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AN ANALYSIS OF THE DOCTRINAL TEACHINGS OF
PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

82

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Church History and Doctrine

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree


Master of Arts

by

Robert K. McIntosh

August 1975

This thesis, by Robert K. McIntosh, is accepted in its present form
by the Department of Church History and Doctrine of Brigham Young University
as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.


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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is a challenging task to adequately analyze the theology of George Albert Smith, the eighth President, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Except for Sharing the Gospel with Others¹ (a compilation of his writings, edited by Preston Nibley), there are no books of theology which bear his name. The works of George Albert Smith are limited to discourses found in the General Conference Reports, editorials in Church periodicals, and a few letters to relatives and friends. His name is seldom referred to in critical writings of the Church.²

¹ Preston Nibley, Sharing the Gospel with Others (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948).

² Brief reference to his doctrinal teachings can be found in: Roy Doxey, Latter Day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1956), Vols. 1-4; Daniel Ludlow, Latter Day Prophets Speak (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1951); Alma P. Burton, Doctrines from the Prophets (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1965); Duane S. Crowther, Life Everlasting (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1967); V. Dallas Merrell, Family Leadership (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963); Richard Vetterli, The Constitution by a Thread (Salt Lake City: Paramount Publishers, 1967); Gerald Newquist, Prophets, Principles and National Survival (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1964); Alice K. Chase, Sayings of a Saint (Salt Lake City: Wheelwright Lithographing Co., 1951); and, Glen R. Stubbs, "A Biography of George Albert Smith 1870 to 1951" (Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974), pp. 403-425.

Added to this is the fact that his writings were never intended to be objective works in theology. Instead, they were exhortive in nature, given to move the audience toward a love for God. Most of his talks were determined by the occasion.³ Nowhere did George Albert Smith give a detailed outline of his theology.

Though George Albert Smith did not present a systematic outline of his theology, his basic beliefs formed the warp and woof of every discourse which he presented. Like Jesus, President Smith did not reveal the truths he taught so much through the written word as through the vocal word.⁴ And as Christ's theology is revealed through the extemporaneous occasion: passing a fig tree that did not bear fruit, observing a woman being stoned for adultery, and watching in rapture the birds of the air and the lilies of the field--so George Albert Smith's theology sprang from the time and the place of his discourse: the sorrows of mothers lamenting the departure of their sons to war, a conversation with the Governor of Utah, and a train ride with a Roman Catholic Bishop who comments on the high morality of the Latter-day Saints.

³George Albert Smith, General Conference Address, Official Report of the One Hundred Thirteenth Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April, 1943 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n. d.), p. 89, hereafter cited as CR. See also Improvement Era (hereafter cited as IE), May, 1949, p. 302.

⁴He did write editorials for the Improvement Era, but other than those there are few other doctrinal writings that he has published.

One must also approach an analysis of Elder George Albert Smith's writings in the same manner that one approaches an analysis of Christ's writings; that is, through the logic of poetry. As Christ revealed his teachings primarily through the method of the poet (that is, through the metaphor found especially in his parables and exempla, through the repetition of key words, images, and ideas), likewise, George Albert Smith revealed his theology through his use of both stories found in the scriptures and the incidents of his own daily life, and through the repetition of such key terms as "Our Heavenly Father," "privilege," "obedience to the commandments," and "rejoice."

It is to be noted here, then, George Albert Smith's unique manner of presentation, for it is through a study of his manner of presentation that we can determine his key theological ideas. The reading of only a few of this Prophet's discourses should make the reader aware of how deceptively simple his teachings appear. Yet in a study of the organic structure of these discourses we can note the simplicity of a fine mind able to use one story to reveal multiple ideas. For example, in his conference talk of April, 1942, we notice with what ease he slipped into the story of the Israelites being attacked by the Amalekites and Moses holding the rod of God above his head. Yet this story formed the organic unity of his theme, and it became analogous to six major themes in his talk. First and foremost, there is the power of prayer; second, the parallel between the war of the Israelites and the Amalekites and the war that exists not only between the Allies and the

Nazis, but between the children of God and the adversary; third, the lesson of the importance of obedience to the authority of God and his commandments; fourth, the parallel between the victory of the Israelites and the ultimate victory of those who keep the commandments; fifth, the analogy between the weakness of Moses and the weakness and infirmity of President Heber J. Grant; and sixth, the great lesson that just as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses, so it behooved the members of the Church to uphold the hands of President Grant in order that God might achieve victory through his chosen people.⁵

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is: (1) to analyze the discourses and brief writings of George Albert Smith from 1904 when he was called to be an apostle in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, until the time of his death in 1951; (2) to examine the relationship between his medium of teaching and his theological message;⁶ and (3) to analyze the main doctrines and prophecies which he set forth.

⁵IE, May, 1942, p. 286.

⁶M. McLuhan has popularized the term "the medium is the message," and it is to be noted here that President Smith's medium is not merely found in his exempla, but also in the love and charity which he radiates toward the gardener, the ushers, the members of the choir, and all of his brethren. See Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Toronto: New American Library of Canada, Ltd., 1966), pp. 23-35.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Because the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is relatively small compared with the memberships of other religions and because there are a number of terms found in the writings of George Albert Smith which must be interpreted in the strict sense of this faith, it will be necessary before proceeding in this thesis to define the following terms so that the reader will have some idea of how such terms are being used in this study.

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: This name refers to the church organized by Joseph Smith on April 6, 1830, and is commonly called the Mormon Church.⁷ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will hereafter be referred to as "the Church," and its members referred to sometimes as "saints," "LDS," or simply "members of the Church."

2. Prophet, Seer, Revelator: The word "prophet" is derived from the Greek and means "to flow," "to utter," "to declare." It is in this sense that the term is used in the Church. A prophet is said to be one who declares the word of God. The term "seer" is derived from the Latin word "vates" which means one who sees by vision or dream the purposes of God. A reve-

⁷ However, it is to be noted here that George Albert Smith was concerned with the use of the term "Mormon"; he preferred instead to call the Church by its full name so that there would be no confusion; that is, so people would realize that the Church was the one and only church of Jesus Christ. CR, April, 1948, p. 160. Also, CR, Oct., 1948, p. 167; IE, Nov., 1945, p. 714.

lator is one who reveals the will and mind of God. Within the Church these three callings are said to be united in the same person or persons--that is, in the persons of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Patriarch of the Church. The President of the Church is called, however, the "prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church."

3. General Authority: In order of their precedence, the General Authorities of the Church include members of: The First Presidency, The Council of the Twelve Apostles, The Patriarch to the Church, The Assistants to the Twelve, The First Council of Seventy, and The Presiding Bishopric. These men, with the exception of the Patriarch to the Church, are all delegated general administrative authority by the President of the Church. They are called to preach the gospel, to direct Church conferences, to choose other Church officers, to perform ordinations and settings apart, and to handle the properties and interests of the Church generally. The labors of their ministries are not confined to stake, ward, or regional areas, but include a general jurisdiction in all parts of the Church.

4. First Presidency: The First Presidency of the Church consists of the President of the Church and his chosen counselors. It is the supreme governing body of the Church.

5. Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Twelve men holding the apostleship, properly organized, constitute the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, also designated as The Council of the Twelve. The unanimous decisions of this quorum are equally binding in power and authority with those of the First

Presidency of the Church.

6. **Patriarch to the Church:** The office of Patriarch to the Church is conferred as a result of lineage and worthiness. He is a man who holds the keys to patriarchal blessings over the Church.

7. **Assistants to the Twelve:** From time to time, as the needs of the Church require, men are called by the governing authorities of the Church to serve in an administrative capacity in assisting the Quorum of the Twelve. These assistants to the Twelve are appointed as General Authorities.

8. **First Council of the Seventy:** This council is composed of seven men who are General Authorities in the Church. They act under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve with the specific responsibility to direct missionary work.

9. **Presiding Bishop:** The Presiding Bishop is responsible for many of the temporal concerns of the Church. He directs the Aaronic Priesthood and receives money for the care of the poor, and is called to travel and preach as an aid to building up the Church.

10. **Presiding Bishopric:** The Presiding Bishopric is composed of the Presiding Bishop and two counselors.

11. **Wards:** The basic ecclesiastical district or church unit in and through which the programs of the Church are administered is called a ward. Members of a ward form a congregation of the Saints. They meet together frequently for spiritual and social purposes.

12. Stake: A stake is an ecclesiastical unit of the Church comprised of a number of wards.

13. Conferences of the Church: Conferences are gatherings of the membership of the Church, held on a ward, stake, and general basis. Conferences are held for the purpose of conducting Church business and for the giving of counsel and direction to officers and members of the Church.

14. General Conference: It is important in this study to indicate the importance of the General Conferences of the Church. These are held annually and semi-annually and are open to the entire membership of the Church, with those occupying leadership positions especially invited. At these conferences the General Authorities of the Church give counsel and advice. It is believed that their messages, when inspired by the Holy Ghost, are scripture to the Church membership and should become the walk and talk of their lives until the time of the next conference.

15. Revelation: In a theological sense the term signifies the making known of divine truth by communication from the heavens. Revelation comes from God to man in various ways. God gives his mind and will to receptive mortals in whatever ways seem appropriate as circumstances require. Some of these ways includes impressions to the minds of men, dreams, visions, and personal appearances. Revelations are recorded in the "Standard Works" and are given in the teachings of the leaders of the Church.

16. The Standard Works: The Standard Works of the Church comprise four volumes of scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

17. **The Doctrine and Covenants:** This is a book published by the Church that contains many of the major revelations received by Joseph Smith.

18. **The Book of Mormon:** This volume is accepted by the Church as a record of the early inhabitants of the American continent and God's dealings with them. Joseph Smith reportedly translated it by the gift and power of God from metal plates.

19. **The Pearl of Great Price:** The name, the Pearl of Great Price, has been adopted as the title of a book accepted by the Church as a volume of scripture containing a choice selection of the revelations, translations, and narrations of Joseph Smith.

20. **The Word of Wisdom:** A revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 89, received by Joseph Smith in 1833, showing forth a standard of health to the saints in the last days.

21. **The Second Coming of Christ:** This term refers to the event when Christ will return to earth in power and glory to meet the righteous and destroy the wicked.

22. **The Latter Days:** This expression indicates the period of time prior to the Second Coming when the major signs of Christ's coming will be manifest. It will also be referred to in this study as the "last days."

23. **The World:** The term "world" as used in this study will refer to the people inhabiting the earth.

⁸The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 89:1, hereafter cited as D&C.

24. **The End of the World:** In this thesis this term will be used to indicate the period of time when the wicked will be destroyed and the Millennium ushered in by the Second Coming of the Savior. The term, "end of the world," then, refers to the end of unrighteousness or of worldliness.

25. **The Millennium:** This refers to a period of time after the second coming of Christ when the earth will be at peace and the Kingdom of God will prevail on earth in its fullness. Christ will reign during this time as Lord of the whole earth.

26. **The Priesthood:** Priesthood is the power and authority of God delegated to man or to men on the earth.

27. **Prophecy:** The inspired utterances of prophets are called prophecy. These declarations may pertain to the past, present, or future. New truths or unknown events may be revealed in them, or they may contain expressions which confirm and give added witness to truths already revealed and testified to by other prophets.

28. **The Celestial Kingdom:** Members of the Church believe that after the final judgement people will be assigned to one of four kingdoms. Three of these kingdoms are kingdoms of glory. The highest among the kingdoms of glory is the Celestial Kingdom. It is believed that this is the kingdom in which God dwells. In order for a person to attain to this glory, he must obey the gospel and religiously live the teachings of the Church.

29. **The Final Judgment:** After all men have been resurrected, the day of the great final judgment will come. Every living person will stand be-

fore God to be judged according to the way he has lived. The assignment to the different kingdoms will be made at this time.

30. **The Resurrection:** The resurrection is the uniting or reuniting of the physical body and the organized spirit after death. A resurrected being is one for whom body and spirit are inseparably connected in a state of incorruption, a state in which there never again can be decay or death. This term applies not only to the resurrection of Christ, but also to the resurrection of everyone who has lived on the earth.

31. **The Godhead:** In Latter-day Saint philosophy, three beings occupy the "Godhead" or supreme presidency of the universe. They are God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. The most succinct statement regarding these three personages is found in the Doctrine and Covenants 130:22: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of spirit."

32. **Foreordination:** This term as defined by Webster's Dictionary means "to dispose or appoint in advance." In Latter-day Saint theology the term refers to God's spirit children being assigned, in their pre-earth life, to special missions or callings during their mortal life.

33. **Patriarchal Blessing:** In this thesis this term will refer to the recorded blessing given to members of the Church by men appointed as patriarchs. A patriarchal blessing includes an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient, and, also where so inspired, prophetic statements of the life

mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give.

34. **Eternal Increase:** This term refers to the right of those who are worthy to have a continuation of their posterity in the resurrection.

35. **Pre-Earth Life:** In LDS thought this term refers to the period prior to man's mortal existence during which he had a conscious existence as a spirit child of God.

36. **Mortal Life:** This term refers to the period of physical or temporal life.

37. **Post-Mortal Life:** This term refers to life after the death of the physical body.

SOURCES OF DATA

In order to understand the teachings of George Albert Smith, it was necessary to consider briefly both his life and his times. As a background for this study, use was made of the Church Historian's Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Brigham Young University Library, and the University of Utah Library. Personal interviews with selected descendants and associates who knew George Albert Smith well were also made. Information on his doctrinal teachings were compiled from the general conference addresses, editorials, and articles in Church publications as follows: The Improvement Era, The Instructor, The Relief Society

Magazine, The Church News, and the Journal History.⁹ To indicate something of the background of Elder Smith's times, reference was made to recognized authorities in the fields of history and sociology.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The methods and procedures of this study involved a careful reading and analysis of all the general conference talks delivered by George Albert Smith, as well as all the articles which he wrote for Church periodicals during the time he was a General Authority.

