

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Time is very precious today, as it is always, and I desire most earnestly that the few moments I occupy will be profitable to this vast congregation.

A MARVELOUS AGE

We are living in a marvelous age, in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. All the other dispensations that have gone before are culminating in this one. The Lord tells us in the Book of Mormon, to which President Clawson has just referred, that at the time of the coming forth of that book, he would commence his work among all the nations, and it is remarkable that since the publication of the Book of Mormon more important discoveries and inventions have been presented to mankind than in all the ages that have gone before. Science has developed many wonderful things. Labor-saving devices have made our work much easier than before. Electricity, which has been in the world from the beginning, has been recently discovered and has been so controlled that it is used to light our homes, to propel our street cars and railway trains, and to operate machinery of all kinds. This was unknown one hundred years ago. As a matter of fact, nobody can tell what it is today; but it is one of the powers in this universe that is controlled by our Father in heaven. It would seem that everything one can imagine has been provided for our comfort in this age. We have the accumulated information of the ages, and surely we ought to be inclined to take advantage of that information in order that we might enjoy our lives here and be prepared to enjoy them eternally. In our great institutions of learning men are devoting their entire time to research. There is a disposition on the part of man to find out everything that is mysterious, and the result has been that intelligent men have had their minds operated on by the Spirit of our heavenly Father, and many of the conveniences to which I have referred have been the result. In the science of medicine, newly discovered anaesthetics have been a boon to suffering humanity, and by their use the surgeon has been able to perform wonderful operations. Toxins have been prepared that have a tendency to prevent disease, and to stop its spread. Opportunity is given us to know what happens in all parts of the world each day through the great newspapers and magazines that are published. Everything that you can think of in the way of comfort and information has been presented to this dispensation. Unfortunately, notwithstanding these blessings, there is a tendency to worship the gift and to forget the Giver.

THE WISDOM OF MAN TAUGHT

We have in our public schools and in our universities, men and women who are trained, their minds are lighted up by the teachings of men, and it is remarkable to what a degree the business of life

has been brought to the attention of the human family; but most of our schools operate as a result of the wisdom of man and exclude God, the source of all truth. We spend millions of dollars in the education of the hand and of the mind, and we exclude from many of these institutions all knowledge of our heavenly Father, who gave to us the hand and the mind. In fact, there has been an effort made by some educators to create in the minds of pupils under their watchcare a contempt for the fact that the world we live in is controlled by our Father in heaven.

In section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants I find this reference:

"Light and truth forsake that evil one.

"Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.

"And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

"But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth."

ADDITIONAL LIGHT AND TRUTH TO BE TAUGHT

So my brethren and sisters, while we can have our children educated in the arts and sciences as taught by men, there still remains a commandment of our heavenly Father that we shall supplement those teachings and that our children shall be reared in light and truth. I find in this same section a reference that is made to one of the men of that time. It says:

"Verily, I say unto you, * * * you have continued under this condemnation;

"You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction."

Now the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints realizes the importance of teaching children the things of God, and has given to us our auxiliary organizations. Our heavenly Father inspired the organization of the Relief Society, the Sabbath School, the Mutual Improvement Associations, the Primary, the Religion Class. The inspiration of the Lord gave to us our Church schools and our seminaries. All these are intended to supplement the teachings of men, and to bring our children under an influence that shall assist them while they remain here in the earth to prepare for eternal life. These have been wonderfully beneficial. Then we are instructed, even in our recreation, to teach our boys and our girls that in their pastime they should recognize our heavenly Father; and in our day the various stakes and wards of Zion are asked to give special attention to recreation, in order that the things that induce our young people to follow after the foolishness of the world may be neutralized by keeping them in an influence that will incline them to righteousness and inspire them to do

those things and live such lives as shall make them worthy to be called sons and daughters of our heavenly Father.

We find in section 68 of the Doctrine and Covenants something that we often hear quoted, but I am going to read it because it has application to these things I refer to:

PARENTS TO TEACH CHILDREN THE THINGS OF GOD

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

"And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord."

There is more of this same section that perhaps you are all familiar with, but the point that I had in mind, and what I am about to say I am exceedingly anxious that it should sink into the mind of every parent in Zion, and that is, that while the Lord has provided all these wonderful educational institutions, while science has contributed so much for our comfort and our blessing, while the Church has prepared places to which we may send our children to be taught the gospel of Christ, that does not relieve you or me of the responsibility and the obligation that is laid upon us by our heavenly Father to teach our own children. And the Lord says, wherein we fail to do that, even at the tender age of eight, that the sin will be upon our heads. President Joseph F. Smith was inspired to give unto us the wise counsel to be more with our children. Notwithstanding the many things that occupy our time—the business of life, theatres, parties, socials, automobiles, pleasure resorts, the canyons and lakes—all these things that we may enjoy in moderation; notwithstanding the pursuit of life whereby we gain a livelihood, that prophet of the Lord gave to us this advice: That we should so arrange our time that one evening each week would find the Latter-day Saints in their own homes, associated with their own children, and there teach them the things that the Lord has decreed that they should know. It is not sufficient that my children are taught faith, repentance and baptism, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the holy Ghost in the auxiliary organizations. My Father in heaven has commanded that I should do that myself. I have read to you that the Lord told one man that the cause of his distress was that he had not taught his children light and truth. There is anguish in some of the homes of the Latter-day Saints today because we have neglected our opportunity, and we have failed to teach our children as we should. If the home evening could only be a fact among the Latter-day

