

THIRD DAY

MORNING MEETING

Sunday, October 7, 1928. Every seat in the tabernacle and all available space in the aisles and doorways was occupied by the large number of people who had assembled. Thousands who were unable to get inside of the tabernacle listened to the services as they were broadcast in the assembly hall and on the tabernacle grounds.

Conference reconvened at 10:00 a. m.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Praise to the Man."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Stephen L. Chipman.

The choir sang, "That sweet story of old."

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I am grateful to my heavenly Father this morning to be permitted to worship with you, as I have been during the preceding sessions of this conference. It is a wonderful thing to live in a land such as this in which we dwell and enjoy the blessings of the free, to be permitted to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, and to feel that we accord to every living human being the same privilege that we desire for ourselves.

DIVINE ANCESTRY

When our Lord prepared this earth that it might be the abiding place of his children, he planned that those who would come to dwell upon it should know him as their Father, they being created in his image, both male and female. He gave to those spirits that he had created the opportunity to have physical tabernacles, that they might enjoy the blessings of the earth that he had prepared for them.

It does seem strange that so many people doubt our divine ancestry, and that God is the Father of our spirits; yet from the very beginning, from the very earliest period of which we have any record in this world, he has been teaching men and women this fact.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR EXISTENCE

I am thinking this morning of the condition that confronts mankind, how many there are who do not know why we live upon this earth, comparatively few who really understand the purpose of the coming of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ; and yet in this great land of America, in this latter day he has restored that knowledge, and fortunately for hundreds of thousands of men and women they have been permitted to receive it. When God created the earth and placed our first parents upon it, he did not leave them without knowledge concerning himself. It is true that there had been taken from them the remembrance of their pre-existent life, but in his tender mercy he

talked with them and later he sent his choice servants to instruct them in the things pertaining to eternal life. History has repeated itself many times. Refusal to obey the counsels of the Lord has been followed by destruction, and I fear that unless humanity recognizes him as the God of this earth, disaster may come again to the nations.

A BLESSED AGE

We live in a marvelous age. No people who have dwelt upon the earth have partaken of so many of the comforts and blessings of life. No people have had such opportunities, as are offered to the children of men in the day and age in which we live; and remarkable as it may seem, you analyze the conditions that exist, every blessing that has come to us has been one that conforms to the ideals of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not have to go outside the Church for real blessings; we do not have to depart from the teachings of our forefathers in order to enjoy that which is most precious in life, but on the contrary those who believe most firmly in God, those who know of the divine mission of Jesus Christ and partake of the gifts that come as a result of his teachings are the happiest people that can be found upon the earth. I fear, however, that the prosperity that attends us has a tendency to draw our attention from the most important things of life. I fear that the sins of men blind them to the blessings of the Giver of all good; I am hoping and praying with you that this great and wonderful nation of which we are a part may not succumb to the evils that afflict mankind and forsake the generous offering of our Heavenly Father, of peace and plenty and happiness, while we dwell here upon the earth.

THE EXPERIENCE OF FORMER CIVILIZATIONS

I have no doubt that in the days of Noah there were many people who had opportunities to know the truth. I have no doubt that in his day he was very diligent in trying to teach the people the purpose of their being. He knew why they were here. He knew that it was necessary to have faith in God. He knew that all that we enjoy comes from a generous Heavenly Father, and for one hundred and twenty years he traveled to and fro in that section of the world and proclaimed the truth, until finally the wickedness of the world became so great that our Heavenly Father directed his faithful servant to prepare to save himself and his household. Then a great deluge swept the earth, and those who had been created in the image of God, who had been alien to the blessings that he offered them so generously, were drowned in order that a new race might come upon the earth, with opportunity to learn of his ways that they might walk in his paths.

You remember the experience of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The servants of the Lord were there, anxious to teach the way of our Heavenly Father, yet the philosophies of men turned them aside from the wisdom of the living God, and eventually fire came down from heaven and destroyed those communities, not because they were serving

the God of this earth, but because they were serving Baal and other false gods.

