

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH*Patriarch to the Church***A TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH**

I have been active all my life, and I don't think that there has been a time when I haven't had a testimony of the gospel. I know that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am the sixth generation in this Church in this dispensation. If all my forefathers could be active members in the Church, as they were, I don't know why I should be one to find fault with it, or to question their testimonies as well as the testimony which bears within me. I know that this is the true gospel of Jesus Christ. However, I think that there are probably thousands of men in the Church who, if called by the proper authority, could come and fulfill any position in the Church, and the position to which I have been called is no exception. I believe and have always taught that the Lord's way is the best way and that he is guiding this Church. This is the Lord's Church, and he is directing it, and those who are called to positions are truly called of the Lord, and they are directing this Church as he wants it done, in spite of the fact that we all have our free agency.

ADVICE OF MISSION PRESIDENT RECALLED

While I was in the mission field in Germany, President Hugh J. Cannon said to us one time in a missionary testimony meeting, where only the missionaries were present:

The Lord uses the weak things in this life to accomplish his purposes. If you don't believe me just look around at yourselves, and the first chance you get, take a good look in a mirror.

That is still true, and I think I am just as weak today as I was then, and I am sure I am going to need the help of the Lord to fulfil this office to which I have been called. President Cannon also said to us at one time, "How much time do you waste in prayer?" If we are wasting our time, we are not praying. My appeal to you as the membership of this church is that you do not waste your time, and when you pray, pray! Remember the Authorities of the Church in that prayer, and include me with them, because I am going to need it.

May the Lord bless us all and help us all in our righteous endeavors and in all of our callings, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I am sure the Lord has been good to us in these days of conference. It has been a happy experience. The brethren who have spoken to us have expressed themselves under the influence of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father. We have been entertained with the

most delightful music that could have been heard anywhere. The Tabernacle Choir today has rendered anthems and hymns that I am sure have uplifted our souls.

GROWTH OF CHURCH

As I have sat here and looked into the faces of the men and women present, I have seen those from many parts of the country, and I have shaken hands with people from nearly every section of the United States and from other parts of the world. Ours is no longer a Church of small number and limited boundary. Its membership may be found in almost all parts of the civilized world.

I am sure we are grateful to those who have sung for us and prayed for us, and to those who have given to us their testimonies. We who are here today are just a little handful of the membership of this great Church. I think we hardly realize the real power of this organization.

FIRST MEETING IN SALT LAKE VALLEY

We have said much about the coming of the pioneers. They were men and women of courage and fidelity. It is a strange thing: I have been thinking of them for the last few moments. Three of us who have talked to you in this audience today are descendants, grandsons as a matter of fact, of three of the men who talked in the first meeting ever held in this valley by the Latter-day Saints. I refer to Brother Benson, Brother Kimball and myself. Our grandfathers delivered the first addresses that were listened to in this valley following the arrival of the Pioneers. It may be of interest to you to know that President Young in speaking to the group, criticized one of those men because he planted some potatoes on the Sabbath day before he came to church.

There was a purpose in the coming of the pioneers. It was no small responsibility that President Young undertook when he led the people across the plains and into the valleys of these mountains. The Lord had opened the way and prepared the time, and the result was that they came and planted their crops, which matured sufficiently to be used for seed. But for the coming of the Donner-Reed Party the year before, they would probably have been weeks longer arriving in this valley, and it would have been too late for planting. Truly "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform."

Later when the pioneers were desperate because of the destruction of their crops by the crickets, they went to the Lord as their only hope. Then the sea gulls came and devoured the crickets and saved the crops.

All these stories are not new or strange to you people. Most of you here have heard them before. I recall that a hundred years ago now our people were camped on the banks of the Missouri River in an Indian country, expatriated from their own homes, deprived

of that which they had earned and accumulated, and willing to come into this western land and leave everything behind rather than surrender their faith. I wonder if we were put to the test whether or not we would be as courageous as they were.

