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PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I feel very dependent upon the Lord for what I shall say this morning, and I also feel very much the need of His assistance and the strength of His Spirit to enable me to make myself heard. About two or three months ago I became poisoned by the foul air which I was compelled to inhale while speaking in a close, warm meeting room, and I have been suffering from it nearly ever since. We cannot live without fresh air. We could live much longer without food than without air, and if there is any fresh air that could be let into this house, I think it would be a good thing for the congregation.

It is a grand sight to behold this vast congregation, gathered from all parts of the Territory for the purpose of attending the sixty-fifth annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and taking part in the exercises thereof. In my judgment, one of the most important acts performed at the conferences of the Church is that in which we hold up our hands before the Lord to sustain the authorities of the Church and the organization thereof as it exists. But it is one of the important things that we do which rests with little weight upon some people. In other words, some people go away after holding up their hands to sustain the authorities of the Church and think no more about it, and act in many respects as though they had merely gone through a form to which they did not attach any importance whatever. I conceive this to be a wrong principle. It is equally wrong to do this as it is to neglect any other principle which pertains to the government of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or to ignore any principle of the Gospel which is necessary for our welfare and happiness and for the uniting of us together in the holy faith. Those who covenant to keep the commandments of the Lord, and then violate that covenant by failing to observe those commandments, do no more than they do who raise their hands in token of a covenant to uphold and sustain the authorities of the Church and then fail to do it. The principle is the same in both cases: it is a violation of the covenant we make. If we do not intend to keep our covenants and to obey the commands of the Lord, it will be better for us to refrain

from making them. For "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" and to him that maketh a covenant, and breaketh it, to him it is sin. He that hath made no covenant, being without knowledge, is under no obligation. Hence the world, not having entered into the covenants of the Gospel, will fare better in the final judgment before the bar of God than many of us who have entered into the covenants of the Gospel and fail to keep them. The heathen world will enjoy greater immunity from the wrath of the Lord in the day of judgment than will the Latter-day Saints who fail to keep the covenants which they have made in the Gospel.

We have been gathered out of Babylon by the hand of God. We have come into these mountains by the voice of the Spirit, calling upon us to come out of Babylon, that we might not partake of her sins nor receive of her plagues. Many of us have come here in obedience to that call. For a time it looked as if we were going to be able to accomplish the purpose for which we were gathered in much better form than subsequent events proved. Notwithstanding we have been gathered here it is apparent that we are still very human, very weak, and susceptible to the influences of the world—that we are far from being what we should be, in many respects. The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of purity, of holiness, of self-sacrifice, of humility, and of submission to the will of the Father. It is difficult for us to comply fully with the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I realize that it is for me. Jesus came into the world born of woman, as we are; yet He is called the Son of God, the Lamb which was slain before the foundation of the world, that taketh away the sin of the world. His life upon the earth was a humble life. It was marked by no great or powerful accomplishments like unto the great deeds that other men have accomplished in the world. He built no temple, He founded no city; He established no empire or nation; He led no armies to battle; He did not figure as a statesman among the people; but He came as the meek and lowly Jesus, the humble Nazarene, preaching faith in God, repentance of sin, and the acknowledgment of the will of the Father as being above all other things. He did not take the pains to teach mankind how to get a temporal living. He did not bother Himself with the science of financeering. When He needed money to pay taxes He told His disciples to go to the lake and cast in their net and take out a fish, and there they would find money to pay their taxes. He devoted himself to the preaching of

the word of life, the word of God, the power of salvation, to the children of men. He did not teach people how to farm or to get a living. It was not necessary. And yet He proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that He knew how to combine the elements to meet His necessities. He was not entirely dependent upon the ordinary sources of life for existence; for when He wanted bread to feed the multitude He was able to call it together, so that when He had fed the multitude they took up more than they had at the beginning. When He wanted wine at the feast of Cana, His own wedding perhaps, He did not have to send out and buy it; but He took the water pots and converted the water into wine, and made superior wine of it, too, to that which man could make with all his skill in wine making. Hence He was not ignorant with regard to the laws of life, development and organization. If He did not teach men how to financeer, He understood the principle. If He did not teach them how to build temples, He understood their purposes and how to build them. If He did not attempt to found cities and empires, He understood the principles by which cities were built and empires were founded. If He did not teach men how to get a living in the world, He understood the principle of life, both temporal and spiritual. He came to teach the way of eternal life. His words were simple words, easy to be understood. He spoke to the understanding of the people among whom he labored. He sought, in the simplest forms of speech and in the plainest manner, to convey to them the words of truth and soberness, the principles of life and salvation. He exemplified these words in His life and actions. Among other things, He taught that the greatest commandment given unto men was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." He further taught that the next greatest commandment given unto men was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These were the great foundation principles of the Gospel that was taught by our Savior while He was upon the earth. Of course, these follow obedience to the first principles of the Gospel; for except we believe, except we have the witness of the Holy Spirit to bear record unto us of the Father and the Son it would be impossible for us to love God as we should. And if we could not keep the first commandment, it would be impossible for a man to keep the next; for it is impossible for a man to say truthfully that he loves his neighbor if he does not love God. It is also impossible for a man to say truthfully that he follows God without he loves his neighbor. The Apostle