

God's greatest gift to his faithful sons and daughters. May they all be yours, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

ELDER J. GOLDEN KIMBALL

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

During our two day's conference I have listened with a great deal of interest to what our brethren have said to us. My mind has been very active during the conference, and I have thought about a great many wonderful things, to me, that might sound very flat to you; but for some reason, this afternoon, I feel like a fellow who had run entirely out of material, having exhausted the material that I had, in thought. I think of what Elbert Hubbard said. It struck me rather strangely the other day. He said: "If you are going to reform the world you had better begin with yourself, and there will be one rogue less in the world." Of course, I did not want to apply that to myself, but I would not object to applying it to you.

Now, brethren and sisters, I shall address you for a short period of time, only a few minutes—although it seems a long time to you, and does to me; it certainly will before I get through. My voice has been heard among this people for nearly thirty years. I think I have been in the ministry here at home for nearly that length of time. I would not give my experience and the association I have had with the brethren of the authorities for all the riches in the world. I hope, brethren and sisters, that during these thirty years, I have created an impression in your minds—at least I have tried to do that—that I am trying to be honest. I am trying to be truthful. I am trying to be sincere and loyal and unafraid. There is nothing that I desire more, outside of the Spirit of God and the honoring of the Priesthood and the sustaining of this work, than to have an honest mind. It seems to me during the past few years that the minds of many are warped. We do not think honest; we do not hear straight, nor do we see straight. I am sure, from the experience I have had in the Church, that the Lord can do very little for a man who persists in being dishonest and untruthful; and, of course, it goes without saying that no man or woman in the Church of Jesus Christ can be immoral, and have the Spirit of God to be with them. I read in the Doctrine and Covenants the message that was given to the elders in early days. The Lord said: "But with some I am not well pleased." Now, what was their trouble? "Because they will not open their mouths but hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Woe unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them, and it shall come to pass if they are not more faithful unto me it shall be taken away even that which they have." I realize, my brethren and sisters, that, during the past thirty years I may have said some foolish things. I have, in my own way, given the people a good deal of chaff to get them to take a little wheat, but some of them haven't got sense enough to pick the wheat out from the chaff. If a man in this Church ever does

say a foolish thing, they will remember it to the very day of their death: and it is the only thing some of them do remember. I think they do mighty well to remember that.

I find out some things by reading the Doctrine and Covenants—which, by the way, I do read. I am familiar with the Bible, a little, and the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. I have wished, sometimes, that there would be a big fire and burn all the rest of the books so that we would read these books more. Sometimes I feel that a man ought to be imprisoned for writing any more books; because I got my experience mostly by reading the books which contain the revelations of the Lord. I got my first experience in the Southern states in two years, and I read the Bible; I read the Book of Mormon; and I read the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. I don't believe the man lives, unless God inspires him, who can ever breathe into a book what you can get out of the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. That is my testimony. Joseph Smith said that a man will live nearer to the gospel of Christ reading the Book of Mormon than any other book that has ever been written. I want to say to the Latter-day Saints that according to my judgment and experience—I am old enough to know a few things, and I am old enough to remember some things—some of the greatest inspired men we have ever had in the history of this Church have been men who have read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Now, brethren, I do not want to say anything to hurt anyone's feelings about books that are written. I read the Bible through once, and when I got through I said: "I will never tackle it again in the flesh;" but I have read in it, and I am acquainted with it, and I have marked it. I would not give my Bible for all the Bibles in the world, because it is the only Bible I can find anything in.

The first council ordained one thousand and forty seventies last year. The Lord has said in the Doctrine and Covenants: "There are many called and few are chosen." As I said, there were one thousand and forty seventies ordained last year; and why are they not chosen? The Lord gives us the answer clear and plain. I am glad he talks plainly. Why are they not chosen? "Because their hearts are so much set upon the things of the world, and they aspire to the honors of men." They would break their blamed necks to get an office in the state or in the nation. I haven't heard of anyone breaking his neck to go on a mission—not lately. Now brethren, I know what the trouble is. You remember not very long ago that Brother Hyrum M. Smith, when he presided over the European mission, sent word to us and gave the sign of distress, like all these mission presidents are doing now. He wanted one hundred capable, efficient, competent men—just what they need in every mission in the world. So the First Council started out to get them. We made a thorough canvas, and we never dreamed

but what we could get one hundred out of the councils of quorums, the presidents of seventies, without any trouble at all. We interviewed those seventies by the hundreds, personally interviewed them, looked them in the face, and we never found one single president that was not willing to go, not one that I remember, but when we looked into their financial affairs they could not go. They seemed to be alright spiritually, but it was their financial troubles. That is the trouble now.