Saints, if during one evening a week we would live with our own, under the influence of the spirit of the Lord, at our own firesides surrounded by those whom the Lord has given unto us, and told us, particularly, that we should instruct them, how many happy homes there would be where today there is sorrow and discord and distress. Fathers and mothers would elicit from their children that respect that is due to parents who are model parents, and who have in their hearts a desire to teach their loved ones. We are told in Luke that there would be a time when men would be choked with the cares and the riches and the pleasures of life. I have in my mind, as I stand here even now, men and women that I love, whose very spirituality is being choked by these very things, and the adversary is leading them along that easy pathway of pleasure and they are neglecting their duty as parents and as members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

THE DUTY WE OWE TO OUR CHILDREN

It was said by one of the speakers that your commission, you men of Israel, is from God the eternal Father. The holy Priesthood has been conferred upon us, and if we exercise it as we should, as we have a right to do in our homes, when we shut out the world and the things of the outside, and under the power of prayer and thanksgiving we give to our sons and daughters those rich truths that the Lord has deposited with us for our welfare and for theirs, a genuine development of faith will follow. I hope that it will be possible for us to return, if we have departed from that advice. Gather our children around us and let our homes be the abiding place of the Spirit of the Lord. If we will do our part, we may know and be sure that our heavenly Father will do his. Let us avail ourselves of all the information that it is possible to obtain in the world; it will rise with us in the resurrection. I am grateful for the great men and women who give their lives for the education of the human family, and I am grateful to God that he has given to us in this latter day a knowledge that the wisdom of man is not sufficient, but it takes the wisdom of our heavenly Father to prepare us for eternal life in his celestial kingdom. Are you satisfied with the thought that your children will go to the terrestrial or the telestial kingdom? Are you satisfied that you shall inherit either of these lesser kingdoms? It is that you might enjoy the celestial kingdom that the Priesthood of the living God has been conferred upon men in this day. It is that we might gain the celestial glory that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been given to the children of men. Now in the midst of confusion, excitement and all the pleasures of life, let us not lose sight of the Pearl of Great Price, the power of God unto salvation, and let us not lose sight of the duty that we owe these boys and girls who are created in the image of God. He is the Father of their spirits,

and he will hold us responsible for the teaching that they receive. I hope and pray that we will so teach them that when the end shall come we can receive from him that blessing, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord," and that we may have our loved ones with us eternally, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A soprano solo, "Beautiful Zion for me," was sung by Lily Shipp Burton.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

"Beautiful Zion For Me," was written by Brother Charles W. Penrose upon the spur of the moment when bidding good-bye to Brigham Young, Jr., who had presided over the European mission, and who was about to sail for home. Brother Penrose remarked, "Oh, Brigham, beautiful Zion for me! I wish I were going with you." Then he asked Brother Brigham Young, Jr., "Do you know the tune, 'Beautiful Isle of the Sea?'" And he said, "Yes." "All right, I will write you a hymn to that tune that you can sing on the ocean." And President Penrose wrote this hymn.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

On occasions of this character there is an obligation resting upon each member of the Church present, perhaps the greatest responsibility is upon those who are called upon to instruct the people.

PRAYER IS OF GREAT BENEFIT

We all have need of the help our Lord so generously gives, when sought after in the way that he has appointed. Our singers need help that they may have control of their voices, that they may have the spirit of these hymns and songs which are sung, that the song may be as a prayer unto the Lord, that it may be an acceptable feature of our worship, and be answered with blessings upon our heads, and that they may be able, not only to be heard, but to be understood. The individuals who pray need help that they may be able to voice the sentiments and feelings of the members of the congregation, for they are not offering an individual prayer, but a prayer for the whole people, expressive of their thoughts and feelings. The speaker needs that help which the Saints can give by their prayers of faith. The Lord has said that the prayers of a righteous man availeth much with the Lord. This being the case, the prayer, silent and secret though it be, of many faithful men and women is sure to avail more with the Lord, and if we all do our duty in the spirit of worship when we come together on such occasions, our worship will not only be approved of the Lord, but will be sanctified to our blessing and salvation.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH

The Apostle Paul in an epistle to the Corinthians made com-