

sacred funds entrusted to them by the tens of thousands of devoted members, most of whom are of small means.

Respectfully Submitted,

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PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I am just trying to collect my thoughts, after listening to that remarkable report of the financial condition of the Church. I am somewhat amused, too, because only a few days ago one of our citizens here in Salt Lake City told a friend of his in confidence that the Church was tremendously in debt.

GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS

I am grateful to our Heavenly Father this morning for the privilege of being here in this opening session of our general conference. I have been inspired by the opportunity I have had of shaking hands with many of my brethren. It is always a joy to me to see you come here, from all parts of the Church, to wait upon the Lord, and to participate in the activities of the conferences that are held from time to time.

As I look into your faces today, I realize that here is a very fine cross-section of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I don't know where anybody could go in the world to witness a finer group of men in worship than we have here today.

I am grateful that President Grant was able to be with us. It is a marvel to me how his life has been preserved. Three times, to my knowledge, his life has been despaired of by those who are close to him, and he has been healed by the power of the Lord. Today is an evidence of what can come to an individual who lives a righteous life. He has always been active and a hard worker, and yet today, at eighty-seven years of age, he comes to us to enjoy part of conference, though his limited strength requires that he return to his home and rest before he can come back again.

I trust that I may have the benefit of your faith and prayers, that I may be led to say something that will be helpful, something that may cause us to feel that it is a privilege to be identified with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When we realize the situation that people of the world are confronting everywhere, when we pause long enough to consider that the world is in a critical condition, that the destruction of life and property goes on and increases as the days go by, we may be grateful that we have benefited by those who were our forebears,

who heard the cry to "Come out of her, O, my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

When I realize that our people were gathered from a prosperous, fine section of the world, in most cases, and were transplanted by the power of God, and no other power, to live in these mountain vales at a time when they were considered unfit for the habitation of civilized man, and then see what the Lord has done for us, I marvel.

It has been my privilege to travel in many parts of the world; it has been a great joy to me to mingle with men and women in many nations, fine, wonderful characters, all sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, but when I come back to the valleys of the mountains, and partake of the influences that I find here, my heart swells with gratitude that my membership is in this Church that bears the name of the Redeemer of mankind, so named by him.

THE EARTH PREPARED TO MAKE MEN HAPPY

It would seem, as you look over the conditions in the world, that men generally have lost all understanding of the purpose of life. A great majority of the people of the world do not know why we are here; but the Lord in the beginning, starting with our first parents who were placed upon the earth, began teaching His children the purpose of life, and gave to them rules of conduct, which, if observed, would have enriched their lives, brought happiness in mortality, and enjoyment of eternal life in the celestial kingdom.

When the Lord began the peopling of this earth—and he prepared it for the people who live upon it—he provided everything that is necessary to make us happy. You cannot think of anything that we need that is not provided. As the years, the centuries, have passed, there have been uncovered new opportunities for development, refinement, culture, and happiness in almost every part of the world.

When the children of Israel were coming out of bondage, where they had been taken in order that a great and wonderful work might be performed, they came out to the Promised Land, and on the way the Lord talked, face to face, to Moses, who was their leader, and gave to him a marvelous rule of conduct, the Ten Commandments.

I should like to read just a part of those commandments, at least, and call attention to the fact, that from the beginning of time, so far as this earth was concerned, when it was populated, our Heavenly Father has been advising his children what to do, in order that they might be happy. He has never counseled them to do anything that would make them unhappy. He has offered a premium of eternal happiness to those who will live in mortality according to His advice and counsel.

When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they disobeyed the commandments of the Lord. It was not very long until they were doing things that displeased Him. Notwithstanding, they were led all day by a pillar of cloud, and at night their whereabouts was indicated by a pillar of fire. A cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night! And they

were fed manna, or "angel food," to preserve them while they traveled through the wilderness.

COMMANDMENTS GIVEN FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND

While they were there, in order that there could be no mistake on their part as to what would make them happy, the Lord gave to them these commandments. I want to emphasize that; I want to say that the only way of happiness is the pathway of righteousness. There is no other way. We refer to them as commandments, though I have always looked upon them as the loving advice of a kind Heavenly Father who, knowing all things, has pointed the way, that his children might be happy.

Now, he says:

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

I hope the membership of this Church realize that profanity in the sight of our Heavenly Father is displeasing, and that there follows a loss of blessings whenever we fail to measure up in the way that he indicates we should.

Again, let us read.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Now, that is the advice of your Father and mine. That is the advice of the Father of our spirits, given to our forebears thousands of years ago, given with the expectation that they would listen, at least many of them, to his wise counsel; and if they had observed to keep that commandment, to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy all through the ages, there would be an entirely different condition in the world today.