In each chapter the main doctrinal statements were analyzed and divided into major areas which were important themes in the teachings of President Smith.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This thesis did not attempt to make a comprehensive study of the life of George Albert Smith, nor deal with all of the theological ideas and implications found in his discourses. It was limited to the key doctrines and ideas found in his discourses and editorial writings. Though some study of his use of scripture was included in this thesis, no attempt was

⁹The Improvement Era, The Instructor, and the Relief Society Magazine are monthly publications (now defunct) of the Church. The Church News is a weekly publication. The Journal History is the daily recorded history of the Church located in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

be made to give a complete study of his use of scripture.¹⁰

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis contains eleven chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 serves as an overview of his life and character. The succeeding chapters treat the major part of this thesis--that is, an analysis of George Albert Smith's theology. Since his teachings on the Godhead form the central doctrine for all his theological ideas, this subject is considered in Chapter 3. Because the eternal plan of progression sets in perspective the manner of conduct for members of the Church, it is considered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a study of the principle of revelation, including President Smith's doctrine pertaining to the Standard Works, the role of the prophet, and the importance and significance of the general conferences. Because George Albert Smith was primarily concerned not so much with an abstract theology as with a living theology based on the love of Christ and one's neighbor, Chapter 6 deals with the study of his concept of the importance of the family. This is followed by Chapters 7 and 8 on charity, and the importance of missionary work. Chapter 9 deals with the Latter-day Saint's relationship to government. Finally, since one of the unique aspects of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is contained in its very

¹⁰For the favorite scripture references of George Albert Smith see Appendix A.

name (that is, a theology founded on the concept of the latter days¹¹), this subject forms the final chapter before the thesis summary.

¹¹This term has previously been explained in the definitions of terms, Number 24, and will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 10 on "The Latter Days".

Chapter 2

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

The epitaph on the grave of George Albert Smith summarizes his life, his character, and his aspirations:

He understood and disseminated the teachings of Christ and was uncommonly successful in putting them into practice; he was kindly, patient, wise, tolerant, and understanding. He went about doing good. He loved Utah and America, but was not provincial. He had faith, without reservation, in the need for and in the power of love. For his Church and his family he had unbounded affection and served them passionately. Yet his love was not limited; it included all men regardless of race, faith or station; to them and of them he frequently said: "WE ARE ALL OUR FATHER'S CHILDREN."¹

AGE OF TURMOIL

The year of George Albert Smith's birth, 1870, was characterized by great changes in the political, scientific, and literary worlds, and by great persecutions against the Church. This year marked the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War wherein the victory of Bismark led inevitably to the First World War, which in turn sowed the seeds for the Second World War. Ulysses S.

¹This epitaph was written by his son George Albert Smith Jr. For the complete inscription see Appendix B.

Grant, who had begun his presidency the year before George Albert Smith's birth, would, the year after, sign the famous Treaty of Washington which would mark one of the major beginnings of the United States' engagements in international affairs. In Europe, one of the major concerns was the building of the Suez Canal which had begun its first year of operation in 1870. And while this canal would extend the benefits of trade between East and West, it would also create special tensions as European nations would vie with one another for colonies and trade concessions in the orient.

In the scientific world, Charles Darwin, who published his Origin of Species in 1858 (which divided the Western World into camps: those who accepted the literal interpretation of the Bible, and those who rejected it as not being scientifically true), would continue to expound his doctrine in the book The Descent of Man, published in 1871. In 1870 Alexander Graham Bell was working on the invention of the telephone, and Edison was working on the electric light and phonograph which would be followed by later inventions that would eventually lead to the beginning of the film industry.

The year of the birth of George Albert Smith would also mark the death of Charles Dickens who had written extensively in his novels on the necessity of social reform. It marked, too, the beginning of the Symbolist Movement in France, which would affect the entire literary world to the present time. In the United States, the most cherished literary novel would

be Louisa May Alcott's Little Women.²

While the world saw many changes at this time, for the faithful of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there were many enactments restricting and threatening the growth of the Church. These included the Anti-Bigamy Law of 1862, the Edmunds Law of 1882, and the Edmunds-Tucker Law of 1887.³

George Albert Smith's life would be intimately bound up with the events and the movements of his age. In this chapter, consideration is given to the life of this prophet under the following headings: (1) his birth and early life from 1870-1889; (2) his years of preparation from 1890-1902; (3) his apostleship from 1903-1945; and (4) his presidency from 1945-1951.⁴

BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE FROM 1879-1889

Latter-day Saints believe that one called to stand at the head of the Church must assuredly have been a "noble and great" spirit in his pre-earth-

²For references to the world scene at the time of his birth see An Encyclopedia of World History, ed. William L. Langer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960). Also, Henry W. Littlefield, New Outline History of Europe Since 1815 (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1951), pp. 136-149.

³For further information on the laws enacted to stop the Church from practicing plural marriage see Russell Rich, Ensign to the Nations (Provo: Brigham Young University Publications, 1972), pp. 363-391.

⁴For a chronological listing of the important events of his life, see Appendix C.

life, foreordained to a special ministry.⁵ They further believe that for such a "faithful servant" the Lord prepares a special lineage to give him birth.⁶ This lineage was provided for George Albert Smith, a lineage that boasts of kings, rulers, magistrates, pioneers, colonizers, educators, and progressive church and political leaders.⁷

The Book of Mormon infers that Joseph Smith, Jr., and his father were direct descendants of Joseph who was sold into Egypt.⁸ Since George Albert Smith's great-grandfather was John Smith, a brother of Joseph Smith Sr., he is therefore of the same ancestral line.⁹ Asael Smith, the father of these two brothers (John and Joseph Smith, Sr.), was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and was a son of Captain Samuel Smith, another patriot who was chairman of the Boston Tea Party. Counting Asael as a convert to the Church, there have been four more generations of saints up to George Albert Smith: John Smith, Patriarch to the Church and the first President

⁵The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), Abraham 3:22-23. See also Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (2d ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959-60), VI, 364 (hereafter cited as HC). For further information see Chapter 4.

⁶Journal of Discourses (Liverpool, England: F. D. Richards, 1855), VII, 289-290. Hereafter cited as JD.

⁷John D. Giles, "George Albert Smith," IE, July, 1945, pp. 430-432.

⁸The Book of Mormon, II Nephi 3:14-20, hereafter cited as B of M.

⁹See Appendix D for a chart that indicates George Albert Smith's pedigree.

of the Salt Lake Stake; George A. Smith, apostle and member of the First Presidency; and George Albert Smith, apostle and President of the Church.¹⁰

Born April 4, 1870, of pious parents who profoundly influenced his entire life,¹¹ George Albert Smith spent his boyhood in a religious environment doing simple household chores as well as playing near Temple Square, across from his home. At age thirteen he attended the Brigham Young Academy where he had an experience that was to have a profound effect upon his life. His teacher, Dr. Karl G. Maeser, said: "Not only will you be held accountable for the things that you do, but you will be held responsible for the very thoughts that you think." This statement, President Smith says, stuck "like a burr." Continuing, he added:

Why, of course, you will be held accountable for your thoughts because when your life is complete in mortality, it will be the sum of your thoughts. That one suggestion has been a great blessing to me all my life, and it has enabled me upon many occasions to avoid thinking improperly because I realize that I will be, when my life's labor is completed, the product of my thoughts.¹²

This counsel came at an opportune time in young George Albert's life. That same year, as a boy of thirteen, he started out in the world of

¹⁰For further information on George Albert Smith's ancestry see Appendix E.

¹¹See Chapter Seven, "Marriage, The Home and Family," p. 99. Also, for an account of his childhood, see George Albert Smith Collection: Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, MS 36. Hereafter cited as GASC.

¹²Deseret News, The Church News (Salt Lake City), February 16, 1946, p. 1. Hereafter cited as DNCS.

business, by working at ZMCI (Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution), a church-owned manufacturing plant and department store in Salt Lake City. He was employed as a laborer in the overall factory. Later he rose from this position to that of president of the entire cooperative.

While material pursuits occupied much of George Albert's time, his life was still punctuated with spiritual experiences that befitted a future prophet of God. One of these experiences was the receiving of his patriarchal blessing. The circumstances surrounding the giving of this blessing were not ordinary. According to his daughter, Emily, one day a knock came at the door of the Smith house. George Albert's mother, Lucy, answered it and found a man standing in the doorway who inquired if this was the home of John Henry Smith. Lucy replied that it was, whereupon the visitor further inquired if young George Albert were at home. Again the reply was in the affirmative. The man went on to explain that he was Zebedee Coltrin, a patriarch in the Church, and that he had not been able to sleep or be at peace with himself for the past few days because of the feeling that he should come and give George Albert Smith a blessing. He then asked Lucy if she would mind if he did so. She replied, "No."¹³

This blessing was given on January 16, 1884, and contains in part the following:

¹³ Statement by Emily Stewart, personal interview, August 12, 1972.

Thou was called and chosen of the Lord from before the foundation of the earth was laid to come forth in this dispensation to assist in building up the Zion of God upon the earth, and thou shalt be enabled to go forth to proclaim the gospel unto the inhabitants of the earth, and shall be enabled to bring many to a knowledge of the truth, for thy voice shall be as the voice of a trumpet in declaring the words of the Lord to the nobles of the earth, and many shall believe in thy words and embrace the gospel of the Son of God. . . . And thou shalt become a mighty prophet in the midst of the sons of Zion. And the angels of the Lord shall administer unto you. . . . And thou shalt be wrapt in the visions of the heavens and thou shalt be clothed with salvation as with a garment, for thou art destined to become a mighty man before the Lord, for thou shalt become a mighty apostle in the church and kingdom of God upon the earth, for none of thy father's family shall have more power with God than thou shalt have, for none shall excell thee, for thy reward shall be great in the heavens, for the blessing of thy father and of thy grandfather shall rest upon thee and thou shalt become a mighty man of faith before the Lord, even like unto that of the brother of Jared, and thou shalt remain upon the earth until thou art satisfied with life, and shall be numbered with the Lord's annointed and shall become a king and a priest unto the most High, for thou art of the pure blood of Jacob, and have a right to all the blessings of the house of Joseph.¹⁴

This blessing had a permanent impression on George Albert Smith for the rest of his life.

During his later teens George Albert Smith worked at several different occupations, ranging from an implement-assembler to a railroad surveyor. When he was working for the railroad, a minor tragedy occurred in his life. While surveying near Green River, Utah, excessive heat and sun glare damaged his eyesight, causing an affliction he would suffer for the rest of his life.

¹⁴Emily Stewart Collection, MSS610, located in Church Historian's Office, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter the Church Historian's Office will be cited as CHO.

YEARS OF PREPARATION FROM 1890-1902

Because of the damage to his eyes, George Albert Smith was forced to leave the railroad. In 1890, he became a representative for ZCMI as a salesman. In the fall of the next year he was called by President Wilford Woodruff to serve a mission in Southern Utah, in the interest of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association. Upon his return from this mission, he was married, May 25, 1892, to his childhood sweetheart, Lucy Emily Woodruff, in the Manti Temple. He left his new bride in June of that same year to fulfill another mission, this time to the Southern States. She joined him, however, during the latter part of his mission and they served together until 1894.

During the course of his mission he had two near-fatal experiences. One occurred when, after taking a wrong mountain road, he almost fell off the edge of a precipice. The other occurred when he narrowly escaped being shot to death by a gang of angry, foul-mouthed, Mormon-hating hoodlums.¹⁵

Four years after his release from this mission he became the first member of the Church to be appointed Receiver of Public Monies and Disbursing Agent for Utah. This position, which he received from President William McKinley, he occupied for nine years. In spite of his heavy responsibilities with the government, he continued to serve his church, especially in the

¹⁵For his own narrative of three occasions when his life was preserved, see Appendix F.

Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, where he served as Superintendent of the Salt Lake Stake.

HIS APOSTLESHIP FROM 1903-1945

The sixth day of October, 1903, was a day never to be forgotten by this young man who was then thirty-three years of age. In his journal for this day, he wrote:

Have had a busy day in the Land Office. At 3:30 p. m. I left for him to take my children to the fair. Was met at my door by Sister Nellie C. Taylor who congratulated me with much earnestness. I was confused at first but she soon told me that I had been voted in that afternoon as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I thought she was mistaken and told her so. She felt confused and returned to the Tabernacle to ascertain if she was wrong. Later I was met by her and others who corroborated the matter. I was completely dumbfounded and could hardly believe it possible at this time, although I felt that I might someday succeed my Father as my Patriarchal blessing under the hands of Zebedee Coltrin indicated that I might become an Apostle.

I didn't feel capable or worthy but if it pleases the Lord I will try to do my full duty.¹⁶

A few days later George Albert Smith was ordained an apostle in the Church. One of the first major tasks given to him by President Joseph F. Smith was to improve the image of the Church, for at this time the Church was still suffering from persecution over plural marriage. This negative image was due in great part to the mass media of the day. Many magazine and newspaper articles appeared in the Eastern United States which pictured

¹⁶George Albert Smith Journal, October 6, 1903, CHO. For an account of his feelings at the time of this call see Appendix G.

the "Mormons" as a people possessed by lust and greed. The majority of these articles printed about the Church in the latter part of the nineteenth century and opening of the twentieth century were negative.¹⁷ The steps which he took to improve the image of the Church reflect his basic philosophy, namely, the importance of the saints being involved in secular as well as religious service. Some of his secular involvements included his active role in the Boy Scout movement, in which he achieved the highest award in scouting--the Silver Buffalo.

