

## SECOND DAY

The meeting began at 10 o'clock a. m., Friday, October 7, President Heber J. Grant, presiding.

The choir and congregation sang, "Come, let us anew our journey pursue."

Prayer was offered by Elder Sylvester Q. Cannon, President of the Pioneer stake.

The choir and congregation sang, "Now let us rejoice."

### ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

*My brethren and sisters*, I feel very humble, indeed, to stand before you on this occasion, for I recognize how very inadequate any man is who attempts, on these occasions, to do wholly the will of God; but I desire to say to my brethren and sisters that I consider it a very high privilege, at any time, to be allowed to bear my testimony to the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as restored in these latter days by the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know, my brethren and sisters, that this is God's work. I know that God lives; that he has instituted the great plan of salvation for the benefit of his children: that he is watching over us and that we may rest ourselves and our troubles on him and that he will lead us safely to the destined end. There is nothing in my life of greater value than this testimony. There is no assurance in my life more certain than that this is the work of God, and I am happy, as I have said, to be allowed to bear this testimony to my brethren and sisters assembled. I feel tremendously the responsibility of standing before you.

#### PEOPLE RESPONDING TO THE REQUIREMENTS MADE OF THE LORD.

During the last three or four months, I have been allowed to visit nine or ten stakes of Zion, in conference and convention capacity assembled, and I have been greatly impressed by the abundance of the Spirit of God which prevails among the people throughout the stakes of Zion. I have marveled at the devotion and the faith of many whom I have met. It has warmed my heart to see the vigor with which the work of the Lord is being conducted by young and old. It is difficult for me to say which has impressed me most, the thorough devotion of those who are old in the cause, or the eagerness of the young to take upon themselves the harness of the Lord to carry onward the work of the Church. I feel, my brethren and sisters, that while we may have many weaknesses—indeed I am sure we do have many weaknesses—and may need constant exhortation, advice and suggestions, such as we receive at these and other conferences throughout the Church, yet this people is so strong in faith and in

good works that God has made us—and I praise him for it—good material with which to build this latter-day work. I believe the spirit of God is with this people, and that the people are responding, perhaps in weak human ways, but are responding, to the demands and requirements made upon us by our heavenly Father.

#### A WONDERFUL FEAST AT THIS CONFERENCE.

We have had set before us during the meetings of this conference a wonderful feast. Admonitions have been given, instructions presented, and doctrines taught, ranging from the very highest, if you so choose to call it, to the very lowest; from the highest spiritual truths to the common, every-day, material needs of man. It has always seemed to me that in no particular does this work more appear to be a marvelous work and a wonder than in the great body of knowledge which has been given through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors in office. It must be a man of many troubles indeed who has sat through these two meetings of our conference and has not found, in the words spoken, some key for the solution of his needs. As I understand the body of knowledge which has been given to this people by God, it is so vast and so comprehensive that it makes light the remotest corners of human needs. There is no place in the world, no condition of human affairs, which may not be made alive, really alive, by the knowledge which God has revealed in these latter days.

Nevertheless, I am impressed to say, that although we have so wonderful a body of knowledge, the most known to any people on the face of the earth, yet knowledge of itself is a lifeless and unsatisfactory thing. Every once in a while, as we journey through life, we meet some man who is rich in knowledge, but uses his knowledge only as an ornament on his intellectual mantel-shelf simply to be looked at, to be enjoyed as an ornament and nothing more. There is no truth more certain in all the world, than that in order to make knowledge—the things that have been taught us, of value, and really beautiful, and helpful in making our lives real living lives, knowledge must be put to some use. Knowledge unused is scarcely worth the having; but knowledge once used leaps into light and life and becomes a bright flame to guide and to help man.

#### TWO CLASSES OF SCHOLARS.

The question that has come before me continuously, during the two sessions of our conference, has been, as I have heard the instructions from the stand: "Will I be able so to apply these truths as to make them a living force in my life?" All humanity today may be classified, I suppose, into two great classes as far as knowledge is concerned—those who have knowledge and use it not, and those who have, perhaps, lesser knowledge and use it well. Those

who use the knowledge are the ones who today are leading the world in every proper human activity. We have in our universities and colleges two great classes of scholars; the non-productive and the productive scholar. We have the scholar who merely teaches what he has learned, and never attempts to use it. He is held in low esteem. We have the man, on the other hand, who believes in using knowledge as it is given to him, and he becomes a productive scholar. He carries onward the realm of knowledge, expands it, increases it, and becomes of great renown.

However, there are many ways of using knowledge. To my mind the greatest manner of using knowledge, the eternal divine knowledge which we have and which we call frequently the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to use it in such a way as to benefit the whole human race. Many men use knowledge for their own sakes. That makes it of less value. Indeed I suspect that one real difference between religion and ethics is in the manner in which truth is used. When truth is used for all men, for the carrying out of some great scheme of salvation, such as God has provided, then knowledge has its noblest use and worth. When it is used only for a few, for me and my family and those near me, the religious element tends to disappear.

