

WISE COUNSEL

I close with another guide to conduct, from the same Epistle of the Twelve, quoted above, of 1839, written by the associates of and under the immediate influence of, the Prophet Joseph Smith:

. . . Be honest; be men of truth and integrity; let your word be your bond; be diligent, be prayerful; pray for and with your families; train up your children in the fear of the Lord; cultivate a meek, a quiet spirit; clothe the naked, feed the hungry, help the destitute, be merciful to the widow and orphan, be merciful to your brethren, and to all men; bear with one another's infirmities, considering your own weakness; bring no railing accusations against your brethren, especially take care that you do not against the authorities or Elders of the Church, for that principle is of the devil; he is called the accuser of the brethren; and Michael, the archangel, dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan"; and any man who pursues this course of accusation and murmuring will fall into the snare of the devil, and apostatize, except he repent. (D.H.C., Vol. 3, pp. 394-5.)

I am reminded, in closing, of an excerpt from one of the letters I have read in the files of President Grant from his correspondence of some forty or fifty years ago, when he was away at one time, and one of his brethren wrote to him, complaining that he did not know what his mission in life was, but he wished he knew what the Lord expected of him, apparently expecting or hoping for some special manifestation or call. President Grant wrote him in his characteristic frankness and directness, and said:

My dear brother: . . . All that the Lord expects of you or of me, or of any other man is for us to do our full duty and keep the commandments of God.

I leave this thought with you, with the testimony of my conviction of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his divine mission, and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the truthfulness of this work, and in its inspired leadership of this day. I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I think nobody could stand here and look over an audience like this and fail to be impressed with the importance of this occasion. Men who come here from all over the United States to be here in general conference for three days, paying the expense incurred, and sitting in meetings day after day to be instructed by other men, are certainly in earnest. Yet, this has been the custom of this Church from the beginning.

The purpose of our being together is that we may think seriously, and wait upon the Lord. We are living eternal life, and here in mortality is the opportunity that God has given to us to

prepare for happiness. I sometimes have said to my friends when they seemed to be at the crossroads, uncertain as to which way they wanted to go, "Today is the beginning of eternal happiness or eternal disappointment for you." We have our free agency; the Lord will not take it away from us.

EXPERIENCES OF JOSEPH SMITH

About a hundred and twenty-five years ago a boy fourteen years of age, named Joseph Smith, lived with his parents near Manchester, New York. He was taught to study the Bible. In the community in which he dwelt when he was fourteen years of age they were holding religious revivals. The various denominations were inviting those who came to the meetings to join one of their groups. This boy was a little uncertain about which group he should join. He wanted to belong to the one that would please his Heavenly Father.

He had read in the Bible: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," and with that in his mind, he decided to put it to the test. The Lord would tell him which church he should be identified with.

He went out into the woods near his home and knelt down to pray. His own statement is that he saw the Father and the Son, and in answer to his question as to which church he should join, they informed him that not any of them was pleasing to the Lord, and that if he would be faithful there would be given to him a great opportunity to bring new light into the world. That was the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Prior to that the people did not believe that God could be seen; they did not believe that we would have any additional information. They said the Bible contained all that the Lord had spoken and would speak. But when this young man, not yet fifteen years of age, listened to the voice of his Heavenly Father, he knew that the heavens were not sealed and that the Lord could speak again; and soon he began his ministry. During the period from that time until now, the representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have traversed many parts of the world, and have gone with kindness and love in their hearts and invitations to their fellows to accept the message of truth, not to give up any good thing they had possessed, but to add to the good things that they did have, and put themselves in condition to know the purpose of life.

The result has been that the membership of this Church has continued to increase. Driven from their homes repeatedly, under the guidance of a prophet of God, they finally settled in the tops of these everlasting hills, and from that time until now, this land,

then desolate and forbidding, has continued to produce, until today it is as the garden of the Lord.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

When the pioneers came into this valley, on the 24th of July, 1847, this was a wilderness. Today comfortable homes, houses of religious worship, business places, all these things have come, built from the grass-roots, if you will, by a people who came with only what they could bring in their wagons, and from that time until now they have believed in God and have worshipped him in spirit and in truth. They have sent more than 60,000 of their own members into the world to divide with our Father's other children the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The result has been that we have continued to be happy; we pass through the experiences of mortality like other people, but we have had an anchor that has made our lives delightful, and when we were in doubt, like the Prophet Joseph Smith when he was a boy, we have this comfort: If we will go to the Lord in prayer, he will give us comfort.

