

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "O Say, What Is Truth," by Melling.

### PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

This has been a wonderful conference. The Lord has said that if two or three shall meet together in his name, he will be there to bless them, and this house has been filled to overflowing seven times during the last week by the sons and daughters of the Living God.

#### ALL ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

I esteem it a great privilege to be here with you, my brethren and sisters, and when I say "brethren and sisters," I am reminded of the fact that every man is a son of God, every woman, a daughter of our Heavenly Father. Wherever they may be, all that have been born upon the earth are the children of the Lord, and our Master taught that to love our neighbors as ourselves is the second great commandment. If we would follow the advice of Brother George F. Richards to love our neighbors, it would go a long way towards bringing happiness into the world.

I trust that during the few moments I occupy I may be blessed of the Lord to say the things that he would have me say. I trust that we who are here may be inspired of our Heavenly Father to rejoice in the blessings that are ours, and that we may be here today as brothers and sisters in the sense in which he desires that we should be.

This is only a small congregation compared to the multitude of our Father's children scattered over the earth, but it is a very choice congregation, because so many of those who are here have devoted most of their lives to going about doing good. That, in a measure, is the sum of the meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to go about doing good. While there are in this congregation men and women who are not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I hope that you will feel that you are welcome in this great congregation, and then realize that wherever you may go and find members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are worthy of the name, you will be welcome, and they will be glad to do you good.

Last night over ten thousand men assembled in this house and the adjoining building, all listening to the same voice at the same time. It was probably the largest group of men that have ever been assembled together in a priesthood meeting since the world began. The fact that so many of you brethren have the priesthood, of course, is one principle that many people do not understand.

#### THE PROBLEM OF SAFETY

In this fast-moving age, the problem of safety is of great importance. We pick up the papers day by day to find that this man has

been run over by an automobile, or that automobile has overturned and been wrecked, and those riding in it have been killed. We hear of collisions between railroad trains and automobiles. Nearly every day the headlines of our papers tell how many people have lost their lives by accident, and I may say to you that in almost every case, if proper precautions had been taken, those lives would not be lost. So, today, safety campaigns are being carried forward in an attempt to preserve the lives of people that are being wastefully destroyed. I hope that the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be among those most anxious and most willing to lend their efforts to preserve life. It is very precious. We have only one life, and if we keep the commandments of God and live as we should, it will be an eternal life of happiness. That is the blessing which comes to us from the gospel.

On our highways, some turn over high-powered cars to children, as soon as they can handle the wheel, and they do not always wait until they are entitled to drive by procuring that privilege from the state in which they live. They do not measure the danger and the result is that many accidents occur. Many accidents result because some men, and some women, I am sorry to say, presume to sit down at the wheel of an automobile and drive off into traffic when they themselves ought to be in bed under the care of a physician, and some of them ought to be in jail sobering up.

Now, what can we do? Let us join with the nation. Let this group of men and women here exercise their influence in encouraging our sons and our daughters and our neighbors, while we are setting the example ourselves, to safeguard the lives of every one of these, our Father's children. They are his, and he will not be pleased with us if by our carelessness, or our wickedness, we destroy their lives.

A number of years ago we did not drive so fast. I remember when the governor of this state drove a car at a time the limit was thirty miles an hour. Of course that was flying in those days, it was so much faster than a horse. I was riding with the governor and noticed that he drove very carefully. As we rode along the highway, I said: "You are a pretty safe driver, aren't you?"

He said: "I want to be."

I said, "This is a lovely car you are driving."

"Yes," he said. "The state furnishes me this car, and just as soon as I got it, my boys and girls wanted to drive it. I couldn't very well keep them from doing it, and so we had this agreement, that whenever we were in the car it would be law-abiding. So," he said, "this is one car in the state that observes the law."

I have thought of that a good many times. If we teach our children to be law-abiding and reasonable, perhaps we will be the means of preserving lives that are very precious to our Heavenly Father. In this day when we are talking about safety everywhere, let us do something about it. Let each of us do our part.

There are so many things that crowd my mind, I do not know

what to talk about. I hope you will not be in the position of the little fellow who sat through a long meeting. When the last speaker got up and said: "I just don't know what to talk about," the little fellow helped him by saying, "Talk about a minute."

#### DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS DISTRESS

What a blessed thing it is to know that we are living eternal lives. What a wonderful thing it would be if all the people in the world knew that they are living eternal lives. How blessed it would be if all men knew that our Heavenly Father was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that he is our Father, the Father of our spirits. What a happy world it would be if men everywhere recognized their fellowmen as brothers and sisters, and then followed that up by loving their neighbors as themselves. Think of the sorrow and the distress that have been in this world for the last few years, due to the great war. Of what benefit has it been? Millions of lives have been sacrificed; millions in treasure have been wasted; and beautiful cities have been wrecked and destroyed. Many people tonight will be sleeping, either on the ground or in wrecked homes because of the great war. There are widows who have been left, and orphans who will have to go through life without father and mother. Why? Because men have refused to keep the commandments of God.

