

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I feel very grateful to be in attendance at this conference. I have been thinking of the brethren who are not here because of illness or due to the fact that they are in foreign lands. They are deprived of the companionship that we enjoy but wherever they are if in the line of duty they may partake of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father.

I have rejoiced in the sweet strains of music to which we have listened, to the prayers that have been offered and to the discourses that have been delivered.

ETERNAL HAPPINESS THROUGH OBEDIENCE AND SERVICE

We are greatly blessed as a people and we have need to express our gratitude in service, not only in lip service, but by giving of ourselves to the blessing of mankind. Our eternal happiness will be in proportion to the way that we devote ourselves to helping others. It will be conditioned upon the things that we do and say while we are here in mortality.

This is a probationary condition for us. Our Heavenly Father gave our first parents an opportunity to come and he told them what they ought to do, and all down through the ages he has been instructing us through his prophets. Wherever the people have listened to the prophets they have had success and happiness and they have been making preparation for eternal joy. Where they have refused to be mindful of the teachings of the Lord through his servants, they have paid the penalty. Not only have they suffered in mortal life, but they have forfeited the blessings that they might enjoy in immortal life.

Think of the experiences through which we personally pass while here in the world and of the centuries of history available from which we may learn valuable lessons.

DESTROYED BECAUSE OF THEIR WICKEDNESS

By reading the Old Testament we learn that for a long period of time after Adam came, the people, exercising their agency, determined to have their own way and followed after the teachings of the adversary until they were too wicked to live. The flood came and only those were left who had been obedient and had sought to do the Lord's will. Abraham tells us of the destruction by fire of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness.

Why was it necessary for the flood to come? Why did the Lord permit the cities of the plains to be destroyed by fire? It was because the people would not take advantage of their opportunities. They were not only wasting their lives here upon the earth but were also bringing into the world another generation which would follow their bad example. In both cases, it seems to me, our Heavenly Father in his wisdom and mercy cleansed the earth by the flood and cleared the way for a righteous

people to dwell here if they would. The cities of the plains were burned that their wickedness might not continue to jeopardize other communities and children as yet unborn.

THE EXPERIENCES OF JACOB AND HIS SONS

We remember the experiences of Jacob. He resided in a country which was fruitful and he was prosperous but in the mercy of the Lord who knew all things, Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, was sold into slavery by his own brothers and taken to Egypt. After he had been there some time Joseph being inspired by the Lord became the chief adviser to Pharaoh and directed the people to prepare for a deadly famine that was to follow seven plenteous years. Joseph not only brought a blessing to the people of Egypt but because he kept the commandments of the Lord he was the means of saving his father's household from starvation by bringing them to a land of plenty.

Then Moses came, and, directed by the Lord, led the people who had become slaves in Egypt out of their bondage, into the Promised Land. When they kept his commandments they prospered; when they refused to keep his commandments they paid the penalty of their disobedience.

These were the people that were saved from the Egyptians and from drowning in the Red Sea when the Egyptian army was destroyed there, who were fed by quails and by manna from heaven, saved from thirst at Horeb when water gushed forth from the rock when commanded to do so by the Lord, and guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

PRINCES OF ISRAEL—DISOBEDIENCE AND DESTRUCTION

There were in that day, as there have always been, those who prided themselves upon their intellectuality and ability. Upon one occasion while in the wilderness Moses told the camp to do certain things. There were some of the princes of Israel, men held in high esteem—among them Korah, Dathan and Abiram—who refused to comply with the request of Moses and informed him that they were holy. Because they had transgressed and become darkened in mind they didn't realize that the adversary was influencing them. They refused to do what the Lord wanted them to do—not what Moses desired of them but what the Lord required of them. And then they defied Moses and criticized him and found fault with him. The result was that a large number of them were swallowed up in an earthquake, and about fourteen thousand seven hundred others who complained because of what had happened to Korah and his followers were suddenly swept away by a plague.

All down through history not only has there been spiritual distress but physical distresses have followed the people of God when they have been instructed what to do and have refused.

AT THE TIME OF THE SAVIOR

We come to the time of the Savior. He was the Son of God, and as

long as people listened to his advice and counsel they had their blessings, but they failed to keep his commandments and the result was that the people from whom he came were scattered. Jerusalem was destroyed and a terrible condition arose. But prior to that time the Lord knowing what would occur took a remnant of his people and brought them across the mighty ocean to the Western Hemisphere.

THE DESCENDANTS OF LEHI

It was during the reign of King Zedekiah, six hundred years before the birth of Christ, that Lehi, a servant of the Lord, crossed the ocean with his family. It was a new world to them. They were at the mercy of the winds and waves of the sea, but the Lord provided them with a compass whereby they might know which way to steer their vessel to arrive at their destination.

