

SECOND DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference continued in the Tabernacle at 2 o'clock.

Music for this session was provided by the "Singing Mothers," Mrs. Charlotte O. Sackett, Director. They sang as an opening number the hymn, "Come, thou glorious day of promise."

Elder Joseph E. Cardon, President of the Cache Stake, offered the invocation.

The "Singing Mothers" then sang the hymn, "O My Father."

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I trust that the few moments I occupy this afternoon I may have an interest in your faith and prayers, that the Lord will bless me to say the things he would have you hear. I have nothing particular on my mind, that I would like to speak about, other than to call attention, if I may, to the marvelous blessings that our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon the children of men in the day and age in which we live.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ADVERSARY

This earth was prepared for us, created for the habitation of the children of men, and from the time that our first parents were placed upon it, down to the present, the Creator of heaven and earth, our Heavenly Father, has continued to entreat his sons and daughters to so live that they might be worthy to dwell with him eternally. But when we scan the history of mankind we realize that the other influence that is potent in the earth, that of the adversary of all righteousness, has been able to deceive many of the children of our Heavenly Father, and has prevented them from obtaining the blessings that the Lord desired them to enjoy.

EXPERIENCES RELATED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We read in the Old Testament that in the days of Noah that prophet taught the people for a hundred and twenty years to be righteous, and they failed to take advantage of their opportunities. The result was that after they had been sufficiently warned they suffered the punishment that had been impending for refusing to obey the counsel of the Lord imparted by a prophet.

Then we remember how later, when the children of Israel were led into the wilderness by Moses, although they were surrounded by the arms of love of our Heavenly Father, so to speak—he fed them manna from heaven; the rock of Horeb was cleft in order that they might have living water; he gave unto them that sure witness of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; they were led by a prophet

of the Lord—and yet there were large numbers of them, even under that influence, who absolutely refused to observe the teachings of our Heavenly Father, failed to take advantage of his wise counsels, and the result was they did not have the opportunity of even seeing the promised land.

THE WORK OF THE SAVIOR

Then we have the case of the Savior. He came and gave to the children of men the Gospel in its purity. He came to prepare the way for all mankind to be resurrected and exalted, not only those who were then living, but those who had died; that they might be raised from the dead, and an opportunity be offered to them to find a place in the celestial kingdom. Read the history of Israel at the time of the Savior, and see how few there were, comparatively, that really understood, that were able to measure up and be prepared to receive the marvelous heritage that our Heavenly Father has promised.

AS RELATED IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

Then we have the experiences of Jared and his colony, and of Lehi and his descendants, who crossed the mighty ocean, and came to the western hemisphere, led by prophets. Many of them obeyed the wise counsels of the men the Lord raised up to lead them, but a greater number were led astray by Satan and forfeited their heritage.

It seems that all the time, notwithstanding the Lord has been tender and thoughtful of his children, the adversary has had such an influence over them the majority of them have been turned aside from the choice place, from the opportunity of attaining the celestial kingdom, and they will find their places in the terrestrial kingdom or the telestial kingdom; and nobody to blame but themselves.

Is it not remarkable, when we think about it, that that has been the experience of the people during various periods of the world's history. I have only mentioned some of the notable instances, but since the peopling of the earth the adversary of righteousness has been able, by means of sophistry, by veiled suggestions and delusions, by appealing to the selfishness of men, to lead from the path of rectitude and right the majority of mankind.

IN THIS DISPENSATION

Remembering the record of the past let us consider the present. In our day our Heavenly Father has restored the Gospel again. The Prophet Joseph Smith gave his life, as did his brother Hyrum, to testify that the Lord had spoken; and the Church was organized under his direction, and divine authority was conferred. From that time until now the prophets and servants of the Lord have been teaching the people righteousness. And yet today we find history repeating itself, and there are many of our brothers and sisters who have their names upon the records of the Church who, unless they repent of their sins, will find themselves cut off, as the Lord has said, from the opportunity of enjoying the celestial kingdom when this earth becomes that kingdom.

In order that we may be properly taught the Lord set apart the Sabbath, on which day he has advised his people to attend divine service, to partake of the sacrament and receive instructions. We meet together in quarterly conference in all the stakes; we meet together in general conference twice a year; and we unite our hearts, our voices and our faith to the end that we may have our spiritual strength renewed and that we may have joy in contemplating what the Lord has said to us. We are surrounded by the temptations of the world, so that if we are not on our guard we are influenced by them, and if we are not careful we may step aside from the pathway that the Lord has pointed out. If we do that, then we have no promise of exaltation.