Let us consider America and think of how our Heavenly Father in his mercy, directed the Jaredites at the time of the confusion of tongues, at the tower of Babel, and brought them to this great western land and gave them teachers after his own heart. It was not many generations after they came here until they became alien to the truth. They sought after those things that gratified passions and appealed to their appetites, and the result was that as a nation they were exterminated. Then there were the descendants of Lehi, those who came from Jerusalem six hundred years before the birth of Christ. They came to America and began to settle it. Then there grew up among them those who did not desire to serve the Lord. Those who had been faithful eventually succumbed to the evils of mankind; dishonesty, immorality, intemperance and all those things that have a tendency to break down civilization, resulting in complete destruction of the descendants of Nephi.

Why? Because they would not serve our Heavenly Father whose children they were.

Analyze the conditions of the American Indian. He came from a people who were educated, a people who had enjoyed the blessings of civilization, a people who had been taught by the prophets of the living God; yet because of indifference and carelessness, because of their wilfulness and selfishness, they too lost the power to reason and to think properly, and eventually became the obscure and unlettered and untutored savage that was found here when the white men came from a foreign shore to settle here. These people refused the blessings of the living God and lost their birthright, as did many other races. Each of these nations has fallen from the high estate to which God had permitted it to come, has lost its heritage because the people were not willing to humble themselves and acknowledge that our Heavenly Father was the God of this earth.

A LAND OF LIBERTY

Think of the blessings that came to America. How Columbus was inspired to go out upon the great waters and find his way to this western land. Then the settlers of Jamestown, the pilgrim fathers, and all those early pioneers who came to America because they desired to serve God according to the dictates of their conscience. The Lord blessed them and finally raised up a nation that is the wonder and the admiration of the earth. Those men who framed the Constitution of the United States were not only wise in the things of this world, but they were inspired by our Heavenly Father who raised them up for that very purpose. This marvelous government that we enjoy in this favored land of liberty, was given to man that it might be a blessing to him. Here men and women are permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. Our Heavenly Father will not coerce or compel mankind, but in loving kindness has given to them

from the age when the world was first peopled until now, opportunity to know the truth.

THE GOSPEL—WHAT IT IS

What is this gospel to which we refer? It is the only power of God unto salvation, it is the only plan that will enable man to go back into the presence of his Maker and enjoy the celestial kingdom. It is the only plan that will bring peace and happiness to all the children of men, of every race and creed; and it is the one plan that should give men a desire to serve him and keep his commandments, in order that they might be happy and rejoice in the happiness of their fellows. Faith in God, repentance of sin, baptism for the remission of sins after the pattern by which the Savior was baptized, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost that men may receive increased inspiration from our Heavenly Father to enable them to follow his teachings and know that he lives—these are the fundamentals of the gospel of our Lord. Not difficult to understand but easy if we will but submit ourselves to that feeling that always comes to us when in the humility of our souls we recognize the Creator of all things. In our day the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been organized, not after the wisdom of men. When I speak thus I have no unkindness in my heart towards all these great religious organizations in the world. Men have done their best to give to the world a system of ethics and a desire to live so that the best that is in life might be enjoyed, but it remained for God the Eternal Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, to give to this earth in this latter-day the gospel that he formerly gave to the people in Judea, and to give to us in our day a more perfect understanding of the purpose of our being. We are privileged to live in the blaze of this glorious century when our Heavenly Father has organized his Church, has placed in it divine authority and has required those who possessed that authority to administer, not in arrogance, not lifted up in their own conceit, but to go to and fro in the world and in humility and love say to his children: "Our Father has again given to the earth the gospel of our Lord, and we come to divide with you this mercy that gives us such peace and such happiness."

THE DUTY OF PARENTS

As I think of the conditions that exist, the lawlessness that seems to have grown more rampant throughout the world since the war, I am reminded of some lines of Rudyard Kipling:

"Lord God of hosts be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

And you men who stand upon the watchtowers of Zion, you men upon whom has been conferred divine authority, I plead with you that you honor that authority. We have a wonderful Church organization, but the one place where we may have greater influence than any other is in the homes in which we reside. We have our Sabbath Schools, our Mutual Improvement Associations, our Relief Societies, our Primaries, our Church schools and seminaries. All these institutions are intended

to develop the best that is in mankind, but we as parents of children in this Church have no right to place the responsibility upon these organizations to establish faith in the hearts of these children that God has placed in our homes. It is your duty and mine to teach the children that come to our homes. It is your duty and mine to exemplify in the presence of our wives and our children those glorious principles that our Heavenly Father has given to us to prepare us for eternal life in his celestial kingdom. And if we fail to do that, then will we come under condemnation, and we will discover when it is too late that we have missed the great blessing that our Father offered to us. He has told us very plainly in this latter-day that those of us who have children in Zion or in any of her stakes that are organized, who fail to teach them faith in God, repentance, baptism, and those things that are essential for their salvation, the sin will be upon our heads. I desire to emphasize this obligation that is upon us, that we cannot shift to anybody else in the world the duty to exemplify in our lives and to teach these boys and girls in our homes, that as they grow up they may develop in the nurture and admonition of our Heavenly Father.

THE DANGER THAT CONFRONTS US

We live in a great and wonderful age. The glory of this century is beyond that of any other century; but I feel that we are in just as great danger as were those who lived in the days of Noah, or those who lived in the days of Nephi upon this great western land. We are in as great danger as any nation that has ever lived, because God has given us more than any other nation, and if in arrogance and in pride we turn aside from the Father of us all, and in our carelessness and indifference towards sacred things we spend our lives for the things of this world, it will not be very long until the chastening hand of an all-wise Father may come upon us as a nation, and we be counted as the nations of the past, among those that have withered away. I pray that we may be worthy of our heritage, that the example of the members of this Church in every nation where they live, may be such that others observing their good works may be constrained to glorify our Father in heaven. How I pray that we as the servants of the Lord may have charity for mankind, may have patience with those who err, and in kindness and love go forward teaching the simple principles of the gospel of our Lord to the blessing of every soul with whom we come in contact.

I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Joseph Smith was raised up in this latter-day to bring again the gospel of our Lord. I know that the authority of our Heavenly Father is upon the earth for the blessing of mankind, not to make those who receive that authority arrogant, but to make them humble; not to make those who have received special privileges feel that they are greater than others, but to make us humble in our souls, prayerful in our hearts, and considerate of all men in all that we do, and thus exemplify by upright lives that which our Heavenly Father desires us to teach.

I know that if we will serve God, if we will keep his commandments, if we will honor the priesthood that has been conferred upon us, if we will sustain those whom he has called to preside over us, with faith and devotion, when the time shall come for us to go hence we will find our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and we will receive at the hands of the Master of heaven and earth that glorious welcome home: "Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord." And I bear witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

One of the tests of worth is the test of time. Whatever has been tried over a long period of time and not found wanting is worthy of our consideration. I have observed with deep satisfaction that since the opening remarks of President Grant the speakers of this conference have reverted to the fundamentals, those principles which have long been in force and effect, and which lie at the very basis of our theology and our philosophy. I sincerely trust that I may be in consonance with these thoughts and expressions as I enter a plea for reverence for God, for sacred places, for sacred establishments and institutions.

Some one has said that the national characteristic of America is lawlessness. It is a terrible indictment. I hope that it is not warranted. Whether it be so or not, we are all persuaded that there is too much of flippancy; there is too little serious consideration and respect for established institutions and for worthy practices which have been tried and proven over a period of many years.

REVERENCE FOR GOD

I am one who believes that morality and righteousness have their inception and bases in religion. I believe that God is the author of all good, and that there is no good which emanates from any source in this world other than from our Father and our God. Respect and reverence for his holy name are essential to spiritual growth and development, and in my judgment they are essential to a proper attitude toward all institutions of society, all our relationships and everything that is worth while in this life. No man can be disrespectful of Deity and have in his heart the proper attitude toward the creations of Deity. A man who properly understands his relationship to God and the endowments which he has received from the Creator, will be filled with reverence and thanksgiving. After all, reverence is an attitude which shows itself in a deferential behavior.

REVERENTIAL RESPECT FOR THE BODY OF MAN

God has given us everything we have in life. He has made it possible for us to live in mortality. It is by reason of his beneficence that we enjoy our very bodies. We who believe in the gospel know that