

commonplace things of life, or if you have learned to count things that really do not count, or if you have been a little blinder to the faults of friends, and know you are richer if a little child has smiled at you, a stray dog has licked your hand, or if you have looked for the best in others and given others the best in you."

#### STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH

My brethren and sisters, I have often wondered why intelligent men and women who believe in the Bible, men and women who believe that there was a Christ, do not attend church. We find churches in all parts of America with but very few in attendance. I have had men ask me time and time again how it was that the Mormon Church had that power and influence over people to tell them to do a thing and they do it with all their might, mind, and strength, and with joy in their souls. They do not understand why our missionaries go out into the world for two or three years, once or twice, or three times, as the case may be, bearing their own expenses in an effort to convert the people who believe that they have the Gospel.

How happy we should be that our lives, our position, our belief are based upon a direct visitation from the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in this dispensation! If that were not true do you think that this Church would have lived and grown and become the power it has? And do you think that any man, I care not whether it was Joseph Smith, or Brigham Young, or any other living soul, could have done this if it were not true that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith, and also that later the Priesthood of the living God was conferred upon him and he was instructed to organize the Church to which you and I belong?

God grant that we may ever be loyal and true to it, and that whatever comes, and whatever demand is made we may know it is what God would desire. God be with you, and bless you, and prosper you. May the Gospel of Jesus Christ grow every day and every year until the Master shall come, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

##### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brethren and sisters, nowhere in all the world do I feel myself so much in the presence of friends, as in these great General Conferences of the Church—thousands of men and women who are of the same faith, with the same objective in life, having the same aspirations as to the hereafter. I feel myself as one of a great family in these conferences. Yet there is a feeling as one stands before this group, akin to fear, akin to awe. I have heard my brethren say that they also have that feeling. Brigham Young explained it by saying that we are all children of Almighty God, his very children, begotten in the spirit world before we came here upon this earth, and that within every one of us, for that reason, is a spark of divinity. When a man stands before a group of thousands of righteous men and women, as I do this moment,

he feels the divinity within them, and feels much as he would if he stood before Divinity itself.

I rejoice in having this opportunity; yet when I look at the clock I know that "the time is far spent, there is little remaining"—except speakers. You will permit me therefore, I am quite sure, to lay aside the theme that I have selected for this conference—it may sound just as well next April—and to bear testimony to you as the Spirit may move upon me at this moment.

#### TESTIMONY AS TO DIVINITY OF WORK

I do bear testimony to you of the truth of this work, which has brought us together during this great, wonderful, thrilling conference. This work is of God, not of man. It was founded in revelation. It has been guided by revelation. It is being directed today by revelation. It possesses the authority of eternity—we call it the Priesthood—the power by which the heavens and the earth were made.

The man who stands at the head of the Church today holds the keys, rights, privileges, and authority held by every man who throughout the generations of time has been called to lead the cause of God. He stands as the representative of God's great plan of salvation.

Our destiny is for all men. We are servants of the human race, bearers of truth and light to those who are in ignorance, and who sit in darkness. We are not like other men; we are not like other women. We are chosen and set apart unto the greatest and gravest responsibilities that the Lord has ever placed upon his children on earth.

This is the last dispensation, not the first. It is the summation of the thousands of years since the earth was made. This is the evening of earth's Saturday. The work is about to be completed. The manner and time of its completion, and all that pertains to these last days are left very largely with us, the commissioned servants of Almighty God in this great work.

I rejoice in this testimony, and I bear it to you. And I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that this testimony is knowledge, the higher knowledge, transcending mere belief, or even ordinary faith. It is the best in my life, as it is the best in your lives—for I speak but as one of hundreds of thousands in this Church and kingdom who bear this testimony. This testimony is my priceless possession, the thing I value most, the thing to which I want to cling throughout life.

You may well ask me, and you have the right to ask me, as you may ask my brethren and sisters by the ten of thousands who like me can bear this same testimony, how we dare to declare such a testimony, how we dare to say that we know that this is the work of God. In answer, thousands in this congregation, would join with me in explaining how such a testimony may be won.

#### EVIDENCES OF THE TRUTH ARE PLAIN TO BE SEEN

The evidences of the truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ lie all about us, if we but search and seek. They lie within easy reach.

