

## ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

I regard it as a distinctive honor to be invited to speak to this large congregation in this, the Sunday morning, session of our annual General Conference, where every seat is taken in this large tabernacle and hundreds of people are standing, eager as I suppose, to hear the word of the Lord as it shall fall from the lips of his servants. I realize that those who have assembled in conference are among the most faithful of the Latter-day Saints. At the same time I realize that there are thousands of men and women in the Church who are just as faithful as those who are here assembled, but those who are of little faith are not wont to make great sacrifice to come to the meetings to hear the servants of the Lord. I do hope that by some means the excellent instruction which has been given during the sessions of this conference may reach that class of people.

## THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS ARE WELL TAUGHT

In the primitive Church there were given officers for specific purposes, as there are officers given to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today: "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers; for the perfection of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The Latter-day Saints are well taught. We have the things of God as they have been given through his servants in days that are past, recorded in these standard works of the Church—the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. These books are before the Latter-day Saints with a commandment of the Lord that we shall search them, for in them we think we have eternal life, and they are they which testify of God and of his truth. If we, the Latter-day Saints, were to read the scriptures as our Father in heaven desires that we should do, we would be better informed in regard to his mind and will concerning us. We would receive strength of spirit to live more fully the commandments which he has given us, and by the living of those commandments we would obtain the blessing of eternal life. It seems necessary that there should be officers and authorities in the Church to speak frequently of these things which are written, because we neglect to read them as we ought to.

## BY WORKS AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY ARE WE JUSTIFIED

There is a proneness, I am sure, on the part of many of the Latter-day Saints, to be hearers of the word and to be satisfied without doing the things which the Lord has commanded us, which in our thoughtful moments we know are intended for our blessing and salvation. It was always so. When our Savior had finished, practically, his Sermon on

the Mount, he reminded those whom he had been addressing, that not all those who cry, Lord, Lord, should be saved in the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of our Father in heaven, and he likened those who heard the word and would not do it unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, that when the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, it fell, and great was the fall thereof; while those who heard and did the things which he taught were likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock, that when the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it stood, for it was founded upon a rock.

We find James, "the Just," and a "pillar" of the Church at Jerusalem, teaching:

"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."

And further James said in explanation of this principle:

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?"

"If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food,

"And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

"Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble.

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

"Was not Abraham our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

"Seest thou faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God.

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

#### 100 MUCH DEAD FAITH IN THE CHURCH

Brethren and sisters, I feel that there is too much dead faith in the Church. Those who have spoken in this conference, have a living faith in God and that which he has revealed, and they represent a large class of the Latter-day Saints. God bless them for their faith and faithfulness; but there is a great deal of dead faith, and those who possess it are deceiving themselves.

Faith is the first principle of revealed religion, the foundation of all righteousness. All our unrighteousness is due to the want of faith. If we had the faith that we ought to have as Latter-day Saints, there is nothing that need be done that we could not do. There is nothing that God has commanded us that we would not do; and we should remember that it is not the profession, it is not the intellectual assent

unto principle, it is not the *form* that is going to save, it is the doing of the things which the Lord, through his gospel, has prescribed by which we may attain to glory and exaltation. Faith in itself will not save us. Knowledge in itself will not save us. Men have to have knowledge in order to be condemned as well as to be saved. The Latter-day Saints are well taught, I say, and if they will do as well as they know, they will obtain salvation; and if they do not do as well as they know, condemnation will certainly follow, for this gospel which we have received is as a savor of life unto life and of death unto death, unto those unto whom it comes. We have the authorities of the Church, they are here to explain to the children of men, in the Church and out of the Church, the things which are necessary to be done by them for their salvation, but men and women who will not obey the commandments of God when they hear them and understand them will scarcely be expected to be obedient unto the advice and counsel of the servants of God. Many there are, as I have already said, who will do so with glad hearts, and will reap the reward. I would to God that all the members of the Church would do so and be consistent and receive the blessings which our Father in heaven has so generously to give to his faithful children.

#### NEED OF DOING THE THINGS WE KNOW

We have need of being impressed with the necessity of doing the things which we know we ought to do, and by the preaching of the gospel we may be thus impressed. Then the Spirit of the Lord attends us, as it has done in the various sessions of this conference, the people who hear may, by that same Spirit, know that these things are of God, they know the voice of the Good Shepherd, even though it be manifest through his humble servants. The Lord has said: "Whether it be by my own voice, or by the mouth of my servants, it is the same," and the true and consistent Latter-day Saint regards it the same. Let me read in conclusion a few words:

"And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation."

So we bear our testimony that we do speak, not of our own strength, and our own wisdom, but by the power of God made manifest by his Holy Spirit. I promise you that if you will heed the counsels which are given you by the servants of God, you will be walking in paths which are straight and which will make for joy, happiness and hope in this life, and eternal life in the world to come. I bear my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, to this effect, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Junius F. Wells, and the Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.