

tom of invoking the blessings of God upon their deliberations there are many prayerless parents in the country who would rebuke these legislative bodies, for even people who cling to a form of religion appreciate the value of prayer. In a home without prayer the seeds of infidelity are being sown. But in a home where there is prayer, where the family reverently gathers around the altar of prayer, faith increases, love for God and man mounts high in the human heart. We are learning that in this great catastrophe, without God we are nothing.

I believe in the Book of Mormon. It is the word of God. We are warned in this sacred record that the promise of a high destiny for any nation will not save it if a nation forgets God. Proud confidence in their destiny did not save nations in the past from self-destruction. We may boast in our pride and glory of the magnificent mission of our own republic, but unless the love of Jesus Christ is invoked in all of our dealings, unless the spirit of Christ reigns uppermost in our hearts and permeates our actions, these promises for a glorious destiny, so far as we are concerned, will fail, as they have failed with nations in the past.

Nations cannot survive where the family altar of prayer is thrown down. No people can prosper long materially who do not acknowledge and believe that Jesus Christ is the God of the whole earth.

Moroni, in the early part of the fifth century, gave this solemn warning to the people living in these days:

“And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.” (Ether 2:11.)

In God alone is our hope. “He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”

Brethren and sisters, I testify unto you that from the bottom of my heart I know the Gospel is true; I know that Jesus is my Savior, the Christ, the Son of the living God. I also know, by the same power—the gift of the Holy Ghost—that Joseph Smith was a choice prophet, a seer and a revelator, a man whom God raised up to accomplish a mighty work. I have seen the manifestation of God’s power upon President Grant. We have seen this power manifested in the ministry of all the prophets of God in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

God bless us with purity of heart and singleness of purpose, and fortify us by the faith which he has delivered to us through his prophets, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER DAVID A. SMITH

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I am happy, my brethren and sisters, to be with you this afternoon and in conference this morning. It was my good fortune and privilege, years ago, to be a student in a class under our new president. I have known him from that time to the present day, and as one of the Presidency of the Church I sustain him and them with all my heart.

Referring to the remarks of President Grant this morning—and I have heard him speak in a similar manner many times, and have gone from meetings and have heard my brethren make light of his advice and his counsel—I want to say now, in all sincerity, that I believe the Word of Wisdom was revealed to Joseph Smith, I know God will not be mocked, and if we disregard this advice and make light of it, we shall see the day when we shall pay the price which will fall upon us as a severe rebuke that cannot be disregarded.

For twenty-five years I have been engaged in hospital work, nearly seven years as superintendent of a hospital. During that time I have had what I think to be an excellent opportunity to put the Word of Wisdom to the test, comparing its teachings with the physical and spiritual conditions of those who are compelled to go into these institutions for treatment. It is a well known fact that poisoned bodies, made so through disobedience to the Word of Wisdom, are weakened and have less resistance against disease. Scientific discoveries being constantly made are added testimonies to the truthfulness of the Word of Wisdom. One instruction given by the government to its soldiers is: "Men should not smoke while on the march. Smokers are more apt to be sick and fall out than non-smokers." It is hard to get individuals to observe this advice. It has been given to the army because scientific discoveries and experience make such advice seem important.

I desire to call attention to another thought in relation to the Word of Wisdom. We seem timid about referring to the statement of the Lord that "they shall receive health in their navel," and sometimes we are shocked or seem to think it to be immodest. I am at a loss to know why, for the navel is a scar on the body having served its purpose when we came into the world and after birth ceases to function. The Savior's sermons were largely given as parables. The revelations given to Joseph Smith were brief and to the point. The definition of navel as given in the dictionary is "the central point or part of anything; the middle." The Lord could have mentioned the vital organs of the body, which would require the enumeration of each. How much simpler to use the expression given.