Throughout his life, Elder Smith endorsed the Boy Scout movement. It is the opinion of D. Arthur Haycock, President Smith's personal secretary, that it was the active support of the Church that aided in the survival of the Boy Scout movement and organization in America.¹⁸

The breadth of Elder Smith's concern and interest is vividly exemplified by his election in 1916 as the President of the International Irrigation Congress. Further civic honors and responsibilities came to him as the President of the International Dry Farmers Congress, and his vice presidency of The Sons of the American Revolution and The Mayflower Society.¹⁹ Addi-

¹⁷ James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, Mormonism in the 20th Century (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1969), pp. 63, 64.

¹⁸ Statement by D. Arthur Haycock, personal interview, April 4, 1972.

¹⁹ George Albert Smith's pride and love for his American heritage can be seen throughout his discourses. For further information see Chapter 9, "The Saints and the United States Government." Elder Smith's daughter, Edith, says that he frequently wore a pin in his lapel symbolizing his membership in The Sons of the American Revolution. While on a trip with him to England,

tional public involvement included his active role in the organization of the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association which was highlighted when he dedicated the "This Is the Place" Monument in Emigration Canyon.²⁰

Yet involved as he was in secular activity, he never excused himself from his religious duties. He served on the General Board of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association and as the European Mission President. He also spoke extensively concerning the Church throughout continental United States, Europe, and the South Pacific.

While Elder Smith indicated that these were happy years, they were not without some trial and affliction. For three years, from 1909-1912, he suffered a serious illness which affected his entire life. This was followed by the death of his wife, in 1938. Speaking of this period of sorrow he wrote:

she indicated her father's sense of humor and love for his country. They entered a spacious building to meet in a social setting some of the "elite" of England. Edith was quite concerned that her father might not be accepted as well as she thought he should be. As they entered the building a man in a tuxedo came down a beautiful stairway to greet them. He looked at President Smith and said, "And who might you be?"

President Smith replied, "I am George Albert Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The man then noticed the pin in his lapel and said, "And what, kind Sir, is that funny looking little pin in your lapel?" Elder Smith replied, "Oh, it's just to remind me that my grand daddy beat your grand daddy!" Edith reports that they all broke out laughing and the tension of the moment was eased. (Statement by Edith Elliott, personal interview, August 12, 1972.)

²⁰ See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Student Supplement (Provo, Utah: Department of Seminaries and Institutes, 1966), p. 80.

I have been in the valley of the shadow of death in recent years, so near the other side that I am sure that for the special blessing of our heavenly father I could not have remained here. . . . The nearer I went to the other side, the greater was my assurance that the gospel is true.²¹

Five years later, he was set apart as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which responsibility, he said, made him realize even more his need for the help of the Lord.²²

GEORGE ALBERT SMITH'S PRESIDENCY FROM 1945-1951

The year 1945, which marked the end of World War II, also marked the advent of a kind and wise leader over The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose task it was to guide nearly one million members of the Church. As a result of the war there were special problems which George Albert Smith had to face as President of the Church. These included the plight of the members in the war-torn countries; the inability of missionaries to spread the gospel; the inability of many church members to communicate with one another; and the general feeling of hatred, distrust, and despair that prevailed throughout the world.

George Albert Smith's personality and character were ideally suited to cope with these problems. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. stated

²¹CR, Oct., 1921, p. 42.

²²For his reply to this call see Appendix H. For the blessing given him by President Heber J. Grant at this setting apart see Appendix I.

at President Smith's funeral: "No man that we have ever had in the Church had a greater love for humanity than President George Albert Smith."²³

President Smith's love for mankind, his church, and his God were evident in his life during the six years he was President of the Church. While the United States was dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Smith was spreading the gospel of love, by directing the shipment of relief goods to the European saints and by travelling widely, visiting the saints in the United States, Mexico, Hawaii, and Czechoslovakia. While President Truman and General George Marshall were trying to solve poverty in Europe and Communist aggression in Turkey, Elder Smith was directing the reorganization of missions to spread the Gospel of Peace. In spite of the seeming early successes of the United Nations, George Albert Smith cautioned:

We can legislate until doomsday but that will not make men righteous. It will be necessary for people who are in the dark to repent of their sins, correct their lives, and live in a righteous way that they can enjoy the spirit of our Heavenly Father.²⁴

Throughout Elder Smith's presidency he instructed the saints as to the true path of peace. Though his health was fragile during these six years, his energies and efforts were untiring in spreading the love of God and the love of neighbor. He directed the commencement of two temples, initiated

²³IE, June, 1951, p. 405. For further examples of his love for his fellowmen, see Chapter 7, "Charity."

²⁴CR, October, 1949, p. 6.

a church program to aid the Indian people, increased missionary labors, and visited members throughout the world.

April 4, 1951, was a day of reflection and prayer for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For, following a few weeks of failing health, George Albert Smith died at age 81. Perhaps the best summary of his life can be found in the eulogies which were given at his funeral:

He was a man without guile, a religious man and a spiritual leader, not only in his own Church but in any group. Even alone with him you had a feeling of this man's spirituality.²⁵

He kept the second great commandment as faithfully as any man I ever knew. His thoughts were constantly employed in the interest of the wayward whom he tried to bring into a better way of life. He never spoke evil of any man; although he deplored the actions of the wicked, he was ever ready to extend the hand of forgiveness to them if they would repent.²⁶

It seemed to me that every act, every thought of our President would indicate that with all of his heart and soul he loved the Lord and he loved his fellowmen. Is there a mortal being who could have loved them more?²⁷

God attracts the godly, and I am sure that the shortest journey this man of God ever made in all his travels has been the journey which he has just taken.²⁸

²⁵ Eulogy by John F. Fitzpatrick (a non-member of the Church), IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

²⁶ Eulogy by Joseph Fielding Smith, IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

²⁷ Eulogy by Doyle Green, IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

²⁸ Eulogy by Matthew Cowley, IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

George Albert Smith's life was an exemplification of a man who lived the doctrines of Christ. Possibly few men in the history of the world have lived the teachings of Christ as closely as did President Smith. Not only his words but his actions, in all facets of his life, were built on the teachings of Jesus Christ. A thoughtful study of his life cannot but convince the serious student that here was a man who lived as he taught.

Chapter 3

THE GODHEAD

The doctrine of the Godhead is of paramount importance to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith stated that it is the first principle of the gospel to know the character of God.¹

This doctrine was also central to the teachings of George Albert Smith. His belief in the existence of an all-loving and all-powerful Father in Heaven, in the existence of Jesus Christ, the Divine and Beloved Son of God the Father, and in the existence of the Holy Ghost prompted every sentence which he uttered, every doctrine which he emphasized, and every counsel by which he directed the Church. On one occasion he said:

Take from you, the knowledge that God really lives, the assurance that Jesus Christ was the manifestation of God in the flesh, take from you the assurance that there will be a literal resurrection from the dead, and you will find yourselves in the condition that our Father's children are in throughout the world, and I ask you, what comfort remains to you then? These are the truths that are fundamental.²

¹Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ed. Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965), p. 345. Hereafter cited as TPJS.

²CR, Oct., 1921, p. 39. See also, CR, April, 1927, p. 82, where he said: "Of all the blessings that have come to me in life, the most precious is the knowledge that God lives."

Traditional Christianity teaches of a Godhead or Trinity composed of three persons in one who are without body, parts, or passions.³ The Church, on the other hand, affirms that the Godhead is composed of three distinct personages: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost.⁴ This chapter will deal with Elder Smith's teachings about each of these personages.

GOD THE FATHER

A Personal God

The testimony of the reality of a living, personal God was characteristic of nearly every talk of George Albert Smith.⁵ Elder Smith expressed his disappointment following a survey of five hundred Protestant ministers, that some ministers did not believe in the existence of a personal God nor in the divinity of Jesus Christ.⁶ He consistently reaffirmed the Church's teaching that God is not merely some kind of essence nor that he is incomprehensible but that "he is our Heavenly Father, a personal God in whose image we are created."⁷ At the April, 1946, Conference, he said:

³ See, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Anton C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1945), pp. 18-41.

⁴ D&C 130:22-23.

⁵ For example, see IE, Nov., 1946, p. 761; IE, Dec., 1950, pp. 102-103.

⁶ CR, April, 1934, p. 25.

⁷ CR, Oct., 1921, p. 39.

We know there is a God in Heaven, that he is our Father, that he does interest himself in our affairs, and he has done this ever since the world began, when his first children were placed upon the earth.⁸

In this teaching we find Elder Smith supporting the statement of Christ that, "Life eternal is to know the only true and living God."⁹ Elder Smith stressed on several occasions the truth that Joseph Smith's vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son restored to man the knowledge of a personal God who is intimately concerned with the salvation of his children.¹⁰ He emphasized this teaching by concluding discourse after discourse with his personal testimony of the story of Joseph Smith.¹¹ The following is typical of his testimony: "I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God as I know that I live."¹²

An analysis of Elder Smith's discourses indicates that the title which he most often favored was that of "Our Heavenly Father."¹³ It would be difficult to find a discourse wherein he did not use this title repeatedly. For example, in his brief talk entitled, "The Foundation of Happiness," he used

⁸ CR, April, 1946, p. 4.

⁹ John 17:3.

¹⁰ CR, April, 1934, p. 26. See also, CR, April, 1923, p. 76. For an evaluation of the number of times Elder Smith refers to Joseph Smith, see Appendix A.

¹¹ See, for example, IE, Nov., 1944, p. 710; IE, May, 1944, p. 32; IE, May, 1946, p. 332; IE, Nov., 1946, pp. 765-766; IE, May, 1949, p. 403; IE, May, 1950, p. 412; IE, Nov., 1945, p. 67.

¹² IE, June, 1943, p. 383.

¹³ See Appendix J for an analysis of his favorite words.

this title twenty times.¹⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, to find that one of President Smith's favorite themes was the Fatherhood of God. His teachings on this subject were clear and direct. While the controversy raged over the origin of man during the 1920's, Elder Smith emphasized that man did not evolve from some lower form of life, but rather, that man was created in the image of God and that his spirit was begotten by God.¹⁵ He further clarified this when he said: "God is the Father of our spirits, and we belong to the royal family, because he is our Father."¹⁶ This teaching is a key to Elder Smith's personal philosophy, that is, the emphasis on the inherent worth of every individual as a son or daughter of God. This is clearly illustrated by a statement he made in 1946. He said:

I esteem it a great privilege to be here with you, my brethren and sisters, and when I say brethren and sisters, I am reminded of the fact that every man is a son of God, every woman, a daughter of our Heavenly Father. Wherever they may be, all that have been born upon the earth are the children of the Lord.¹⁷

¹⁴IE, May, 1944, p. 274.

¹⁵CR, Oct., 1921, p. 39; see also, CR, Oct., 1928, p. 90; CR, Oct., 1925, p. 29. This subject will be treated further in Chapter 4.

¹⁶IE, May, 1946, p. 39; see also, CR, Oct., 1925, p. 33, where he said: "We did not come from some menial order of life, but our ancestor is God our Heavenly Father."

¹⁷CR, Oct., 1946, p. 147. Since the truth of the above is so vital to the theology of George Albert Smith, an entire chapter will deal with the principle of love and charity which flows from the doctrine that we are all children of our Heavenly Father. See Chapter 6.

We noted earlier that Elder Smith was not concerned with purely abstract theology; rather, his emphasis was on the practical application of the theology to the life of man.¹⁸ Since the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was for him so intimately connected with the conduct of man, he repeatedly stressed this doctrine.¹⁹ It is also apparent from his discourses that he followed faithfully the teachings of Joseph Smith with regard to the character and attributes of God the Father. Joseph emphasized six important attributes of God: his knowledge, his faith or power, his justice, his judgment, his mercy, and his truth.²⁰

A God of Knowledge

Like Joseph Smith, George Albert Smith taught that God has all knowledge. A careful reading of his discourses would convince the reader that Elder Smith had great faith in God's omniscience and because of this had great faith in God's ability to help man with his problems.

He repeatedly emphasized this by referring to the many times God revealed a future event to one of the prophets. Citing the incident where God

¹⁸ See Chapter 1.

¹⁹ This doctrine was stressed by Joseph Smith and was also central to the teachings of Jesus Christ. For a summation of Joseph Smith's teachings see HC 6:302-317, 473-479. Jesus Christ consistently stressed the importance of the Fatherhood of God in his prayers and parables.

²⁰ Lectures on Faith, compilation by N. B. Lundwall, Salt Lake City, n. d., pp. 41-46. In his discourses Elder Smith does not make reference to these attributes in any specific order but mentions them at random.

told Abraham that his seed would go to a promised land, Elder Smith said:

"It wasn't a matter of guessing. It was a matter of knowledge on the part of God and he gave the information to Abraham."²¹ The year he was sustained as President of the Church, he added:

I know of nothing of great importance that has happened in the world that the Lord through his prophets has not advised the people beforehand, so that they have not been left in ignorance of what was to develop, but would plan their lives.²²

God's advice is for man's eternal happiness, and this, according to Elder Smith, is due to God's omniscience. Commenting on this he said:

I want to say that the only way to happiness is the pathway of righteousness. There is no other way. We refer to them as commandments, though I have always looked upon them as the loving advice of a kind Heavenly Father who, knowing all things, has pointed the way that his children might be happy.²³

This teaching of Elder Smith was further emphasized when he said that we are being guided by a wise Father, "who knows the end from the beginning."²⁴ He, therefore, looked to God as the ultimate source of wisdom and knowledge. He indicated in 1926, "The wisdom of man is not sufficient,

²¹IE, Nov., 1943, p. 660. See also IE, May, 1950, p. 362.

²²IE, May, 1945, p. 242.

²³IE, May, 1944, p. 274. Underlining mine for purpose of emphasis. See also CR, April, 1907, p. 21, and CR, April, 1940, p. 108.

