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PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I feel grateful this morning for the privilege that we all enjoy of meeting together on the Sabbath day, where we may call in the wanderings of our thoughts and concentrate them for a little season upon our spiritual duties. From the very nature of the responsibilities that rest upon us, a large portion of our time is devoted to providing for ourselves the temporal things of life; and it is only on occasions like this that we are enabled to throw off, to a certain extent, our worldly cares, our daily toils and labors, and place our thoughts upon some things that are higher and more important to us than the temporal affairs of life are. I am aware that it is a difficult matter to make people sense the fact that there is something more beneficial and of greater importance to us than "bread and butter." There are a great many people in the world who esteem riches and the temporal things of life of greater importance than anything else. When such a thought arises in my mind, I hasten to call the fact to remembrance that, long as we may live in this world, our lives are but short. In looking back over my own experience, which has been only very brief in comparison to some men's, I can see how very many of the acquaintances of my youth and of the men who officiated in responsible positions then, have passed away, and how very few of them remain today. By far the greatest number of my early acquaintances are now beyond this vale of tears, in another sphere of action. And this has not been confined to those that were prosperous, nor to those that were less favored in temporal things; this lot has befallen the great and the small, the learned and the unlearned, the leaders and those who were led. The faces with which I used to be so familiar have passed beyond the veil, and now I see growing up around me other generations—young men and young women who in a few years will occupy the positions that are now held by the leaders of the people, while we in our turn will have passed to the other sphere. This proves to me that the affairs of this world are of comparatively small importance in consideration of the great things that are to come to us in the future. Our lives here cover but a few years. When a man gets beyond 60 years of age he begins to feel the weight of age resting upon him, and both his body and his mind are weighed down by the responsibilities and labors of his life. He commences to look over on the other side and to consider that his days are shortening, and that his turn will come soon. Now, it seems to me that if there is anything which ought to bring

to our minds the great importance of preparing ourselves for that state which all nature and all the evidences of the divine power go to prove is immortal and eternal, it is the fact that our lives are so brief here, and that whatever extent of power we may possess here it is only for a very brief space; it is not ours by right, but it is loaned to us for the time being. Whatever influence or power we may have in this world—gold, or silver, houses or lands, or whatever else we may set our affections upon—they are ours only for a few moments. This proves to me, and it ought to prove to every intelligent man, that the earth and the fullness thereof belong to God, and not to us. No matter what we may gather together of this world's goods, we can only use it for a little while. By and by we will be called away from it, and it will be left to our successors, or it will perish and fade away. Then, I say, while it is a good thing to have comfortable homes, and while it is encouraging and calculated to fill our hearts with joy and gratitude to be surrounded by that which is needful in this world, and while God designs that we should enjoy all these blessings to the full extent of our necessities, yet there is something that is of more importance to us than these temporal things. And what is it? It is a knowledge of the principles which pertain to immortal life, a knowledge of the principles which pertain to the government of God among the children of men, a knowledge of those principles which are calculated to make pure men and women of us, to exalt us in the scale of intelligence, to make us pure and noble-minded, and to influence us to feel for others as well as for ourselves.

God has taken the pains in this dispensation to reveal to us the fullness of the Gospel, which deals with these things, which teaches to men this principle of self-sacrifice for the good of others, and which teaches us that we are doing ourselves good when we are doing good to other men. As President Cannon said, this feeling is almost extinct in the world. Nowadays you find almost every man struggling for himself and for his immediate associates. If a man happens to have a family, his whole thought is for himself and for his family; and he cares not how he may get wealth, so he gets it. Too many in the world are so bound up in themselves and so liberal in their souls that they are not even willing to struggle for any but themselves. You find thousands of men today who, to gratify their own lust, would ruin hundreds if it were in their power, while they would not turn their hand over to build up, to save, to bless and to comfort anybody but themselves. There are many who live upon that principle. They live apparently for that which they can obtain and use upon their own lusts and for the gratification of their own desires in this world, and they do not care for anything beyond it. What

will be the condition of such men when they stand before the Judge of the quick and the dead, to give an account of the deeds done in the flesh? Will it not be said "Take from him that which he seemeth to have, and give it to him that hath?" For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The duty of mankind, as I understand it, under the holy Gospel which we have received, is to protect the innocence, the virtue, the honor and the rights of all men and women as jealously as we would protect our own. That is the great principle that is taught us in this Gospel of freedom and liberty that we have received from the Lord in our day and generation. And when you talk about the Priesthood and the servants of the Lord trying to take advantage of the people, trying to fasten upon their limbs and minds chains, and to bring them into bondage, I ask you what have they been doing all the time that they have been laboring for the cause of Zion? Have they not been trying to make men free? Have they not been trying to teach men the principles of righteousness and truth? Have they not been trying to make men pure and Godlike? Have they not been continually seeking the welfare of the people, the building up of Zion and the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth? What did Joseph Smith do all the time he lived after God revealed Himself to him and he became an instrument in His hands of bringing forth the Book of Mormon and the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants? Did he seek to trample upon the rights of the people or to curtail them in their privileges? Did he seek to fasten chains of superstition and bondage upon them? No. He sought to strike off from their minds all the shackles of tradition and superstition, and to instill into them pure principles of knowledge, truth and understanding which came from God. He taught the people correct principle, that they might be able to govern themselves. He gave as a reason why he could control so many people so effectively, that he taught them correct principles and they therefore were easily governed. When you teach the people true principles and they obey them they need no governors or rulers, because they are united, they see eye to eye, and they seek each other's good. When the Spirit of God is with a people they do not need rulers, and they will not have rulers. There are no rulers in Zion. There are teachers, exemplars, counselors and advisers, but there are no rulers. There is nothing so dangerous that I can conceive of as a man attempting to become a ruler in the midst of the Latter-day Saints. When a man undertakes to rule, he is on dangerous ground, and unless he repents of that ambition he will assuredly fail. The Lord has not called us to be rulers in the midst of the people; He has called us to be teachers, to be exemplars, to exhort, to admonish, re-