PROGRAM OF CONSERVATION

Reference has been made to the necessity of increasing our holdings of food, clothing, bedding, etc. We, the group that dwells here in the tops of these mountains, will not need the increase very much, unless something happens that we do not know of now, but it was the advice of those early pioneers under President Young to keep a year's foodstuffs on hand, so that if anybody did lose his crops, he could carry over until the next season.

It was a very severe test of faith, I am sure, to some of our people, when the President of the United States and those associated with him decreed that we should destroy our food, and that we should kill our animals, and then to have the Church leadership say: "We will build granaries; we will grow more food; we will increase our herds and our flocks; we will not destroy what this world will soon need so much."

The result was that when the war was finished, we had plenty. Not only did we have plenty in our granaries, but we had also given the surplus to bless the needy. In our root cellars and on our farms and ranges, we had sufficient that from that time until the present, carload after carload has been sent off to our brothers and sisters in other lands, and we have not missed one bushel of wheat, one pound of meat. Nor have we missed one quart of fruit or vegetables that has been canned and sent over there. I want to say that as we have given to the poor, we have but lent to the Lord. And so we ourselves today are in greater comfort than many people in different parts of the United States and other parts of the world who have not given to help those who are in distress.

I am sure the Lord loves those humble, faithful souls who are willing to reach out and touch those who are in need whether it be with food or clothing or bedding or kindness because that is a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS KNOWN FOR GOOD

Today people of all the world know of the Latter-day Saints. They know the record we have made, and they know the truth about us now as they never have before. The result is that our neighbors and friends of other faiths who come to see us look from a different viewpoint, see what we are accomplishing, and go away to become missionaries for the cause of the Master. I wish you could see several letters that have come to me in the last few days from people not members of the Church, and telegrams from some of the most prom-

inent men in our nation, men of affairs, wishing me well as President of the Church, wishing the Church well for what we are doing to bless our kind, and encouraging us to go forward.

We have over three thousand missionaries in the world and many of them will be led to homes which before were closed but will now be open to hear their testimonies. It is our responsibility to carry the message of the gospel not only to the civilized world but also to those who are not considered to be so civilized. All this has been made possible because the Lord in his wisdom saw the necessity of giving us a nation in which we could thrive. In no other nation under heaven could the Church have been organized and gone forward as we have in this nation. The founding of the United States was not an accident. The giving to us of the Constitution of the United States was not an accident. Our Heavenly Father knew what would be needed, and so he paved the way to give us the Constitution. It came under the influence of prayer, and he guided those who framed that wonderful document.

BLESSINGS OF DEMOCRACY

I hope that the membership of this Church will not be deceived into thinking that other plans, other forms of government, other systems of direction whatsoever, are desirable. I want to say to you without any hesitation that no form of government in the world can be compared favorably with the government God gave to us. This is his plan. Then after giving us our civil government, preparing the way for governing ourselves, if you will, he organized the Church and gave it the name of his Beloved Son, and then directed that we share that information with all his children. What a commission, a divine commission!

The Lord says that he is a slothful servant who waits to be commanded in all things. (See D. & C. 58: 26.) When we see all around us the need for living as well as teaching the gospel, it is our duty to set the example. We ought not to be waiting for other people to take the initiative; it should be our responsibility to go forward. Everything that is praiseworthy, everything in civil life, or in religious life that is necessary to make the people happy will come to us as a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord. This is his Church; we are his people if we are faithful. I want to say that this Church will continue to grow and expand, and instead of approximately a million souls as we have now, if we shall do our duty, the membership of this Church will continue to increase, and the good men and women, those who are seeking God, will get the inspiration and accept the truth as some of your forebears did.

STORY OF AUSTIN FAMILY

I would like to tell you the story of the family of a man sitting in this audience today, that of the Austin family. They wanted to come to Zion, but they did not have the means. The father was not

sure they could make it. He was working in the coal mines in England. However, the mother received the inspiration and said: "We must get ready to go to Zion." When the husband indicated that he did not think it was possible, she paid no attention. She secured boxes and began to make and repair the children's clothing which she put in the boxes. The husband saw the preparations, and yet he could not see how there was any chance for them to go. They had only food enough and barely enough clothing to keep them comfortable.

