

## FREE AGENCY OF MAN

It was the Master who decreed that men must have faith, and we are told that without faith we cannot please him. It was the Master who declared that all men must repent, and sent his disciples into the world to cry repentance. It was the Savior who gave to us the gospel of Jesus Christ that bears his name, that declared that all men must be baptized. It was the same blessed Redeemer who said: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come," and after he had left them, there came upon his disciples the Holy Ghost. Faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, (for that was the form of baptism that our Master received) laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, as taught by him, are the requirements in his Church that all men must subscribe to if they would obtain celestial glory. Men may refuse to accept this opportunity. We have our agency and can please ourselves, but the Lord says in the Doctrine and Covenants 93:31:

"Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifested unto them, and they receive not the light."

That is the trouble with this world—the holy scriptures are filled with the teachings of a kind and merciful Father that are not appreciated, and today there are hundreds of the elders of this Church going to and fro in the world, pleading for a hearing that they may be able to point out the pathway of life and salvation. This is our Father's work. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth for the last time. It will never be taken away or given to another people, and upon us devolves the responsibility and obligation to so live that wherever we go, or whatever we do, our light will shine in such a way that others, observing our upright lives, will be constrained to seek after the Redeemer of mankind, and to become identified with his Church, in preparation to living with him eternally.

That the Lord will strengthen our hands; that our voices may be made powerful in truth; that the Holy Ghost may remain with the elders of this Church to inspire them to greater effort that to the very ends of the earth all men may have an opportunity to know that this is God's work, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## ELDER REED SMOOT

I never felt so humble, and my weakness more than at this moment. I never felt better in the work of the Lord, in my life, than I do at the present time. I have never enjoyed a general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as I have enjoyed the present one. Beginning with that remarkable sermon delivered by our President, the opening day of the conference, down through all of

the speakers, I have had in my heart an echo of gladness and approval that has indeed made me feel that life is worth living.

#### THE TEACHINGS OF MOTHER

I do not know why it is, but from the opening session of this conference, I have thought of my mother, perhaps more times, from that moment until this, than any other time since she was called to the beyond. I had a chance, last night in my dreams, to thank her—her boy thanked her—for the teachings that she gave and instilled in my heart when I was but a boy. It seems that I can hear her voice ringing out now; it seemed in my dreams but last night that I could hear her pleadings to me, and her sound counsel and wise advice. I remember so well that she used to impress upon me that no person, whether he be baptized into the Church or not, can retain a testimony that God lives, without he asks of Father in heaven, in humility and prayer, to give him, and help him maintain that testimony and the love of the work. She used to tell me that if I did not have a testimony, then, that Jesus is the Christ, the way to get it was to pray to God constantly and in earnestness, and she promised me—my mother promised me,—that the Lord God would give it to me in due time, if I kept myself unspotted from the sins of the world. That promise came true, not perhaps in the way that I intended it should come; not in the way that I expected it must come, to satisfy my soul, but it came in God's own way, and there is nothing that I appreciate so much in all the world, and I shall never cease asking my God to help me as long as I live, to maintain that testimony and be true to God's work and cause here upon this earth.

Her slogan was: "Be true to yourself, be true to your country, and be true to your God; and no matter what happens to you, the end will be success." I hardly understood it then. I did not know what it meant, but, thank God, I know what it means today, and I testify to the people here, and in all the world, that if you will be true to yourself, true to the covenants you have made with God, true to your country, there can be no danger that will in any way, shape or form, bar you from receiving the blessings of God and the plaudits of all honorable men.

#### POSITION OF THE CHURCH TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

When President Grant was reading section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants, that section in which is contained the declaration of the Church regarding our obligations to our government and the laws of the same, I could not help but think back some twenty years—a mere span of time—when I was charged with being disloyal to my government. I was charged with taking an oath, as a Senator of the United States, that was inconsistent with the oath that I had taken as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Nothing ever hurt me so much. I knew, in my soul, that I would give my life, not only for my Church but for my Country, if necessary. I knew there was no man living that was more loyal to the constitution of the United States, her laws, her institutions, than I, unless that man had greater power and greater wisdom given him. And, at the hearings of the case, as they dragged on from month to month, and from year to year, I remember well the late senator, Philander C. Knox, of Pennsylvania, a member of the committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate, coming to me one morning and asking me if the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believed in our form of government. I told the senator we believed that the constitution of the United States was an inspired instrument from God; we believed that the men who drafted and put it into force were inspired and directed by the overruling hand of God. He said, "Have you any declarations to show your belief?" I called his attention first to the 12th article of our faith. I read it to him, but it hardly satisfied him—that short statement—and he asked if there were not some written, published statement of the Church, showing its attitude toward the government and the laws of our land. I said: "Senator Knox, I will see that by tomorrow morning, you will get a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants, and I ask you to turn to section 134 and read the section, and you will find there a clear, concise, straightforward statement of the position of the 'Mormon' Church, so-called, toward the government of the United States and the laws of our country." It satisfied him. I had no more loyal supporter than the senator from Pennsylvania.

#### THE POWER OF PRAYER

My brothers and sisters, I want to acknowledge before you this day that during all of that troublesome time, I recognized the hand of God in it all. It was not Reed Smoot that they were fighting—it was the Church of God, and I want also to acknowledge to the people here today, that no greater power came to me from any source than from above, through the constant and earnest prayer for assistance from above.

I wonder whether the world today believes in prayer, as they did in the early days of our country. The prayer of an honest man availeth much. I wonder whether our own people are attending to their daily prayers as was their wont in years past. Fathers and mothers, if you do not teach the children how to pray, and if you do not pray yourselves, there will be unlocked a door and the evil influence of the powers of darkness will enter the home. I remember, when I was a counselor in the Utah stake of Zion, although there were but few cases of trouble between the wife and the husband that ever came before the Presidency for decision, in every such case, it developed that in that home prayer had been discontinued; and I plead with the people here that they not only pray themselves, but that they have their children pray as well, and teach them how to pray.

