

By the way, in conclusion, I would like to admonish you people not to pray only for the Presidency and the Twelve, but once in a while pray for the First Council. I don't know of any other council that needs it worse. We need your help, we need your assistance, we need your faith to prepare that great body of priesthood to fulfil their appointment in this Church. I know as well as I know that is my right hand, if you will call that body of priesthood to the foreign ministry they will go, but we have advised them not to go until you call them, and I have told them hundreds of times, not to go until they were sent. If you will call them and get behind them, I promise you in the name of the Lord they will go. I know. God bless you. Amen.

The congregation sang, "High on the mountain top."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Thomas E. McKay, President of the Ogden stake of Zion.

CLOSING SESSION

Conference convened at 2 o'clock. President Heber J. Grant presided.

The choir and congregation sang, "Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation."

Prayer was offered by Elder Lemuel H. Redd, President of the San Juan stake of Zion.

A sacred solo, "Fear not ye, O Israel," was sung by Margaret Merrill.

ELDER HYRUM G. SMITH

(Presiding Patriarch of the Church)

I am grateful, my brethren and sisters, for the privilege of being in this gathering today, and for having the privilege of standing and bearing my testimony to the goodness of the Lord unto me, as one of the younger sons of Zion, in these the last days, and one of the younger members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I have recently had a privilege which I have dreamed of ever since early boyhood—the privilege of going over at least some of the ground, visiting some of the places visited by the prophet Joseph Smith, and by the early members of the Church. Through my teach-

ings, from my infancy, I have never doubted in the least the divinity of the mission of the prophet Joseph, but I have often desired to visit some of the early points of history, and just recently that privilege was granted me. From that historic town of Palmyra, New York, I visited the house or place in which the first edition of the Book of Mormon was published. I also visited the old bank at Palmyra; I do not know how long it has been used as a bank, but it looks as if it had been used for many years. It is today being occupied, and business is being conducted very much, I suppose, as it was nearly a hundred years ago, without any of the so-called modern improvements. At that bank I was permitted to view what is claimed to be a copy of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, or the printer's copy. In that little town I also noticed four distinct churches, all facing one another, one upon each of the four opposite corners of an intersection of two streets; and from residents there I learned that those churches still maintain their names and their practices, opposing one another, of course, until they all unite to oppose the "Mormons"—a very impressive lesson in Church history to me, because I had always believed, and believe today, the testimony of Joseph, the prophet, that he went to those churches and saw their contentions in his day, when he was a boy. He heard them crying, "Lo, here is Christ," "Lo, there is Christ," "Come into this church, for this is the right church," and he wondered how all four of those churches, and others perhaps, could be the right church when they were all claiming it and claiming it differently. And so, I could not help but think how natural it would be for him to go back to his home, only five miles distance, and wonder in his own heart where he could find the truth, and, with the earnestness of his soul, he sought refuge in the scripture, as it had been taught to him.

I was also permitted to go into that sacred grove where the boy sought an answer to his prayer, and I instinctively felt the very spirit that one would naturally suppose would be in that place from its sacred history, and the entire time that I was in the grove I felt the very presence of the Spirit of the Lord. It seemed to me to have a care for everything about the grove. I also had the privilege of going into the old jail where the prophet and his brother, my great-grandfather, gave their lives in testimony of this great principle and the power of the everlasting gospel. I also visited that city beautiful, Nauvoo, which today is only a very small place, but I could imagine the love that those Saints must have had for that place when they could look toward the highest point from all the surroundings and admire the workmanship of their hands as was manifest in the temple which they had erected to their God, equidistant in three directions from the river on a general slope. The river, the great Mississippi river, surrounded it in a sort of letter "D" equidistant from the temple on three sides, (north, west and south). Today those landmarks are fast passing back to their mother earth; and I was im-

pressed with the thought that in a very few years to come, very little but history and perhaps the photographs and paintings of these beloved homes will be about all that will be left. There is no mark today of the temple, except a few of the stones that were once in the walls, and a little part of an old barrel that marks the place of a well from which the water was taken to supply the temple. Very few marks of that wonderful history are left today. A city where once was housed and homed twenty thousand Latter-day Saints, today only about fourteen hundred people make their homes.