One day, about two weeks, as I remember it, before a boat was to sail, a good woman came into the home of this family and said, "Sister Austin, we have been preparing to go with this boat. We have our reservations; we have our money, but sickness has come into our family, and it is necessary for us to stay. Would you like to use this money and take your family to America? Then you can send the money back after you get over there."

Talk about a miracle, with money as scarce as it was in those days! The result was that the Austin family came to this country, and it has been a blessing to the Church that they came. God opened the way.

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING CHILDREN

There are dozens and dozens of such instances, hundreds of them if we had time to check on them and repeat them. What a wonderful thing it is to know that we can, if we will, hold our Heavenly Father's hand and be guided by him. No other people in the world have the assurance that this group of people has. If we do our duty, even our children may have that faith, as a result of the training in our homes that prepares them for the struggle of life. We may desire the wealth of the world, but the most important treasures that we have are the sons and daughters that God sends to our homes. I want to say to the Latter-day Saints one of the responsibilities of every married couple is to rear a family to the honor and glory of God. Those who follow the customs and habits of the world in preference to that blessing will some day find that all the things they have struggled for are wasted away like ashes, while those who have reared their families to honor God and keep his commandments will find their treasures not altogether here upon earth in mortality, but they will have their treasures when the celestial kingdom shall be organized on this earth, and those treasures will be their sons and daughters and descendants to the latest generation. That is what the Lord says. Fathers and mothers, teach your sons and your daughters the necessity of virtue. Do not leave it to somebody else. Do not take it for granted that they understand, but in their tender years explain to them the purpose of life and guide them that they may feel that it is a blessing from the Lord to be members of the Church and to be sons and daughters of the Living God.

APPALLING DIVORCE RATE

The divorce rate of our country is appalling, and many of those, who, within the last few years, have hastened into marriage are dissolving those ties. They are sowing the seeds of sorrow that will continue with them a long time. They have not been willing to work it out in patience and take their chances that all will be well.

HARD TIMES

I remember what one sister in Idaho said a number of years ago when people were complaining about hard times. I had asked if there was anybody in attendance at the meeting eighty years of age and was told, "Yes, there is one woman here that is over eighty."

I said, "Call her to the stand, and let us hear her testimony."

She said: "You make me sick, talking about hard times. Why you have more food and everything else than you need here; a few families possess more than we had in this whole valley when I first came. When we came in, we had a span of horses and a wagon and a cow and the only encumbrances I had were my baby and my husband. (She meant companions.)

Of course that provoked a great deal of merriment in that group. She was not taking much stock in her husband if she meant what she said. Then she continued, "We worked; we did teamwork. We worked outdoors and indoors. We did everything we could to conserve our energies and conserve our means, and see what this valley has produced now. Talk about hard times!"

It was interesting to hear that dear old soul scold that great congregation of people who thought they were having a hard time.

We may have hard times, brothers, and sisters, but we can be prepared for them, if we think of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in the days of Pharaoh and plan as they did. Such conditions may come again. We do not know, but we do know that in the early days of the Church the Presidency and leadership of the Church advised the people to store sufficient food to meet an emergency. The result has been that since the people got thoroughly settled here and farms began producing, and herds and flocks increasing, there has been no real necessity for anybody to suffer for food.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP TO BE PRIZED

This is God's work. This is the Church of the Lamb of God. He has offered us eternal membership in it, and O my brethren and sisters, I plead with everyone of you to prize that membership and retain it by reason of righteousness, and that there will never come a time when you will find yourselves in the dark and groping your way, uncertain as to what it all means. I would like to say to you before closing that this work is a joyous work. It will bring peace and happiness that nothing else can bring if we will do our part. We

will be loved by our neighbors and our friends, many of them not associated with us, if they see our virtues, and if we will develop those virtues as the Lord intends we should.

