

"And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness—

"Until all shall know me, who remain, even from the least unto the greatest, and shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and shall see eye to eye, and shall lift up their voice, and with the voice together 'sing this new song—"

QUOTES NEW SONG

I declare to you, my brethren and sisters, that this new song which I will read is one of the greatest songs that was ever written, and I have no doubt that it is a greater song than anything that ever can be written, because it sets forth the works of Almighty God and the consummation of all things. Let me read these words:

"The Lord hath brought again Zion;
The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel,
According to the election of grace,
Which was brought to pass by the faith
And covenant of their fathers.

"The Lord hath redeemed his people;
And Satan is bound and time is no longer.
The Lord hath gathered all things in one.
The Lord hath brought down Zion from above.
The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath.

"The earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength;
And truth is established in her bowels;
And the heavens have smiled upon her;
And she is clothed with the glory of her God;
For he stands in the midst of his people.

"Glory, and honor, and power, and might,
Be ascribed to our God; for he is full of mercy,
Justice, grace and truth, and peace,
Forever and ever. Amen."

BEARS TESTIMONY

My brethren and sisters, when all this is accomplished one might well exclaim: "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform!"

I testify in all solemnity that the work in which we are engaged is the work of God, that Jesus was the Christ, that Joseph Smith was his prophet, and that Joseph's successors in office were and are prophets, even men holding the keys to the kingdom of God upon the earth; and I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and Congregation sang, "America."

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who

keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever."

AS A REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS

These words which I have read present to us an epitome of existence. They are the words of Jesus Christ, uttered in the pre-mortal state. From them we discover that we are here in this world because of obedience to former commandments and laws. We are here in this world, in this mortal existence, passing through all of its vicissitudes because of former faithfulness that has entitled us to receive these tabernacles of flesh. One-third of the hosts of heaven, through rebellion, were denied this great and glorious blessing. But we are here on probation. This is called a probationary state. We are here to be tried, to be proved, to be found worthy of exaltation in the kingdom of God, to go back into his presence, to become his sons and his daughters, entitled to a fulness, or to receive other rewards, according to works of lesser degree of importance.

ALL THINGS SPIRITUAL WITH THE LORD

I desire to spend the portion of time allotted to me in speaking of temporal things and spiritual things, if I may so designate them. The Lord has so designated matters that we may understand them. But to him there are no such things as temporal things. These are his words:

"Speaking unto you that you may naturally understand; but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed.

"Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

"Behold, I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual; they are not natural nor temporal, neither carnal nor sensual."

Nevertheless, that we may understand, the Lord uses these terms and speaks of temporal things. We, naturally, being in this mortal state, are surrounded by change, and all things are subject to change; and seeing the end but not the beginning, we naturally conclude that there are things temporal. All things in this life are mortal, and yet in the eyes of the Lord there is nothing but eternity and all things are eternal.

POWER TO CHOOSE FOR HIMSELF

In this world, as you have discovered in the words which I have read, the Lord has given unto man the power to become an agent unto himself. We are not coerced, we are not forced, there is no compulsion in the Church. Every man has that freedom granted unto him by virtue of the power given him by our Father in heaven to choose for himself what he will do and be.

One of the ancient prophets upon this continent has summed this

matter up very beautifully, and I desire to present to you his words. These are the words of Alma :

"For I know that he [God] granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

"Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience."

An earlier prophet, in fact the founder of this race upon this continent, has also given us this information, not new by any means, as it comes from him, as it is found in all the revelations of God, but he says :

"Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other."

That is, by the power of righteousness or the power of evil. From this we learn that opposition is necessary. We must be enticed. We are subject to temptation. We are subject to all the ills of the flesh as well as to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And then as agents we have the right, the great God-given right, to choose for ourselves, and we may choose righteousness and eternal life or we may choose death by disregarding the commandments of the Lord.

A TEMPORAL LAW

I said that I was going to speak of some things temporal. I must hurry if I do so. In the beginning of this Conference, President Grant presented figures in relation to certain sums of money that had been expended for the benefit of this people, in our education, in our temple work, in the building of meeting houses, in the care of the poor and many other ways in which the funds of the Church are spent. I want to call your attention to the fact that money for these purposes cannot be spent unless it is received, and the Lord has given us a law by which these revenues may be obtained; this is called the law of tithing. Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon has called your attention to this law and the necessity for it. It is a very important one. It seems to me that a man holding membership in this Church is certainly disloyal, he certainly does not comprehend the nature of this work or his duty, if he fails to pay his tithing.

A PROMISE AND WARNING

I want to present to you a few things coming from a former President of the Church, President Lorenzo Snow, uttered more than thirty years ago, but just as true and binding upon the people today as when his words were uttered. Said he :

"Teach the children to pay tithing, so that it may be perpetually observed. If we observe this law, no matter what our enemies may do the Lord will preserve us."

What a wonderful promise! And it appears to me that little do we appreciate it! Then again he says:

"Because we are his sons and daughters he loves us and he has forgiven us our forgetfulness to this holy law in the past, but he will not forgive you and me any longer. I say it in the name of the Lord. He will not forgive this people any longer if we continue in this dilatory way of paying tithing. We will be scattered just as the people of Jackson County were. It is true, just as God is true."

I call your attention to the fact that this comes from the one who had the right to speak in the name of the Lord and give commandments. He goes on further to say:

"Those who will not observe this law are not entitled to the blessings."

I shall not take time, much as I would delight in doing so, to read farther, because in this expression which I have already presented there is food enough for thought to keep us busy in our reflections regarding our duty in this matter for many days to come.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

One or two other items. Our attention has been called to the fact during this Conference that we are living in perilous times. There is sin, there is distress everywhere and disregard of the commandments of the Lord. He has given us another commandment, and that is that we regard the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Who does it? Do the people of this nation? Do the people of other nations? I have been in some parts of this land where on the Sabbath day people worshipped, but here among us we find Babylon in all its glory, all its wickedness; and we are face to face with temptation, with sin, with enticement of various natures to lead us from the path of truth and from the worshipping of the true and the living God.

The Lord has pointed out in the revelations what we should do on the Sabbath day to keep this day holy. We should not go to picture shows, nor go to places of amusement, nor spend our time foolishly; but in thought and in reflection and in study, in consideration of the things of the kingdom of God. What more can be said? I leave these thoughts with you, fragmentary they are.

May the Lord bless and guide the Latter-day Saints and keep them in the path of righteousness, in the path of humility, in the path of truth. We must uphold the standards of Zion. May we do it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Of the First Council of Seventy

The Twelve Apostles, the First Council of Seventy, and the mission presidents, who have addressed you in this Conference, as already stated, met together during last Wednesday, to hear reports and consider matters pertaining to the missions of the Church. I had the pleasure of attending that meeting.