

BISHOP DAVID A. SMITH

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I rejoice this day, my brethren and sisters, in my lot. I am happy to have the privilege of laboring with these, our brethren, whom we sustain as the Authorities of the Church.

I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for permitting me to hold the holy Priesthood, the power of which I have seen manifest in unmistakable manner. I am grateful for the privilege that comes to me of visiting with you in your homes, in your wards, in your stakes, where I receive blessings and encouragement.

I want to say to my brethren who feel to criticise the President of this Church for repeatedly calling your attention to your failure to keep the commandments which God has given, especially you who have had the Priesthood conferred upon you—when you feel this desire coming upon you, think what you would do under the conditions we face in this day, were you in the position of the President of this Church, and felt the responsibility as he feels it. Then perhaps you would change your mind and your attitude. I have no word of censure for you, only pity, and in a spirit of love I call upon you to repent, for you are walking in the shadow of darkness and in danger of becoming lost, for so the Lord hath spoken.

To me it seems that there has been no time in the history of the Church when it was more necessary that we should arm, not with the implements of modern warfare—and may I say the cruel implements of modern warfare—which are a menace to the world in this day, but with the authority of the holy Priesthood, clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost, which is promised to us as a guide, and which will, through our faithfulness, lead us into the path of light and truth and righteousness and on to eternal life and exaltation.

It is a great privilege to go into the world to preach the Gospel. It is a greater privilege to preach it in our home, in the home of our neighbor, our friend, our kindred. This is our mission. This is our work, as the army of the living God, clothed with his power and authority. Are we using it to the fullest? Are we neglecting it? Do we appreciate it?

I constantly pray that I shall not be found at any time belittling this great work which has been entrusted to our care, or making light of those who I know are heart and soul in this great work, full of faith and knowledge and honesty of purpose.

I thank my God for his blessings, for his plan of salvation, his Gospel message, and that I find in my soul harmony therewith. May his blessings be upon us. May we, in the power which he intends that we shall have, go forward to accomplish his purposes, that his blessings shall rest upon us in abundance, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.