²⁴CR, April, 1932, pp. 44-45. See also CR, Oct., 1931, pp. 122-123; CR, April, 1907, p. 21; and CR, April, 1940, p. 108.

it takes the wisdom of our Heavenly Father to solve man's problem"²⁵

A God of Power

George Albert Smith also emphasized that God is all powerful. It should be noted here that Elder Smith's term as a General Authority was during some of the most trying years in history.²⁶ Elder Smith used this period of turmoil to stress his belief in the omnipotence of God and in the need for man to seek God's help in solving this turmoil.

He emphasized the power of God when he said, "He is the God of the universe. He is the Father of us all. He is all powerful."²⁷ Ten years prior to this statement he said, with relation to the problems in the world and specifically to the obstacles preventing world peace, "there seems to be no way to remove it except by the power of our Heavenly Father."²⁸

One of President Smith's favorite teaching methods was to use an example from the scriptures and relate it to current events. He used such stories as Daniel in the lion's den,²⁹ and the deliverance by Moses of the

²⁵CR, April, 1926, p. 146.

²⁶See Chapter 2.

²⁷CR, April, 1954, p. 383. See also CR, Oct., 1922, p. 94, and CR, April, 1948, p. 185.

²⁸CR, April, 1934, p. 27.

²⁹IE, June, 1943, p. 383. It is to be noted here the frequent references President Smith made to scriptural accounts. See Appendix A for an evaluation of this.

children of Israel from bondage³⁰ to illustrate that man can be saved from his problems through the power of God. Referring to these examples he said:

It doesn't make any difference how strong our armies, we are outnumbered by those who do not believe in God. It doesn't make any difference how powerful the engines of destruction we prepare, they might be destroyed by that which may be brought against us by the enemy, but if we have the confidence of our Heavenly Father, if we have his love, if we are worthy of his blessings, all the armies of the world cannot destroy us, cannot break down our faith, and cannot overcome the Church that is named for the Son of God. He is all powerful and He promised us protection if we will live worthy of it.³¹

How is man to be worthy of God's blessings? President Smith answered:

If we will honor God and keep his commandments, and live as we should, no matter where the storms may strike, the winds may blow and the lightnings may flash, we will be as the children of God always have been when they kept his commandments; we will be under the protecting hand of him who is all-powerful.³²

George Albert Smith was also aware that keeping God's commandments could be difficult. He was aware of the power of Satan, the adversary, in leading men away from the true paths of righteousness. Yet, he emphasized that when an individual truly seeks the Lord, he receives power to overcome Satan.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Elder Smith used as an example of God's power the many discoveries of science. Speaking about electricity he said: "as a matter of fact, nobody can tell what it is today; but it is one of the powers in this universe that is controlled by our Heavenly Father." IE, May, 1949, p. 305. CR, April, 1926, p. 143. See also CR, April, 1932, p. 45.

He illustrated this on one occasion with a story from the mission field. The congregation had just finished singing "Do What Is Right," and Elder Smith told the following story from his life:

I went into a section of country where that hymn "Do What Is Right" was known to the community, apparently. Two humble missionaries walking until late in the afternoon in the sun, in the heat of summer, came to a small house that was at the bottom of a hill. When the missionaries arrived, they found friends who invited them in to partake of their meager refreshment. And then they were asked to go outside in the cool of the afternoon shade, on one of those comfortable, open southern porches between two rooms and sing some hymns. The people were not members of the Church, but they enjoyed Latter-day Saint hymns.

The missionaries had been threatened in that section. One of the men who had threatened them kept watch of the road and in that way learned that they had arrived. He sent word to his associates, who saddled their horses and took their guns, and rode to the top of the hill overlooking the little house. The missionaries knew nothing about it; they did not know that right over their heads, not very far away, were a considerable number of armed horsemen. But they had the spirit of the Lord, and as they sat there in the cool of the afternoon and sang hymns, the one hymn that seemed to have been prepared for the occasion was, "Do What Is Right." They happened to be good singers, and their voices went out into the quiet air. They had only sung one verse when the leader of the mob took off his hat. They sang another verse, and he got off his horse, and the others got off their horses, and by the time the last verse had been sung, those men were repentant. Upon the advice of their leader, they rode away without making their presence known. The leader was so impressed with what he heard the missionaries sing that he said to his associates: "We made a mistake. These are not the kind of men we thought they were. Wicked men can't sing like angels, and these men sing like angels. They must be servants of the Lord."

The result was that this man became converted to the Church and later was baptized. And I never hear that hymn sung but I think of that very unusual experience when two missionaries, under the influence of the spirit of God, turned the arms of the adversary away from them and brought repentance into the minds of those who had come to destroy them.³³

³³IE, Nov., 1945, p. 697.

He concluded by saying: "Remember, that as long as we seek the Lord, and keep his commandments, as best we know, the adversary will have no power over us to lead us into transgressions that may forfeit for us our place in the Celestial Kingdom."³⁴

A God of Love and Mercy

Frequent reference to the mercy and love of God toward his children was characteristic of Elder Smith's discourses. He used such phrases as "Our God still lives and loves us and desires our happiness."³⁵ "The hand of our Heavenly Father has always been extended in love to his children through his prophets."³⁶ And, "We hope that wherever you go you will keep in mind that our Heavenly Father loves you."³⁷ He stressed this point further with the story of Noah, a seeming tragedy, to emphasize the mercy of God: "From the beginning of time, it seems to me, our Heavenly Father in his wisdom and mercy cleansed the earth by the flood and cleared the way for a righteous people to dwell here if they would."³⁸

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ IE, May, 1945, p. 314.

³⁶ IE, May, 1949, p. 303.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ CR, Oct., 1936, p. 71. See also CR, Oct., 1922, and CR, April, 1948, p. 185.

A God of Justice

Though Elder Smith believed in the mercy and love of God, he still emphasized the justice of God. True, God loves us but he loves us to conform to his teachings, for by conforming to his teachings, man achieves his true happiness. Though he is long suffering and patient, he will not always be so. George Albert Smith emphasized that it would be foolish for man to anticipate that God would always overlook man's mistakes. He said:

Our Heavenly Father loves us, and he loves our lives when they conform to his teachings. He is long-suffering and patient, although he has told us plainly that he will not always be so, that he will not always overlook our mistakes, but he has helped us by giving us counsel and advice, informing us what we ought to do.³⁹

He emphasized that God's counsel and justice are directed toward the happiness of man as he stated in October, 1935:

From the beginning of time, so far as this earth was concerned, when it was populated, our Heavenly Father has been advising his children what to do in order that they might be happy. He has never counselled them to do anything that would make them unhappy.⁴⁰

A God of Truth

Some readers of George Albert Smith might be inclined to believe that he did not speak about the attribute of truth possessed by God. However, perhaps on no other subject did he speak so extensively, for the truth of God was fundamental to the entire theology of George Albert Smith as it was to the

³⁹ CR, Oct., 1935, p. 119.

⁴⁰ IE, May, 1944, p. 274.

entire theology of Joseph Smith. In November of 1943 he stated: "The philosophies of men vary and change. The truths of God are fundamental and never change."⁴¹

Speaking in 1928 on the seeming conflict between science and religion, he further emphasized that God is a God of truth. He said: "There is no conflict between true science and true religion; the truth, no matter from what source we derive it, all originates with our Heavenly Father."⁴²

A God of Judgement

Finally, Elder Smith taught that God is a God of judgment and that he will hold his children accountable for what they do. He emphasized this in 1928 when he said: "Refusal to obey the counsels of the Lord has been followed by destruction, and I fear that unless humanity recognizes him as the God of this earth, disaster may come again to the nations."⁴³ It is for this reason that he stressed over and over again the importance of God's children being obedient to his word⁴⁴ and not mocking him.⁴⁵

⁴¹IE, Nov., 1943, p. 660.

⁴²CR, April, 1928, p. 45.

⁴³CR, Oct., 1928, p. 91, and CR, Oct., 1941, p. 99; CR, April, 1941, p. 28.

⁴⁴See CR, April, 1932, p. 44.

⁴⁵See CR, April, 1932, p. 71, and CR, Oct., 1935, p. 121; CR, Oct., 1922, p. 98.

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON

George Albert Smith emphasized throughout his discourses four major doctrines concerning Jesus Christ: (a) his divine sonship and mission as the Savior, (b) his literal resurrection, (c) his gift to man of a universal resurrection, and (d) his second coming.

The Divine Sonship of Christ

Elder Smith referred consistently to Christ as "the son of God," and "the only begotten of God in the flesh," thus emphasizing his belief in the divine sonship of Christ. Speaking of an experience he had while attending a conference in Canada, he said:

I remember I attended a conference in Canada once, and it so happened that I referred to my remarks during the evening to our faith in the divine mission of Jesus Christ, that we believed that the Lord prepared the way for the coming of Jesus of Nazareth; prepared Mary to be his mother and Joseph to act as his earthly father.⁴⁶

Elder Smith taught, therefore, that Jesus Christ was more than just a "good man" such as Socrates or Confucious or Buddha who taught a system of ethics, but that he was the Son of God. He stressed this in 1924 when he said:

He was indeed the Son of God, the only begotten of God in the flesh. He was sent into this world to remove from the minds of men the delusion that had confounded them for many generations. He came to call men to repentance, to turn them from error of their way. He went among them representing God

⁴⁶CR, Oct., 1921, p. 39. See also, CR, April, 1905, p. 61.

the Eternal Father, proclaiming that he was in the image of the Father, and that those who had seen him had seen the Father, and told them that he had been sent to do the will of his Father, and called on all men to turn from the error that had crept in among them, to repent of their sins and go down into the waters of baptism.⁴⁷

He further emphasized this when he taught, like Paul, that there was no other name given under heaven by which men could be saved other than Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. He reminded the saints in 1921 that Joseph Smith was revered in the Church as a servant of the Lord, but that there was only one name through which exaltation was available and that was through Christ.⁴⁸ He outlined the mission of the Son of God at this same conference when he said:

He was sent into the world to remove from the minds of men the delusion that had confounded them for many generations. He came to call men to repentance, to turn them from the error of their way. He went among them representing God the Eternal Father, proclaiming that he was in the image of his Father, and that those who had seen him had seen the Father, and called on all men to turn from error that had crept in among them, to repent of their sins and go down into the waters of baptism.⁴⁹

Three years after this statement he commented on the fact that there were many people who did not know that the Latter-day Saints believed

⁴⁷ Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, December 21, 1924, p. 3, located in Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City. Hereafter this collection will be referred to as JH.

⁴⁸ CR, Oct., 1921, p. 162. See also, CR, Oct., 1927, p. 50.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

in the divine mission of Jesus Christ. He told the following story in reply to this erroneous belief:

I remember a few years ago delivering an address in Cardston, Alberta. In the audience was a lady who was not a member of the Church. My remarks were about the life of Jesus Christ our Lord. The next morning she went to the railway station to buy a ticket to go home and in conversation with a lady who was in the ticket office, she was asked where she had been. She said she had been there in Cardston visiting, and the evening before she had attended a "Mormon" meeting. This woman who was living there in a community of Latter-day Saints said to the visitor: "Well surely you would not go to worship with a people who do not even believe in the Savior?" to which the visitor replied: "Only last night I listened to one of the elders of the Church speaking of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and I have never heard anybody who seemed more profoundly impressed with a knowledge that Jesus was indeed the Christ, than the speaker on that occasion."⁵⁰

Characteristic, therefore, of nearly every talk given by Elder Smith was his testimony of the living reality of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and his divine mission. Typical of his powerful testimony was a statement made in 1924. He said:

Believe in the divine mission of Jesus Christ? Why, as one of the humble members of this Church I bear you my witness that I know He lives as I know I live. Every fiber of my being vibrates with a knowledge that Jesus is the Christ.⁵¹

⁵⁰ JH, Dec. 21, 1924, p. 3. Elder Smith taught also that the reason Jesus Christ could be the redeemer of mankind was because Christ was without sin. See also CR, April, 1905, p. 60.

⁵¹ JH, Dec. 21, 1924, p. 4. See also CR, April, 1934, p. 28, and CR, Oct., 1936, p. 72.

The Literal Resurrection of Christ

George Albert Smith believed also that Jesus Christ was the Son of God with a divine mission, given to no other, and that this could be seen in the fact of the resurrection. Here Elder Smith followed the teachings of the Apostle Paul who said: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain."⁵²

He summed up his belief in the resurrection by stating in December, 1924:

Not only do we believe that Jesus of Nazareth lived upon the earth, but we believe that he still lives, not as an essence, not as something incorporeal or intangible, but we believe in him as an exalted man; for he arose with the same body that was laid in the tomb of Joseph or Arimathea, the same body that was ministered to there by those who loved him. The same Jesus Christ who came forth from the tomb, brought with him that body which had been purified and cleansed, if it needed such purification and cleansing, and he took it with him when he disappeared from the gaze of humanity at Jerusalem when the two men in white raiment said: "As you see him go, so likewise will he return again."⁵³

Two important facts may be noted in the above quote: first, that Jesus Christ lives in heaven, not as an incorporeal or intangible being, but as a corporeal and tangible person; and second, that the doctrine of the resurrection is a proof that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will again return to the earth.

⁵²I Corinthians 15:17.

⁵³JH, Dec. 21, 1924, p. 4. See also, CR, Oct., 1937, p. 49, and CR, Oct., 1950, pp. 156-157.

