

I certainly pray, and I want an interest in your faith and prayers, that we will be able to measure up to this great responsibility. I thank the Lord for the testimony that I have and the spirit that has come to me and I do it humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:

President William L. Killpack, formerly president of the North Central States Mission and, as he intimated in his concluding remarks, soon to be president of the Idaho Falls Temple, has just completed his address to us.

This is President Smith's birthday and he has indicated his willingness to say something to us and to the Saints on this occasion. May the Lord bless him that he may be able to say what he wishes to say and give us the inspiration and wisdom which he alone can give and he alone has the right to give.

### PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Seventy-nine years ago today, a baby boy came to earth across the street from where I stand. There was snow on the ground. The boy's parents were living in very humble circumstances. I was that boy, and here in your presence today, I praise my Maker and thank him with all my heart for sending me into a home of real Latter-day Saints.

#### EARLY LIFE

I grew up in this community. When eight years of age, I was baptized in City Creek just a block from here. I was confirmed a member of the Church in fast meeting in the Seventeenth Ward, and with the encouragement of one of my dear aunts, Lucy M. Smith, I stood up and bore my testimony. I told that audience that I was glad to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ, for I believed it was the true Church, and I wanted to be worthy of my membership in it.

Many things have happened since then. I wish I could give you a picture of what has passed before my eyes and through my mind since I began life here on earth. I was privileged to go to school. I attended the Sunday School and the Mutual Improvement Association in the Seventeenth Ward. I attended fast meeting and used to come to this building on Sunday to hear sermons delivered by the great leaders of the Church. I was permitted to go to Provo and attend Brigham Young Academy under Superintendent Karl G. Maeser for one year; and the influence of that good man on my life was so great that I am sure it will endure for eternity.

I was ordained a deacon and was president of my quorum. When I was about fourteen years of age, I read the fortieth chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon in our Sunday School class. It

*Monday, April 4**Second Day*

made an impression on my mind that has been helpful when death has taken loved ones away. I will not take time now to read it, but it is one place in the scriptures that tells us where our spirits go when they leave this body, and I have wanted to go to that place called paradise ever since.

#### MISSION IN SOUTHERN STATES

I was called on a mission to the Southern States in the days when great bitterness motivated some of the people who lived there. The most of them were good men and women, but there were a few who objected to the gospel of Jesus Christ being taught as the Lord desires us to teach it. Some of our missionaries were brutally whipped. During the period of time before I went there, several were killed. I had the experience myself of lying in bed while the bullets whistled overhead. A mob surrounded the building where we were sleeping and fired into the four corners. Splinters fell over us, but nobody was hurt. I labored under the direction of Elder J. Golden Kimball. He was a great mission president. I came home and continued my life work, having been benefited by the experience of my missionary career.

There were saloons and gambling houses in Salt Lake City in my youth—not very many—but some, but I never had occasion to go into them. I always felt it would not please my father and mother if I did, and I was happy to do the things that they wanted me to do.

#### FURTHER ACTIVITIES

After my mission to the Southern States, I was called to work in the auxiliary organizations at home, in both the Sunday School and the Mutual Improvement Association, and later became one of the stake superintendents of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association. I was also a ward teacher and stake home missionary. I also served as a member of the general board of M.I.A.

The President of the United States, William McKinley, sent word to me by Governor Arthur L. Thomas that he felt that a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was entitled to a federal appointment. We had not had one up to that time, and he offered me the position in the Land Office of Receiver of Public Monies and Special Disbursing Agent. Before that I had worked for the Grant-Odell Company in the yard putting up wagons and other equipment, and when I was offered the position of Receiver in the United States Land Office. I was working for Z.C.M.I. My first appointment came from President William McKinley, and the next one came from President Theodore Roosevelt.

I attended the general conferences that were held semi-annually in this building. I used to edge my way in and sit down on the stairs at the left. The house would be full, and there weren't

seats for everybody. On the particular occasion to which I refer, I came in, as usual, and worked my way through the crowd and finally got a seat down near the bottom of the stairs. (At that time I was a married man with a family, living across the street, and may I say that having a fine Latter day Saint wife was one of the greatest blessings that ever came to me.) Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley, who was my neighbor, touched me on the shoulder and said, "Come and sit by me." "I said, "There is plenty of room here." Again he said, "Come and sit by me. It is more comfortable here." If I had known what was going to happen during that conference, you could not have pried me into that seat.

#### CALL TO APOSTLESHIP

That was on Sunday. I had to be at my work in the land office because people were there from all over, and I could not go to the meetings except on Sunday. The following Tuesday, I came home from the land office to take my children down to the fair at four o'clock, and Sister Nellie Colebrook Taylor came across the street and said, "Oh, Brother Smith, I congratulate you."

I said, "What are you congratulating me about?"

She said, "Don't you know?"

I replied, "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Why, she said, "you have just been sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve." And I talked her out of it.

She apologized and said, "I am sorry. I hope you will forgive me." Knowing what my father's experiences had been, and having such a nice position at the land office, I was not looking for a place such as father had. It took all his time and kept him away from home so much.

I turned to my wife and said, "I'll take the children now and go down to the fair." But before I could get to the buggy, back came Sister Taylor, and she rushed up to me and said, "It was you! It was you! Everybody heard it."

I will never forget how I felt. I turned to my wife, and she was in tears. That is the way I received my notice that I had been sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve.

These are some of the experiences of a short life; and I want to say to you brethren and sisters, it is a good deal better to be seventy-nine years young than it is to be fifty years old.

#### SHARING THE GOSPEL

I came into my place as humble as a man could be. It took me about three weeks before I could feel comfortable, and that would be another interesting story if I had the time to tell it. During the period of time I have held the priesthood, I have traveled more than a million miles in the world, seeking to share the gospel of Jesus

*Monday, April 4**Second Day*

Christ that is so precious to me. It has never been difficult for me to tell men about the fine things that we have. Sometimes when men belonging to other churches have said, "We have this and this," I have said, "Keep all the truth that you have, and then let me explain to you some of the things that you do not possess that have made my life rich, and I am sure would make you happy."

I was secretary of the Southern States Mission, and I presided over the European Mission for a term, and I have been associated with you, my brethren and sisters, and many of your fathers and mothers who have passed to the other side, in this marvelous gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. I would like to say there has never been one hour in my life that I can remember that I have had any doubt about this being the work of our Heavenly Father. It has been a joy to me. People have been kind to me wherever I have been—almost everyone. I cannot imagine that I could have lived a richer life if I had planned what I wanted to do during these seventy-nine years.

I take this occasion now to thank the General Authorities of the Church, the stake authorities, ward authorities, members of the Church, to thank you for your kindness, your love, your help, and willingness to enable me to do my work, especially at times when it has been somewhat difficult.

#### BLESSINGS TO BE EARNED

We have a great responsibility resting upon us in the various positions we occupy. I say to you men who are in this audience, who are elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and who have no official position, the Lord expects just as much from you. If you expect your blessings in the hereafter, you will have to earn them in the same way that the men who are ward and stake and General authorities are earning theirs.

It is a wonderful thing to look into the faces of a group like this. I do not know how soon the time may come that I will be called from this sphere of action, but when that time comes, I hope that I will have earned the right to continue my associations with just such men and women as are here today, and those who are scattered throughout the world who are living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To this marvelous choir of young people, from Ricks College of Rexburg, Idaho, I say: Keep the commandments of the Lord. There isn't any happiness worthy the name if you fail to do that. All happiness is on the Lord's side of the line. We thank you for coming here to sing to us. We hope that wherever you go you will keep in mind that our Heavenly Father loves you and has offered you and continues to offer you opportunity to develop to be such men and women as will be entitled to a place in the celestial kingdom to have the association with those whom you love throughout the ages of eternity.

## GRATITUDE FOR PRESERVATION

I had no idea when I came this morning that I was going to talk to you like this. I am grateful for the preservation of my life. Many times when I have been apparently ready to go to the other side, I have been kept for some other work to be done. I want every one of you to know that I do not have an enemy, that is, there is no one in the world that I have any enmity towards. All men and all women are my Father's children, and I have sought during my life to observe the wise direction of the Redeemer of mankind, to love my neighbor as myself. I have had much happiness in life, so much that I would not exchange with anybody who has ever lived, and I do not say that boastfully but gratefully. All the happiness that has come to me and mine has been the result of trying to keep the commandments of God and of living to be worthy of the blessings that he has promised those who honor him and keep his commandments.

## THE LORD'S SIDE

God bless you, my brethren and sisters. Do not make any mistake in these days of uncertainty. Stay on the Lord's side of the line. All righteousness, all happiness is on his side of the line.

In conclusion, I pray that we may all so adjust ourselves as we pass through life's experiences that we can reach out and feel that we hold our Father's hand. This is God's work. This is his Church. It is the way that our Heavenly Father has provided to prepare us for eternal happiness. I pray that we may all be worthy of it.

I would not feel right if I failed now to express to my father's family, my brothers and sisters, my own family who have been so close to me all these years, my gratitude to them for their helpfulness. They have never put anything in the way of my doing my duty. And I take this occasion to say to my brethren, the counselors in the Presidency of the Church, and these other men who are here on this stand: You will never know how much I love you. I have not words to express it. And I want to feel that way toward every son and every daughter of my Heavenly Father, and I can feel that way if I observe his laws and commandments and follow his advice.

That the Lord may enable us all so to adjust ourselves that when the time comes for us to go hence we may find our names enrolled in the Lamb's book of life entitling us to a place in the celestial kingdom in the companionship of the best people that have lived upon the earth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:**

We have just listened to President Smith, the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are very grateful to him for his message and for his blessing. I repeat, may the Lord