Think today of this great organ and Tabernacle Choir singing to the world all during the war, and giving their time, day by day, week in and week out, to sing for us and for our neighbors and friends everywhere. How the Lord has magnified them and held them up to the admiration of mankind!

This is the Lord's work. You cannot find anything else like it. The city we live in was a desert a hundred years ago. Today it is the one city in all the world whose streets originally were made wide enough to be useful for the automobile. I think that those who came in that early day never dreamed of an automobile, but when they laid the city out, they laid it out wide enough so that if people will be careful, there is plenty of room to drive four cars abreast in our streets, do our parking, and get along without any difficulty.

This desert has been made to blossom as a great forest. I have taken people up on the hills and had them look over the valley, and they have said, "We heard this was a desert country. Why, you cannot see the houses for the trees." It is a beautiful valley. The Lord sends us the early storms and the late storms and stores our mountains with snow so that we are sure, year by year, of the blessing of moisture that we so much need to mature our crops and enjoy this once desert land.

OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSINGS

There are so many things that we might talk about if there were time. I want to say to you that every blessing we enjoy is the result of keeping the commandments of God. Every blessing we desire we must obtain on those same terms. So today I witness to you that we have a Heavenly Father—I know that he lives. I know that Jesus was the Christ, his Beloved Son, who gave his mortal life that we might have eternal life. He came to this country twice, once to the Nephites, and later in the days of Joseph Smith. The Father and the Son came in that latter instance to see that the way was opened for the dissemination of his gospel. He has called us to bear the priesthood and carry the gospel message as missionaries to the various parts of the world, and in return for that he has promised us eternal life in his celestial kingdom. Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith gave their lives as a testimony to the world of the truthfulness of this work.

You have voted today for two men in this audience who are the descendants of Hyrum Smith, the martyr. God has blessed that family all down through the years, and if they will be faithful, he will continue to bless them, and nobody but themselves can take their blessings from them. You do not have to belong to that family, but each of you has the same promise if you will seek first, not last, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. He has promised every-

thing else. What more do you want? But all is conditioned on our willingness to honor him and keep his commandments.

TESTIMONY

Joseph was a prophet who gave his life for the cause. Hyrum was a patriarch who gave his life, and many others have given their lives also for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the Lord's work; his authority is deposited with this Church, and nowhere else in, all the world except with the Church. Knowing that, I am happy to be here with you. I am delighted to be able to worship with you in this house that is sacred to us all. I pray that when we go from here, each of us will return to our homes with a renewed determination that we will be worthy of him who gives us all our blessings, that we will be worthy of one another as we live together in our homes, sanctified by the righteousness of our lives.

This is God's work, and I bear you my witness of it, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Singing by the Tabernacle Choir: "Hosannah," by Jones.
Elder Willard C. Stolworthy, President of the Young Stake, offered the benediction.

Conference adjourned.

President George Albert Smith:

I have been asked to read this notice: "Please announce the meeting of The Message of the Ages pageant choir which was scheduled for the Assembly Hall at 4:30 p.m. today will be held in the 17th Ward at that hour. [That means a block and a half north and a block and a half west from where we are now.] This is to make way for the Scandinavian Conference in the Assembly Hall."

I want to tell you that if any people should have a place in which to hold their meetings in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is the Scandinavians. They have been the salt of the earth and the substance that has built this country, in very large measure.

In conclusion, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Hosannah" and the closing prayer will be offered by President Willard C. Stolworthy of the Young Stake.

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The congregational singing of the Conference was directed by J. Spencer Cornwall, Conductor, and Richard P. Condie, Assistant Conductor of the Tabernacle Choir.

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir was in attendance at the Sunday sessions and presented musical numbers at those meetings. J. Spencer Cornwall and Richard P. Condie directed the singing of the Choir.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Salt Lake and Central