The Gift of Universal Resurrection

Elder Smith cited three other proofs to add to the testimony of the Bible concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These were: (a) the visit of Christ to America as recorded in the Book of Mormon; (b) the vision of Joseph Smith in 1820; and (c) the personal witness one may receive from the Holy Ghost.⁵⁴ Again the doctrine of the resurrection was important in Elder Smith's theology because it provided a convincing proof of a universal resurrection of mankind. Stressing this he said:

It is nearly two thousand years since Jesus Christ our Lord came to earth and gave his life as a ransom for us that through him all might be resurrected from the dead. He was the first fruits of the resurrection.⁵⁵

The Second Coming of Christ

President Smith also emphasized the teaching that Christ will return to the earth at a time which has been referred to as the Second Coming. He referred to the account in Acts 1 when Christ ascended into heaven while two men dressed in white exclaimed, "As you see him go, so likewise shall he

⁵⁴ Commenting on this he said:

"I say to you we not only have all that the world has with regard to the divinity of the mission of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible. But also, we have the story of another book known as the Book of Mormon, and the accounts of his appearing in this western hemisphere, the tradition of which has been among the Indians ever since, and we also have the story of another man who gave his life as a witness that he knew that God lives and Jesus is the Christ. I refer to Joseph Smith." CR, April, 1939, pp. 121-122. See also CR, 1921, p. 160; CR, April, 1905, p. 61, CR, Oct., 1950, pp. 157-58.

⁵⁵ IE, May, 1945, p. 313. See also CR, April, 1939, p. 123, and CR, April, 1940, p. 84.

return." Commenting on this, Elder Smith indicated that Christ would come again to dwell with those who are worthy of a celestial glory.⁵⁶ It was because of this conviction (that is, that Christ will return to the earth) that Elder Smith said, "Are we prepared for the coming of our Lord? I hope we are preparing, because we need to be prepared."⁵⁷

The above presentation of George Albert Smith's teachings pertaining to Christ does not reveal the totality of his belief and his reverence for the person and words of Christ. To see the extent of this reverence demands a close analysis of all his writings. For instance, Elder Smith constantly quoted and paraphrased the words and parables of Jesus. Such phrases as "light of the world," "love thy neighbor," "the temple of the body," "eternal life," "pearl of great price" formed the warp and woof of his discourses. The story of his deathbed offers perhaps the best proof of his belief in Jesus Christ and his love of the Savior. A few hours prior to his death his family gathered around his bed. His son gently asked him if there were not something special he wanted to say to his family at this time. He responded by recalling the words of Job,⁵⁸ and said, "Yes, just this. I know that my Redeemer liveth."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ JH, Dec. 1, 1924, p. 4.

⁵⁷ IE, Nov., 1943, pp. 661, 707.

⁵⁸ Job 19:25.

⁵⁹ Statement by Edith Elliott, personal interview, June 30, 1972.

THE HOLY GHOST

Joseph Smith taught that the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, is a personage of spirit whose special mission is to bear testimony of the Father and the Son.⁶⁰ The Holy Ghost, as a person, has access to divine power which he manifests to man. This is the power of the Holy Ghost. It is necessary, therefore, to differentiate between the power and the person of the Holy Ghost.

George Albert Smith did not dwell on the person of the Holy Ghost but centered his teachings on the mission and power of this member of the Godhead. A careful study of his discourses could not but impress the reader with the delicate and yet definite responsiveness of Elder Smith to the workings of the Holy Ghost. Throughout his discourses he emphasized these manifestations of the Holy Ghost by giving examples of this power in the lives of people. His examples range broadly over five different areas, but taken together they bear witness to the profound reality of the Holy Ghost in Elder Smith's experience.

Elder Smith referred to the Holy Ghost by using such titles as "the Spirit," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of Our Heavenly Father," and "the Comforter" to indicate his belief that the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit and to stress the special role of the Holy Ghost.⁶¹ He stressed in

⁶⁰D&C 130:22-23. See also B of M, 3 Nephi 11:32.

⁶¹See, for example, CR, Oct., 1913, p. 103.

his discourses five aspects of the mission and power of the Holy Ghost.

A Guide to Truth

President Smith indicated that one of the powers of the Holy Ghost was to convince people of the truthfulness of the restored gospel, that is, to guide the hearts of men toward the truth and to enable man to look forward to the coming of the risen Redeemer. He admonished the Church in the October, 1912, General Conference to get and keep the Spirit of God in their hearts. He said, "Get the Spirit of God in your hearts and keep it; it will guide us into all truth; it will enable us to look forward to the coming of the risen Redeemer confident that he shall come again in the clouds of heaven."⁶² He further stressed this by saying: "No matter how gifted we may be, or how choice our language, it is the Spirit of Our Father that reaches the heart and brings conviction of the divinity of this work."⁶³

The above teaching is emphasized by the Apostle Paul who said, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."⁶⁴ Joseph Smith, commenting on the translation of this passage of scripture, said that it should read, "No man can know that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."⁶⁵

⁶²CR, Oct., 1921, p. 118.

⁶³CR, Oct., 1904, p. 66.

⁶⁴I Corinthians 12:3.

⁶⁵HC, 4:602-603.

George Albert Smith, as President of the Church, amplified this truth by stating that before people can become believers in Christ's mission, they must first be touched by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

He referred to an experience in the mission field to illustrate how this happens. He said:

There was something that touched the hearts of of those who heard. I have had experiences in the mission field. I have seen groups of people stand and listen to a humble missionary explain the purpose of life and talk to the people and encourage them to repent of their sins, and I have sometimes heard people say, "I have never before felt an influence like I feel while I hear that man talk."⁶⁶

The Power to Think,
Reason and Teach

Elder Smith's teachings on the Holy Ghost are all interrelated. However, there are certain aspects which may be divided, but never isolated from one another. This is clear in a second aspect regarding his teachings on the Holy Ghost. Here President Smith emphasized that the "Spirit that comes from Our Heavenly Father" permits men to think, to reason, and to teach. He said, "I trust that the few moments I occupy, I may enjoy the Spirit that comes from Our Heavenly Father, that gives to us power to think, to reason, and to teach."⁶⁷

⁶⁶IE, Nov., 1949, p. 790. See also CR, Oct., 1949, p. 6.

⁶⁷CR, Oct., 1939, p. 65.

The Surest Way to Happiness

Elder Smith was continuously concerned with the relationship of divine truths to man's happiness, and with the special role of the Holy Ghost in aiding man to find this happiness. He said in 1944, for example, "I can say to you that if we have the spirit of the Lord burning in our souls we cannot be unhappy."⁶⁸

He believed emphatically that the companionship of the Holy Ghost was the surest means of happiness and an antidote for all unhappiness. He stated, "The spirit of the Lord is an antidote for weariness, for hunger, for fear, and for all things that sometimes overtake us in life."⁶⁹ Elder Smith further commented on this at the conclusion of the October, 1945, conference. He said:

My brethren, you have been very patient for the last two days; you have been in meetings very much of the time. Ordinarily, one would become exceedingly weary, but if we enjoy the Spirit of the Lord, it relieves us of that weariness and we are happy.⁷⁰

Sorrow and distress could also be overcome by the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He stated:

Brethren and sisters, let us go to our homes rejoicing when this wonderful conference is finished. No doubt when

⁶⁸IE, May, 1944, p. 320. See also IE, May, 1950, p. 412: "People need not be unhappy as they are everywhere but that happiness may be in their lives--because when the Spirit of God burns in your soul, you cannot be otherwise than happy."

⁶⁹IE, Nov., 1945, p. 320.

⁷⁰CR, Oct., 1945, p. 115. See also CR, Oct., 1929, p. 25.

it is concluded we will say, "It is the best one that we have ever had." Why? Because while we are basking in sunshine of the Spirit of God we forget our sorrows and our distress. While our lives are illumined by his power, our souls are enriched.⁷¹

An Aid to Humility and Repentance

A fourth point stressed by Elder Smith was that the influence of the Holy Ghost leads one to soften his heart and repent of his sins. He said:

When we possess the Spirit of the Lord we always have the spirit of repenting. Whenever our hearts are hard and we can't repent, we may know that we have not a proper spirit.⁷²

A Guide to Charity, Kindness, and Gratitude

Lastly, George Albert Smith indicated that the Holy Ghost can inspire within people love, kindness, and gratitude. Paraphrasing the Apostle Paul he said that unkind things are not said under the inspiration of the Lord, for his spirit is one of kindness, patience, charity, forbearance, and long suffering.⁷³ He emphasized on another occasion:

Possessing that spirit, our ambition will not be a selfish one, but with charity in our hearts for all mankind, love for all our Father's children, we will mingle with them day by day, and the influence we radiate will be one of love and kindness that will have its influence for good upon every child of Our Father with whom we come in contact.⁷⁴

⁷¹CR, Oct., 1929, p. 25.

⁷²CR, Oct., 1934, p. 51.

⁷³I Corinthians 13:1-3. See also, CR, April, 1937, p. 34.

⁷⁴CR, Oct., 1912, p. 118.

Elder Smith added further explanation to this in April, 1948, General Conference when he spoke on one of his favorite virtues, namely gratitude. He said:

We will continue to be grateful as long as we have the Spirit of our Heavenly Father; the feeling of gratitude is a result of enjoying the Spirit of the Lord.⁷⁵

But how can the Saints receive the influence of the Holy Ghost in their lives? For Elder Smith there were three ways: The first was by faithfulness to the principles of the gospel.⁷⁶ The second was to "wait upon the Lord," that is, to seek his spirit through attendance at meetings.⁷⁷ The third was to serve one's fellowmen. He indicated:

Our ministry is one of love, our service is one which enriches our lives. The opportunity of those who preside in the stakes and wards of Zion or elsewhere, is one beyond all price, and if we are living as God intends that we should live, if we should minister, every day of our lives is enriched by the influence of His spirit, our love of our fellowmen increases and our souls are enlarged until we feel that we could take into our arms all of God's children, with a desire to bless them and bring them to an understanding of the truth.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ CR, April, 1948. For a listing of his favorite words, see Appendix .

⁷⁶ CR, April, 1948, p. 181. See also CR, April, 1907, p. 19; CR, April, 1931, p. 34.

⁷⁷ CR, Oct., 1948, p. 189. See also CR, Oct., 1934, p. 49; CR, April, 1944, p. 26. We might note an interesting comparison and contrast here with John Milton's concept of "waiting upon the Lord," when he writes: "They also serve who only stand and wait." While both Milton and George Albert Smith imply a belief in the goodness of God's providence, Elder Smith further qualifies "waiting upon the Lord" to indicate serving the Lord by attending Conference and other meetings. See John Milton, On His Blindness.

⁷⁸ CR, Oct., 1929, p. 24. Underlining mine.

SUMMARY

The reader can see from this chapter that George Albert Smith's teachings on the Godhead centered in a relatively few areas. He was most-ly concerned with emphasizing to the saints the fatherhood and personal character of God, who he stressed was a God of knowledge, faith, justice, judgment, mercy, and truth. He gave this personal emphasis in his teachings regarding Christ's living reality and divine sonship. Finally, the Holy Ghost was seen to be a very immediate, personal, and practical help to man in his progress toward eternal perfection.

Some teachings were conspicuously absent in George Albert Smith's discourses and writings. He made scant mention of the fatherhood of Christ, the person of the Holy Ghost, and the gifts of the Spirit, which have been treated in depth by other Presidents. These omissions, taken together with those positive affirmations already discussed, afford a clue to the nature of George Albert Smith's unique mission as eighth President of the Church. His emphasis on God's love, as opposed to other possible emphases he could have taken, was uniquely suited to the needs of the people living in the time of the world wars. It is to be noted here that while President Smith did not add any new theology to the doctrine of the Godhead, his total approach to this subject was impressive. He added to Latter-day Saint theology an approach to the Godhead that was based almost totally on a love for God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Though Elder Smith spoke of justice and judgment, his emphasis for serving God was based on love. He saw this love being

developed as a person came to realize that he was a child of God. It was this knowledge, coupled with a testimony of the divine mission of Christ, that would lead people to seek the influence of the Holy Ghost through obedience to the commandments and service to one's fellowmen.

Chapter 4

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

I fear that the condition of the world is due to a lack of understanding of the purpose of our being. They do not know about pre-[earth]existence. There are so many that seem to have no conception of it, and have no desire to know where we are going when our mortal life is ended.¹

The Psalmist once asked of God, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"² Down through the centuries wise men have sought answers to this question.³ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that to understand the reason for man's existence, it is necessary to know the answers to three main questions: "Where did man come from before he was born?" "Why is man on earth?" and "Where will man go after he dies?"

George Albert Smith emphasized that an understanding of the plan of salvation and the purpose of life would bring man greater happiness. He said:

It would seem, as you look over the conditions in the world, that men generally have lost all understanding of the purpose of

¹CR, April, 1915, p. 94.

²Psalms 8:3-4.

³Socrates throughout Plato's Dialogues is constantly concerned with this question.

life. A great majority of the people of the world do not know why we are here; but the Lord in the beginning, starting with our first parents who were placed upon the earth, began teaching His children the purpose of life, and gave to them rules of conduct, which if observed, would have enriched their lives, brought happiness in mortality, and enjoyment of eternal life in the celestial kingdom.⁴

Consideration will be given in this chapter to Elder Smith's teachings concerning: (a) the pre-earth life of man, (b) the purpose of man's existence on earth, and (c) the post-mortal state of man.

MAN'S PRE-EARTH LIFE

A Child of God

Elder Smith, though he taught the doctrine of the pre-earth life of man, did not give a detailed analysis of this doctrine. His statements were plain and direct. He said: "We believe in pre-[earth]existence; we lived before we came here."⁵ He expressed his beliefs on this doctrine most emphatically during the Scopes Trial of 1925.⁶ He indicated at this time that man was "first created in the image of God, with God being the father of his spirit."⁷ Elder Smith further explained where this "first creation" took place.

⁴CR, April, 1944, p.27.

⁵CR, Oct., 1923, p. 70. See also CR, Oct., 1926, p. 102.