HOUSES MUST BE SET IN ORDER

Every human being, not only those in the ranks but the leaders of ancient Israel and the leaders of modern-day Israel—even the Prophet Joseph Smith himself and his associates—were admonished by our Heavenly Father, and attention was called to the fact that it was necessary for them to set their houses in order; they were warned that unless they did that, unless their families gave heed to the teachings of the Gospel, they would lose their opportunity. That brings it right close to home, does it not—right into our own day? Let us read a portion of Section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light.

“And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation.

“For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy;

“And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy.

“The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple.

“The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

“Light and truth forsake that evil one.

“Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.

“And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

“But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.

“But verily I say unto you, my servant Frederick G. Williams, you have continued under this condemnation;

“You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction.

“And now a commandment I give unto you—if you will be delivered you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house.

“Verily, I say unto my servant Sidney Rigdon, that in some things he hath not kept the commandments concerning his children; therefore, first set in order thy house.

“Verily, I say unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., or in other words, I will call you friends, for you are my friends, and ye shall have an inheritance with me—

“I called you servants for the world's sake, and ye are their servants for my sake—

"And now, verily I say unto Joseph Smith, Jun.—You have not kept the commandments, and must needs stand rebuked before the Lord;

"Your family must needs repent and forsake some things, and give more earnest heed unto your sayings, or be removed out of their place.

"What I say unto one I say unto all; pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place." (Sec. 93:31-49.)

Isn't it unfortunate that men who received marvelous manifestations from the Lord, who knew the truth, were not able to resist the temptations of the adversary, and many of the blessings that they might have enjoyed were lost to them? We today are subject to the same influences but we should profit by the experiences of the past.

BECAUSE OF VANITY AND UNBELIEF

In order to avoid misquoting I desire to read a portion of one of the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, in which the Lord, speaking to the Church in that early day, called attention to some things. He said this:

"And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin. * * *

"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received." (Sec. 84:49, 54.)

Let me read that again, speaking to those early-day members of the Church:

"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—"

That explains why we do not always understand. That explains why we fall into transgression—because of unbelief and because we have treated lightly the things we have received.

"Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

"And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all." (Ibid. 55-56.)

NEGLECTING OUR OPPORTUNITIES

When we think of the date of that revelation, September 22, 1832, how early it was, we realize that the Church had hardly been organized before the Lord began to call the attention of his children to the fact that they were losing their opportunities.

And then he said further:

"And as I said unto mine apostles, even so I say unto you, for you are mine apostles, even God's high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends;

"Therefore, as I said unto mine apostles I say unto you again, that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe," and so forth. (Ibid. 63-65.)

I call attention to the fact that the Gospel was restored a little over a hundred years ago, and hundreds of thousands of people have participated in it. All this time the adversary has been seeking to thwart the

purposes of the Lord and to take from the children of men the opportunity that is theirs.

Let us examine ourselves. We are living in a marvelous time. The conveniences and opportunities in the world were never so plentiful as today. Never such an opportunity to enjoy the comforts and blessings of our Heavenly Father as now. Yet the world has transgressed the laws of God. They have violated his commandments. I am speaking particularly now of the Ten Commandments. I will not take time to repeat them. You know what they are. But they are being ignored by a very large portion of our Father's children. They are being ignored by some of those whose names are upon the records of this Church, and the result will be that the opportunity to find a place in the celestial kingdom will be taken from them, unless they repent of their sins and turn unto our Heavenly Father. Righteousness has never been popular with the masses. The popular thing is often the wrong thing. That a thing is popular is frequently justification for the Latter-day Saints to avoid it.

GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED

We are living in a period of time when upheavals in the world are daily, almost momentary. Marvelous things are occurring. The map of the world is changing. The order of government is being modified. In our own nation we are almost helpless before the problems that confront us, notwithstanding we are probably the wealthiest and most powerful nation in all the world. What is our difficulty, brethren and sisters? It is that men refuse to hear what the Lord has said. They refuse to pay attention to his wise counsel. They absolutely neglect to give credence to the things that he teaches us, and *he will not be mocked*. He gives us the advice and the counsel that we need, but he will not compel us. But if we refuse we lose our opportunity, and it passes away from us, in many cases to return again no more forever.

