

When priestcraft shall assume that which does not belong to it, then God's mercy and protection will be withdrawn. Go on and read the remainder of this eighty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, (I do not like to read it here) because it tells us what is going to happen to priestcraft, and it is coming with those other manifestations of the power of the Lord which are so prevalent.

May the blessing of the Lord be with you, my brethren and sisters. We pray for you, we work for you, we love you. Our only desire is to be of service to you, forgetting ourselves. And I want to bear witness that never in the history of the Church have men more unselfishly directed its affairs than at the present time. I know this from my association with these men, with the Presidency, with the members of the Council of the Twelve. They are here to sacrifice everything for the welfare of the members of the Church of Christ. God help us all to follow that example, I pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang, "Inflammatu8," Laurinda Brewerton, soloist.

The benediction was offered by Elder Geo. W. Middleton of the Ensign stake.

The conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.

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### AFTERNOON SESSION

The meeting opened at 2 p. m., Sunday, October 3, 1926; President Heber J. Grant presiding.

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

Prayer was offered by Elder John M. Baxter, president of the Woodruff stake.

The choir sang the hymn, "Go, ye messengers of glory."

### PRESIDENT CHARLES W. NIBLEY

*My brethren and sisters:* It has always been a considerable task for me, at the general conferences, to address these large gatherings of Latter-day Saints, although I have had many years' experience. Approaching a task of this kind gives one a feeling of awe.

#### A GREAT WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SAINTS

I rejoice in the work that the Lord has accomplished with the help of his Saints, imperfect as most of us are. Under his guidance and direction we have been able to accomplish a great work. I believe that he would say now, as he said to the Church in former days, that he is well pleased with his Church collectively—not individually, but collectively.

## GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR THIS AGE AND NATION

I feel very grateful for the privilege of being here. I often think what a grand thing it is to be permitted to live in the world today—this wonderful age of the world, with its marvelous developments of science and art, and the great progress that has been made from the conditions of the world as they existed two or three hundred, or even a hundred years ago. What a different world! And what a wonderful land of liberty we are living in—a choice land; under the freest and best of all governments on the face of the earth; where there is more security, more protection for the rights and liberties of the people, than there is in any other nation. The hand of the Lord has guided the destinies of this great nation, for he it was that planned it.

He tells us in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith which we often quote: "I, the Lord, raised up wise men for this very purpose"; that is, to found this government; and it has had divine guidance all the way through. The people here in the United States, even those who are not so well off financially, are housed better, fed and clothed better, and better situated than the rich and well-to-do in most other nations. Never before in all the history of the world has there been a nation like this, of such commanding importance, and yet not desiring anything but what rightfully belongs to it.

## REVERENCE FOR GOD

I was glad to read the inaugural address of President Coolidge, delivered a year ago last March, particularly the closing paragraph wherein he showed such reverence for God. He concluded the address with these words:

"America seeks no earthly empire built on blood and force. No ambition, no temptation, lures her to thought of foreign dominions. The legions which she sends forth are armed, not with the sword, but with the cross.

"The higher state to which she seeks the allegiance of all mankind is not of human, but of divine origin. She cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God."

"She cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God". These words constitute an acknowledgment of God in the affairs of the nation, and a desire to be governed by the spirit of righteousness and justice, to do good and to uphold the principles of freedom.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

The liberty that we enjoy today has come only after a hard struggle in the world. Four hundred years ago the fight for freedom was on. The reformers, as they are called—Martin Luther, John Knox and others—rose up and protested against the tyranny to which they were subjected. They demanded more liberty. They were few in number compared to the many millions, but under the blessing of the Lord they conquered. Finally, little by little, liberty was conceded to the people by the potentates and popes that then ruled the world. But it

was a hard struggle and cost some of the best blood of that period. *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, by Motley, gives a graphic description of the terrible sufferings endured by the Dutch people in this long fight for liberty. For the liberties that we enjoy today we are indebted in large measure to the people of the Netherlands. For many years they fought most valiantly for religious freedom and the extension of the rights and liberties of the citizen against all the might and power of Catholic Spain, backed by the Spanish Inquisition. They were small in number and weak indeed compared to the thousands and tens of thousands of Spanish troops, led by the notorious Duke of Alva. But they finally conquered. Why? Because the guidance of the Lord was with them, and he gave them his favor and blessing.

A hundred years later the same desire for liberty was again manifested. Oliver Cromwell was raised up, and he fought a good fight and kept the faith. We are also largely indebted to him, and to those who fought with him, for the freedom that exists in America today.