I am grateful for the privileges that I have enjoyed and for the testimonies that I have received; and the experiences through which I have passed only make me more determined in my efforts to serve the Lord. As it has been said in this Conference, this is the work of the Lord, and I pray that God will bless his people and bless me as one individual member, that we altogether may go on serving him and accomplishing the great work which he gave to the prophet Joseph Smith and his associates when this Church was organized ninety-one years ago today. I desire, my brethren and sisters, to so live that I may merit the blessings and carry the responsibility that is desired of me from my Father in heaven, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at the head of this great work.

I desire also to leave one word of admonition beside a word of blessing. It is natural for many of us to follow extremes, or to look for extremes. There is always danger in extremes. Therefore, I say, beware of extremes, beware of extremes. I think that nearly all of us can apply this principle in our lives. I should like to apply it as it appeals to me, as one of the officers of the Church, in a particular direction. There are many in the Church who never get a written blessing for their guide or their comfort. This is an extreme. It is the privilege and right of every faithful member in the Church to receive a written blessing, for his guide and his comfort, at the hands of certain officers in the Church, and there is little or no excuse for anyone going without this privilege. On the other hand there are others who get a multitude of written blessings, and I have discovered that some have even lost regard for, or faith in, their blessings, because they have received conflicting blessings. They have received a multitude or many, and they have discovered a conflict. Therefore, their faith is lost, or they are discouraged, and they lose regard for their blessings. Therefore, I say again, beware of extremes.

Now, to make myself plain, it is the right of every faithful member of the Church to receive a written blessing for his guide, either at the hands of a stake patriarch or at the hands of the presiding patriarch, who are authorized to pronounce and seal blessings by the laying on of hands, which is an ordinance in the Church. Now I believe that the Lord knew what he meant when he required, through revelation, that these blessings should be written for the purpose of

refreshing our memory and aiding us to put them into practice rather than going back at every opportunity or every few months or weeks or so, to get another blessing. I have thought, and have been impressed, that this was one of the great reasons why the Lord required us to make a record of all of the patriarchal blessings that are given by his patriarchs in the Church. And I should like to admonish my brethren and sisters to read their copies carefully and not to be easily discouraged and think that because their blessing is short it is incomplete, or because it contains only a few promises, that there is something else that has not been written or has not been promised. Yet, it is true that all the blessings and all the promises that the Lord has in store for us are not embodied in one written blessing; why, surely, but that written blessing is a guide, and it is a key in a way, through your faithfulness, to the blessings which are promised unto the faithful, and may be an index to your whole life. And, it isn't a good thing to go without a blessing, that is one extreme that I wish to warn you of; and the other is to beware of getting a multitude of blessings, in the fear of your losing your faith in the one you have already received, and as long as you get those blessings according to the rules that have been established in the Church for our guide, there will be no danger. At the present time officers of this order in the Priesthood are placed in nearly all of the stakes of Zion. These officers are authorized to officiate only for members of the stake in which they reside and their kin, and when we go to making little side rules from that, to accommodate certain individuals, then we discover that someone else wants a special order, a special blessing, a special favor, and so we have to make exceptions to the rule, and sometimes the exception becomes the rule.

Brethren and sisters, let me admonish you to follow the rule or rules of the Church pertaining to your written blessings. Every member of the Church has access to his blessing, either at the hands of the presiding patriarch or at the hands of the patriarchs in the stake where he resides, and not here and there and everywhere, because there is order in the work of the Lord.

