

May we fulfil our covenant. May we feel this inspiration in our lives, for this is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I have rejoiced today, as I have during the other days of our conference, in the Spirit of the Lord that has been poured out upon the people. It has been a time of feasting to me, greeting my friends and looking into the faces of men and women who have come to wait upon the Lord.

THE WORLD IGNORANT OF CONDITIONS CONFRONTING IT.

I am thankful that we are not in doubt as to what the attitude of our heavenly Father is toward his children, and I am thankful that those who have been called to address us in this conference have been inspired to tell us things that give us courage and hope. The people of this world, generally speaking, are not aware of the real condition that confronts them, but you have been advised of what awaits you. You have heeded the call and have partaken of the ordinances of the gospel and many of you have received a witness that your action is approved of the Lord. The brethren who have addressed you this afternoon have borne testimony of the divinity of this work; but the most important testimony to you, the most important testimony to me, is that individual witness that comes to us that we have done well, and that we feel that our heavenly Father has approved our action.

OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

We believe in God the eternal Father and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. That is not incomprehensible to us. It has been made plain to us, that these are the Godhead that we worship. We believe that our Redeemer has revealed himself to the children of men in the days that are past, that the Old and New Testaments contain his wise counsels, and in addition to that, we believe that he revealed himself to the people who dwelt on this Western continent after his resurrection. The Savior appeared and directed the organization of his Church in the western hemisphere, as he had done in the eastern hemisphere. We believe that our heavenly Father has spoken in our own day also, that he heard the humble prayer of a youth in Palmyra, and answered his prayer and blessed him with a knowledge of his personality, that all people might know the Lord, if they will.

NATURAL THAT THE PROPHET JOSEPH SHOULD SEEK THE LORD.

It was a very natural thing that Joseph Smith should seek the Lord. He came of a race of people who believed in our heavenly Father, in the divine mission of the Savior, in the efficacy of prayer, and that God would hear and answer his people if they went before him with a proper spirit. It was easy for this young man to believe, because he had been born and reared in a believing household; and when he went out into the woods in response to the injunction of the scripture (James 1:5): "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him," he believed that his prayer would be answered, and our heavenly Father has promised his children from the beginning, that, "by faith ye may know all things." The result was that wonderful manifestation, unlike any other that we have ever heard of in the history of the world. We have heard of instances where our heavenly Father has manifested himself; we have read of instances where the Redeemer of mankind has manifested himself; but we have never read of any instance where the Father and the Son before have appeared to any living being and have spoken to that individual. People of the world do not believe it. Men and women have been taught that the heavens are sealed. They have accepted the scripture because they have been taught that the Bible is the word of the Lord. Many of our Father's children have never given thought to the teachings of the Lord, and when this youth declared that in our day, at the very time when we needed light most of all, when men and women were running to and fro for the word of God and could not find it, as predicted by the old prophets, the Lord had manifested himself, he was ridiculed. Faith prompted Joseph to seek God in prayer and ask which church he should identify himself with. What was the response? Did the Lord say, "My boy, they are all good, they are all striving to keep my commandments, the men who are leaders of all these churches are approved of me, any church will do, they will all lead you back into the presence of our heavenly Father?" The boy might have expected such an answer from the conditions that existed. But he wanted to know what to do, and he had full faith that the Lord would tell him. So when he prayed, he asked which of the churches he should join, and I presume he was astonished when our heavenly Father said to him, "Join none of them; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men; they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me; they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." Think of a boy fourteen years of age arising from his knees in the woods near his home and announcing to the world such a message at that! Can you imagine that a youth would have dared

to do such a thing as that? But with the witness that had been given unto him by his heavenly Father, with that commandment from the Lord himself, dared he do anything else than make the announcement that the Lord had spoken to him? It is true, his statement was rejected, and those who should have been his friends turned away from him and even said it was of the evil one. What was the boy's testimony?

So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

THE RESULTS OF JOSEPH'S VISION.