There was no happiness worthy of that name which resulted from violating the Sabbath day, in the time of Moses, and I want to say to you there is no happiness for us now, when we violate the Sabbath day.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

"Honor thy father and thy mother—" you men here, most of you, are fathers, and you know what it means to have a child respect you and honor you in your place as head of the household. Our Heavenly Father is just as pleased with us when we honor him.

"Thou shalt not kill." Think of the distress that is in the world today as a result of the violation of that advice of our Heavenly Father. Millions of people are being involved, and many millions more are made to suffer as the result of the destruction of human life in violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." One of the greatest distresses in all the world today is the disease that afflicts the human family as a result of immorality. There isn't anything that will destroy a man's self-respect like abusing himself and defiling his body by becoming immoral. Our Heavenly Father did not place us in a position where we could not help ourselves. He gave us our agency in all things, and for the observing of His counsel He gave to us a promise, and that promise was happiness.

"Thou shalt not steal." Just think of the theft, the dishonesty, that is in the world today—taking that which belongs to a neighbor without his permission. We understand that in the United States alone there are organized bands of marauders and thieves that number hundreds of thousands, feeling that they can do just as they please. The remarkable thing is that the man who steals never receives any happiness as a result of his theft. He loses his own self-respect, he loses the respect of his neighbors, and brings upon himself the displeasure of our Heavenly Father, who makes it possible for all of us to live without stealing, if we will.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Think of the sorrow and distress in the world, as a result of men and women gossiping about their neighbors, testifying to things, or referring to things that are not true, and implying that they are true. But they never get any happiness out of it. You never saw a gossip in your life that was happy. He is just as unhappy and miserable as the devil all the time—and of course he is in Satan's company when he is gossiping about his neighbors.

This is one of the transgressions that the Lord points out particularly, and we ought to be very careful. If we state anything, it should be the truth. We should never testify to anything that is untrue. And if we are truthful always, our Heavenly Father has assured us happiness.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Some people are never satisfied with what they themselves possess, but they want something that somebody else possesses, and if they cannot obtain it in any other way, they will obtain it by foul means. But it does not result in happiness.

I want to say in passing, my brethren, if you want to be happy, and I think we all want to be happy, we must conform our lives to the wise counsels of our Heavenly Father, who gave these Ten Commandments to ancient Israel, and they are binding upon modern-day Israel, just the same.

A LAW GIVEN TO THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Then he gave us another commandment that has a great influence upon the happiness of our lives. I should like to refer just briefly to this.

The world is not responsible to the Lord for what I am about to read you, but we are, because He gave it to us in addition to all the other commandments that have been given us in the Old and New Testaments—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and all other inspired advice intended to make men happy—in addition to which he gave us in our day another law that is referred to as the Word of Wisdom. It means a simple law, but I have never known anybody that was happy as a result of violating it.

The Lord says that we should not use hot or strong drinks. He tells us that tobacco is not good for us. He advises us against the using of these things, and tells us that we should use grain for food and even tells us the kind of grain that is best for us. He tells us that there are some things that are better than others. He tells us to use meat only sparingly, and he gives us the privilege of having all wholesome herbs and fruits as part of our diet and promises us, with the use of these things, happiness.

He warns us against the use of strong drinks and tobacco. Last year, this state that we live in, violated that commandment of God to the extent of over \$22,000,000. Yet, we, many of us, belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I want to say that not one penny of that \$22,000,000 that was used for these things that our Heavenly Father has said are not good for us, has produced any happiness. On the contrary it has produced misery, and sorrow, and the unfortunate part of it is that it not only applies to us in mortality, but also it will mean sorrow in many cases throughout the ages of eternity.

So, my brethren, how blessed we are if we are living under the influences that God intended we should live under. If we keep His commandments we are making progress, and development is sure to follow. But if we fail to take His advice, if we refuse to accept His counsel, then we will be in the same condition as the rest of the world who are soon, I may say, to be "ripe for destruction," unless they repent; and unless we repent of the wrongs that we do, some of us will be very remorseful when we analyze the situation and examine ourselves to find we are justifying ourselves because we are like the world.

Now, when the Savior was upon the earth in the meridian of time, He taught his disciples what they should do, exhorted them to works of righteousness, and marked the pathway that would lead them into his presence in the celestial kingdom—not only did He advise His children in the Old World, but He came over into this western hemisphere and taught the people the same things here. Why? Because He wanted them to be happy; He wanted them to utilize their time upon the earth to their advantage and not waste it. He came down from heaven, and they saw Him coming out of heaven. He gave them counsel and advice that is contained in the Book of Mormon, some of which is also contained in the Old and New Testaments.

