wish to interfere with the mode of worship or anything in which they may engage that is lawful—at the same time we have to remember the fact that we are the people of the Lord, and that we are here and are baptized into His Church, and ordained to the priesthood or appointed in the several auxiliary societies, that we may be saviors of men and of women and of children, and that we may plant in the earth a structure that cannot be uprooted, the benefits of which will go to our posterity and reach back to our ancestors for generations that are past. It is a splendid work. There is no language in which its greatness can be properly extolled and glorified and explained, because it is divine, and carries the mark of divinity in every part of its organism, in all its doctrines and precepts and ordinances and ceremonies, all of which are from God and not from man.

OUR MISSION THE SALVATION OF SOULS

Now, brethren and sisters, this is our mission on the earth, to labor for the salvation of souls, to do good and fear not, to stand, each man and woman in his or her lot and place, and labor for the redemption of the race, under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master. It is a splendid work in which to be engaged. I have been in it for a long time, and I can say that I have more joy, and always have, in carrying the gospel to people afar off, or preaching it to people at home, when I have the spirit of it, than in anything else that I have been engaged in at any time. There is a joy, a complete satisfaction and contentment of soul in laboring for this cause, that does not go with anything else in the world. This will be our payment right here, if we get no other pay, but the glory that is to come, oh! if we could only express what we can see and feel of it, I think we would enthuse other people. I think we would inspire them to works of righteousness, and to join in and bring about the purposes of the Almighty, because this work is to go on forever and ever, and there is no end to it. This work will go on in the worlds that are to come, and our posterity, if they are only trained up in the right way and will walk in the path of righteousness, will help to carry this on, generation after generation, eternity after eternity, and there is no end of it.

ETERNAL OR CELESTIAL MARRIAGE

One of the greatest manifestations of the mind and will of God to this Church is in the doctrine revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith on eternal or celestial marriage. This ought to be impressed on the minds of our children, our boys and our girls. Not merely as a matter of duty should they receive the ordinance of eternal matrimony, but as a great delight, as a privilege. Thankful they should be in their hearts that they can be worthy of receiving that great blessing—a man to have a wife sealed to him by the holy order of God, by that which is from all eternity, by the power of the eternal priesthood, which is without beginning of days or end of years, and that this shall be recorded on earth and recorded in heaven. It shall be sealed on earth by the power of the Most High in men appointed to perform it, and sealed in heaven to stand forever, both beyond the veil and in and after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. What a privilege for men and women to be sealed together by the holy order of God in holy matrimony, loving one another with all their hearts, putting down every feeling of discord that may arise, subduing every feeling of personality wherein they disagree, trying to harmonize in the household and build upon a foundation that shall never be destroyed, that the children after them shall come forth in purity to serve the Lord, to spread his gospel in the world, and in the world to come shall be with them in the holy patriarchal order of the family relation, and that they shall increase, worlds without end, in their posterity, in knowledge, in wisdom, in understanding, in dominion; in power, in glory, and in close intercourse with the great Eternal Father and beings of his character. That is what is involved in this splendid order of celestial marriage.

When I speak of "celestial marriage" I mean just as we can read about it in the 132nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants. It is given as a commandment; that is, this celestial marriage, which is eternal marriage, marriage for time and all eternity. That is necessary for a man and a woman to attain to the highest degree of glory in the celestial world. If they do not receive it in their hearts they are damned, or condemned, because if they do not receive it then they cannot go further; their relations will end at death. But if they are united by the holy order of God, by that power which is from all eternity, ordained, as Jesus said, by him and his Father before the world was, it shall abide in death and it shall abide in and after the resurrection. The children, the posterity of the persons thus joined, shall belong to them, to one another, and with that order they will progress in all things and have an endless posterity while eternal ages roll along. That is a privilege. We need not class it as a duty, although it is, for it is a commandment of God.

PLURAL MARRIAGES NO LONGER SOLEMNIZED

There is another portion of that revelation which relates to further orders in that holy order of marriage which is under special direction, the power and keys of which are confined to one individual, who is the

President of the Church. Read it carefully. The keys of that power are given only to one man at a time on the earth, and you will see sometime, if you cannot now, the wisdom of that law. He holds the key of that power, and when he turns it, as Brother Woodruff did, it closes the door. He issued a manifesto which was adopted by the Church, that plural marriages should no longer be solemnized, because the highest court, the court of last resort in this land, passed upon the laws that had been enacted by Congress, and pronounced them constitutional, then we submitted to the law of the land, as we are told to do in the revelations of God, and to the authority that belongs to the one man in the law of God. Now then, when you hear of people—I want to refer to this as clearly as possible, and I find it necessary to do it because of some recent occurrences—when men go around and whisper in the ears of the people that this thing is all right if you can keep it secret; keep it from the man that holds the keys—Think of it!—if you can keep it from him, don't say anything to him about it; it is all right. Such deception has been exposed and condemned several times, but it is cropping out again.