I am grateful, grateful indeed, my brethren and sisters, for the privilege of laboring in this wonderful ministry. There are a number of men who have been called to this great position in the stakes of Zion, who, I suppose because of their study and their experience, have feared to go ahead and exercise their callings. I also have feared. Sometimes I tremble with fear, because I feel the responsibility of officiating in this sacred calling. Nevertheless, I feel to trust in the Lord, and if I am deceived, it is due to the weakness of the flesh and not to the willingness and the humility of the spirit. And so I have often wondered out of the hundreds and hundreds of promises that have been written and made by the patriarchs, how many of those wonderful promises the Lord will be able to make come true. I am astonished at the testimonies of the Latter-day Saints

as they come back, declaring that those promises have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled all over the Church; and I am grateful to be permitted to officiate in this sacred work. I see hundreds of young men as they go out from their homes into the world, to carry the message of life and salvation to the world. Under the duties of my office I am enabled to admonish these young men, to give them a blessing, which, with their faith and their works, the Lord is able to bring to pass a fulfilment of the promise or promises, and they go out to all the world, in all the nations of the world where the gospel door is open, they have faith in the promises given and they live by them, and they come back and testify, that the blessings have been a source of strength and power to them. Others go out into the world without the blessing; and many of them have written to me in this manner, "Brother Smith, here am I, away over in Liverpool; I am on a mission; I was unable to get my blessing when I went away from home, and now I am over here in the service of the Lord; my companions have blessings and they receive comfort from them; can't you send me a blessing, I need a blessing, can't you write one, and send it to me?" Well, I have to send word to them that I can pray for them, and when they come home, then I can officiate for them in the regular way and give them a blessing. And so I admonish the young elders, the missionaries, both men and women, to get their blessings before they leave home, so that they will have these comforts and guides in their missionary experiences abroad.

I also have the privilege of officiating for many young people as they start out into the great battle of life, and they receive comfort, consolation and guide, because they have faith in these promises. And I am grateful to the Lord for the privilege of officiating for them, because they frequently come back and testify that the Lord has blessed them, and that their promises have come true, and they have been a source of great strength to them in hours of trial, in hours of doubt, and in hours of sickness.

I also have been permitted, and am permitted, to officiate for many fathers and mothers in Israel, and they have testified to me that they have received comfort and consolation in their responsibilities of parenthood. And so I am grateful for the privilege of officiating for them in this sacred work.

Brethren and sisters, beware of extremes. It is not necessary that you go without a written blessing; neither is it necessary that you burden our records with your simple desires of perhaps wanting only a question to be answered rather than a desire for a written blessing at the hands of the patriarchs in Israel today.

I pray God to bless this people and those who preside in Israel today. I frequently hear my brethren pray very much as Elder Kimball hears them praying, for the leading authorities of the Church, naming only, of course, the first ones, and when I hear the remark,

"And then all the rest of the authorities," I always come in for my share, because I need the blessings of the Lord.

I pray the Lord to bless the Priesthood of God, and those who are called to bear it in the earth, even from the greatest to the least, and I pray God to bless the faithful members of the Church, both old and young. I pray God to bless our lands, that the destroying elements may not interfere with our blessings. I know that there are a great many people now wondering how much danger this wonderful storm is going to cause. Brethren and sisters, it may cause some danger, and some damage, but the Lord is not sending this wonderful storm to crush us nor to interfere with our blessings. This wonderful storm is a blessing to the multitudes of his children in these valleys of the mountains, and while it may interfere with some of us, in slight ways, the great end of this storm will be a blessing to us.

I pray also that drought as a destroying element may not interfere with the blessings of this people, and if the brethren and sisters, the members of the Church, will hearken unto the counsel they have received in this conference, as they have done unto the counsel that was given six months ago, in a like or similar manner, the Lord will continue to multiply his blessings upon us; and that his blessing may be upon us, and his name be honored and glorified forever. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

I read here last evening at the priesthood meeting some items regarding our missionary work, and I thought they would be interesting to all the Saints, so I will read these items again:

MISSIONARY STATISTICS.

The mission membership of the Church at the close of 1920 was 99,870.

Tithes paid in all missions of the Church, \$456,699; an increase of more than a hundred thousand over any previous year.

Value of mission property, \$1,467,571. This does not include all of the Hawaiian property.

Spent for charity in all the missions, \$34,532.

Baptisms in all the missions last year, 5,087. This is the highest record in many years.

There were 1,727 missionaries in all the missions on January 1, 1921, an increase of 574 over January 1, 1920; while the average expense of the missionaries of the Church was \$37 per month in 1920, or \$10 per month higher than in 1919, and that is the highest expense per elder in the history of the Church.

The number of baptisms per elder in 1920 was about three.