But some of the sons of Lehi rebelled and whenever they rebelled the compass would not work and they drifted hither and thither until they would repent. When they turned to the Lord the compass operated and they could steer their vessel in the direction of its destination.

They came to this country. Soon after their arrival Laman and Lemuel became rebellious and they and their group refused to listen to the advice of their father or their younger brother Nephi whom the Lord had inspired. Nephi, desiring peace, went into another section of the country with his followers and left that which they esteemed to be a better part to Laman and Lemuel and those who followed them.

What was the result? Those who kept the commandments of the Lord prospered. As long as they were faithful they were blessed and became a mighty multitude. Those who followed Laman and Lemuel because of their wilfulness were cursed with a dark skin and later became known as Indians. They lost their written language. They retained the story of their former lives and the lives of their parents by tradition. Nephi's people remained white and as long as they honored God and obeyed him were marvelously blessed.

After his resurrection the Savior visited America as he had promised and conferred upon the faithful people the same blessings that he bestowed upon those at Jerusalem. He gave them the priesthood and ordained apostles. He told them what they should do as a Church, and for two hundred years they were a righteous people. They kept his commandments and they were happy. Then came a period of wickedness and the destruction of the white race by the Lamanites.

When Columbus discovered America the Lamanites were here in large numbers. They had lost their written language and knew of their ancestry only by tradition. They were a degraded people. They had suffered the penalty of refusing to take advantage of the opportunities that the Lord in his mercy had offered to them when he brought their ancestors to America.

MODERN PROPHETS AND EXPERIENCES

The Lord raised up mighty men to establish the United States of

America, and we became a nation. He gave us a glorious Constitution for our guidance and protection. He revealed himself again to the children of men and gave us another prophet. This prophet was only a youth but the Lord blessed him and magnified him and gave to him revelations. He organized a Church as commanded and we are members of that Church.

The purpose of it was to prepare us to live eternally right here upon this earth, not upon some other earth. The Lord in his mercy restored the priesthood that had been lost to the earth. As martyrs for the truth, this prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum sealed their testimonies with their blood.

But the Lord raised up another leader. Brigham Young was called. And the people followed him and came into these mountain vales. I know of no people who have ever lived that have been more wonderfully blessed than have the people who followed President Young out into this section of the country. It has been my privilege within the last few days, in company with three of my brethren, to cover most of that trail. We came from Nauvoo along the route the first company followed and saw where they were camped at Sugar Creek, Garden Grove, Mount Pisgah, and other places. They were a courageous people.

Winter Quarters, where the monument was dedicated two weeks ago yesterday, has been referred to here. The people were absolutely expatriated from their own lands, not for any wrong that they had done, but the Lord as in the case of Joseph in Egypt had a mission for them to perform. Joseph had not committed any wrong when he was sold into slavery and cast into prison, but he was needed and he had the courage to face his problems and became the savior of his race.

So it was with those who had turned their backs upon civilization, many crossing the Mississippi river and the plains of Iowa in the winter. Many came later to the valley of the Great Salt Lake from other parts of America and from Europe.

I stood just a few days ago upon the ground near Iowa City where three thousand of our people who had come from the east and from the old world, desirous of being with the body of the Church and unable to afford teams and wagons, began their pilgrimage with handcarts. We went over the trail where they traveled and saw where they had been. Many of them laid down their lives as a testimony of their faith in God. They gave their all and thereby became martyrs for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have earned eternal life in the celestial kingdom, the highest reward of all.

Driven from their homes in so-called civilization they suffered from exposure and the want of every comfort, facing dangers seen and unseen and passing through every unpleasant experience that you can think of they laid the foundation of this beautiful city and other happy communities. They gave to us this building in which we worship today. They began the Temple that is upon the ground just east of us. And we

were fully established in the tops of the mountains before the passing of Brigham Young.

NO SAFETY EXCEPT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

I have covered several thousand years of time in a few minutes but the thing that I would like to emphasize is that all through this period those who kept the commandments of the Lord were laying up treasures in heaven that nobody can take from them. They are sure of eternal life in the celestial kingdom. What of those who refused to do what the Lord would have them do? Think of those people in the days of Moses who ignored the advice of our Heavenly Father and were swallowed up by an earthquake or were destroyed by a plague. They forfeited all because of disobedience. But do we realize that in our own day and in our own time if we fail to keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father the difficulties and distresses that afflict mankind generally will come to us. The only assurance we have of safety is on the score of righteousness. There is no other way.

OUR PRESENT PRESIDENT'S ADVICE REJECTED

There are those among us today who have been blinded by the philosophies and foolishness of men. There are those who reject the advice and counsel of the man that God has placed at the head of this Church.