President Lorenzo Snow, in the year 1900, the 8th day of January, issued a statement through the *Deseret News*, announcing that plural marriages were positively forbidden. They were stopped before that, of course, and the congregation in conference assembled endorsed the decision of President Wilford Woodruff, who held the keys, that this kind of marriages should be permitted no longer. President Lorenzo Snow, on the date named, published in the *Deseret News* a statement to the effect and told the brethren everywhere that if they entered into that kind of marriage it would be at their own risk under the law, for the law is against it, the law of the land and the law of the Church; and when people are inveigled into any relation of plural marriage by persons pretending to have a right to do it, they are led astray, and I am afraid when they are, they are very willing to be led astray, at least in some instances, but there are only a few such cases to be heard of nowadays, and yet they continue. There are persons who claim to hold the priesthood, who go around among the people and tell them it is all right and that it can be done.

President Joseph F. Smith, in 1904—he had spoken about this before, but he then issued a public manifestation which also was published in the *Deseret News*, proclaiming to all the Church that there was not one man in the Church that had any right to administer that order of marriage, and yet such things have been done since that time, and we hear now that it is springing up again, and there are persons going around among the people and trying to lead them astray in regard to this. Let me read to you a verse or two. Here is what President Lorenzo Snow said January 8, 1900:

“I feel it just to both ‘Mormons’ and non-‘Mormons’ to state that in accordance with the manifesto of the late President Woodruff, dated September 26th, 1890, which was presented to and unanimously accepted by our general conference on the 6th of October, 1890, the Church had positively abandoned the practice of polygamy or the solemnization of plural marriages in this and every other state, and that no member or officer thereof has any authority whatever to perform such plural marriages or enter into such relationship.”

Here is what was said over the signature of President Smith :

"Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff of September 26th, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6th, 1890, which forbade any marriage violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage, he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom."

Thereupon the following resolution was unanimously adopted when this instruction and decision from the President of the Church was presented :

"Resolved that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in general conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith, just made to the conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof."

On January 31st, 1914, a message was sent to all the presidents of stakes and counselors, signed by the Presidency of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund and Charles W. Penrose, saying :

"Having reason to believe that some members of the Church are secretly engaged, advising and encouraging others to enter into unauthorized and unlawful marriages, we have deemed it advisable to call your attention to the communication we addressed to you on this subject on the 5th of October, 1910, a copy of which is herewith appended; and believing, as we do, that these people are at the bottom of all the violations referred to in our communication, we direct your special attention to them, with the request that any information received by you from time to time relating to cases of this character, be followed up and investigated, with a view to having this class of offenders placed on trial for their fellowship in the Church, as we regard them equally culpable with actual offenders. Please make the same request of your bishops."

Now, perhaps it might be thought there was no particular need to speak of this in this public conference, but I feel it a duty resting upon me, because I have heard so many stories that are being told concerning this that I thought it ought to be presented to this congregation, and I hope I have not trodden on the feet of any of my brethren in doing it. I know that this is their mind and will, and I know there are many members of our Church who point to certain parties and say they know that those parties have been married in plural marriage, that is, they have been joined—for there is no marriage in it—in plural marriage, but they do not tell that in a way that those parties can be properly handled. There is order in this Church, as there is in all the works of God, and there are proper tribunals to which these things should be presented. The bishops, as common judges in Israel, can take up such cases, and when they find the evidence, the proof is given them, can withdraw the hand of

fellowship from the offenders, and they can send up the cases of men holding the priesthood, who have been shown to be transgressing in this way, to the high council of the stake wherein they reside, and it is the duty of the high councils in the respective stakes of Zion to act on these cases when they are so presented.

The Council of the Twelve, which is a traveling, presiding high council, has had to take up some of these cases and has acted upon them, but the Twelve are not in a position always to do this, and when the people say: "Oh, the Church knows about it, the Church knows about it," they are mistaken; the Church does not know, and if they know, it is their duty to take the matter before the proper authorities and get the matter handled, and stop this talk about the Church knowing it. Every case of this kind, when people make such remarks, is a reflection upon the President of the Church, who holds the keys, and it is intimated that he has one thing for the public and another thing in private; that is a wicked falsehood, and I denounce it as such. I know that President Smith is the very soul of honor. I know that he stands in his right place and holds the keys of this power, and if he thought it was proper to countenance such things in any way, he would do it with the greatest boldness in the world. I have not talked to him about this particular point, this morning or at any time recently, but I know that this is his mind, and I think that it is a good time to speak of it now.