I cut out of the paper yesterday morning, a clipping from a Chicago paper. I was delighted to read it, and I am going to read a portion of it now to you. Perhaps you did not notice it:

"Consideration, at the Protestant Episcopal Triennial General Conference, of divine healing, and the question of giving it official sanction as a part of church work, drew attention to the fact that several of the churches in the Chicago diocese already maintain classes in faith healing. Our method is that of James, the Anglican layman, who conducted meetings of healing in Chicago a few years ago;" and then, brothers and sisters, it goes on and describes what they are undertaking to do, and winds up by saying that they were following the plan of James—not the Apostle James of old but James, the Anglican layman.

They deny that there is any power of God in the administration. I thought to myself: I would that the peoples of the world would begin to think more of prayer and follow the teachings of the Master—follow the plan laid down by James, in the days of the Savior, for he says—"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

#### A RECENT EXPERIENCE

I know as well as I know I live that there is power in prayer. I do not know but what it would be proper for me, at this time, to call attention to an experience that I had four weeks ago today. Sunday afternoon I called at the White House, to call upon the President. For days Mrs. Harding had been lying at the point of death. The President was in the sick room when I arrived, together with Dr. Mayhoe, Dr. Finney, Dr. Harding and some three or four other prominent doctors. The attendant announced to the President that I had called to see him, and he came out of the sick room into his private office adjoining the sick room. He had been watching over Mrs. Harding for days and nights past, seeing each day bring her nearer to the brink of the grave, and the doctors had just decided that nothing would save her but an operation. The question of the operation was left to the President for decision. The President said: "I have never had, in all my life, a question brought to me for decision that I feel so helpless in arriving at." I haven't the time to go into the details. Worried as he was, haggard as he was, it seemed to me if any word of encouragement could be given to him, it ought to have been given. What a wonderful woman Mrs. Harding is, lying upon her sick bed for days. When Dr. Finney was leaving the room, she gave orders to take him down to the depot in the President's car, rather than send for one himself; and, while the President and I were discussing questions affecting legislation, on which he had asked me to make a report to him, and just as I was about to leave, the at-

tendant brought into the room a beautiful box of roses, stating that Mrs. Harding had directed him to bring them to me to deliver to Mrs. Smoot. Nobody thought that Mrs. Harding would live through the night. The decision as to an operation had to be reached, so the President told me, before midnight; and, as I left the room, he came with me until we stood at the head of the stairs. I turned to the President and said, "President, there is hope yet. I have seen men and women raised from a death-bed. I know that there is power, Mr. President, in prayer—the wife can yet be saved. Do not be discouraged." And I said, "This night a prayer shall go up from my home, that God may spare her life, that she will not have to undergo an operation." He said to me: "Senator Smoot, I wish I knew that. I believe in prayer. I wish I knew that God through prayer would heal the sick." There were millions of people praying for her, from one end of the land to the other, but as those noted physicians sat around the bed, as midnight was approaching, there came a change. God had heard the prayers for her and the crisis had passed.

How many cases could we relate, testifying to just such power, and I hope and I trust that we will never forget that God rules the universe.

The other day, my attention was called to a wonderful painting, the author of which was Tompkins H. Mattson. It was called "The First Prayer in Congress." I noticed in that painting that a majority of all the members of that first congress that was held in Carpenter Hall, Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, were kneeling in prayer, and among those who were kneeling, I noticed George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Rutledge, Col. Folsom, Payton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, John Jay, Isaac Lowe—some of the most renowned American citizens that ever lived.

#### A WARNING TO VIOLATORS OF THE LAW

I wish now just in a few words, in closing, for I see the time is past, to say that the laws of the land must be obeyed and enforced. I want to warn law makers; I want to warn business men; I want to warn the wealthy of the United States, that they cannot violate the law with impunity. Some time in the future, their actions will arise to plague them. Men cannot serve liquors of all kinds at their dinners—not only in violation of the law on the part of the party that sold the liquor to them, but in violation of the law on their own part—without, sooner or later, paying the penalty. Violation of the law is the first step to anarchy, and don't let us think that the man who has no regard for law, no love for the constitution of the United States—an outcast in all society—can see the violation of laws, on the part of legislators, the wealthy of the land, and not take advantage of the same by offering it as an excuse for his actions. So, my brothers and sisters, I ask you to be loyal, not only to the constitution, but the laws of our land.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." I know that God lives. I know that this is his Church. I know that all he has predicted will come to pass, if we are but loyal and true and sustain his work here upon this earth.

God bless you all. Amen.

The choir, with Miss Dolores Seal, soprano, as soloist, sang, "Inflammatu8."

Benediction was pronounced by Elder John V. Bluth, president of the North Weber stake of Zion.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.

## FIRST OVERFLOW MEETING

An overflow meeting of the Conference was held in the Assembly Hall at 10 o'clock, Sunday morning, October 8. Elder Rulon S. Wells, of the First Council of Seventy, presided.

The music and singing were furnished by the Twenty-first ward choir, Salt Lake City; Elder Walter A. Wallace, leader; with Elder Tracy Y. Cannon at the organ.

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

Prayer was offered by Elder Elias A. Smith.

The choir sang, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God!"

### ELDER DAVID A. SMITH

*(Of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.)*

Those who have been called upon to speak during this conference have dwelt upon subjects which to them seem most important. Each man who feels his responsibility is anxious for the cooperation and help of the Church members. I sincerely hope that I may be assisted by the Spirit of the Lord in delivering to you the message I have in my heart.

The Apostle James counseled us as follows:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man