A hundred years after that we find George Washington and the patriot fathers contending for the liberties of the people, and the Lord gave divine guidance to them. They could not have succeeded without his help. His power and his hand were over them.

So, as we heard from President Ivins this morning, it comes about in the progress of the spirit of freedom and liberty, that the Lord has prepared the way in this nation for his Church to be established.

#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIVINE GUIDANCE AND DIVINE AUTHORITY

But here let me emphasize one thought. To all of these men—Luther, Knox, Cromwell, Washington, and their compeers—there was given divine guidance. But they did not have divine authority. The Lord today gives divine guidance to good people of the world who seek him—and many millions do. It is true that there is a divinity that shapes our ends (and the ends of nations, too) rough-hew them as we will. But he has not given to them divine authority. As we heard this morning, religious denominations sometimes meet together and pass resolutions against us. They are without divine authority. And there is a marked distinction between divine guidance and divine authority. People can see and acknowledge the guiding hand of Almighty God in the formation of this government and in its growth and development. It is plain to many that we have enjoyed his favor as a nation. But as to divine authority, that is different. Let me read from the very first revelation in the book of Doctrine and Covenants:

“And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, [We heard from President Grant this forenoon of the necessity of preaching this gospel to all the nations of the earth] by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

“And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

“Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants.”

That is a little different from divine guidance.

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when he was only seventeen years of age, in 1823, we read:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

#### DIVINE AUTHORITY CONFERRED BY HOLY MESSENGERS

Was that divine authority bestowed? Let me read another section. On the 15th day of May, 1829, an angel of the Lord, known as John the Baptist when he lived upon the earth in the days of the Savior, appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them, in these words, the Priesthood of Aaron:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

Here is divine authority. Do any of our friends or neighbors make such a claim? We know the claim of the Catholic church, and all we say in response is that "By their fruits ye shall know them." These were the words of our Savior, and that is enough on that score. But our Protestant friends do not even have that much of a claim. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. And because they do not have the authority themselves they think no one else has.

I have read to you how the Lord conferred the lesser Priesthood upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Let me read from the 27th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Prophet Joseph, in preparing for a sacramental meeting in August, 1830, started to go to a neighbor's house to secure wine for the sacrament, because that is what had been used. He was met by a messenger from the Lord and instructed that he need not go for wine; that pure water should be used instead:

"It mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins."

Then this messenger goes on to tell the prophet that the day will come when he, Joseph Smith, would be able to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses, with Elias, with others of the ancient worthies and partake of the sacrament "and also with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world." So, some of us may have the privilege of being there. But he said further, that the Prophet would have the privilege of sitting down "with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and

bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them."

Here was divine authority in these last days, conferred by holy messengers, the same men, Peter, James and John, of whom the Lord Jesus Christ said, in his time: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." The Lord Jesus himself ordained those three men, and they came, as I have read, and conferred the holy apostleship upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. So here is divine authority to act in the name of the Lord. Our claim is that the authority of the Priesthood has been conferred upon men and given to this Church which is the Church of Christ. It is not given to the nation. But the nation has had divine guidance, as I have said. Individuals not of our Church may have divine guidance; but divine authority, to act in the name of the Lord, to baptize, to lay on hands, to say: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," as the apostles of old said, and then to have them receive it, that is a different proposition.

#### WITNESSES OF THE BESTOWAL OF DIVINE AUTHORITY

Upon these statements of divine authority we rest our case, as the lawyers say. If these heavenly messengers did not come to Joseph Smith and confer upon him this divine authority, then is our preaching vain and our faith is vain also. But we know, and the world may know also by the fruits of "Mormonism" that there is divine power in this organization. Moreover, we have witnesses. Through Joseph Smith the Lord called three special witnesses, to whom was given the great manifestation of the truth of the Book of Mormon. We have not only three witnesses to the testimony of this divine authority, but we have three hundred thousand of them, and more, that can rise up and testify that by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost they know that this is the work of God, that it is the power of God unto salvation. It is not a form of godliness without any power; it is *the* power of God unto salvation, the salvation of all those who will accept it, in this land and in every other land. That is the difference between this Church and all other churches in the world. We call upon all the world to know that that divine authority is here, in this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that it is nowhere else. God bless you. Amen.

#### STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

God is in heaven, but he is not far removed from them that seek him. He is a friend who never fails. One can always trust him.

#### THANKS AND GRATITUDE

I thank God for the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for the great conceptions of life which it offers for the comfort and the encouragement and the hope of all mankind.

I thank him for the Church with all its great institutions, built up and maintained under the power of the holy Priesthood for the