STATUS OF PEOPLE WHO ENTER MARRIAGE WITHOUT AUTHORITY

Brethren and sisters, when we enter into any order that God has appointed, we have to do it properly, righteously, in the right spirit, and the man who holds the keys only has the right to regulate the matter. Do not believe these stories that men who are seeking to indulge their own lust are circulating around among the people, but try to guard the purity of our innocent girls, many of whom have never heard of such things, and these things are whispered in their ears by some designing person who is a rebel, a rebel against the Church of Christ and a rebel against the laws of the land—the laws of Utah I refer to. The laws of Utah forbid these things. The laws of Utah provide a very heavy penalty for any person who solemnizes such a marriage, a very heavy penalty for the man who enters into such a pretended marriage. It is not recognized as a marriage, but it is called a marriage so that cases may be tried in court. So that a man who goes around and does this, either by solemnizing such a thing or by advocating it, is a rebel against the Church and a rebel against the country, the state to which he belongs. That may sound rather harsh language, but it does not fully express my feelings and the feelings of others in regard to such persons. Now, I hope there are only a few cases existing among the people that I have referred to, because it is a serious thing to have people fancy that they are married, when there was no real marriage, no marriage according to the Church, no marriage according to the laws of the land; and yet they live together with all the privileges of matrimony. It is wrong, displeasing to the Lord, displeasing to those who are in authority in the Church, and

offensive to a great many people who are surrounded by such persons and have to meet them pretty nearly every day. I would say to my brethren in the priesthood that while we want to extend the hand of kindness to repentant souls, while we do not want to throw a straw in the way of a repentant sinner, either in time or eternity, it does not follow, when such persons really repent, that they should be put up on high to be a mark for the people to respect in high places. Just think that over in your minds. Repentance is right, and encouragement of repentance is right, and the forgiving of sinners is right. God forgives sin when people properly repent, but that does not involve the idea that they should be set up in high places to be a mark of respect for people who feel that these persons have been in transgression.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD AS A CONSTANT WITNESS

Now, brethren and sisters, let us all do our duty. Let us rejoice in the Lord. Let us feel glad in this splendid work of the Lord that has been established. Let us do all in our power to spread forth the gospel by carrying it or sending it to the ends of the earth. It is a glorious work to carry this message of salvation, to bring souls, honest souls, into the knowledge of the truth and into the Church of Christ, to baptize them for the remission of their sins, and their sins are washed away: as the water washes their bodies, so their souls are cleansed, their spiritual being is cleansed and revived, and they are born unto Christ Jesus, and become part of him, or of his body, the Church; and then by the laying on of hands to confer upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost as a gift from God, the Holy Spirit to be with them as a constant witness, as the abiding testimony, as the light of God, lit up in their souls, and to enable them to come near to the Lord and receive the revelations of his will concerning themselves, but not to govern the Church unless they are so appointed. Now, that is a splendid thing, and it is a reality. I know it is true. I know "it works," as the saying is, in every land to which it is carried. People of different languages and countries and customs, to whom I have had the privilege of bearing my testimony, who have embraced the gospel, have received this one spirit, which gives the testimony of Jesus, and it is a reality and no moonshine about it. It is the light from the Sun of Righteousness. It is the glory of God that shines around about them. It fills the soul with peace. It gives them an abiding witness of the life and death and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the divine authority of the Prophet Joseph Smith, of the divine authority of the elders of Israel who bear this priesthood, and it is a real thing in the soul of man.

TESTIMONY AND BLESSINGS

I thank my God this morning in the midst of this congregation for this knowledge. I desire it to rest upon the people. I desire the Latter-day Saints to realize that they are members of the body of Christ, that they are all under covenant to walk in his ways, to serve him and keep his commandments, and when they receive the sacrament of the Lord's sup-

per, that they renew their covenants with him, declaring that they are willing to take upon them his name, and to keep the commandments which he has given them, so that the Holy Spirit may be with them always. What a blessing! What a great gift from God, and it is true, just as true as that we are here in this congregation this morning.

Now, may the Lord bless his servant, President Smith, and prolong his days on the earth in usefulness, according to the full desire of his heart. The Lord will bless him in time and in eternity, in the body or out of the body. He is one of the chosen of God before the foundations of the world, to come here on the earth and hold the keys of this last dispensation, and he will carry with him wherever he goes, on the earth or in the spirit world, the might and strength and power of the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, to be a witness for Him, to spread truth and light and salvation among the children of men, when they are out of the body as well as in the body, and stand in his lot and place as a leader in Israel, with the glory of God surrounding him forever and ever. God bless this congregation, and while we are here together in this conference may the Spirit of the Lord inspire every one who speaks, that they may bring forth words of eternal life, and may the Holy Spirit accompany them, and may we all be able to carry it with us wherever we go, as ministers of Christ, exemplars as well as preachers of the word, and stand in our lot and place and do our duty to the full extent, then our glory is sure, our exaltation is certain, and it will be forever and ever. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

I feel it imperative upon myself to endorse and affirm without reservation the statements that have been made by President Penrose in relation to the subject upon which he last treated. I want to say to this congregation, and to the world, that never at any time since my presidency in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have I authorized any man to perform plural marriage, and never since my presidency of the Church has any plural marriage been performed with my sanction or knowledge, or with the consent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and therefore such unions as have been formed unlawfully, contrary to the order of the Church, are null and void in the sight of God, and are not marriages. I hope you will put this down in your note-book of remembrance, and bear it in mind henceforth.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Guide us, O Thou great Jehovah."

The closing prayer was offered by

Elder Joseph R. Shepherd, former president of the Bear Lake stake of Zion. Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.