How fully do we grasp the meaning of the promise that we shall have marrow to the bones? We learn that marrow to the bone is as a hub to a wheel where the spokes center; it is the inner meaning and purpose; the inner substance; the essence; the essential strength. "The so-called spinal marrow or spinal cord is the central axis of the nervous system." The fact that Joseph Smith in his 27th year, with no college education, could make such statements as found in this revelation, which 100 years later are supported by the findings of scientists, at least suggests that we must look for some power other than that discovered through his own knowledge. He took no credit to himself and acknowledged that he was only a humble instrument used by our Heavenly Father

to give this warning to his children, to help them preserve their inheritance, the greatest possession of which is these temples, the dwelling place of our spirit, which body and spirit together constitute the soul of man. Have we the right to accuse anyone of being narrow minded or selfish when he calls our attention to these things. Is it not really an evidence of his love for us and concern for our welfare?

Recently a young man came into the Presiding Bishop's Office to see me. He said: "Brother Smith, I had a dream. In the dream I was told to come to you. I have suffered from stomach trouble. I was given to understand that you could help me, if I should come to you."

I told him to keep the Word of Wisdom, to stop using coffee, etc.

He looked somewhat startled. I didn't know that he was a user of coffee, but I was impressed to make the statement.

"Brother Smith," he answered, "I think I can do that."

Then I talked to him about the Word of Wisdom and asked him to make a test for a week or two and come back.

Sometimes, it seems to me, we plead with the Lord for blessings when at the time we are doing things which make it difficult for him to give us the blessings for which we plead. To me it is a mockery. Under such conditions we cannot approach him in faith for we are not worthy to enjoy that privilege.

I wonder if, in these days of depression, we take time to review the history from the beginning of this Church and ponder over the problems of its founders. Our problems are insignificant when compared to theirs. Looking back as we may do today we can see the hand of the Lord in the movements westward. Persecutions and hardships united them and developed in them faith in God, tolerance and love for their fellows. Little did they dream in the beginning that they were destined to move on and on until they should establish headquarters in the "top of the mountains." Their enemies forced them to do so and the hardships which followed developed God-fearing men and women of sterling worth. The Spirit of the Lord was upon them and traveled before them. They were not afraid and did not permit themselves to become discouraged. Their battle cry was:

Come, come ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear,
But with joy wend your way;
Tho' hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day. * * *
Why should we think to earn a great reward,
If we now shun the fight?
Gird up your loins, fresh courage take,
Our God will never us forsake.

They were our fathers and our mothers. Do we forget that they were the chosen of the Lord to prepare the way for those who should follow? It was their mission to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-3:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The Prophet Ezekiel gave us a picture which should encourage us:

"Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent:

"In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

"And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it." (Ezekiel 17:22-24.)

And I repeat, "the Lord has spoken and has done it."

We are of that stock. Have we forgotten their suffering? Are we willing to take upon us the burden? Do we quit when trials come upon us? Or are we willing, as they were willing, to face the wilderness, full of faith, determined that we shall do our part, in order that we may receive and enjoy the blessings of the Lord? That is our mission, but how well are we taking our part?

During the last four years we have increased the activity of our young men to a point where the low point of activity at the close of 1932 is almost on a level with the high point four years ago. And yet in many places we are lagging. There is much we can do which is left undone. While we are looking after our young men who hold the Aaronic priesthood, what of their brothers and their fathers who have gone beyond the age in which they are expected to serve in the Aaronic priesthood? It seems that we are leaving them too much alone and are doing very little for them.

Now is the time, it seems to me, in which men who hold the priesthood should have faith. They should feel that service in this church is required of all; if we hope to develop spiritually, now is the time in which we should take advantage of the leisure time we have, through unemployment or other causes, and give not only our substance but our faith and our love to those who are careless and indifferent, those who are drifting away and to whom the Gospel must be preached again.