One of the great commandments that was given at Sinai was: "Thou shalt not kill."

I wonder if we realize how easy it is to violate a commandment of God? Think of the Ten Commandments that were given to ancient Israel when they were in the wilderness, spoken by the Lord and written by his finger upon tablets of stone. If the people, during the hundreds of years that have elapsed since that time, had honored those Ten Commandments, this earth would have been heaven, most of the time, and the men and women who have lived upon it would have attained great blessings that we have not known yet.

It was a simple thing for the prophet of God, Moses, to bring those Ten Commandments among the people, but it seems to have been most difficult for the men and women who have lived upon the earth to observe them. I fear that the time is coming, unless we can find some way not only to prevent the destruction of human life by careless accidents, but also unless we can call the people of this world to repent of their sins and turn from the error of their ways, that the great war that has just passed will be an insignificant thing, as far as calamity is concerned, compared to that which is before us. And we can avoid it if we will; if we will each do our part, it can be prevented.

#### EARLY SCENES IN SALT LAKE CITY

I am standing here today not more than about three hundred yards from the very spot where I first breathed the breath of life. It was just across the street in a little humble home, a little adobe

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house with four or five rooms, surrounded by a little garden and orchard. That is where I began. Salt Lake City at that time was a village. We did not have any water pipes. All our water was picked up in buckets and barrels at the side of the ditches that ran down our streets, and then it was carried to the house in smaller receptacles. We did not have any electric lights in those days. We had tallow candles, or kerosene oil lamps, but no electric lights. The gas did come a little later while I was a child.

At that early day we did not have a foot of pavement in the city, either on the roads or on the sidewalks. I can remember this great wide road just at the west of us here. There used to be about six inches of dust upon it in the summer time, the finest dust that you could ever put your feet into. That is the way we used to play, bare-footed, running up and down the street playing ball. We did not have to dodge automobiles. Nobody had ever dreamed of an automobile at that time, I think; at any rate it was a long time after that before the first one came here, and then it was a curiosity. I am thinking of what has happened since. This house was built at the time I was a child. The temple was begun before that time, and when it was completed I still lived across the street.

During the time that has elapsed since my birth I have traveled in many parts of the world and met many of our Father's other children, men and women of various creeds and nationalities; and what occasion I have this day to be grateful for the kindness they have extended to me! It is not difficult for me to love my fellow men because I have known so much kindness from them, wherever I have been. Of course I have found, occasionally, individuals who had not grown up. They had bitterness and jealousy, and suspicion, and hatred in their hearts for their fellows, but that was not the kind of training that I had.

#### MOTHER'S TEACHINGS

I was trained at the knee of a Latter-day Saint mother. One of the first things I remember was when she took me by the hand and led me upstairs. In the room there were two beds, the bed in which my parents slept, and a little trundle bed over on the other side. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. When we got upstairs, she sat down by my little trundle bed. She had me kneel in front of her. She folded my hands and took them in hers, and taught me my first prayer. I will never forget it. I do not want to forget it. It is one of the loveliest memories that I have in life, an angelic mother sitting down by my bedside and teaching me to pray.

It was such a simple prayer but I can repeat it today.

Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.

That was my first prayer. That prayer opened for me the windows of heaven. That prayer extended to me the hand of my Father

in heaven, for she had explained to me what it all meant as far as a little child could understand. From that day until now, while I have covered approximately a million miles in the world among our Father's other children, every day and every night, wherever I have been, when I have gone to my bed or arisen from it, I have felt I was close to my Heavenly Father. He is not far away.

My mother gave birth to eleven husky children, three of them girls. It was the gospel of Jesus Christ that prompted her to bring us into the world, notwithstanding the anxiety we gave her. She wanted to do what God had commanded our first parents to do, to multiply and replenish the earth. As long as she lived upon the earth, I was taught to love my Heavenly Father. I had an angel mother, for she was an angel, as we understand angels these days to be. And as I stand here today, after the experiences of a long life I realize that she was only one of the daughters of my Heavenly Father, and he loves them all.

Just a few days ago the national Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints filled this building with women, many of them wives and mothers and grandmothers. They, just like the men who were here in this building last night, had the training given to them when they were children that we believe in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. That is the training of the children of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and of course of many other churches. But I am thinking of what your privileges have been, of how the Lord called you out from the world, that call which was heard by one of old:

... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (Rev. 18:4.)

#### BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL

Many of you who are in this house came from foreign lands, from sections of the world where there were not the blessings you enjoy here. You have come to the tops of these everlasting hills, to the headquarters of the Church, and what has been the result? When you started, you found that the Lord had promised this:

... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6:33.)

That is what brought your parents and mine, your grandparents and mine, from other lands, and from other parts of this country. They came because they felt that they held their Father's hand. Many of them had a hard time when they came. There was not very much food, not much clothing, and housing accommodations were poor, but they held their Heavenly Father's hand. Morning and evening they bowed in thanksgiving and prayer to him who is the giver of all. They taught us who were born later to adjust ourselves so that we could be happy by being filled with the love of God and the love of our fellows in the world.

## THE TABERNACLE CHOIR

I am thinking of how the Lord's promise has been fulfilled. Here you are today, listening to this great choir. This choir has been singing not only to the United States, but during the war the broadcast has also been carried to our boys and women in the armed services in different parts of the world. Year after year, the faithful men and women in this choir have given their time, without compensation, because they wanted to sing the sacred things of our Heavenly Father to his children.

## EVAN STEPHENS

We used to have here a number of years ago a young man who came from Wales. He did not have the opportunity of a college education, but he was a Welshman, full of Welsh music. When he came here, he became the leader of this great choir. He it was who had joy, along with those who preceded him and those who followed, in building a choir not just to sing but to sing praises to our Heavenly Father.

I want to tell you a little incident about Evan Stephens. Some very prominent people were coming here. In that day we did not have so many visitors of prominence. We were too far out in the wilderness. One of our good bishops came to Evan Stephens and said: "Brother Stephens, I have some company coming next Sunday to the religious meeting"—(we used to have a meeting here at two o'clock every Sunday)—"and I hope you are going to have some good music."

Brother Stephens said: "All right, Bishop, we will have good music."

The bishop did not think that was enough assurance so he pressed it a little. He said: "These people are not ordinary people. They are men of affairs and wealth. Their families are wealthy, and I would like them to see just what a fine choir we have. Now, won't you give us something just a little extra?"

Brother Stephens said: "Bishop, we have already had our practice. The music has all been prepared. I don't see how we can make a change. I think it will be good enough for your friends."

Then the bishop pressed him a little harder, and then Brother Stephens' Welsh got up, and he said: "Now look here, Bishop, we have prepared the music for next Sunday to sing to the Lord, and I suppose if it is good enough for the Lord, it is good enough for your company."

That is the spirit that has always been here. This house was dedicated to the worship of God, by the spoken word and by music, by song and by story. I stand in a pulpit here that has been sanctified by the righteous men and women who have stood here and have testified of their knowledge of God and have encouraged others to

keep his commandments, that they might be happy. I feel very grateful for my blessings.

#### . WARNING AND TESTIMONY

In conclusion let me say: We are not out of the woods. This world is in for a housecleaning unless the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father repent of their sins and turn to him. And that means the Latter-day Saints, or the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, along with all the rest, but we, first of all, ought to be setting the example. We have sent over seventy thousand of our sons and daughters into the world, paying their own expenses, to divide the gospel of Jesus Christ with his other children. Why? Because we know it is the only plan God has given to the children of men to earn a place in the celestial kingdom. That is why it is so important. In this great building that has been so sacred to all, after listening to the splendid choir and the organ, listening to the prayers that have been offered here, listening to the testimonies that have been borne, I want to leave my testimony with you and say to you: I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of the Living God, and had restored to him the true gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days.

That might sound like boasting if it were not so serious. It is serious, and I know that I will have to answer for that testimony as I leave it with you today. It will not be long until this man who is talking will have finished his work and passed to the other side, and when I go, I want to be worthy to join my grandparents and my parents, my brothers and sisters who have passed on. I know they have earned a place that is worth while. I want to go where they have gone, and I know that if I were not to tell you the truth in regard to this matter, I might lose that opportunity.

So, realizing the seriousness of a testimony like that, realizing what it means, and with love unfeigned and a desire to be a blessing to all our Father's children, I leave this witness with you that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the only power of God unto salvation in preparation for the celestial kingdom, into which kingdom we may all go if we will, but it will be on his terms, and I bear you that witness this day, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

#### President George Albert Smith:

We now have one order of business that is customary with these Conferences; that is, the presentation of the Authorities of the Church to be sustained by the vote of the people. I hope that you will realize, all of you, that this is a sacred privilege, and I hope that if you know of any reason why you should not sustain the leadership of the Church that you will make that reason known to those who handle the situation. On the contrary, if you feel that you want to carry on, that you want to sustain those who are doing the work and have been for a