

patriot fathers of this country. I pray that God will inspire us to continue loyal and true to him, to our country, and to its institutions; and that we may in very deed preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by our acts; that, as we grow in years and increase in understanding, we may grow in the power and ability to live the Gospel, that our example of integrity, of honesty, of loyalty to God and country may inspire others to investigate the message of life and salvation.

CLOSING TESTIMONY

Before sitting down, I bear my testimony to you and to all the world that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind, the Creator of heaven and earth; that Joseph Smith was his prophet, the instrument in his hands of establishing again the Gospel of life and salvation. That we who have that knowledge may live the Gospel is my prayer, and I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior. Amen.

ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

My brethren and sisters, I am very happy to have the privilege of again meeting with the Latter-day Saints in a General Conference. I did not have this privilege six months ago, and I have felt the loss which is sustained by every member of this Church who does not participate in the spirit and the exercises of these great gatherings.

A TESTIMONY OF JESUS

I bear witness to the testimony borne by President Grant this morning. I say with him that I know that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that Joseph Smith was the prophet of these latter days, called to restore the eternal gospel of Christ. I am happy in the possession of this truth; and I ask for nothing more than that the Lord may so help me to live, day by day throughout the years that may remain, that I may retain this testimony and be willing to bear it to all who may care to listen.

A REMARKABLE AGE OF THE WORLD

Yesterday morning, before I left my home, I picked up a paper which is circulated in this country by the hundreds of thousands of copies. I turned to the editorial page, and to my surprise saw a statement by the editor to the effect that what this great country needs today, these great United States of America, is a dose of Voltaire. I suppose he meant by that a dose of atheism. That statement has remained in my thoughts, because it seems to be another evidence of the fact that after these many centuries of light, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, many in the world, even among professed Christians, are unable

or unwilling to accept the truth of the gospel, or the existence of God.

This is a marvelous age. It is clear to all who follow the events of the day, and who note the great steps of progress from month to month, that this is in many respects the most remarkable age that the world has known. The air above us, the seas, the solid earth, the whole physical universe, all seem unitedly to bow before man, to his acquired power over the natural forces of the universe. Today, man is able to do things that in days gone by were conceivably done only by God. Yet, as I read the editorial in this famous newspaper, an old thought came back to me, that the airship, the steamship, the telephone, the radio and all the other marvels of this age, are but as the clothing of the body, but as instruments to be used by man. By means of these great inventions and discoveries, great gifts of God to the people of these latter days, it is possible for the righteous man to accomplish righteousness more widely and more speedily, but it is equally true that by means of these great modern developments the wicked man may do wickedness much more easily and much more comprehensively than in the days gone by. The discoveries with which we conjure in this day have not touched the mainspring of human character, have not shaped or reshaped human conduct. Something deeper than material conquests relates itself to human conduct, to that manner of life, which in the end makes the world great or small, good or bad. A knowledge of God, and faith in his word have ever been the determining force in the making of the character of a man or a nation.

MAN HELPLESS WITHOUT GOD

If the world needs atheism, at this day, then the faith of this poor world of ours must concern itself entirely with man's own powers. Take God away from the earth and man has left only that which his own powers may produce, and he must become a worshiper of his own power. Centuries of human experience, and the events of every day, demonstrate the utter inadequacy of man's unaided power in winning human happiness. Life becomes full and rounded only as the forces beyond man are accepted and used by him. Man is helpless without God.

A GREAT INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL CONTROVERSY

Such thoughts have been brought home to us especially during the last twelve months by a great intellectual and spiritual controversy, among honest people, which has shaken this country, and which is spreading across the seas into other countries, the result of which will probably appear much more important when history is written than the great wars and political contentions of the day. The modernists who already have been discussed from this stand say that they believe in an Almighty God, but declare that they are unable to believe in the virgin birth of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They declare themselves unable to accept as real the miracles of Christ as recorded

in Holy Writ. They say that, above all things, they cannot believe that man after death may be brought into a life again, to live forever as a personal embodied being. These doubts are before them, as they say, because man is not able to understand how such things may be done.

These people, however good and sincere they may be, are engaged in an old pastime; they limit God and try to make him great only as man is great. They say in substance that God can do only that which man himself is able to do, or only that which can be understood by man. This limitation has been attempted before; it is not a new thing. It is surprising how, in this latter day, in this greatest civilization, we return, over and over, to such age-old controversies. I have no doubt that in the days of Adam men differed as do these modernists and others of today, with respect to the nature and character or the existence of God.

It seems curious to me that a man can say that he believes in a God who is the author of life, of the unfathomable mystery of life, and in the same breath can declare that he cannot believe that God is able to cause the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ. It is difficult for me to understand the mind of a man who believes in a God who has raised the bottom of the sea into mountains, and has made the mountain-tops into sea-bottoms, and yet cannot believe in the possibility of the miracles of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is still more mysterious to me how, in this modern day, men may say that they believe in a God who has made this great earth out of eternal elements and indestructible forces, but that man, the sum of creation, the most marvelous product of God's handiwork, upon this earth, is a transitory being, to be laid down in the grave, and if he ever emerges, to be merged quiescently with the forces of the hereafter.

