

TESTIMONY

This is the work of the Lord. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, which name was given to it by our Heavenly Father. I do not say that boastfully. I hope no one here this morning will feel that I am arrogant because of my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have no such feeling, but I have a feeling of humility, of gratitude, of thanksgiving for the companionship of such men and women as are here, and men and women in the world whom I have traveled with and associated with during these many years, many of whom have not been able to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope for their sakes and for the sake of those they love that they will eventually receive that blessing, and it will have to come, if it ever does, from the Author of our being through the inspiration of his Spirit.

Again I say, this is our Father's work. This is the Church of the Lamb of God. We who know that have a responsibility that no other people in the world have, and if we will be righteous in our lives, having our own homes and our own lives in order, the spirit of our Heavenly Father will be with us always. People will rejoice in our companionship, and when we go to the other side, we will find our names enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life, and that will entitle us to an eternal inheritance in the celestial kingdom, and this earth will be that kingdom. I bear you witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

There is one advantage in being called on early. I can assure you I will enjoy this conference more than any I have enjoyed before, and I hope that I will have your faith and prayers with me while I stand before you because I assure you I need them.

It is a very inspiring sight to look over this audience, and it is also a frightening feeling not only to see all these people and have them watching me and sensing that responsibility, and using your time, but also adding to it all the people who are listening, as President Smith has announced, through the broadcasting systems, and through television. No one knows how many thousands there are there—I assure you I sense the responsibility of the time I use here and hope I have your faith and prayers in my behalf in helping me to say those things which will be of benefit.

GOAL OF PERFECTION

It has been the goal of all who are striving to do the will of the Lord to accomplish the request of the Savior in his Sermon on the Mount:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5:48.)

This is rather a large order, is it not? It would seem almost impossible to attain. We are only human. And certainly, to err is human. The conflicting forces of good and evil in the world, and our free agency to choose what course we will, make it very hard to do what is right all the time.

LAW OF REPENTANCE

God has given us commandments and instructions and shown us the way, and it is for us to follow. He knows we will step aside at times, so he has given us the law of repentance. Repentance is not only sorrow for our sins, but also turning aside and exerting ourselves to the utmost to make retribution.

There are four kinds of people in the world. There is the kind that does not know when things are wrong, and the kind that knows when things are wrong but does not care. There is the kind that knows when things are wrong and does care, but does not care enough to make them right. And there is the fourth kind that knows when things are wrong and strives intelligently to make them right and to keep them right. Those are the people who know how to progress.

We must be aware of our sins and repent every day of our lives if we would strive for perfection. Repentance is not only for some big sin or for our past sins before we are baptized—it is also regretting every slip we make and honestly striving to do better.

The Lord in his wisdom has divided our time into daylight and darkness. With the dawning of each new day comes a new chance to improve upon the mistakes of yesterday. Let us call upon the Lord for help. Every morning and throughout the day we should pray for strength to do his will. We need it, for it is the little, trivial daily trials that are the hardest to bear serenely. It is the seeming little sins which we scarcely recognize that are the hardest to overcome. Pray for strength, then, constantly, to be kind, honest, charitable; and each night let us pray for forgiveness of the sins we have committed, repent and try harder the next day to do better.

OVERCOMING EVIL

There is an old saying, "There is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self." Without opposition there would be no progress, for it is only as we overcome that we develop strength.

As the steel which is heated and quenched becomes much stronger and more valuable, as a result of that tempering, so do we become stronger and more valuable as we overcome our sins, be they

great or small. Each one has his trials to go through, and they all seem to be different. In the process of this tempering of the soul of man, we learn one great principle among many others: the need for repentance. It is this spirit of repentance the Lord requests as a prerequisite to baptism, that through the act of repentance man may start on the road to perfection and receive baptism and the Holy Ghost. But repentance does not stop there. That is the beginning of progress; and as soon as repentance stops, progress stops.

If we are to become perfect, we must constantly overcome the powers of evil. We find the powers of evil on every hand, every day. We learn to combat them in earliest childhood. We are taught by our parents to do good and avoid evil. We are taught to distinguish to some degree between good and evil. We are taught the law of repentance by correcting things that are wrong. Those teachings by mother and father are most enduring, and many great men accredit their success to those early teachings.

Parents, there is the challenge to us. Can we give our children the right start in life? There is also the challenge to the rest of us. Can we so live to be true and faithful to the teachings in righteousness given to us by our parents? Can we be more like the "lonesome pine" seen so often on the uppermost levels of these beautiful mountains of ours—this pine which stands alone, bending and swaying in the wind? These gallant timbers are known to naturalists as "limber pine," so named because of their resiliency, which enables them to ride through the heavy storms that rage around them on occasions. You can tie their branches in knots without breaking the bark. When untied, the branches snap back into their original position.

RESILIENCY NEEDED

We see, in their survival, not strength alone, but victory in their ability to spring erect again, after bending to the gale's fury. Resiliency is an important factor in the goal of perfection. The winds of life may bend us, but if we have resiliency of spirit, they cannot break us. To straighten again courageously after our heads have been bowed in defeat, disappointment, and suffering, is the supreme test of character. Such people live on the mountaintops of life and are on the road to perfection.

There are many who have bowed to disappointment or criticism or for some other such reason have stopped their progress in the priesthood, and have lacked the resiliency to rise to the occasion and, in spite of opposition, continue to progress. Can you acknowledge your mistakes and intelligently try to correct them? Can you also make allowances for others' weaknesses and give them the opportunity to make retribution?

PROCRASTINATION

There is one important thing to remember. As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker. Neglect of opportunity in holy things brings a forfeit of the chance.

From the Book of Mormon in the Book of Alma we read:

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked. (Alma 34:34-35.)

TEACHINGS OF CONFERENCE

May the Lord bless us to be able always to keep his commandments to the best of our ability. And I bless you, my brothers and sisters, with a strength of memory sufficient to take home with you the spirit and teachings of this conference that you may not be forgetful of the kernels of truth and light, and that you may not be so burdened with the numerous teachings of this conference, that you will lose sight of the important things, and that you will remember them and put them into practice and teach them to the many hundreds of our members who are not able to attend this conference.

I bless you, my brethren and sisters, that you may be saints in very deed, through your faithfulness and your devotion to the teachings which are given in this conference, and may God be with us all, that we may ever honor and glorify him. May God be ever honored and glorified for his manifold mercies unto us, his children, I pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, Come Ye Saints."

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I wish I might say something to the missionaries of the Church that would be helpful in their work in teaching the gospel. In a broad sense, we are all missionaries who hold the priesthood of God. We are ever ready to give the message of eternal life because of the truth, beauty, and goodness of the divine teachings of the Savior. Out of our faith, we find everything that is holy and