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REMARKS

Made at the Davis Stake Conference,
Farmington, Sunday, September 6th, 1896, by
ELDER JOHN HENRY SMITH.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

Brethren and sisters, I desire to endorse the sentiments and feelings expressed by Brother Grant and President Joseph F. Smith this morning. While I have made some effort to study, and have sought to comprehend the doctrines and views entertained by religious people, that I might know the ground upon which they stood, I cannot remember when I did not know that the Gospel was correct. In the very earliest experiences of my life I can remember when the gift of tongues was manifest in the Church; I can remember having an abiding faith in the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick; and I can remember when I was so certain that I would be made well by the imposition of the hands of good men, that there was no question of doubt in my mind in regard to this matter. When old father Emer Harris came to bless me as a child, no matter what the ailment might be, I never had the least doubt but that health would be my portion. I had seen and realized so fully the blessings of God in connection with this that my faith then was fixed. And I believe it is just as fully and more thoroughly established at the present moment than at any other period in my life. I have heard the voice of prophecy uttered, and witnessed its fulfillment. I had the opportunity in youth to commune with that Spirit which in its counsels is so certain and so sure, that question in regard to the work of the Lord has never since arisen in my mind. I realize that the white man is a wonderfully uncertain man; that little things unseat our judgment and overturn our reason, and that conditions arise in human experience that it is difficult for us always to fully comprehend. But I do not believe that our Father in heaven will ever abandon any man or any woman who find themselves pulling upon the tugs, with their necks in the collar, straight and square, for the blessing of His children. The conviction is so deeply settled within me in regard to this matter that I, like my brethren, feel that it would be impossible for anything to shake that feeling and determination to be found striving for the advancement and the upbuilding of God among the children of men.

The work of the Lord, as it has been committed to us, requires of all a broken heart and a contrite spirit. There are none of us in danger while this con-

dition is with us. We are only in danger when ambition, blighting our minds with the flattery of our friends, impels us into the idea that we are possessed of intelligence of a higher order perchance than our fellowman—that we have been specially endowed for the accomplishment of some specific purpose, and that we ourselves are a necessity to our Father in heaven in the accomplishment of that purpose. Whenever this sentiment becomes imbedded in the mind of a man, then he stands upon dangerous ground. Not that man may not become imbued with a knowledge of a mission that he may have to perform. God may mark upon his mind and write in the fibres of his being that there is a duty lying before him in the accomplishment of a life work which he must struggle to attain. But if he becomes heady, ambitious, proud, danger lurks in his way. When as a little child he can come before his Maker and pour out his heart; when he can cultivate within his soul humility, recognize the dangers of the higher rounds upon the ladder, the misstep or the breaking of one of those rounds, and the possibility that may come to him in the fall; when he can place his foot upon one round, seeking to his Maker for strength and aid in the onward struggle of life, and then plant his foot upon another round, and notices the round to see that it possesses the strength to bear him, and step by step moves up that ladder without ostentation and display, he will then be able to fulfill the mission that God has planted in his breast, at the same time acknowledging the source of his strength, and not arrogating to himself aught that does not belong to him, but being as the man who presented to the world the great blessing of the electric telegraph, and who, when the news was flashed forth to the world that men at great distances apart could converse with each other, exclaimed, "What hath God wrought!" Morse brought to light these wonderful possibilities: he turned the key; but he did not arrogate to himself greater knowledge than those who stood around him, because forsooth this light and knowledge had come to him, nor did he think that light was not given to others as well as to himself in the development and upbuilding of society.

Thus it is with the Gospel of the Son of God. It was not the wisdom, and the light and the knowledge of Joseph Smith that placed him in the forefront of the human race as the receiver of the message from God. It was the humility of his soul, and the strength that the Lord implanted within him that enabled him to raise the standard of truth and say in effect, "Here it has been planted, and while I live it shall

never be lowered. Father, you set me this work to do; you gave me the spirit of this mission; you presented the panorama of the human race before my mind, and wrote upon that panorama that which was to be accomplished. I know it was from Thee, and knowing it, while I may be compelled to wade through tribulation—while perchance life itself and family ties may be broken, it is Thy purpose that the principles of everlasting life shall be so deeply rooted and established that in the sacrifice of my life it shall simply augment and magnify Thy purpose and bring about Thy designs in regard to the children of men."

My brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the opportunity of attending this conference; and with my brethren who spoke to you this morning I trust that in the performance of your duties, in the faith that you have accepted, and in the stability of your character, the name of Latter-day Saint shall indeed become a synonym for integrity and for honor in the world. There are cases that arise in the midst of our business experiences wherein men, in some instances, are seeking to hide that which they possess and to avoid the result of their actions. The spirit of integrity should be fixed among the people, so that every obligation we assume we purpose to meet, if it carries us even beyond the pale of this existence—paying every debt to the uttermost limit, that our record may be without stain in the experiences of time as well as when we shall stand in the presence of our God and make reckoning for the stewardship that has been committed to us. We cannot afford to be frittered about; we cannot afford to be tampered with. There may be conditions of public policy in connection with our lives that may call for us to do our part in seeking to allay excitements and to restore within ourselves, as far as possible, the strength and fortitude to continue in the proper line. There may be very peculiar circumstances arise among us. They doubtless will arise in the future as they have in the past. But I hope, so far as I am concerned, that there shall never occur in the experiences of my life a condition that shall in any sense turn me away from that which every fibre of my being is convinced is correct, or in any sense cause me to seek to lower the standard of the cause which the Lord himself established, and which He will make honorable in the earth, even though perchance we may fall from the ship's side and be lost in the torrent that may sweep us away.

The spirit of the Gospel is the spirit of peace, of happiness, of love, of forbearance—extreme forbearance. As has been suggested, time has been given to