⁶The Scopes Trial dealt with the teaching of Darwinism in public schools. For further information see Clarence Darrow, Attorney for the Damned, ed. Arthur Weinberg (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1961).

⁷CR, Oct., 1925, p. 33.

He indicated: "We came from the spirit world, where our spirits were begotten by Our Father in Heaven."⁸

Elder Smith continued by expressing his gratefulness for the knowledge that man did not "grow up" or evolve from some "unknown condition," but that man was first created in the image of God, with God being the father of His spirit.⁹ He expressed this same idea in 1807. He said: "Children are the offspring of God, their spirits were begotten in the holy heavens of our Father, and they are given to us for our blessing."¹⁰

Elder Smith felt that people who accepted the doctrine of organic evolution placed themselves under a handicap. He believed that a knowledge that man was a child of God was essential for true happiness. He said:

I am grateful that in the midst of the confusion of our Father's children there has been given to the members of this great organization a sure knowledge of the origin of man, that we came from the spirit world where our spirits were begotten by our Father in heaven, that he formed our first parents from the dust of the earth, and that their spirits were placed in their bodies, and that man came, not as some have believed, not as some have preferred to believe, from some of the lower walks of life, but our ancestors were those beings who lived in the courts of heaven. We came not from some menial order of life, but our ancestor is God our Heavenly Father. I am grate-

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ CR, Oct., 1907, p. 36. See also D&C 93:21-23. This belief is not entirely unique with Joseph Smith. Wordsworth presents a similar but less concrete doctrine in "Imitations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood": "But trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home." See English Romantic Poets, ed. by Stephens, Beek, Snow (New York: American Book Co., 1952), p. 64.

ful that we are not laboring under a handicap such as I feel that some men are who feel that they have grown up and evolved from some unknown condition, but, on the contrary, standing as we do, facing the problems of life, believing as we do that we were first created in the image of God, that he is the Father of our spirits, and that he created this earth for us that we might dwell hereon, under his wise counsel and direction, we may be happy, to rejoice in life and to prepare ourselves to go back into his presence, to live forever when our lives here upon this earth have been terminated.¹¹

The belief that man was a "Spirit child" of God was essential to George Albert Smith's theology. It was because he believed all men were children of God that he constantly referred to the saints as "my brothers and sisters"¹² and to non-members of the Church as "Our Father's other children."¹³

¹¹CR, Oct., 1925, p. 33. On another occasion, he said:

"The Latter-day Saints are believers in the words contained in the holy scriptures. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth; and the same God that created the heavens and the earth declared that He made man in His own image; male and female created He them. No matter if scientists and great men of the world shall proclaim that we have evolved from the lower order of animals, the witness of the Spirit to you, my brethren and sisters, is that you are the offspring of the Lord, that the spirits which inhabit your bodies are immortal, and that in due time, if you are faithful, you will go back to the presence of that God who gave you life." CR, April, 1905, p. 61.

¹²IE, May, 1942, pp. 286-7. See also CR, Oct., 1948, p. 165; IE, Sept., 1950, p. 1022; IE, Nov., 1946, p. 761.

¹³IE, Nov., 1944, p. 660. See also, IE, May, 1950, p. 362; CR, Oct., 1947, p. 666; IE, Nov., 1945, pp. 716-7. It might be noted here that George Albert Smith had a special affection for the term "Our Heavenly Father" which he used constantly throughout his discourses. See Appendix A.

The First Estate

Elder Smith referred to this pre-earth spirit existence as the "first estate" and added in the 1906 general conference the following: "We ascertain that not only was the Saviour in the beginning with the Father, but also that you and I were there."¹⁴

Elder Smith also taught that opportunities for growth were afforded man in this pre-earth existence. He said:

By reason of faithfulness, having kept our first estate, we have been permitted to come into this world and receive the tabernacle of flesh. That fact that we are living in the flesh is evidence that we did keep our first estate.¹⁵

He added further insight to this in a letter to Nelson Lowry. Elder Smith wrote: "Some of God's children were assigned to superior positions before the world was formed. Our birth into this life and the advantage under which we may be born, have a relationship in the life heretofore."¹⁶

President George Albert Smith's total theology was based on the belief of a living, personal Heavenly Father who was intimately associated with

¹⁴ CR, October, 1906, p. 8.

¹⁵ Ibid. See also CR, April, 1905, p. 61, and CR, Oct., 1906, pp. 47-48. He indicated here that all who are born on this earth are those who kept their "first estate."

¹⁶ Nelson Lowry, Correspondence with George Albert Smith, 1893, Church Historian's Office, MSS 886. See also Pearl of Great Price, Abraham 3:22-23, and TPJS, p. 365. In this statement we see Elder Smith's belief in the principle of foreordination. He said in 1907: "We believe that we are harvesting the fruits of our pre-earth lives." CR, April, 1907, p. 18.

His children in a pre-earth life. He felt that if mankind understood this doctrine they would act much differently. He indicated:

It is regrettable that in the world today in many cases men do not appreciate that this temple of the body is sacred and should be so held, that this body of ours was given to us as a tabernacle for the spirit while we are here in mortality, but that the spirit that is in this tabernacle came from God. He is the Father of it. If men realized that, how much more careful they would be to protect this tabernacle and keep it wholesome and delightful.¹⁷

MAN'S PURPOSE ON EARTH

A Time To Prepare and Develop

President Smith taught, contrary to the beliefs of many present-day existentialists, that man was on earth for a purpose.¹⁸

Man's purpose was to prepare and to develop himself, ". . . to be worthy to dwell in the presence of Our Heavenly Father." He taught further that earth life was a probationary period where man was to learn to do good and overcome evil. He said:

We are here to prepare ourselves and develop ourselves and qualify ourselves to be worthy to dwell in the presence of our Heavenly Father. We must learn to overcome our passions,

¹⁷ IE, Oct., 1944, p. 660. Underlining mine.

¹⁸ For example, see Jean Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (London: Meuthess, 1957).

our evil tendencies. We must learn to resist temptation. That is why we are here.¹⁹

The Two Influences That
Affect Man

The above statement offers another insight into Elder Smith's thinking. He avoided the abstract and, unlike many philosophers who have given diverse answers for the existence of evil, showed the practical purpose of evil.²⁰ He taught that there were two influences in the world. One was a constructive influence ". . . that builds character and happiness; the other degrades and turns men into demons."²¹ The second influence, he explained, came from the adversary who tries to tempt man toward evil.²² Nonetheless, evil did have a practical value as it was not merely intended to destroy man,

¹⁹CR, Oct., 1926, p. 102. See also CR, Oct., 1921, p. 41 and CR, April, 1905, p. 61, where he said:

"We have been placed here for a purpose. That purpose is that we may overcome the evil temptations that are placed in our way, that we may learn to be charitable to one another, that we may overcome the passions with which we are beset, so that when the time comes for us to go to the other side we may be worthy, by reason of the effort we have put forth, to enjoy the blessings that our Father has in store for the faithful." In 1907 he added: "We are here on earth to develop manhood and womanhood and to magnify our opportunities." CR, April, 1907, p. 19.

²⁰For example, St. Augustine replies to the problem created by the Monkeans by indicating that it is not necessary for an evil God to exist as well as a good God, for evil is not a positive but a negative thing, and that God allows evil to exist in order that man may win honor and glory. See The Confessions of St. Augustine, trans. E. Pussy (New York, 1951).

²¹DNCS, June 17, 1944.

²²CR, Oct., 1945, p. 117. We might note President Smith's affection for the term "adversary" which he used repeatedly to refer to Satan. This expression through its Latin derivation means "to turn upside down the plan of God."

but could be used to perfect man. Herein was the key to man's success on earth, that is, in learning obedience by facing opposition. He said in 1942:

I pray that the Spirit that directs those who keep the commandments of Our Heavenly Father may be with us always, that we may have power to understand, that we may have the strength to resist the temptations of the adversary, for we will all be tempted, that we may be able whatever the circumstances may be, to place our all upon the altar, as many of our forebears have done, and say to Our Heavenly Father, "Whithersoever Thou desirest me to go, I will go."²³

The Theme of Obedience

It is to be noted here that President Smith consistently stressed the theme of obedience. His "recipe" for happiness in this life was clearly explained in relation to the principle of obedience. He said: "The finest recipe I could give to obtain happiness would be: Keep the commandments of the Lord."²⁴ He further taught that all happiness in this mortal life was conditioned on obedience to the laws of God, while all unhappiness was conditioned on disobedience.²⁵

George Albert Smith stressed the importance of this earth life as a time to prepare to return to the presence of God.

²³ IE, May, 1942, p. 287. Underlining mine.

²⁴ CR, Oct., 1934, p. 48.

²⁵ IE, Sept., 1950, p. 1022. See also, IE, May, 1946, p. 332; IE, Nov., 1946, p. 7101.

MAN'S POST-MORTAL STATE

The Spirit Lives On

George Albert Smith believed in a life after death. He commented on this belief in 1905. He stated:

Some believe that when we pass from this sphere of existence, that is the end. It seems incredible to me, when we look into the works of nature, when we investigate the organism of man, the perfection of his body, the pulsation of his heart, the building and strengthening from childhood to manhood, then the gradual decline until this life is ended--that it is possible any of our father's children can believe that human beings have been born into the world only to live to manhood and womanhood, pass to old age, and die, without some purpose in their having lived here.

The spirit which inhabits the body is not the product of man, and when that spirit leaves the body we believe that it goes back to the source from whence it came.²⁶

He emphasized this point further at the same conference. He said:

Life is real. Life is earnest. The grave is not its goal. The spirit that inhabits the tabernacle is immortal. It lives beyond the grave. The body decays and returns to earth but the spirit lives on.²⁷

Elder Smith maintained that a knowledge of what happens after death is essential in order to inspire men to live righteously. He said: "The knowledge that all the good we accomplish here, and all development we make, will enhance our happiness eternally, encourages us to do our best."²⁸

²⁶ CR, April, 1905, p. 59.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁸ CR, Oct., 1921, p. 41.

Elder Smith's philosophy regarding death is best summarized by a statement he made two years after becoming President of the Church. He said: "The inevitable experience of death that comes to all people is not serious if people are ready for it," and, "I am not looking forward to that time with anxiety and distress, but with hope, and with the assurance that the change death, when it occurs, will be for increasing happiness, and for advantages that we cannot know in mortality."²⁹

A Literal Resurrection

President Smith did not dwell on the spirit existence of man after death. He did, however, express his belief in the resurrection. He believed in the literal resurrection of all mankind and said:

We are informed in this section (D&C 88) that our bodies are to be raised from the tomb, not some other bodies, and that the spirits that possess the tabernacles now will inhabit the same tabernacles after they have been cleansed and purified and immortalized.³⁰

He added further insight to the resurrection when he said in 1926 that all that a person learns on earth will rise with him in the resurrection.³¹

The Final Judgment

Elder Smith's beliefs about the final judgment were clear and definite. He offered four ideas:

²⁹ DNCS, Feb. 1, 1947, p. 9, and, Oct., 1921, p. 41.

³⁰ CR, April, 1939, p. 123.

³¹ CR, April, 1926, p. 146.

1. A person will receive a reward equal to what he has earned.

He said:

We are living eternal life, and our position hereafter will be the result of our lives here. Every man will be judged according to his works, and he will receive only that degree of glory that he has earned.³²

2. A person will be judged according to the opportunities he has received.³³

3. A person will be judged not only on his actions, but his thoughts.³⁴

4. At the final judgment people will be assigned to one of four kingdoms.³⁵

The Four Kingdoms

Latter-day Saints believe in four kingdoms that constitute the eternal abode of man after the final judgment. These kingdoms are: the celestial, the terrestrial, the telestial, and the kingdom which is without glory. Elder Smith in describing these kingdoms said that the telestial was a lesser

³²CR, April, 1945, p. 139. See also, IE, August, 1949, p. 542.

³³"Especially is this true with regard to members of the Church," he said, "we will be among those who have received the word of the Lord, who have heard his sayings, and if we do them it will be to us eternal, but if we fail condemnation will result." CR, Oct., 1906, p. 47.

³⁴See Chapter 2.

³⁵DNCS, Feb. 13, 1932, p. 7.

kingdom and those who lived in it would be resurrected telestial bodies. He characterized the terrestrial as a kingdom for those who desired greater privileges than those of the telestial. But to those who desire the highest and the best of all, he said:

Our Heavenly Father has made known that there is another Kingdom, known as the Celestial Kingdom. Those who desire to inherit that kingdom must conform to the rules that are laid down by the Redeemer of mankind while here upon the earth. The virtues that are attained by those in the other kingdoms, will be achieved by those who inherit the Celestial Kingdom, and additional virtues that the others have not acquired will be possessed by those who inherit the Celestial Kingdom.³⁶

The Celestial Kingdom

Though he talked frequently about the adversary in his discourses, he rarely discussed the sons of perdition, or those who go to the telestial and terrestrial kingdoms. His discussions, on the contrary, were primarily positive. Instead of perdition he talked of salvation and instead of the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms, he talked of the joys of the Celestial Kingdom. He said:

We must have faith in God . . . to enter into the celestial kingdom; if we cannot keep the celestial law, we cannot abide a celestial glory; the purpose of the gospel . . . is to prepare us for the celestial kingdom; if we want to be happy in the celestial kingdom, we must observe the laws that govern that kingdom.³⁷

³⁶DNCS, Feb. 13, 1932, p. 7.

³⁷CR, Oct., 1926, pp. 102-103. See also IE, Aug., 1949, p. 542.