I am grieved as I stand here and think of the way we rejected the counsel of President Grant. And I don't want to be counted among that "we" for I was not—but there were those among us who rejected the advice of the President of this Church and voted to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment and approved of bringing intoxicating liquor back into our community and legalizing it. That action has increased our accidents and murders and thousands of the sons and daughters of America are losing themselves and are being debauched beyond the possibility of recovery.

Had we listened to the man who stands at our head and done our duty we would not in this valley and other places be suffering from the distresses that have come upon us, at least, we would not be responsible for them.

People who haven't very much information suddenly come along with a bright idea, and they suggest "this is the way" or "that is the way," and although it is in conflict with the advice of the Lord some are persuaded to try it. The Lord has given safe advice and appointed the President of his Church to interpret that advice. If we ignore what he advises, as the President of the Church, we may discover that we have made a serious mistake.

THE LORD INTENDS WE SHALL WORK

He has advised us to work. He has advised us to take care of our-

selves and not become objects of charity. He has advised us not to look forward to the time when we can sit down in ease and live upon the efforts of somebody who is more industrious or more successful or more faithful.

He has advised us to be real men and real women. I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, if you will take that counsel, if the membership of this Church will carry out the program that has been started God will bless us. We will have joy and satisfaction in our homes. We will not be concerned as to the conditions that exist abroad. More than that, there will be peace and love in our homes and that comfort that can only come from our Heavenly Father. That is the plan. Do you believe it? Do you believe that this is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Do you believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Lord? Do you believe that the man who stands at the head represents our Heavenly Father? He may make mistakes. The Prophet Joseph made his. Moses, the greatest leader of ancient times, made his mistakes. But I want to say that as long as the Lord sustains his leaders we should sustain them. Today the men who stand at our head are unselfishly giving of their time that not only we but the world in general may be blessed. As long as the Lord gives them physical strength, mental power and spiritual light, if we are wise we will follow their advice and counsel.

When I think of those who came here into this arid country, how they divided the little substance they had with one another, how they worked with their hands, not only the men but the women and the children, I tell you it is a serious thing whenever we or any other people set up a regulation that says to our boys and girls: "You shall not work until you are eighteen years of age."

That is not the Lord's way. Our Heavenly Father intended that we should work. He made it possible for us to work in this land and will continue to do so. One of the greatest curses that could come to humanity would be to lose the power to work, and yet many seem not to appreciate that fact.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE

I am thinking of the future. I am thinking of the handwriting upon the wall in the days of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. I am thinking of the conditions in the world today. The Lord has drawn you out of the world, has brought you to the fastness of these great hills, has given you an opportunity that you may be preserved from the evils of mankind if you will, and has promised you eternal life in the celestial kingdom if you will be faithful.

I am grateful today for the blessing that is mine. I am thankful for membership in this Church. I am happy to be identified with the men who are in its leadership and I am thankful to be a member of the Church to which you belong and to associate with you in the flock.

We can read the history of mankind and see that when men honored

the Lord they were happy and prosperous; when they turned their backs upon him and listened to the adversary of all righteousness, they lost their blessing and were often destroyed. Yet, with all that information before us, there are good men and good women in our own communities who are blinded by the philosophies of mankind, and they are going along in the broad way that leads to destruction and unless they repent of their sins and turn back, they will be lost.

HAPPINESS IN PROPORTION TO RIGHTEOUS LIVING

There are many things that might be referred to wherein we are falling short, but I see many successes attained. I also see the joy and happiness in the homes of our people, and I pray that as a people we will look for the light and not for the darkness, that we will follow our leaders and not the trailers, that we will go forward, each realizing that we live independent lives, and our eternal happiness will be in proportion to our righteous living. The Lord has offered us opportunities for development that the world has never known before. Are we going to be blinded by the foolishness of others and lose our privileges, or will we cling to the iron rod with our faces to our problems and our backs to those who would lead us astray?

So, Father in heaven, we are grateful for our membership in thy Church. We desire to be worthy of it and with thy help we will prove our devotion to thee and thy cause. That we may continue so to do and gain eternal life in the celestial kingdom in the companionship of the best men and women that have ever lived or will live upon the earth, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ORLANDO C. WILLIAMS

President of the Spanish-American Mission

My brethren and sisters, this glorious sight takes my breath away from me. This is a glorious privilege that I am today adding to my privileges and blessings that have come to me as a result of this Gospel, and I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for it.

I am happy to report the Spanish-American Mission. Although it is new in name yet this mission has existed for many years as a part of the Mexican Mission.

I say to the parents that your boys and girls, the Elders and lady missionaries in this mission are well and happy in the work that they are doing in spreading the principles of this Gospel. We have had very little sickness among the missionaries during the summer months, some slight colds as a result of extreme heat in the southwest and along the Mexican border, but at this time they are all well and happy.

It would be a source of joy and would gladden the hearts of each and every parent if they could hear the prayers that the missionaries are offering daily in their behalf, giving thanks for the privileges given them,