What of the results? From that boy who, at fourteen years of age, beheld the Father and the Son, there came that wonderful message that our Father in heaven and his Son Jesus Christ are glorified men. That the Savior of the world had been resurrected from the dead; that youth beheld what the world had known, but for some reason had forgotten, and he began bearing witness of it to the children of men. He went about, performing his duty, and in due time, by the power of God translated and gave to the world the Book of Mormon, a faith-promoting record, second to none. Under the direction of the Lord he organized the Church with the same officers that were placed in it in Judea. The Lord recognized and approved them. He directed those possessing divine authority, to confer it upon them, and by his instruction the Church was organized in the year 1830. From that time it has continued to grow. The people of the world have generally refused to recognize this Church as divine. All the so-called Christian churches have been allied against it. What have been the results? By the thousands, men have accepted the truth and have been willing to go into the world bearing their testimony of it, paying their own expenses, working without money, trusting in God, the eternal Father, to lead them on their way. Why do this? Because that testimony was burned into their souls. Would brethren and sisters have filled missions in the world, have departed from their homes, left their loved ones, and gone into the world without purse or scrip, or paying their own way, had they not known, as you know, that our heavenly Father would reward them for it? The result of this work has been marvelous in its development, despite the opposition of all the forces of the world. Our Father in his mercy, has led this people over the

many snares and pitfalls that the adversary has prepared. The world have seen the development of the Church and they have marveled, and people have said, "What has made its people what they are?" The answer comes ringing true, because it is our Father's work, and no power on the earth can stay its progress.

OUR GRATITUDE DUE TO FATHER IN HEAVEN.

Oh, my brethren and sisters, those who have received the same witness that God has burned in upon my soul, be grateful and show it by your lives. You men and women who have been gathered from the nations of the earth as a branch from the burning, be sure that you are mindful of his glorious gift unto you, and that you are indeed grateful unto him.

We will not be popular with those who are unrighteous. This Church is opposed by the same power that sought the life of the Savior, it has followed the prophets of this dispensation, and many of you have lived to see the hand of the Lord as he has thwarted the powers of evil that they have not been able to overthrow this work. I am grateful for the knowledge that has come to me. I am not dependent upon the testimony of anybody else. It is not necessary that my brethren and sisters declare this work to be true. But it is music to my ears when they do so. From my childhood I have sought to serve the Lord; from my youth I have been taught to keep his commandments. And since I have been called into the ministry I have sought to do what the Lord would have me do, making mistakes as others make mistakes, but through it all I have had the sure witness that my heavenly Father knows I was trying to do my best, and have felt all the time that he would preserve me, if I would honor him and magnify those whom he has called to preside over this Church. I have known that by obedience to his teachings to the children of men, no power could stay the effort that I was making, and that in the end I would obtain eternal life. That has been my testimony.

THE SWEETEST TESTIMONY OF ALL.

We have listened to a variety of narratives, but I want to say, the testimony that is sweetest of all to me is the testimony that my Father lives, and that he, my heavenly Father, has placed this work on the earth, that he has called men to act in his name, and that all men who will believe and comply with the requirements of the gospel will eventually be redeemed in his presence and obtain glory, immortality and eternal life.

What can we give in return for that wonderful information that has come to us? I feel as humble as a little child, and I am grateful that at my time of life (and I have passed the meridian) I see more clearly than I have ever seen before, our Father's love and mercy extended toward the children of men.

COMFORTING TESTIMONY.

I testify that I know that God lives. I know that Jesus of Nazareth is the Redeemer of mankind, and there is no other name under heaven whereby we may gain a salvation but his. And there is no way by which we can obtain an exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God but by obeying the laws and ordinances that he has laid down. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God. He gave his life as his testimony to the truth of the gospel, and it will be borne to all the world. He was a prophet, and those who have succeeded him have been prophets. President Grant is a man of God, and I desire to sustain him and hold up his hands that all Israel may be blessed by his ministry, and I say that every man and woman who will do that will enjoy the blessings of the Almighty.

This is our Father's work. He has pointed out the way whereby we may gain an exaltation. He has organized his Church. He has instituted the authority of this Church in his own way, and all the wisdom of the world cannot change it, and all the opposition of this world cannot overthrow it.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE, LOVE AND ORDER.

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord may find place in the hearts of the children of men, that in the great gathering about to be held in the city of Washington the representatives of the nations may be inspired to so organize and so arrange that many of the evil conditions in this world may be set aside, and that the awful calamity that befell us in the late war may not be repeated. It is our duty to pray for good men and wise men, and to hold up their hands in their attempts to perpetuate peace and law and order among the nations of the earth.

Now any man who refuses to assist in carrying into effect the constitutional law of the land not only is he a lawbreaker in the sense that he consents to things that are evil, but I want to say that he is in opposition to the will of our heavenly Father. (Read Section 134 of Doctrine and Covenants.)

May God add his blessing. May peace be in the homes and at the firesides of the Latter-day Saints. When conference closes, let all return to our homes determined that, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And if we will do that, the blessing of the Almighty will rest upon us, Zion will arise and shine, she will put on her beautiful garments, and all the world will turn their faces to the land where men are keeping the commandments of God. That this may be our happy lot, and that we may be worthy of the blessings that are bestowed upon us by our Father in heaven, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.