He revealed the Word of Wisdom in our day with the promise of health and happiness and long life if we would observe it. Now, brethren,

we cannot blame our Heavenly Father if we are not happy. We have nobody to blame but ourselves.

I can say to you that if we have the spirit of the Lord burning in our souls we cannot be unhappy. We read in Job that there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. If we keep the commandments of God we are entitled to that inspiration, and if we live as the sons of God ought to live, we will have that inspiration, and nobody can prevent it, and the result will be our own physical and mental and moral development in mortality, and continued development throughout the ages of eternity.

OBSERVANCE OF GOD'S LAWS BRINGS SAFETY

So I am asking today that we examine ourselves. Let us set our own homes in order. Are we observing the teachings of our Heavenly Father, or are we setting our own judgment up, and saying, "We'll do as we please"? The world may do that without so much criticism, it seems to me; but I cannot understand how we, who have received so many blessings, can do that. I cannot see how we can be satisfied with ourselves if, when we make a mistake, we do not correct it just as soon as possible. I am sure that most of us will make mistakes, but we do not need to go on making mistakes. I remember my own father saying to me when I was a child: "My son, you will go out into the world, and every once in a while you will stub your toe and fall down; but for goodness' sake, do not stub your toe twice in the same place."

I have thought of that a good many times. When I have made a mistake and found I have made it, I have tried to avoid it in the future. Insofar as I have done that, I have had happiness. I may say to you, all the unhappiness I have known in the world has been the result of a failure to measure up in taking advice from our Heavenly Father and living it—all of it. It may not have been my own transgression; it may have been the transgressions of some others that I love, but unhappiness has always followed violating the advice of our Heavenly Father.

You brethren hold the Priesthood. That is why you are here. You are here because you have received a special gift from our Heavenly Father. You are here because the hands of the servants of God have been laid upon your heads and you have been given a divine calling and an opportunity, and in addition to that you have been given all the advice that anybody has had in all the world to make us happy. Our Heavenly Father loves us, and he loves our lives when they conform to his teachings.

Today in the midst of the confusion that exists in the world, let us not follow the adversary who would lead us into by-paths. Rather let us plant our feet upon the highway that leads to happiness and the celestial kingdom, not just occasionally, but every day, and every hour, because if we will stay on the Lord's side of the line, if we will remain under the influence of our Heavenly Father, the adversary cannot even tempt us. But if we go into the devil's territory where drinking, smoking, carousing, immorality, lying and stealing predominate, we will be unhappy and that

unhappiness will increase as the years go by, unless we repent of our sins and turn to the Lord.

I have traveled in the world approximately a million miles, in my ministry. I have been in many lands and climes, and I have met many people. I have never known anybody who had real happiness in his life except on the score that he was keeping the commandments of God as far as he was able.

Now, we want to be happy. We want our homes to be happy. If we do, let them be the abiding place of prayer, thanksgiving and gratitude. Ask a blessing upon the food when we partake of it. Fathers, be kind to wives and children, and children be kind to mother and father. "Love one another." "Honor thy father and thy mother."

I feel very grateful that the Lord has made me capable of understanding some of these things. I am grateful that the inspiration of the Almighty has taken possession of me sufficiently that I have understanding in regard to these things, and He has given you the same opportunity, and you have enjoyed it.

Today in this conference and the meetings that follow, we are here to wait upon the Lord. All the advice recorded in the scriptures we have access to; and then He calls us together, and advises us, under the influence of His Spirit, to do the thing that is right. When we do what He wants us to do, we will never injure any living soul. We will always be helpful to them, and we will enrich their lives as well as our own.

A TESTIMONY

I know that God lives; I know that Jesus is the Christ; I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God, and I am thankful to have lived in a day of the world when these things were made known unto the children of men. I am thankful to my forebears that they accepted the Gospel and made it possible for me to partake of its blessings if I will.

That the Lord may add his blessing, that we may continue faithful, that we may love one another, remembering those who have been our associates before, who have been faithful and have passed on I humbly pray. As I stand here I think of the men who have preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ from this pulpit, who have long since passed to their reward, and realize that in the not far distant future every one of us who are here will face our record, whatever it may be. With that feeling and that assurance, let us set our own homes and our lives in order, and be rich in the companionship of the spirit of God, for the only pathway of happiness is the pathway of righteousness that will eventually terminate in the celestial kingdom, in the presence of our Heavenly Father, with the good men and women who have lived upon the earth from the beginning. I bear you that witness, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the closing song, the congregation sang the hymn, "Zion Stands