

want us all to help in every way that we can to bring that knowledge to the youth of our Church, and to all those who have fallen by the wayside. I am grateful for that knowledge. It brings into my life more comfort, more satisfaction, more hope, more that is worth striving for, than all else, and I am very desirous that I may live to be worthy of a continuation of that testimony, that it may grow and ripen and strengthen within me.

My grandfather was with the Prophet Joseph in Carthage jail. He was his intimate friend; he was his confidential secretary. He knew his thoughts, I believe, as well as one man may know the thoughts of another. He loved him. He was perfectly willing to give his life for the prophet. My grandfather has left his testimony that Joseph Smith was divinely chosen, that he was indeed a prophet of God, and I know that he did not lie, and I know that hundreds of other good men who knew this prophet have not falsified when they have given their testimony of his divine work.

God grant that the testimony of this latter-day work may come not only to the great hosts of faithful Saints who, from season to season, gather here to hear the word of the Lord, but to these hosts of worthy men and women who should be saved, who have strayed from the path of truth. I feel for one to consecrate my efforts to their reclamation and retention in the fold of Christ, and I know that could you speak here you would join in such a dedication. God bless you, my brethren and sisters, that you may carry forward this great and wonderful work to its glorious destiny, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

I am happy, my brethren and sisters, to find myself in full accord with all that has been said in this important conference, and earnestly do I desire to add my testimony to those which have been borne, and to speak of one or two items, that have already been referred to, which have been weighing very heavily upon my own mind for more than a year past. I believe that this representative gathering of Latter-day Saints is an opportunity for the messages that have been delivered by the President of the Church and his associates to be carried, in the spirit of these instructions, to the various stakes of Zion.

MEETING THE TESTING TIME

I wish to read a few verses from the 115th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord said to his Church, in 1838:

“Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

“And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.”

I have felt that the Lord had in mind the very perils that are

threatening the world and are endangering the faith of some neglectful Latter-day Saints, when he spoke of finding a place of defense for us, a place where we may escape not only the physical dangers that will be in the world, but those storms of a moral character that are far more disastrous to people than physical destruction or physical injury. It has been said during the conference that as a Church we are enjoying a period of peace. I rejoice that after nearly a century of struggle and effort, contending against all kind of opposition, we have at last won the right to exist, a right conceded now by men and women generally in the world. Reference has also been made to a condition of prosperity that is with us. I rejoice in that. I would not change the prosperity of the people, nor would I stir up strife. I welcome peace, it gives us a better opportunity to deliver our message to the children of men. But the thing I am concerned about is not so much what the world thinks about us just now as it is our own status with reference to keeping the commandments of God and how to meet the perils that are before us. I am not a pessimist, and yet seeing and feeling things most clearly, I want to be one of those watchmen upon the towers of Zion, with my brethren, who detect the storm that is coming and give a fair warning, and point out not only the danger, but the way to avert that danger. Therefore, I feel that we have probably reached, in the Church, in this period of our peace and prosperity, a testing time for us. If you will read the history of the past, no dispensation of the gospel has ever had so hard a time to maintain itself as during the period of its own peace and prosperity. Indeed, there is no gospel dispensation that has yet survived its peace and prosperity. In the time of its trouble, people were united, and stood shoulder to shoulder and endured all things and kept the faith and died for the faith. I say, I am not a pessimist, nor do I believe that we will lose the faith, nor do I believe that the dangers which threaten us are going to overwhelm us, and yet I am conscious of the fact that mere membership in this Church will not save a man or a woman. It will require something else. I cling tenaciously to the promise made through the Prophet Daniel, as the Lord inspired him, looking down to our own period of time and predicting the rise of this Church, insignificant as it was, like a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, yet it shall roll forth until it will fill the whole earth, and it shall not be left to another people, nor shall it fail. I have a comfort in that; I have an abiding confidence that no matter what the difficulties are, the majority of this people shall survive even this peril, and that we shall demonstrate the thing that never has yet been done; namely, maintain the truth and defend it in peace as well as in times of trouble, and that the work shall go on victoriously until Christ shall come to receive it, and that it shall roll forth until it fills the whole earth, for it is the last dispensation and it shall not fail. But many of us may fail. That is my fear, that is my anxiety.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