They are evidences no man can deny, so clear to the vision, I was about to say, that the blind can see them. Who can read the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the backwoods boy of New York, untaught, unlettered, except as revelation came to him, who can read his career and the teachings of his life without saying of him, honestly, "The man did not speak of himself. Powers beyond man spoke through him for the benefit of humanity"?

Take the life of our own President, the commissioned leader of our Church today. His life is like an open book; we know every chapter in it. Who would dare to say that Heber J. Grant the President of the Church today speaks only through the great natural endowment that was recognized in him even while he was a boy? One must be blind, indeed, and hard of hearing who cannot recognize the spirit of inspiration and the voice of God speaking through the prophet of this day, our day, this Sunday, in which we are living.

Yet, evidences are not enough to gain a testimony of the truth; we have something more. I was brought up in scientific laboratories, where I was taught to test things, never to be satisfied unless a thing was tested. We have the right to test the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. By testing it I mean living it, trying it out. Do you question the Word of Wisdom? Try it. Do you question the law of tithing? Practice it. Do you doubt the virtue of attending meetings? Attend them. Only then shall we be able to speak of these things intelligently and in such a way as to be respected by those who listen to us. Those who live the Gospel of Jesus Christ gain this higher knowledge, this greater testimony, this ultimate assurance that this is the truth. It is the way to truth. All the while, brethren and sisters, we must seek help from the great unseen world about us, from God and his messengers. We call that prayer. A man never finds perfect peace, never reaches afar unless he penetrates to some degree the unseen world, and reaches out to touch the hands, as it were, of those who live in that unseen world, the world out of which we came, the world into which we shall go.

#### SIMPLE THINGS LEAD TO GREAT TRUTHS

I want to conclude by saying that in seeking a testimony of the truth of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel restored in our day, we need chiefly to give attention to the little things of life. The little things are really the great things of life; and the things we call great in life are the little things. Life is made up of little things, our daily duties. We are too prone to say that that which is clear and understandable is of little consequence; while that which is complex and difficult to understand we sometimes hold to be great. Let us remember that the little things of life, the simple things, are the ones that lead us into the greater truths.

I was taught in my scientific day to look for fundamental principles, the governing principles, and not to worry about the complexities or mysteries of things. I found that when I looked down deep into the heart of things, I found that the principles that govern and guide were always

simple and easily understood. Man's progress towards truth has been along simple ways.

The theme of President Grant's opening sermon just a few days ago was constant labor of the right kind as far as we have strength and ability. That is a simple, elementary principle; yet so fundamental that in practice it changes the whole world for every man who lives in it. Brother Bowen spoke of honesty—another simple principle; yet he wove it into the pattern of our character. Brother Merrill spoke on unselfishness—a simple principle, yet the power that makes the world habitable. From such simple principles are woven the pattern of the peace and prosperity of the world.

#### CONCLUDING TESTIMONY

Now I must not say more. I have borne you my testimony. It may be gained by any and every person. The way is simple; God has not made that road difficult to travel; but we must obey certain principles of truth to guide us if we are to reach the end. Every man may reach it who really desires it. There are hundreds of thousands of people, I am happy to say, in this last dispensation who have found this testimony, who have secured this certain and firm knowledge of the truth, and who can bear witness, perhaps even more certainly than I can—though it seems to me that my faith has passed beyond doubt—that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet of God divinely inspired and guided, and that we are engaged in the work of God for the completion of God's great plan with respect to the human race.

I thank God for the Gospel, in my behalf and in your behalf. God bless us and make us true to the truth, I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The *Tabernacle Choir* sang "By Babylon's Wave," (Gounod).

#### PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

##### *Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

My brethren and sisters, as I contemplate the growth of the mission of the Church of Christ, I feel to exclaim with Browning: "God's in his heaven: all's right with the world." Men and nations make errors and will be punished therefor, but ultimately the Lord will overrule the acts of men for the triumph of Truth. This great Conference has given added assurance in the success of this, God's work. I hope all who have attended the sessions or who have listened in have had their faith increased in the divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### PURPOSES OF CONFERENCES

Such is one of the purposes of these conferences. Reference to the Doctrine and Covenants will disclose the fact that there are four principal purposes of holding conferences of the Church: