

## ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

*Of the First Council of Seventy*

I am laying aside the remarks that I had prepared to deliver during this Conference, should I happen to be called upon, and this for special reasons that have occurred to me during the last few minutes. In the first place, I realize that this congregation has been together for a long time. It has been a strenuous day throughout, and according to the announcement of President Grant, I am to be the closing speaker of this meeting.

It has been, to me, a glorious day. Many great and important themes have been developed. I was thrilled with the beautiful discourse of President Ivins on the subject of the resurrection, and pleased with the reassertion of our faith in that simple story that he developed chiefly from the New Testament. And in all the other addresses there has been more or less of intensity of thought in reference to organized effort to achieve righteous ends. All through, I repeat, this has been a strenuous day in our worship.

It seems to me that if I could get the spirit of it, it could be a fitting close to proceed in a manner that would permit us to relax a little the intensity of our intellectual effort. So I am going to proceed in a way that perhaps may have that effect. I trust it will.

To begin with, there is no reason on earth that I know of why I should refer to the opening address of President Heber J. Grant, on the first day of our Conference, because that was a complete thing in itself as he delivered it—in the introduction of it, in the development of it, and in the closing admonitions of it. From my youth I have been delighted in the defense of the faith and of the Saints, and have made some efforts, humble ones, of course, in that direction. I was pleased beyond all expression that at this time, when falsehood had reared its head, and slanders would spread their baneful influence to hinder the progress of the Church, the Church itself was able, through its President, to make a complete and comprehensive denial and denunciation of all those things. I am sure President Grant has created for the Church, at this Conference, a permanent document that will be useful in all time to come as a standard to which we can refer in denial of false charges, now and hereafter on the points treated; because I do not suppose that the enemies of the Church will cease their efforts; and others will arise—even if these present ones were supposed to be crushed—others will arise to perpetuate their evil work.

Yesterday afternoon, as I entered the building, you were singing that wonderful hymn of Montgomery's on "prayer":

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed."

I presume that it is inconvenient, and perhaps hardly tolerable to sing all the eight verses of this beautiful hymn, though each verse is in itself a gem; but if we may not sing all the eight verses, I have often

thought that I would like to see the Church adopt the practice of singing the last verse of that hymn. If we could put that in with the others usually sung, I should be happy over it. It runs as follows:

"O Thou by whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way!  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;  
*Lord, teach us how to pray.*"

One of the sweetest incidents related in the New Testament is that one where the disciples gather about the Christ and say to him: "Master, John taught his disciples to pray. Teach us how to pray." And it was in answer to that petition of theirs that the Christ gave his very wonderful instructions on prayer, and then introduced that classic of devotional exercise, the Lord's prayer; and then continued his comments upon it. He taught them *how* to pray, and moreover, he set them the example of prayer.

The prayer known as the Lord's Prayer may not be the prayer that would be suitable for all occasions, although it is so comprehensive and covers such important matters. I think he intended that it should be rather a sample of prayer, in simplicity, in brevity, in spirit, and you will note perhaps that it was a universal prayer. It was not a strictly Christian prayer, in that it was not offered in the name of Christ, but was an address unto the "All Father," and has become a universal prayer, given to the world through which every cult, sect or division of religion could express its attitude towards God. It is valuable chiefly for the very universal spirit that is in it.

But I call your attention to this great request, "Lord, teach us how to pray." I want to call your attention to the fact that this New Dispensation has not been left without instruction on that subject. You will find in the history of the Prophet Joseph Smith a rather singular declaration. Speaking in the early part of October, 1831, the Prophet Joseph said: "I received the following prayer, given through revelation." But it is more than a revelation to be *called* a prayer. It is in reality a revelation *on* prayer, and that is quite another matter. Very little has ever been said of it. It just seemed to drop out of the clear sky, into the record of the Prophet: but as I said, it is not only a revelation called a prayer, but it is a revelation *on* prayer, in that the Lord outlines for us the things, I think, he would have us hold nearest to our hearts and comprehend in our deep and earnest desires concerning the work of God in the earth.

Because it has been so infrequently referred to and used by the Church, I thought that we could now just relax our tense nerves, and could close this meeting, on the accepted anniversary of the resurrection of the Christ, by the reading of this wonderful prayer, and go hence, influenced with the spirit which I am sure it will leave; and let us indulge in the feeling of divine worship while we consider the beauty and grandeur, and express the desires that are given through revelation to this New Dispensation Church on the great theme that God would have our minds dwell upon.

During my short experience in the army I learned to appreciate the psychology of standing at attention before the officers of the army. There was a wonderful spirit that went with that custom of the army, and it tended much to improve the *corps d'esprit* of the companies and of the battalions and regiments and divisions into which the army was divided.

Now, what I am going to suggest is that in our spirits, at least, we here assembled draw our minds to attention to these great things that God revealed, through his prophet, to the Church. I read:

"Hearken, and lo, a voice as of one sent down from on high, who is mighty and powerful, whose going forth is unto the ends of the earth, yea, whose voice is unto men." (The foregoing, of course, has reference to the Christ.) "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

"The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.

"Yea, a voice crying—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, prepare ye the supper of the Lamb, make ready for the Bridegroom."

Here the scene shifts, and this revelation on prayer becomes a commandment to pray:

"Pray unto the Lord, call upon his holy name, make known his wonderful works among the people.

"Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.

"Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen."

So pray we, in thy words given to thy Church through the revelation of thy servant Joseph on prayer, and ask thee, O God, to accept these divine expressions concerning the going forth of the kingdom of God on the earth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, and the two be joined, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world. We so pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

As a closing number the Choir sang the anthem, "The Lord Now Victorious."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Jesse W. Richins, President of the Twin Falls Stake.

Conference adjourned until 10 o'clock, April 6th.