I believe in all that President Grant said. I preached it years ago, after I went broke, with just as much vehemence as he ever did in his life. I preached until I was almost exhausted. I remember a sermon. I think it was a very wonderful discourse, too. I was up in Smithfield at a conference, and I preached to the people on the subject of debt. I had just been through the mill of the gods, and they ground me to powder. I went "over the hill to the poor house," and I think I was able to tell them a pathetic story; they sold me out, just like they would sell cattle; and yet I was in the missionary field at that. I told my story, and told it very plaintively; and there was a salesman at this meeting. I saw him the other day at one of our conference meetings. That made me think of it. He was a salesman of the Co-operative Wagon and Machine Company. After I preached my discourse I met this man and he said: "Brother Kimball, that is the best sermon I ever heard. I never sold as many implements in my life as I did after you preached that sermon." After I had warned the people and forewarned them, that to be in debt was to be in hell—I don't know anything about hell, but that is the worst hell I have ever been in—to be in debt. I can tell you how you can keep out of debt; but I can't tell you how to get out after you get in. I had a man come to me the other day who wanted me to indorse his note. I had sworn, almost on an oath, I would never sign another note, not even for my wife. But he looked at me so pitifully, and was in such dire distress, and I had so much confidence in him, that I told him I would sign it, although I was quite sure I could not pay it if he did not. He applied at one of our banks. They did not know me, for which I was very thankful. I went to the bank and looked the man in the face. He said: "Mr. Kimball, haven't you got any collaterals?" I said: "Collaterals—I should say not! I haven't got a collateral of any kind." He said, "How do you expect me to take your indorsement?" I replied, "On my looks and general character. That is all I have got." And he turned me down; and I have been tickled to death ever since. That is the way to keep out of debt.

I thought I would like to read some scripture as a closing of my remarks: I am sure I can make it in two minutes. It is something my father read, in reading from his old Book of Mormon, that was published or printed in 1830. I found this page worn almost out, and I wondered what it was. This is what I found. It was just such a condition that we are now in. They had had war, and they had had famine, and then they went to the prophet and appealed to the Lord, so that the famine was withdrawn, and it says: "That ended the

eighty and fifth year." In thirteen years that people fell down two or three times, and yet they were God's people. This is what he said. I want to read it to you and impress you, if I can, with this one thought: "And thus we can behold how false and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him. Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time,"—Now that strikes me as a strange thing. After God has done all that for his children, and it could not be written any better if it was written of this people, how God had blessed them—"then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

"And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him."

We are just like all other children of God, in all other dispensations. Notwithstanding the fact that we are a chosen people, for a special purpose, our hearts have been hardened and we have forgotten our God—some of us. Now, brethren, I think you will have no trouble in getting out of debt. At least you can get out as well as I have.

Now, brethren and sisters, I am glad; I thank my God that he chastened me. I thank God that I have had the love and affection of my brethren. I thank God that I am alive. I know the gospel is true. I know it because I learned it through adversity and through suffering and through hardships. I never learned it because I was Heber C. Kimball's son, because I was the son of a prophet. I learned it just as he learned it. I may not have paid as big a price as my father did, but I paid for pretty nearly everything I have. I paid well for it, but I am satisfied. I sustain the brethren of the authorities, and I uphold their hands. I never felt better in all my ministry in this Church than I do today. I thank God the sun shines. I thank God the grass is green, and the water runs down hill; as it did not for a long while. Now the Lord bless you. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, "Redeemer of Israel," and Conference adjourned until 10 o'clock, a. m., Sunday, October 9. The closing prayer was offered by Elder C. Alvin Orme, President of the Tooele stake of Zion.