#### ETHICS VS. A LIVING, VITAL RELIGION.

I remember that, a few years ago, we had in this city a visit from three or four members of the Chinese republic, distinguished men who came here to study the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by this people, for the express purpose of taking back to China, if they could, some of the conclusions that we had reached, for the upbuilding of the Chinese republic. I remember the question was put to one of them at one of our gatherings: "Do you not have in your country a sufficient amount of truth to guide you? Do you need to come to this far western land, and to this far western state, to this humble people, to gain information that will help you in building the new China of which you dream?" And the wisest of them, an old man, rich in the experiences of life, through his interpreter, said to the small company assembled: "We have in China a system of ethics and that is all; we have no real religion. Our system of ethics is not so organized, does not have such life as to be of service for the whole people; and," said he, "the conclusion of four thousand years of Chinese civilization is that ethics will never save a people or make a people fully happy and contented. We need a living, vital religion."

I am impressed always with the fact, as I think about these matters, that the thing that gives us life and vigor, and makes us a peculiar people, different from all other people, that makes it possible for us to have such a great assembly twice a year as we have in this great tabernacle, is that we do know a plan of salvation that enables us and requires us to use all our knowledge for all people of all time—past, present and future—and that we do this work by the authority

of the Priesthood, which means simply that back of the plan and back of our efforts is a great, intelligent Will who has laid out the plan, who is carrying it onward, and whose agents we are in conducting the work on earth. It is the Priesthood, my brethren and sisters, given to all honorable, faithful male members of the Church, the blessings of which the women share with their husbands, which gives us life, which makes this Church a living, growing Church and kingdom, which separates us, if you choose, from all other kingdoms on the face of the earth, from all other churches; for no other organization, so far as I know, makes the same claim in regard to Priesthood that we make.

#### A PRIESTHOOD WITH A TRUE CONCEPTION OF GOD.

The conception of God held by any group of people may well be understood by the nature of the priesthood which that people respects. In fact, the priesthood of any people is really a definition of the God in which that people believes. If we find an impotent priesthood, a priesthood that dallies Sunday mornings, in the pulpit, with the vital issues of life, the chances are that that church also has a conception of an impotent God who also dallies, Sunday mornings, with the vital issues of life. If we find a vigorous priesthood which concerns itself with man's needs and life, day and night, from the week's beginning to the week's end; which attempts to understand man, and to serve the every need of man, and which guides the conduct of man into large dreams of life; then in all probability the group of people sustaining such a priesthood has a conception of a God who is real, a true Father of the men and women of the earth, who teaches the brotherhood of man. The priesthood of this Church which deals with all the affairs, temporal and spiritual, of the members of the Church, is an evidence of our conception of God: God is our Father: we are his children: he understands us since he has had, perhaps, experiences similar to ours: he looks into our daily life, and unto him we can go day by day, with the common, ordinary troubles of life and lay them before him, feeling assured that the God we worship desires us to approach him in all things, and that he will answer our prayer, even though that prayer concerns itself with the humble, simple affairs of life. The grandest conception of "Mormonism" is our conception of God. It was by divine purpose that the first great vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith was of the Father himself in person, who to the boy explained the order of things, and gave to the world again, forever, as I believe, the true knowledge of God. It was by divine purpose when the Prophet Joseph Smith was instructed as to the real condition in the world that necessitated the re-establishment of the Church and kingdom of God, that God said to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol \* \* \*.

THE GREAT NEED OF THE WORLD IS A TRUE CONCEPTION OF GOD.

The first great message of this latter-day work has been with respect to God, and my testimony to you is, my brethren and sisters, that the great need of the world today is a correct understanding of God. This world is in turmoil and strife. The old paths seem insufficient. Men are seeking new ways to solve new problems. They are looking for safe principles or guides which they can apply to these new problems and test proposed new solutions. The only path to peace and happiness is through the proper knowledge of God, including his plan of salvation; and therein, and therein only, will the nations of the world find what they are seeking today. It is our duty to teach the word of God to the world. We shall have, as I view it, no real peace, no full satisfaction among the nations, until the knowledge of the true God is re-established and accepted among the nations of the earth. Many have made fun, in our day, of those who are seeking for God. H. G. Wells, the great novelist of England, has been ridiculed because, during the last few years, he has been seeking for God—a God he could understand and that his fellows could understand; a God who could help the nations in their trials; but I believe that H. G. Wells stands for a great group of men and women throughout the world who are God-hungry, who understand that the God they have been worshiping is incomplete, insufficient, mystifying and mysterious. They want a God, or a conception of a God, who may be understood by plain and simple people; who understands humanity and who, in a measure, perhaps, is of humanity.

May God bless us and help us to carry to the nations the great and wonderful truths we possess, and may we be given strength, from time to time, so to use the knowledge that we have, that it may burn as a living fire within our breasts, throughout this Church and before all the world, I ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE W. McCUNE

*(President of the Eastern States Mission)*

My brethren and sisters, I have a high sense of appreciation for this privilege of standing before you to bear my testimony; and I sincerely desire to have the Spirit of the Lord to direct me; to that end I beseech of you, sustain me by your sympathy and your love. I have enjoyed more than I can tell you the remarks that have already