President Smith discussed five major doctrines concerning the Celestial Kingdom. The first was that this earth in its glorified state would become the abode of the faithful in Celestial glory. He indicated that the purpose of the restoration of the Church ". . . was to prepare us to live eternally right here upon this earth, not upon some other earth."³⁸

The second doctrine he stressed was that an individual assigned to the telestial or terrestrial kingdoms could not eventually progress to the celestial. He said:

There are some people who have supposed that if we are quickened telestial bodies that eventually, throughout the ages of eternity, we will continue to progress until we will find our place in the Celestial Kingdom, but the scriptures and revelations of God have said that those who are quickened telestial bodies cannot come where God and Christ dwell worlds without end.³⁹

The third point Elder Smith stressed was that entrance into the Celestial Kingdom was not based on the position one held in the Church on earth, but on keeping the commandments. He said:

The humblest member of the Church, if he keeps the commandments of God, will obtain an exaltation just as much as any other man in the celestial kingdom. The beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that it makes us all equal in as far as we keep the commandments of the Lord. In as far as we observe to keep the laws of the Church we have equal opportunities for exaltation.

³⁸CR, Oct., 1936, p. 74. See also DNCS, Feb. 1, 1947, p. 9, and CR, Oct., 1943, p. 45.

³⁹CR, Oct., 1945, p. 172. See also DNCS, Feb. 13, 1932, p. 7.

As we develop faith and righteousness our light is made to shine as a guide and blessing to those with whom we mingle.⁴⁰

He further stressed this when he indicated:

All that he has asked us to do in order that we may enjoy eternal life in his celestial kingdom, is to follow the simple teachings of our Lord, that he has given to the children of men, that all men may follow if they will, and while doing it, peace of mind, contentment and happiness may be theirs.⁴¹

The fourth idea he emphasized concerning the Celestial Kingdom was that the major joy to be experienced there was a reunion of loved ones.

He said at the funeral of Patriarch Hyrum B. Smith:

It is possible for each of us to so observe the commandments of our Heavenly Father that we will in due time go where Hyrum has gone. I will ask for no better place in which to spend eternity than in the companionship of the good men and women who have said by their daily conduct: "Father in Heaven, I desire a place in the Celestial Kingdom."⁴²

In the General Conference of April, 1925, Elder Smith expressed his joy at being taught in his own family to look forward to the time when he could live with his family eternally. He said: "I have been taught to look forward to the time when I may have their eternal companionship, and I rejoice and with deep gratitude thank my Father in Heaven for that assurance."⁴³ He expressed this belief further in 1915 when he said: "There is

⁴⁰ CR, Oct., 1933, p. 25.

⁴¹ CR, Oct., 1923, p. 72.

⁴² DNCS, Feb. 13, 1932, p. 7. See also CR, Oct., 1915, p. 28, and CR, Oct., 1948, p. 8; CR, Oct., 1947, p. 8; CR, April, 1948, p. 163.

⁴³ CR, April, 1925, p. 65.

nothing that can compare with the joy that will be yours, after keeping the faith, you are called home and permitted to meet with your loved ones in our Father's kingdom."⁴⁴

The fifth point was that one of the blessings of those who are exalted in celestial glory would be eternal increase. It was his prayer, in 1923, that the Saints would be loyal to the faith so that God could grant them the blessings of ". . . eternal life, eternal progress, and eternal increase in the celestial kingdom."⁴⁵

SUMMARY

The plan of salvation, in the view of George Albert Smith, rested on the central theme of obedience. He illustrated this by numerous straightforward discussions in which happiness was seen to be the result of obedience and unhappiness was seen to follow disobedience. Obviously for him, obedience was a continuing joy; it came naturally to him by virtue of the kind of person he was. He realized that this kind of obedient living would also bring joy to others. Perhaps this affords the reader an insight into why President Smith stressed the doctrine of obedience so frequently. Perhaps this is also why we do not find him discussing in depth such doctrines as pre-earth war, foreordination, spirit world, sons of perdition, and other such

⁴⁴CR, Oct., 1915, p. 28.

⁴⁵CR, Oct., 1923, p. 74.

related themes. Rather, because he saw man as a child of God, he deeply desired that all people should achieve their individual divine destiny. President Smith saw the path to recognizing one's divine potential as being the path of obedience, purely and simply.

Here again we see another example of President Smith cutting through the complexities of doctrine to give a straightforward and workable approach to living.

Chapter 5

THE PRINCIPLE OF REVELATION

The distinction between this great church and that of all other churches from the beginning has been that we believe in divine revelation; we believe that our Father speaks to man today as he has done from the time of Adam.¹

The term revelation as defined in the introduction means the making known of divine truth to man, from God.² Members of the Church accept as sources of revelation not only the Standard Works, but the words of the prophets, seers, and revelators. To understand George Albert Smith's teachings on the principle of revelation, it was necessary to consider his teachings pertaining to: (1) the importance of the Standard Works; (2) the place of the President of the Church and other General Authorities; and (3) the importance and purpose of the general conferences. Because these themes were so frequently mentioned in the discourses of George Albert Smith, they were considered in detail in this chapter.

¹CR, April, 1917, p. 37.

²The term "scripture" as defined by Peter in II Peter 1:20-21, refers to the inspired utterances of the prophets.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STANDARD WORKS

The Better Part of the World's Literature

The Church considers four books of scripture to be the recorded word of God and the general standard or guide for all that is done in the Church: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.³

Joseph Smith received a revelation, in February, 1831, which explained the importance of the scriptures. It stated: "Thou shalt take the things which thou has received, which have been given unto thee in my scriptures for a law, to be my law to govern my church."⁴ George Albert Smith also stressed the importance and the value of the scriptures in the lives of the members of the Church. He reminded the saints, in the October conference of 1917, that the scripture did not contain the wisdom of men alone, but that of God. He emphasized his point by praising some of the great writers of the world, such as Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, but informed the Church that even though they read these famous writers they would miss the better part of the world's literature if they failed to read the scriptures.

³The only person who has the right to give further revelation to the entire Church membership is the President of the Church. See Harold B. Lee, "The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," Address to Seminiaries and Institutes of Religion Personnel, BYU, July 8, 1964, p. 14.

⁴D&C 42:59. Underlining added.

He said:

The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, do not contain the wisdom of men alone, but of God. While they do not find their way into the homes of many people, they contain the word of the Lord. What mattereth it though we understand Homer and Shakespeare and Milton, and I might enumerate all the great writers of the world; if we have failed to read the scriptures we have missed the better part of the world's literature.⁵

A Source of Truth

Elder Smith looked on the scriptures as "letters from our Heavenly Father" and stressed two major reasons for reading them in the home.⁶ The first was that the scriptures contain all of the basic truths necessary for man's salvation. In 1946 he referred to the scriptures as containing enough information to "provide for us an inheritance of eternal life."⁷ He illustrated this belief by stressing that "the nations that have been most influenced by the

⁵ CR, Oct., 1917, pp. 43-44.

⁶ CR, Oct., 1923, p. 70.

⁷ DNCS, May 11, 1946. He emphasized in the October, 1948, conference that the scriptures should be understood by the Latter-day Saints as they are "previous truths" which contain the revealed word of the Lord which will prepare them for a place in the celestial kingdom. Continuing this theme he said:

"All that God has revealed and published to the children of men that is necessary to prepare them for a place in the celestial kingdom is contained within the covers of these sacred books. How many of us know what they contain? I frequently go into homes where I see all the latest magazines. I find books that are advertised as best sellers on the bookshelves. If you were to throw them all away and retain only the sacred scriptures, you wouldn't lose what the Lord has counselled to be written and made available for us to enjoy." CR, October, 1948, pp. 164-165.

Bible have accomplished most to bring success and enlightenment to the world along every line of endeavour, because they have profited by the guidance of God."⁸ Elder Smith characterized the Bible as a wonderful record containing marvelous prophecies and said that if ever there was a time when the saints should know what it contained it was now.⁹ He explained further that members of the Church had been given "additional light and knowledge" because of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These books, he said, "do not contain what the scientists of today know, but what our Father in Heaven knows, and has given as His word to His people on earth."¹⁰

President Smith further emphasized that it was not essential to possess a library of two or three thousand volumes, but it was possible to possess, at small cost, a priceless library more precious than all of the libraries in the world. He said: "Compare these small volumes with all the library volumes of the world, and yet within their covers they contain all the word that God has given to his people here on earth."¹¹ And in 1931 he

⁸ CR, April, 1945, p. 139.

⁹ CR, Oct., 1940, p. 107. Drawing from his own childhood, he recalled that one of his first treasures was an illustrated story of the Bible which was "intensely interesting to him." These Bible stories, he said, "gave me an understanding of the power of the Lord, that has been useful to me all my life." See GASC, Box 124, SBKI.

¹⁰ CR, Oct., 1917, pp. 43-44.

¹¹ Ibid. By this he did not mean that the Standard Works were the only source of revelation, he also taught that God speaks to His people through living prophets. See pp. 6-17, and also, CR, October, 1940, p. 110.

stated: "As I read the scriptures I marvel at the goodness of the Lord to bless those who accept his teachings, for we find more comfort in these sacred records than in all the philosophies of the ages, as given to us by the wisdom of men."¹²

George Albert Smith gave a promise to those who would read and follow the Lord's teachings as contained in the scriptures:

When you return home from this conference, remember the things that have been said here by those who have been called to speak. Remember the testimonies of truth that have been borne in your hearing, and in addition, know that God has given to you a great library of scripture and instruction for your guidance that has accumulated during the ages and He will add to it in the future just as rapidly as we fulfill His desires in the things that are already revealed.¹³

It was his counsel in 1949:

I would like to reemphasize, if it needs emphasis, the suggestion that has already been made: Read the scriptures. This is the advice of the Lord. Are you taking it? It was the Savior who said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

It does not just say, "Read the scripture - but, search the scriptures." What does that mean to you? To me, it means prayerfully to investigate what the Lord has said, and in that way, if we are humble we will be entitled to his guidance, and we will not be misled.¹⁴

¹²CR, Oct., 1931, p. 120.

¹³IE, May, 1942, p. 287. Underlining mine. For a listing of some of his prophecies see Appendix K.

¹⁴CR, April, 1949, p. 188.

The Price Paid for the Scriptures

The second reason George Albert Smith gave for the importance of the scriptures was that they have "cost the best blood that has ever been in this world" to bring them forth.¹⁵ Here he referred to the ancient prophets who gave their lives for the Old Testament; to Jesus Christ whose life provided the basis for the New Testament; to the prophets of the Book of Mormon who gave their lives that we might have this volume of scripture; and to Joseph and Hyrum Smith who were martyred in their effort to bring forth modern revelation.

Elder Smith posed a question in the October, 1917, general conference to emphasize this teaching:

Do you suppose that after the Lord has done all this for us, has given to this world the choicest and sweetest of men and women, whose lives have been dedicated to the blessing of mankind, many of them sealing their testimony with their blood, has placed within our reach the excellent teachings contained in these holy records, that He will consider us appreciative if we fail to teach them to our families, and to impress them upon those with whom we come in contact?¹⁶

For these reasons President Smith counselled the members of the Church to "search the scriptures, to read them carefully and faithfully, and to teach them in their homes." He suggested, in 1948:

Brethren and sisters, keep this library where you can find it, and where your children will find it, and then have enough interest in the eternal salvation of these boys and girls that are

¹⁵D&C 135:6.

¹⁶CR, Oct., 1917, pp. 43-44.

in your home that you will find ways and means to interest them in what these books contain, that they may know how precious they are in the sight of our Heavenly Father.¹⁷

In Elder Smith's theology, the scriptures were to play an integral part in man's quest for salvation. He loved them and plead with members of the Church to read them.

THE PLACE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH AND THE GENERAL AUTHORITIES

The Role of the Prophet

One issue that has confronted members of the Church since its organization is the place which the Prophet and General Authorities occupy, and the responsibility of the saints to sustain them. Throughout the history of the Church there have been those who have questioned the importance of following the counsel of the leaders of the Church.¹⁸

Church leaders from the time of Joseph Smith have emphasized the role of the prophet as God's representative on the earth.¹⁹ George Albert Smith also emphasized this theme by counselling the Church concerning the important position of the prophet of God. He stressed in 1930 that when we are instructed by the President of the Church we are being told what the Lord

¹⁷ CR, Oct., 1948, p. 165.

¹⁸ For further information on this, see Russell R. Rich, Those Who Would Be Leaders, Brigham Young University Press: Provo, Utah, 1967.

¹⁹ D&C 21:4-7. See also Marion G. Romney, CR, April, 1953, p. 125.

would have us do.²⁰ Not only did he stress the necessity of following the prophet, but also the teachings of the General Authorities. He stated that members of the Church must look to their leaders as "representatives of Our Heavenly Father."²¹ It was for this reason that he explained: "It is not hard for me to comply with the requirements that are made of me by my Heavenly Father, and I realize that His teachings to me come through those whom He has chosen."²²

Elder Smith's main emphasis, however, was on obedience to the living prophet. He explained, in 1927, why he felt so strongly about those "whom God has called to lead the Church: "This great Church has been presided over by men who have been specially equipped for that high honor that has been conferred upon each as he has taken this place."²³ Because of this he emphasized a basic teaching that has been stressed by other prophets:

He [the Lord] will not permit the men who preside over His Church to lead the people into error, but He will sustain them with His almighty power. He will magnify them in the eyes of good and great women. He will bless their ministry and it will be wrought with success. Those who oppose and find fault will

²⁰ CR, Oct., 1930, p. 66.

²¹ CR, Oct., 1931, p. 117.

²² CR, Oct., 1911, p. 43.