Now, I realize that I am not expected to speak long. Let me picture a little incident to you, if I can—one of the many I have seen. Let me take you back some years. We enter a little home, two rooms. We find three little girls, ragged and dirty, and with bare feet; a mother poorly clothed; no comforts in the home; and in the corner the husband and father in a drunken stupor, an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, a man who had been ordained

to the priesthood and sealed in the house of the Lord to his wife for time and all eternity. Bad company caused him to forget his covenants. Liquor took away from him his reason, from his children their food and clothing, and from his wife and children the comforts of home. Then visit with me in that home, not three months later but next week, and the next week, and every week for nearly a year; and little by little partake of his joy as he finds someone to help him overcome his weakness; then, finally, as he is persuaded to kneel in prayer, feels the spirit which comes, for God is with us when we sincerely pray. We feel the added joy when finally we hear him admit that he hasn't the power over that damnable influence which had caused his disgrace and almost ruined his home. He pleads for someone to call on his employer and get his check on pay-day, pay his bills, make his purchases. And later we see him enter the quorum meeting, with the understanding that he will not be called upon to take part until he signifies willingness to do so. After a while we hear him say: "I believe I can now take part," and we note the concern that comes when in his first attempt he apparently makes a miserable failure. But prayer, love and kindness have touched his soul, the Spirit of God is upon him, for realizing he has made a failure he turns to say: "I am not satisfied. I want to try again." We realize that he has won. He continues to grow in faith and becomes active, and master of himself again.

I had not seen this man for nearly thirty years when, one evening while attending a meeting in the ward in which he lived recently, at the close of the service an elderly gentleman with white hair, round face, bright, flashing eyes, reached out his hand and I took hold of it, hardly recognizing him. He placed his free arm around me and said: "Brother Smith, I love you."

It seems to me that there are but few things in life that could bring greater joy than to have such an experience. It helps us to understand this statement revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

"And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"

Brethren, sisters; this is our work. We cannot save those who are indifferent and careless by preaching to them. We must go into their homes. We must bow with them before the Lord, and plead with him for their welfare. We must, in the spirit of

love, help them to see the need of obedience and service, for without serving we cannot develop and keep alive the spirit which God has promised to those who have entered the waters of baptism and keep his commandments. To me, the greatest privilege in life is the opportunity to serve in authority of the priesthood. What would become of me if it were not for you, my brethren, and the encouragement you give. I find we are all very much alike, and need to help each other. We should go out on the highway and the byway, so to speak, and find those who are careless and indifferent, and labor with them, not by one visit, but day by day, in a spirit of love and friendship. Men will not listen if we criticize, for criticism seems to bring forth a vigorous defense. But love and prayer, offered in the spirit of humility, will touch the heart and mellow the soul and eventually bring joy and happiness and eternal salvation. It is within our power. It is our right. God has given us that mission. May he grant that we shall not fail, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ELIAS S. WOODRUFF

President of the Western States Mission

I have but one desire in my heart at this moment—that I may find favor with my Heavenly Father and be enabled to discharge this duty acceptably before him, and for your and my blessing.

The Saints residing in the Western States Mission, like you at home, are beset with the problems of how to live and meet the present conditions of life. Many of them are unemployed and are living almost alone on hope. Many of them are employed. Those who live in the country regions, following agricultural pursuits, are reasonably comfortable and happy. The rest of them are hoping for relief from present conditions, but they are enjoying their worship, and I believe our meetings have never been better attended than they are at the present time. We try to find comfort in the thought that has been expressed here today, that all things are for our good.

As a matter of fact, my brethren and sisters, I think if we will ask ourselves the question: What is a blessing? that we will get some comfort out of the answer. I remember that once, while I was teaching a class of boys in the Forest Dale Ward, the question was asked. I asked them this question in return: Of all of Jacob's sons which was the most blessed? And the answer came back very promptly—Joseph. Yet Joseph was a slave in a foreign land. He was incarcerated in a dark prison. He was without friends or kinsfolk, while his brethren were at home enjoying the blessings of the land. They had plenty to eat and to spare. They had their houses and their farms, their lands and their possessions. But Joseph was in favor with God. His spirit was in tune with the Holy Ghost. He had the companionship of that marvelous influence, and he was by far the most blessed.

The Lord tells us in the thirty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants that his commandments are spiritual; that he never has