

to them, and actual associates with them and get into the deeper recesses of their hearts by your kindness and your solicitation for their welfare, and let them feel that you love them, that you love them dearly, and that you have their interest at heart all the day long, and thus you will easily bring your children into lines of greater perfection as they advance in life, preparing them for the great events that are to transpire in the future, and fitting them to take the places of their parents in the leadership and membership of the great societies of the Church, and thus making good your parentage in the rearing of your children in the fear of the Lord. God bless you, my brethren and sisters, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning."

Benediction was pronounced by Elder James I. May, of Honeyville, Utah.

## CLOSING SESSION

The Conference was continued in the Tabernacle on Sunday afternoon, April 8, 1923, at 2 o'clock. President Heber J. Grant presided.

The choir and congregation sang, "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah."

Prayer was offered by Elder Henry H. Rolapp, of the general auditing committee.

The choir sang, "Have faith, ye Saints," music by Professor A. C. Lund, words by Burt Auerbach.

## ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

I have had a great many reflections; many thoughts have come into my mind during this conference. I realize that I can only mention one or two this afternoon.

### THE WORLDS ARE A MEANS TO AN END, NOT THE END ITSELF.

There comes to my mind an expression in the Pearl of Great Price, in the vision of Moses, which was given at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceeding high mountain and saw God face to face and talked with him. The Lord showed to Moses the "workmanship of his hands," and Moses beheld the world, and all the children of men to the latest generations.

And the Lord said to Moses:

"For behold there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man, but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.

And it came to pass that Moses spake unto the Lord, saying: Be merciful unto thy servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth and the inhabitants thereof, and also the heavens, and then thy servant will be content.

And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine."

We are informed by astronomers that some of these worlds are so large that they would fill the space occupied by our sun, and extending out to the orbit of Mars, far beyond the orbit of the earth on which we dwell. Such, they say, is the case in regard to the great star in the constellation of Orion. While reflecting on this matter the thought comes to mind that notwithstanding the countless number of worlds and the great magnitude of many of them, they are a means to an end, and not the end itself. The Father is creating worlds for the purpose of peopling them—placing upon them his sons and his daughters. We are informed in section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, that by and through the Son of God, the "worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God."

#### MAN THE MOST IMPORTANT OF GOD'S CREATIONS

We learn from these scriptures from which I have read and from other revelations from the Lord, that man is the most important of all our Father's creations. In the same vision given to Moses, the Father said: "And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words. For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

#### GOD'S LOVE FOR MANKIND.

From this, and other scripture, I say, we learn that the great work of the Father is to bring to pass the salvation of his children giving unto each that reward which each merits according to his works. I feel most assuredly that our Father in heaven is far more interested in a soul—one of his children—than it is possible for an earthly father to be in one of his children. His love for us is greater than can be the love of an earthly parent for his offspring. In another part of this record we are informed that when the Lord spoke to Enoch and showed to him the nations of the earth and explained to him the nature of the punishment that should befall them for their transgressions of his commandments, that the Lord wept and showed his sorrow in tears for their disobedience. Because of this, Enoch marvelled and thought it strange that the Lord could weep.

Here is the passage:

"And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is

it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

"And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy and from all eternity to all eternity?

"And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there and also thou art merciful and kind forever."

And the Lord answered: "\* \* \* Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

"And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should choose me, their Father; but behold they are without affection, and they hate their own blood."

#### MAN MUST BE REDEEMED ACCORDING TO LAW

These are reasons why the Lord wept and why the heavens wept.

I was asked by a brother one time if a man could be perfectly happy in the celestial kingdom if one of his children was not permitted to enter there. I told him that I supposed that any man who was so unfortunate as to have one of his children barred from the celestial kingdom would, of course, have feelings of sorrow because of that condition; and that is just the position our Father in heaven is in. Not all of his children are worthy of celestial glory, and many are forced to suffer his wrath because of their transgressions, and this causes the Father and the whole heavens to have sorrow and to weep. The Lord works in accordance with natural law. Man must be redeemed according to law and his reward must be based on the law of justice. Because of this the Lord will not give unto men that which they do not merit, but shall reward all men according to their works.

#### THE WORTH OF SOULS GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

In my preaching I have always tried to be consistent and to be careful, keeping in mind the things that I have said here this afternoon, knowing the worth of souls. The Lord made the statement, in one of the revelations given shortly before the organization of the Church, that the worth of souls is great:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God:

"For behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him."

