

our land. This is one of the reasons why our young men who go away to college incur such risks of losing their faith. Nearly all the text books and the teachings of these institutions of learning, not excepting theological institutions, have a tendency to make the students accept as true the modern ideas concerning the antiquity of man and the age of the earth.

Now, this Church is the repository of the truth. I know of no other organization on the earth that is made the custodian of these grand truths which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints holds. This is a very important mission that God has entrusted to us. He has communicated to us these truths, and has borne testimony to them unto us by His Holy Spirit. Men may philosophize and say they can prove that man lived on the earth more than four thousand years before the Savior came, and that the earth itself was organized and inhabited long anterior to the time assigned in the Mosaic account. Suppose they entertain this idea and think they can do this, it ought not to disturb our faith. We have seen theory after theory dissipated. Scientific men are continually advancing theories and creating hypothetical conditions, only to be shattered later on. Almost every generation changes its views in regard to these things. That which was believed fifty years ago is overturned today; that which is believed by the scientific world today may be upset, if things don't change, fifty years hence, by new theories as unsound probably as those they displace. But this is not our condition. The Lord has revealed the truth to us, and the records that we have confirm His revelations to us.

We may be called ignorant and fanatical for clinging to these things. But it is like the rod of iron that Lehi saw in his vision; if we cling to it, we have got something firm in our grasp, and though the mists of darkness may surround us, making it difficult to see the path before us, we may rest assured that we will be brought safely through.

Aside from these evidences, however, I would rather believe that I was a literal descendant of the Almighty, and lift my eyes to Him as my Father, and aspire to be like Him, than to entertain any other belief, however well supported it might be by the evidences of men. No, no; we have not ascended from any inferior order of beings. We have, I repeat, descended from the God of heaven, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The sublime words of this hymn that we have sung this afternoon are true.

My brethren and sisters, we come together on these occasions to be taught of the Lord by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon us; and when we come with this feeling, I am sure none of us go away empty. How often we hear the expression, "I have enjoyed this conference better than any conference I ever attended," and there is no reason why this present conference should be an exception. The Lord is willing to bestow His blessings upon us and to fill our souls with light and intelligence. We have heard this morning testimonies that I consider of the greatest importance to us. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the principle of recognizing and acknowledging the counsels and the guidance of the Priesthood of the Son of God. Oh! that our eyes could

be open to see and our hearts be made to understand that which God has done for us in placing the Holy Priesthood in His Church. If we could but comprehend it, every heart would swell to its utmost capacity in thanksgiving and praise to the God of heaven for His infinite kindness and mercy in bestowing the Priesthood upon men in this day and age, in giving unto us the organization of the Church and the Gospel, with its glorious principles, and in giving unto us men who have the authority to officiate in all the ordinances of the Gospel. Do the servants of God want to lift themselves up and become objects of adoration among the people? Do they want you to bow to them and to do reverence to them? If there are any among those who occupy official positions in this Church that have this feeling, I have not met them. My observation has been that while these men feel the importance of the Priesthood God has bestowed upon them, and have a desire to magnify and honor it, and to see it honored, yet they recognize that in and of themselves they are very weak, and they feel the lack of that ability and power which they ought to have to magnify their offices to the acceptance of God and the satisfaction of the people. You know the President of this Church. I need not—in his presence, at least—enumerate his qualities, nor speak to you of his humility and his unassuming character. You know him. So it is with the rest. Some may not have so happy a faculty of appearing humble in public as others; but in the hearts of these men there is no desire to exercise any improper authority among this people. I can testify of this, for I know these men and their spirit. What, then, is it that prompts them to talk about the Priesthood and to appeal to the Saints to honor that Priesthood? It is that God our Eternal Father may be honored. He has bestowed this authority, and it is representative of Him, and we should honor it as we desire to honor Him. I know that if this people will listen to the counsel of God's servants they will be prospered and blessed, and the gifts and graces of the Gospel will be enjoyed by them to their fullest extent. I know that those who have this spirit grow in knowledge, in strength, and in the gifts of the Gospel, and are, I might say, better Latter-day Saints than those who do not.

You take the leading men of this Church, not only the Twelve, but the Presidents of Stakes, the High Councilors and the Bishops, and I do not believe you can find in any organization, religious, political or social, a body of men so independent, so desirous of having their own way, so firm, and so determined, as those to whom I allude. Take the First Presidency. Those who know us know what our characteristics are. Take the Twelve, the Seven Presidents of Seventies, the Presidents of Stakes, the High Councilors and the Bishops of wards. Those who know these men know to a great extent what their characteristics are. These men, generally speaking, are men of independent thought, men that will not bow lightly to the behests of others. They are men that would rather die than sacrifice a principle. They would suffer their goods to be destroyed and their bodies to be burned rather than to bow to that which in their estimation was not

right. I call attention to this because these men are submissive men. It is not because they are easily influenced. What is the cause of their submission and their obedience? It is because God has revealed the Priesthood and has restored the authority. That is what I bow to. When I respect and honor Willford Woodruff I bow to God who has chosen him. My neck does not nor never did bow to man. Those who know me know that I am unbending in that respect. I may get along quietly; I do not like to quarrel; but I never yet bowed to man. I only bow to proper authority. If I listen to Willford Woodruff, if I look to him to see how the Spirit of God moves upon him; if I ask his counsel and take it, it is because God has commanded me. God has given him the keys of authority. Let anybody else try it, and see what effect their action would have. When Joseph F. Smith obeys Willford Woodruff, he does it upon the same principle. We reverence him as the prophet of God, and as our leader. We listen to him, and are guided by his slightest wish. It is because we know that he is the servant of God, chosen by the Almighty to fill that place, and that he holds the keys of the Priesthood to this generation on the earth at the present time. I can say truthfully that we strive to consult his slightest wish, and honor him in his position, because we know that God has chosen him. And who are we that we should withstand God? Who are we that we should withstand that which God reveals? Does this sacrifice our independence? Not in the least. And these Twelve Apostles are in precisely the same position. When they accept the counsel of the First Presidency, they do it because they believe the First Presidency to be chosen of God. They may have different views on many things; but when the First Presidency gives counsel, every man that has the Spirit of God accepts that counsel. This does not prevent him from entertaining his views and expressing them, and it does not detract from his influence.

Now, we do not ask this people to be more obedient than we are. We do not ask you to do something that we are not willing to do. We have set you the example. We ask you, as the Lord asks you, to obey the authority of God and to respect it. Does this mean man-worship? Does this mean loss of independence? No, a thousand times no. There is no more independent people on the earth than the Latter-day Saints. They have proved it. They have been willing to leave everything they had on earth, and even to risk their lives, for that which they knew to be true. Men, therefore, who talk about us, as though we were servile, as though we do not have independence of character, as though we blindly follow a few leaders, are guilty of falsehood. We are as independent as human beings can be. But we know that God has restored the Priesthood, and we obey that. When a man takes me down into the water, after believing in Jesus and repenting of my sins, and baptizes me in the water, and I know that I receive the remission of my sins through that act; when a man lays his hands upon me and confirms me a member of the Church of Christ and confers upon me the gift of the Holy Ghost, and I know that I receive that gift through that ordinance, shall I not respect and honor that man unto