Reference has been made in this conference to the importance of seeking the Lord in prayer. And we should know that our prayers will not avail us much unless we repent of our sins. Faith, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, are the fundamental teachings of our Heavenly Father to us, and have been the groundwork of the Church since it was organized.

MISSIONARIES IN THE ARMED FORCES

Reference has been made to the fact that we are engaged in a terrible war. We are involved in it, far though we are from the scenes of conflict. But there are two wars going on, one a war for the destruction of human life and property, the other for the destruction of eternal happiness. The latter one is the most serious because it is eternal.

Today we have comparatively few regularly called missionaries in the world, but we have about 80,000 members of the Church in the armed services of our nation. If they have been properly taught in their homes, and have availed themselves of that teaching and conformed their lives to the inspiration that should come therefrom, all of them are missionaries. Thus, there are today in the world, by example, if not by precept, 80,000 missionaries laboring for the cause of the Master, demonstrating by their conduct that they know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ.

Many of them may not return; quite a number of them have already given their lives in order that liberty of conscience and religion may remain in the world, but they have faced their prob-

lems believing they were doing their duty to God as well as their country. They have this assurance if they have kept the commandments of God, that they are living eternal life, that they will be resurrected from the dead, and that they will again have the companionship of those they love when this earth shall have been cleansed of all impurity and become the celestial kingdom.

Today you men are here with that serious thought in your minds, and as you read the papers—and it is very distressing to read the papers—and as you examine the public magazines that come to your table, you see that not only is the world at war, but it is drinking in the filth and degradation of humanity through the printed word, and through the information that is scattered broadcast. I was thinking today, if the magazines that I find upon the tables of my brethren and sisters, the popular magazines of the day, had been brought into my mother's home when I was a child, I would have been denied the privilege of looking at the pictures and reading the stories. There is so much in them that is debasing and destructive of the morals of humanity. But we go serenely along and our children are exposed to those things. If we are properly taught, it is a joy to have in our homes the purity of virtue, the sweetness of righteousness.

A CONVERSATION WITH A CATHOLIC BISHOP

A number of years ago I was riding on a train with one of our prominent Catholic bishops—a very fine character—and as we visited and compared notes, he made some expressions with reference to the faith of the Latter-day Saints and their high standard of morality, and intimated he would like to know why it was that we were able to maintain such a desirable condition.

I confided in him and said: "From my mother's knee I have been taught that this body of mine should be kept sacred, as the tabernacle of an immortal spirit. I was taught when I was a child that to be clean in my living was most important. In fact," I said, "upon one occasion my father called me to him when I was just a young man, and he said, 'My son, I have something I want to say to you.'" And I said to the bishop: "I loved my father; I almost worshipped him, and anything that he said to me sank deep into my soul. He said, 'My son, there are reports of evil in the community; bad men and bad women are coming in from different parts of the country, one or two at a time. I hope that you will avoid them, but if by any chance any wicked man were to enter into our home and attempt to take the virtue of your mother or your sister I want you to know from your father that I would expect you to defend that virtue with your life. Then,' he said, 'that is not all. I lay the same obligation upon you with reference to every other man's wife and daughter.'"

As the bishop looked at me, I said: "That sank into my soul,

and has been as armor to me as I have traveled through the world, and it has been a joy to me to hold up to our Father's other children that standard of virtue: not only shall we not have our own despoiled, but we should see to it that no other man's family should be despoiled."

He looked at me and said: "I thank you for that suggestion. I have never heard anything just like that. I hope you will have no objection if I repeat it as I go among my people."

It is regrettable that in the world today in many cases men do not appreciate that this temple of the body is sacred and should be so held, that this body of ours was given to us as a tabernacle for the spirit while we are here in mortality, but that the spirit that is in this tabernacle came from God. He is the Father of it. If men realized that, how much more careful they would be to protect this tabernacle and keep it wholesome and delightful.

THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE

Think of what is presented to us in the world today. Not only has mankind strayed from the moral teachings of our Heavenly Father, for we were told here today that among the armed forces, those who are facing death, a large percentage of them are not living moral lives. I am happy to say that I believe that in that group that has gone out from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there are thousands who will return home just as clean as they went, if they come at all, and if they do not come back to us alive, they will be prepared to stand in the presence of their Maker and give an account for the time they spent on earth, and explain to him why they are there now, because they offered their mortal lives to safeguard their fellows.

Today I am thinking of the need not only of prayer, not only of faith—the world is teaching that, too—but I am thinking of the need, the sublime need, if I may use that term, of repentance from the things of the world and the turning away from the temptations that afflict mankind.

We are in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because we desire eternal life in the celestial kingdom. We cannot have that kind of a life unless we keep ourselves clean. It would not make any difference who the man is, whose son he is, or what family he belongs to, or what church he belongs to, if he despoils his body he must account some time to God for his base life.

So we who have had a proper teaching should instill in the lives of our families, the seriousness, not only of keeping ourselves as we should be, but if we should make a mistake, how great the need of repentance before it is too late. So let us set our houses in order. When we write to our loved ones who are in the army and navy and air service, send them a message of confidence. Say

to them: "We count on you," even as the patrician mother who gave a shield to her son who was going to the army, and said: "Come home with it or upon it." So we might say to these boys, by letter if we have not already trained them, "Come home in purity, or come home not at all."

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ; that is the purpose of this conference. The reason we are here today is that we believe sincerely that we are the sons of God and that he desires that we be happy forever, and the life that is to make us happy is the life that conforms to the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us see to it that wherever we go we teach by precept the gospel of repentance, and by our conduct live the gospel of repentance and faith in God; and in prayer let us go to him and plead for power to resist evil and to cleave to that which is right, that in the end we may have the companionship of those we love, throughout the ages of eternity, and that right here upon this earth, when it shall become the celestial kingdom.

That is why we are here today, brethren. That is the blessing that God has given to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ—it is that anchor that should make us secure against all evil, if we will permit it so to do.

A TESTIMONY

In conclusion let me say, knowing that I stand here as one of the older ones among you, I leave you my testimony. This is not some imaginary thing with me; I know that God lives; I know that Jesus is the Christ; I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the living God, as I know that I stand here and speak to you; and with that knowledge in my soul I plead that we shall go forward with faith and with prayerfulness and with hope and courage to receive at the hands of our Heavenly Father a glorious welcome home when mortality shall cease and we go on to immortality. I pray that it may be so for us and for all that we love, wherever they may be.

A PLEA FOR THOSE WHO NEED COMFORT

One word more. Let us remember the mothers of these men who are in the missionary field and in the armed services—for they are both the same—let us remember these good women, and where they are bereft let us go out of our way to comfort their hearts. They have not given their own lives, but they have given that which is dearer than life itself, and we owe it to them, after the sacrifices they have made to bear children, to surround them by the arms of our love and let them feel that we are in sympathy with them, and grateful that they are able to go on, waiting for the gathering of the family when it shall finally come.

God bless you, and peace be in your hearts and in your homes,

throughout our great land, and throughout the world as a result of repentance and righteousness, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

After singing and benediction this conference will be adjourned until seven o'clock this evening.

The services tonight will not be broadcast.

We shall meet tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock and will be favored with the Tabernacle Choir and organ broadcast and *Church of the Air* service. Will you, all of you, try to be in your seats no later than 9:50 a.m. Admission will be only by tickets.

Please join in singing, "Praise To the Man Who Communed With Jehovah," number 20 in your Folder.

The congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Praise to the Man."

Elder Nathan T. Hurst, President of the Reno Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 7 o'clock p.m.

SECOND DAY

EVENING MEETING

The fifth session of the Conference was held in the Tabernacle at 7 o'clock p.m., with President David O. McKay of the First Presidency conducting the exercises.

The Tabernacle Choir male chorus was in attendance and rendered choral numbers during the meeting.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

This is the fifth session of the 115th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Grant, who has requested that I conduct the exercises, is listening to the conference on a direct wire from the tabernacle to his home.

Elder J. Spencer Cornwall will direct the music, Elder Alexander Schreiner will be at the organ.

The congregation will please join in singing, "Do What Is Right," Song Folder number 2, Hymn Book 185. You may remain seated.