PARENTS MUST SAFEGUARD THEIR CHILDREN

This is a marvelous organization with which we are identified, these great groups—the organizations of the priesthood and the auxiliary groups in the stakes and wards and mission fields—in which there are faithful servants of the Lord, both men and women, seeking to improve the condition of the world; and I realize how they are resisted many times by those who ought to hold up their hands, and objection is made to the teachings that are given because they are not popular, notwithstanding they are the Lord's teachings.

We may just as well confront the fact that unless we, as parents in Zion, safeguard our children by teaching them, and by surrounding them by the arms of our love, unless we safeguard them by every possible means, the adversary will break down the barriers that are raised by the organizations that protect them, and those that we love more than we love our own lives will be drawn away from the truth; they will lose their faith; they will fall into transgression; and then we, the parents in Zion, will have occasion for sorrow, not only now but throughout the ages of eternity.

Brethren and sisters, these are perilous times. These are the days that the Lord has spoken of. I turn again to the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants and read from a revelation given in 1831:

"For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion."

We have been warned, brethren and sisters, not once but many times. There will be no excuse for us if we fail to do our part. As one of those whom the Lord has asked to teach, I plead with you to set your houses in order. Don't take too many things for granted. Don't be led into the follies and foibles of the world. Safeguard your families in every possible way. Unite them under the influence of prayer. I thought this morning when one of the speakers said: "Did you pray last night? Did you pray this morning?" what a power prayer is to keep us in the pathway to eternal life and lead us into the celestial kingdom!

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Nobody else can perform the part that God has assigned to us as parents. We have assumed an obligation when we have been the means of bringing children into the world. We can't place that responsibility upon any organization. It is ours. We can gain their assistance, and it is marvelous the assistance that is rendered by these great groups in the Church; but first and foremost the obligation is upon you and upon me to not only advise and counsel but to train, by setting an example, by spending sufficient time with our loved ones, these boys and girls, that they may not be led into by and forbidden paths.

VICE AND EVIL MUST BE RESTRAINED

Only a few days ago a man, a member of the Church, who was in my office, said:

"As I sat in my own home a few evenings ago I was horrified to hear the things that my own children and those who were visiting in my home were saying." He said: "One of the young ladies, only a girl, said to the others: 'I am going to learn how to drink this new beer, when it comes in. They say it isn't just the same as the near beer that we have been having; it doesn't taste the same. I am going to learn to drink it, because it will be popular. Everybody will want to know how to do that.'"

What does that mean? It means that if we let down the least bit in the effort that we have put forth to hold up the standard that God has created for us, we are responsible to him. I want to say that every voter in this Church, every legislator in this Church, every civil officer in this Church, is not only bound by the laws of the land in which we live, to sustain constitutional law, but we are bound by the moral law and by the advice and counsel that our Heavenly Father has given, to do everything possible to restrain vice and evil in the communities in which we live. If we fail to do that we can blame nobody but ourselves for the evil results.

HOLDING ALOFT THE BANNER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I pray that during the continuation of this great conference we may have joy and satisfaction in the things that are said, as we have had in the meetings that have passed. I pray that we may go hence, when the work of the conference has finished, feeling renewed in our power to serve God; that we may go to our abiding places determined to be worthy to be called sons and daughters of the living God; that we may not say, because a thing is popular, that we will cast our lot with this group or that. But standing upon holy ground, because of the righteousness of our lives, may we hold aloft the banner that the Lord has given us to hold, bidding all men join us in the works of righteousness, preparing this earth to be the celestial kingdom, preparing those who dwell upon it even now to be worthy to be members of it; that when the time comes for us to go hence, those with whom we associate may be truly able to say that because of the righteousness of our lives we have influenced them to be better men and better women.

ONE IN ALL THINGS

I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God. I know that this is his Church, led by his chosen servants, and his divine authority is deposited with it. I know it as I know that I live. With that knowledge in my soul I pray that weak and frail though I am I may continue to keep the faith, that I may continue to be worthy of your confidence, that we may live together in the bonds of love and unity and faith and devotion, keeping in mind this statement that has come to us from on high: "Unless ye are one ye are not mine."

Let us be one in all good things, helping and sustaining that which is righteous, encouraging that which will make for better citizens of the kingdom of heaven, as well as citizens of the land in which we live, that when the light shall go out of our eyes and we finish our work we may look back upon lives that have been consecrated to the blessing of mankind, and receive at the hands of the Master of heaven and earth that glorious welcome home:

Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

I humbly pray for this for all, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters: The thought of facing this great audience here, and the further thought of facing that greater audience who are on the air, is almost sufficient to sweep one off of his feet. From where you are sitting it looks like a very simple matter, but from where I am