In the time of our peace and prosperity, we may be tempted to be

indulgent with ourselves. All over the world, I believe there is a growing spirit, even in the hearts of many leaders, to become careless, to become more or less accustomed to the new order of things that obtain. This, after all, is most threatening to the life, to the peace of the people and to the stability of even governments themselves. The statement of a poet is still true, that :

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

We came out of the world to escape the evils of the world, but, as has just been observed, these world conditions have come to us. We are part of the world and the influences of the world and the practices of the world will naturally have their effect upon the lives of the Latter-day Saints. Is it possible that we ourselves are seeing so much of these things which a hundred years ago when this Church was brought into existence would have shocked us; the present moral status, the frequency of divorce, and many common practices that are heralded abroad throughout our own country that would have been revolting then—is it possible that these vices have been seen so much by us that even some of us begin to feel a little bit calloused and almost wink at them? I hope not. I believe that this body of people here assembled have no such feeling as to compromise or tolerate evil. We are tolerant of the sinner, but we cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; and woe be to the man or woman, the leader in the wards or stakes or elsewhere, among the young people, who can wink at sin and compromise with it!

THE TENDENCY TO INDULGENCE AND RELAXATION

Woe be to him who contributes to the establishment or the perpetuation of a state or condition that contributes to the delinquency, to the sin, to the transgression, of boys or girls or men or women. So far as we are concerned we stand solidly against immorality; and let me say to you, my brethren and sisters, the culminating thing that shall come out of this tendency towards indulgence, towards relaxation, is immorality, and immorality is the plague of the world today, and that plague is threatening all about us, if it is not indeed creeping into the midst of Latter-day Saints. Therefore to our standards, men of Israel, which teach us to look upon virtue as precious as life itself, and that we would as soon die as to lose our virtue. There is no cessation on the part of the enemy against this work. Though he may not be conspiring to move mobs against us, nor to induce men to annihilate us, he is among the people with new means and ways, lulling them off to sin a little, to lie a little and to steal a little, and do other things with the promise: You will be beaten with a few stripes, but you will be all right. It is the doctrine of the devil which is intended to lead men gently down to hell, and we cannot be ignorant of it nor indifferent toward it.

A WARNING AND A FOREWARNING

When the Lord gave the Word of Wisdom he used this language in the 4th verse of the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation."

The Lord knew what was coming. He knew back in Daniel's time. He could tell the nations what would arise. He knew the times of men's coming. He knew their habitations and their limitations and he could foretell them. God knew when he spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith that which would come: "Knowing," said he, "the calamity that would come upon the earth." He spoke to Joseph Smith and through him sent a warning to all the world of the danger that was threatening and offered the means of escape. But the Lord is very much like an earthly father. What can an earthly father do to his grown sons and daughters more than to teach them of the danger. He cannot rescue them against their will, if they are determined to sin and transgress the law of God and man. They presently shall come into bonds and imprisonment and be subject to the execution of the law, and when the judge renders his decision it may be years or a life of imprisonment or even the execution of the man himself. The father would be willing to give his life to save his son, but he cannot do it, neither can he cancel the judgment of the court nor set aside the majesty of the law. So it is with our heavenly Father. All he can do is to warn us, point out the danger, show us the way of escape, and when we resist it all we bind God. We speak of binding the devil, and the devil will be bound and have no power over us when we resist him, but we may resist the Lord in the same manner and thus bind his hands so that he can do nothing for us, for he himself is ruled by law, he cannot set aside the majesty of eternal law, nor save men in their sins. In the 88th section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same.

"That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still."

So that God is rendered helpless in the case of a man or woman in this Church or out of this Church who resists him and who will not abide the law.

THE WORD OF WISDOM GIVEN TO FORTIFY US

Now the Lord gave us the Word of Wisdom to fortify us against the temptations of the day, giving us the power to resist, knowing that the man or woman who breaks the Word of Wisdom and uses tobacco, tea and coffee, will weaken his or her moral stability. So that

in this other period that now has come, of other temptation that leads to graver sin and immorality, the individual has broken down his morale, his will and his power to resist, notwithstanding the thing that he does is contrary to the will of God, has lost the power to stand when greater temptations come. God was steeling us and arming us and fortifying us against the plague that is presently threatening us.

ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

An article recently appearing in one of our magazines stated that the divorce rate is growing so rapidly that if it continues in the same increase in proportion to marriages, by the year 1936, there will be as many divorces each year as marriages in the United States. What will that do for the world or for the United States? It will destroy the family life, and when the family life is broken up and destroyed the government will be in peril. God's work can go forward only by men and women in the Church and in the state observing the sanctity of the marriage relationship. Side by side with us, in this and other states of the union we find forces tending to the destruction of family life. In Russia and elsewhere there is a great rebellion, inspired by Bolshevism, which teaches the doctrine of companionship in marriage that may be changed and altered at will, and that the children are the property of the state. When these doctrines are spread abroad what is the antidote for them? It is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Latter-day Saints have that which teaches them to prepare themselves to come into holy places, and, over holy altars, receive each other by the authority that binds on earth and it is bound in heaven, in companionship as husband and wife, parent and children, for time and all eternity. No planning for divorce here in our own ranks. The evidence of the safety in God's plan is manifested, for there are twice as many divorces among our own people who are married outside of the temple as among those who enter into this holy place and receive each other in this bond of union that begins to plan and to build forever and forever, and our divorce rate is $\frac{1}{5}$ that of this country. If we want to escape the plague of divorce, if we want to escape the destruction of family life—and when this is gone faith is gone, and there shall come quickly other perils in the wake of it, until we shall be threatened with the destruction of our civilization—we must preserve the foundation upon which family life rests, eternal unions. We may be found fault with as being narrow and intolerant by some of our outside friends, but we stand for those things that are fundamental. We always shall stand for them, and we refuse to be absorbed by present world standards; we expect to be victorious in defending our own. And presently, showing by the lives of the Latter-day Saints the fruits of these things, it will awaken surely in the hearts of righteous men a consciousness that here in "Mormonism" is stability, a stability that will save men, save the family, save the home, save the nation.

OUR GREATEST ASSET IS OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

When Brother Pratt and I were in South America we presented

pictures of the achievements of the Church, and I said to Brother Pratt, and have said many times since, that the greatest product we have is not our material prosperity. What I wanted was a picture of tens of thousands of "Mormon" boys and girls, and we have them, who keep the Word of Wisdom, who never have used tea, coffee or tobacco, who are as pure, as clean and undefiled as the angels of God. I would never have discovered the match of these boys and girls elsewhere in all the world, although I would have observed individual instances, but not in community groups like they may be found here, the product of this Church. So that my soul turns towards them in a sympathy today, confronted with conditions that are strange and new. They need us. There is now a warfare which will require the closest cooperation on the part of the leaders with their people, on the part of fathers and mothers towards their sons and daughters. No wonder the Lord said that without this principle, which joins parents and children to each other for time and all eternity, the turning not only of the hearts of the living to the dead, but of the living children to their earthly parents, in a union that will preserve the family,—the whole earth would be utterly wasted. The great saving thing in the world today is this principle upon which family life is established in this Church.

TESTIMONY

Now the Lord bless us, brethren, that we shall go home with an awakened interest in the new problems that have arisen, with a consciousness that the people, to whom Brother Stephen L. Richards, has just referred, who are in danger and in peril because they keep not the commandments of God, that we shall reawaken their interest in these simple and yet all-important saving principles. They are the only hope of the world and the only hope of this Church. I know that God is with us. We are not in the dark. The light is in the ship; the captain is inspired. He knows where he is going. God is at the helm and the storms may blow, they may become furious, but I declare to you, as the Lord lives, that if the Latter-day Saints will only keep his commandments and accept of the plan he has offered, God is bound; his promise will be fulfilled, we shall come out victorious and shall be far more distinguished than we are today, if we can only weather the storm that is threatening. God help us to do so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A soprano solo, "How beautiful upon the mountains," was sung by Margaret Stewart Hewlett.

ELDER DAVID A. SMITH

Of the Presiding Bishopric

Early Sunday morning, two weeks ago, I stood in the grove where Joseph Smith first saw the Father and the Son. I recalled my first visit to that place. Then I was filled with the spirit of