Knowing this, and realizing as I think I do the fact that the human soul,—and by that I mean the spirit and body combined—is the most important of all the works of God, I have tried to be careful in my teachings only to express those things which are true and which can be proved by the revelations of the Lord, fearing lest I should teach something that was not true and which might affect my

brother and my sister and cause that they might depart from the path of truth and righteousness.

THE GOSPEL PLAN NOT EASY FOR THE WAYWARD.

I have never been able in my teachings to make the gospel plan appear easy; that is, to hold out hopes to those who are indifferent, to those who are wayward, to those who wilfully break the commandments of the Lord and will not hearken unto these truths when every opportunity is given them to obey the truth. I have always tried to impress upon the people the fact that the gate is strait and the way is narrow which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it,—in reference to the celestial kingdom of God. I know that the Father will save all the workmanship of his hands in the three great kingdoms, the Celestial, the Terrestrial or the Telestial, except Sons of Perdition. But only the righteous, those who are just and true, shall enter the Celestial Kingdom.

OUR DUTY TO LABOR FOR THE SALVATION OF MAN

Now, if the worth of souls is great, then we ought to be engaged in the saving of souls; and I feel that it is the duty of every man holding the Priesthood not only to strive to save himself and his immediate family, but it is his duty to labor in that Priesthood for the salvation of all men; and this responsibility rests not merely upon those who hold the Priesthood, but upon all the members of the Church who know the truth.

For a moment or two, however, I desire to reverse this picture; and the reason that I do is because of the remarks that have been made here concerning the doctrines of false teachers in the world—men who stand up before the congregations of the people, telling them not to believe in Christ, that he is not the Son of God, that he did not rise from the dead, that he did not atone for the sins of the world.

DENYING CHRIST A FEARFUL RESPONSIBILITY.

Now, brethren and sisters, let me, if I can, impress upon you this thought: If the worth of souls is great as I have shown, and our joy shall be great in heaven with those we may be able to bring unto the strait and narrow way, what will be our feelings if, through any teachings of ours, one soul is barred from the Celestial Kingdom? If that which we have taught and practiced shall destroy the faith of one individual so that he does not accept the truth and that fact is made known unto us when we stand before the judgment seat;—then, let me ask, how great will be our sorrow, how great will be the condemnation which we will merit in that we have barred, through our influence and through our teachings, one of the children of our Father from entering into eternal exaltation? I tell you that these men who stand up and say that Jesus is not the Christ, that he was a great teacher, but not the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, and thus lead

many to deny the power of the resurrection and the divinity of Christ, are taking upon themselves a most terrible responsibility that should cause them to fear and tremble. I could not stand it to know that I had taught an untruth that would lead people to destruction. And when these men realize what they have done and that, not only their own souls have not been saved, but they have been the means of destroying the souls of other men, leading them away from truth and righteousness, I tell you that it shall be hard with them, and their punishment shall be most severe in eternity.

MEN SHOULD TEACH WHAT THEY UNDERSTAND.

I mention these matters that our attention may be called to that which is our duty; and that a man should not teach that which he does not know to be the truth. The revelations of the Lord have been given unto us for our salvation that we may understand and walk in the light, that we may teach others and impart unto them the same instructions that we receive, that they, likewise, may receive salvation; for I am satisfied that our Father in heaven would, if it were possible, save all men and give unto them celestial glory, even the fulness of exaltation. But, he has given unto man his agency and man is under the necessity of obeying the truth according to that which is revealed in order to obtain the exaltation of the righteous. We are not walking now by sight, as we did before we came into this world, but the Lord expects that we shall walk by faith; and walking by faith we shall receive the reward of the righteous, if we adhere unto those commandments which are given for our salvation and that men may again come back, through the resurrection from the *dead* into the presence of the Father and the Son.

THE BEST IS THE FULNESS OF THE FATHER'S KINGDOM.

I know that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world, that he came into the world to take upon him the transgression of every soul who would repent; and that we, through our repentance and our faith and our acceptance of the principles of the gospel, shall receive full salvation through the shedding of his blood and through the atonement which he brought to pass that we might receive these blessings. Moreover, I know that all men shall be redeemed from death, because men are not responsible for death, therefore Jesus Christ has redeemed them from death through the shedding of his blood. They shall rise in the resurrection, every man to receive his reward according to his works. We who have received the truth of the everlasting gospel ought not to be satisfied with anything short of the best, and the best is the fulness of the Father's kingdom; and for that I hope and pray we shall live and set examples in righteousness to all men that none may stumble, that none may falter, that none may turn from the path of righteousness, due to anything that we may do or say, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.