DANGEROUS TO LIMIT THE POWERS OF GOD

I am inclined to think, though I recognize that these seekers after truth are honest and desire to do the right thing in their seeking after truth—I always desire to give them credit for that—that there is no great difference between the modernist of today and the idol worshiper of the past. Heathen nations have set up a god to produce rain, and another to produce crops, and in a dry year of small harvests they have slapped the ears of both gods. It is dangerous to limit in our thinking the powers of God, to allow ourselves to say that God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, the Founder of truth, is limited simply because we are limited in our understanding. It leads men to unbelief and atheism.

SOMETHING, HOWEVER, TO BE SAID FOR THE MODERNIST

Yet, brethren and sisters, I would like to say that there is something to be said for the modernist, because, after all, he has broken

away from the unacceptable traditions of the past. What has the fundamentalist, his brother, to give him? Just a short time ago I met two priests of a church well known in the world, who explained to me at great length that God is a person, yes, but a person who fills the whole universe in person, and who, at the same time, in person complete and whole, is in every human heart. That is beyond my understanding. This summer I met a minister of another church well known in the world, who explained to me that God made matter out of nothing, and then, having made sufficient matter out of nothing, he proceeded to build an earth from the matter so created. I cannot understand that. A few weeks ago, a member of another Church wrote to me and said that God was in the beauty of the rose, in the melody of a song, in the tenderness of a mother's heart; and that was all there is of God. No wonder people break away from such conceptions. No wonder that we have modernists breaking away from fundamentalists. The fact of the matter is that in this day with respect to the existence and character of God the blind are leading the blind.

A FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE

Among the great doctrines revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, none is greater or more fundamental, as has been explained today by the living Prophet of today, than that God is from everlasting to everlasting; so far as we can understand without beginning and without end; the Father of our spirits, who in so far as he deals with human life may be understood by us, and who understands us because we are his children; a God whose glory is intelligence, and whose work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. There is no need for us of this Church to become fundamentalists or modernists or to set up new theories as to divinity, for God has revealed himself so clearly in these latter days that, with respect to our human life, every one of us may understand to a sufficient degree the nature of God and his relationship to the human family.

THE LORD HAS DECLARED HIMSELF IN ALL GENERATIONS

I rejoice in such truths. I rejoice to know that God in person came down to commission the boy, Joseph Smith, with prophetic power in these latter days. As President Grant has stated here today there is no doubt in our minds about the reality of the First Vision of Joseph Smith. Every religion is built upon a conception of God. The Lord, knowing this, has declared himself in all generations. The first statement in Holy Writ makes it clear that man must understand the true God and must not worship false gods nor set up gods for himself. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—Almighty God, not blind forces, made the earth and the heavens above. Later on, out of the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, the first commandment was: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And on the back of the statue of Joseph Smith, in this square, you will

find as a great fundamental message, that "It is the first great principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God."

ALL SHALL BOW BEFORE THE ONE TRUE GOD

The people of the earth are gradually beginning to understand the truths respecting God, though they are unwilling to abide by them. I read in a recent magazine—I clipped out the verses because they seemed so applicable to our belief—a verse which reads something like this:

"We serve no God whose work is done,
Who rests within his firmament.
Our God, his labors but begun,
Toils evermore, with power unspent."

And so, the truth of this latter day work is filtering in among the nations, and filling the hearts and souls and understandings of men. After a while I have no doubt that all shall bow before the one true God, the one who made the heavens and the earth, and who has spoken throughout all these ages to his children, even if obedience is not shown him.

It is possible to know God. There are thousands in this Church, there have been hundreds of thousands, who are and have been able to bear witness to that. There are hosts of people, who, in this Church, have sacrificed all for the love of the gospel, separated from their kindred, met the hardships of pioneer life, sacrificed all worldly ambitions, and then, at the close of life, have testified fearlessly that God has been good to them, that throughout their lives, in all their sacrifices, they have been simply carrying out the great purposes of Almighty God, that they have been engaged in the cause of truth, that they know of a certainty that God lives, that he has spoken in these latter days, and that it is good to be in his work. These testimonies from the thousands who have borne them become one great shout to heaven that God may be known, and that this work is a work of truth. A knowledge of God is the need of this and of every land. To know him and to serve him is the certain way to human happiness.

WE REST UPON THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

There is no other gathering on the face of the earth such as we have here this morning; such a great body of men and women who see alike and think alike. We rest ourselves upon truth, the simple truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are willing to live by that truth, and if necessary to die for it. I am deeply grateful that I know this truth; that God, in his mercy, brought it to my mother and to me. I praise God for it every day of my life. I know that you do the same. May the Lord be with us and make us strong in his cause. May we grow in a knowledge of God and his desires with respect to us, and be willing always to sacrifice whatever may be required of us for his great cause, I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.