²³ CR, April, 1927, p. 86.

not find joy in their opposition. Those who criticize and seek to destroy the influence of the leaders of the Church will suffer the result of their wrong doing.²⁴

A Guide to the Saints

George Albert Smith also stressed that one of the duties of the prophet was to prepare the people for that which was to come. He used the scriptures to support this belief and referred to the Old Testament record of Amos who described the role of prophets: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."²⁵ President Smith added that the world would be prepared to cope with the evils which would come if it gave attention to the prophets God had called.²⁶ He taught that the only pathway of safety was to be found in following the prophets; and that when anyone expounded principles that were opposed to the teachings of the prophets, such false principles should be discarded.²⁷

President Smith drew from a story in his own life to illustrate this view. He referred to an occasion when he boarded an airplane on route

²⁴CR, April, 1934, p. 29. See also, Wilford Woodruff, The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), pp. 212-213, and, Harold B. Lee, "The Place of the Living Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," p. 16.

²⁵Amos 3:7.

²⁶IE, Nov., 1943, p. 660.

²⁷We might note here the parallel with Paul's teachings in Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

to a conference. During the trip the plane encountered a terrible fog, and Elder Smith explained how he marvelled at the ability of the pilot to use all of his electronic instruments to land the plane safely. He used this story as an analogy to explain four main teachings: (1) that the members of the Church are on the good ship "Zion," (2) that the prophet is the pilot; (3) that just as the pilot of an airline receives messages from the landing tower, so the prophet receives messages from God to guide the members; and (4) that those who follow the prophet will arrive safely at their destination, while those who oppose the prophet bail out into spiritual darkness and are lost.²⁸

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SAINTS TO THE PROPHET

The Obligation to Sustain the Prophet

Elder Smith felt keenly the need for members of the Church to sustain the living prophet, both in word and in deed, and was quick to point out that happiness could be obtained in no other way. He said:

Wherever the people have listened to the prophets they have had success and happiness and they have been making preparations for eternal joy. Where they have refused to be mindful of the teachings of the Lord through his servants, they have paid the penalty. Not only have they suffered in mortal life, but they have forfeited the blessings that they might enjoy in immortal life.²⁹

²⁸CR, Oct., 1937, pp. 50-52.

²⁹CR, October, 1936, pp. 71-72.

He referred to the principle of "common consent" in the Church by which members are allowed to raise their right hand either in support or non-support of those who have been called to lead the Church. In expressing the sacredness of this action, he said:

The obligation that we make when we raise our hands under such circumstances, is a most sacred one. It does not mean that we will go quietly on our way, and be willing that the prophet of the Lord shall direct this work, but it means, - if I understand the obligation I assume when I raised my hand - that we will stand behind him; we will pray for him; we will defend his good name, and we will strive to carry out his instructions as the Lord shall direct him to offer them to us while he remains in that position.³⁰

³⁰CR, June, 1919, p. 40. An interesting experience he used to further illustrate this point is found in a letter written to Israel Smith of Independence, Missouri. George Albert Smith told the following story:

"I remember that in the lifetime of President Joseph F. Smith your father and Frederick M. were in attendance at a General Conference of the Church. At that time Frank J. Cannon, who had been excommunicated, and Senator Kearns who had become embittered because President Smith refused to support his political ambitions, were making a fight and thought that they had succeeded in arousing bitterness in the hearts of enough people to discredit President Smith by voting against him, at the time the general officers were sustained. It was an experience that I shall never forget.

The Tabernacle was packed to suffocation and when the vote was taken the hands were thrust so high in the air that it was noticeable. To the casual observer it would appear to have been a unanimous vote. If your father and Frederick were there it would have so appeared to them but the fact is that there were 3 puny hands raised at one side of the gallery and of course no notice was taken of that. President Smith closed that meeting which happened to be the last one of the General Conference. He blessed the people. It seems to me there could not have been a dry eye in the house. Strong men were weeping like children. Sam Studebaker of the old Studebaker Brothers Wagon and Carriage Company was sitting in the audience. He wept with the others and leaning over the bench touched one of the Stake Presidents that he happened to be acquainted with on the shoulder and whispered to him. 'You need not be afraid to follow that man any place that he may lead.' It was a very remarkable experience, comparable in my mind to the experience on the day of Pentecost when all the people were so stirred in their souls. Since that time I do not remember ever to have known one dissenting vote and the house is usually filled to capacity when the General Authorities are presented." GASC, Box 62, Fd. 17.

Reference has been made to President Smith's unique manner in conveying his message. Like the poet, he often used an apt metaphor. Though his analogy of Moses and the modern Church has been cited earlier in this study, it bears repetition here. Elder Smith told the story of the battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites.³¹ As long as Moses held the rod over his head Israel prevailed, but when Moses' arms tired and dropped, the Amalekites prevailed. To assist Moses when he was weary, Aaron and Hur sustained his hands. President Smith's analogy stressed the importance of the members of the Church upholding the hands of the Prophet, if the Church was to prevail in its battle against the adversary.³² Elder Smith indicated throughout his discourses specific ways by which members of the Church could "uphold" the hands of the prophets and General Authorities. Their obligations were to pray for them, to read and follow their messages, and to defend them when they were misrepresented or criticized.

George Albert Smith repeatedly called on the faithful to pray for the leaders of the Church,³³ and he admonished them to read and to follow their messages.³⁴ He stressed, in particular, the importance of defending the Prophet and the General Authorities when they were misrepresented or

³¹Exodus 17.

³²CR, April, 1942, p. 14.

³³CR, April, 1931, pp. 31-32.

³⁴CR, Oct., 1930, p. 65. See also CR, April, 1916, p. 45.

criticized.³⁵ In 1933, for example, he made the following statement pertaining to this point and also included an important prophecy:

I am grateful for my position among the General Authorities of the Church, one of the humblest of all, I am grateful for their companionship. I know that these men are servants of the Lord, and I know they are seeking to bless mankind. I hope that not any of you who are here will fail to sustain them, not only by your faith and prayers but if they are misrepresented and their attitude misinterpreted that you may be willing and anxious to defend them, if need be, because there is a time coming when they will need your defense.³⁶

An example of how strongly he felt about this is taken from a story of Castle Murphy, former mission president and President of the Hawaiian Temple. Elder Murphy recounted:

At one time I walked into the Church Office Building and was met by President George Albert Smith as he just got off the elevator. He took me by the arm and said, "Come, Brother Murphy, I have a bone to pick with you." I followed him into the elevator and we went to his office. He said to me, "I would like to ask you Brother Murphy, just what you meant by issuing a temple recommend to a certain young man, (he named him) and thus permitting him to go through the temple here." I replied, "President Smith, I am very grateful that you asked me privately my reason for issuing that recommend. I want you to know that I didn't issue that recommend. That young man came to Hawaii while I was president of the mission. He had just completed a mission to Samoa. He laid off the coat of service in the Church and began to associate with people not of the Church. Reports that were unfavorable continued to come to me. I thought I could save him. I went to him and asked him if he wouldn't take over the leadership of the Samoan people in our mission as he knew their language. He accepted the appointment but he never fulfilled it. Later I found out that his associations and some of his actions were disreputable. I tried to get the young man to become active and give up those associations that were not

³⁵CR, April, 1934, p. 29.

³⁶CR, Oct., 1933, p. 29.

favorable to the Church. He wouldn't listen. The next thing I knew he had come to Salt Lake City and was engaged to be married in the temple. The thing that brought it to my attention was an Associated Press account in the Honolulu newspaper of his being arrested while on his way to the temple to be married. This article brought to the attention of the people of Hawaii what had happened. This account brought condemnation upon my head for the people thought I had issued the recommend, but he actually received it from a General Authority. I received a cablegram from this General Authority who asked me if this young man couldn't receive a temple recommend from me to go through the temple if he would repent of all his weaknesses and wrong doings. I wired back, "If you have rescinded every order pertaining to the issuance of temple recommends, then you may issue one to him. But be sure that all those orders pertaining are checked before you write one." That General Authority took original jurisdiction and issued the recommend himself. Everyone in Hawaii thought I had issued it, but I didn't tell them how he received the recommend. I wanted to protect the General Authority.

President Smith sat up, then stood up, and put his arms around me and hugged me. He said, "God bless you Brother Murphy for carrying that burden and protecting the General Authorities."³⁷

Elder Smith continued this same theme by saying that the leaders of the Church would need to be defended because the adversary would seek to impede their important work.³⁸ This he saw as one of the evidences of the divinity of the Church; that is, that good men speak good of the leaders and evil men speak evil of them.³⁹ Consequently, he plead with the saints not to permit words of criticism or unkindness to pass their lips, for the Lord himself called these men to be His leaders.⁴⁰

³⁷ Castle Murphy, personal interview, July 17, 1973.

³⁸ CR, April, 1931, pp. 31-32.

³⁹ CR, Oct., 1933, p. 29.

⁴⁰ CR, April, 1937, p. 34.

President Smith further taught that those who criticize God's chosen leaders, and consequently weaken their influence, line themselves up on the side of the adversary.⁴¹ If these critics of God's leaders would not repent they would be lost. But what was one to do when he felt that there was something wrong with the Church and consequently felt the need to criticize? George Albert Smith gave a practical solution. He suggested prayer and, like Christ advocated,⁴² the examination of one's own heart:

Whenever you, my fellow laborers feel there is something wrong with the Church, go into your secret places and kneel down before the Lord, examine your hearts, and you will find every time that there is something in your own life that occasions doubt; the tempter is working on your mind, causing you to feel that perhaps Zion will not be victorious.⁴³

Elder Smith realized, as a practical psychologist, that criticism very often springs from a guilty heart⁴⁴ and that righteous people have no need to

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jesus said to the people who wanted to stone the adulterous woman: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." John 8:7.

⁴³ IE, March, 1946, p. 141.

⁴⁴ In 1931, George Albert Smith stated: "Righteous people will have no desire to speak evil of those who are doing good but the adversary will use those who, having transgressed the laws of the Church and the laws of the land, are themselves in darkness." CR, April, 1931, pp. 32-33.

This principle was also stressed by Joseph Smith when he said:

"I will give you one of the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom. It is an eternal principle, that has existed with God from all eternity: That man who rises up to condemn others, finding fault with the Church, saying that they are out of the way, while he himself is righteous, then know assuredly, that that man is in the high road to apostasy; and if he does not repent, will

speaking out against those who are doing good. He indicated:

During my experience in the Church, I have yet to know of one person who has been observing the commandments of the Lord who has raised his or her voice against those who were called to preside over this Church. This is really remarkable because all have had their agency and could have refused to sustain their leaders had there been evil in men who have been called to direct them. Surely if they had not been good men some of this great army of people who are living near to the Lord would have discovered wrong doing and would have made it public. As it is only those who have been cast out because of unworthiness or who have transgressed the laws of the Lord have raised their voices in condemnation of the leaders of the Church.⁴⁵

The Agency of the Saints

George Albert Smith promised great blessings to those who sustained the leaders of the Church. "As you uphold them in the positions to

apostasize, as God lives," TPJS, pp. 156-157.

Harold B. Lee added further light to this subject when he said:

"So it is today. There are some who look upon the leaders of this Church and God's anointed as men who are possessed of selfish motives. By them the words of our leaders are always twisted to try to bring a snare to the work of the Lord. Mark well those who speak evil of the Lord's anointed, for they speak from impure hearts. Only the "pure in heart" see the "God" or the divine in man and accept our leaders and accept them as prophets of the living God. . . .

I want to bear you my testimony that the experience I have had has taught me that those who criticize the leaders of this Church are showing signs of a spiritual sickness which, unless curbed, will bring about eventually spiritual death. I want to bear my testimony as well that those who in public seek by their criticism, to belittle our leaders or bring them into disrepute, will bring upon themselves more hurt than upon those whom they seek thus to malign. I have watched over the years, and I have read of the history of many of those who fell away from this Church, and I want to bear testimony that no apostate who ever left this Church ever prospered as an influence in his community thereafter." CR, Oct., 1947, p. 67.

⁴⁵CR, April, 1931, p. 33.

which they have been called," he said, "so will our Father in Heaven sustain and bless and magnify you in the eyes of your families and those with whom you associate."⁴⁶ In unequivocal terms he stressed this point, saying:

The Church continues to grow and strengthen. The adversary will deceive some of those who are members of the Church. He has done it from the beginning. They have so far misinterpreted what our Heavenly Father desires that they array themselves not against His servants only but against the Lord Himself and thus impede the progress of His work, for which they will suffer the penalty.⁴⁷

Referring to the scriptures, he pointed out that the people from the time of Adam until the present who have had the greatest joy and happiness were those who followed the prophets of God. Those who ignored these inspired men paid the penalty of sorrow and destruction.⁴⁸ One of President Smith's favorite stories from scripture was the account of Noah and the wickedness of the people in his day. He emphasized this story to show the evil that comes to people when they fail to follow those whom God has called to lead them.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ CR, Oct., 1905, p. 29. He reiterated this same blessing during the October Conference when he was sustained as President of the Church. During his opening address he thanked the members of the Church for their sustaining vote and promised that if they would keep the commitment they had made the blessings of Our Heavenly Father would abide "with you and in your homes and with your loved ones and Zion will continue to grow." See CR, Oct., 1945.

⁴⁷ CR, April, 1940, pp. 86-87.

⁴⁸ CR, April, 1961, p. 46. On another occasion he said:

"Whenever the people have listened to the prophets they have had success and happiness and they have been making preparation for eternal joy. Where they have refused to be mindful of the teachings of the Lord through his servants, they have paid the penalty, not only have they suffered in mortal life, but they have forfeited the blessings that they might enjoy in immortal life." CR, Oct., 1936, p. 7.

⁴⁹ CR, Oct., 1936, p. 71. See also IE, Nov., 1943, p. 66; CR, April, 1945, p. 242; and IE, May, 1949, p. 303. See Appendix A.

He referred also to the example in the Book of Mormon, when the Nephites were destroyed because they failed to follow the prophets.⁵⁰ Another illustration that he used was the story of Moses and the children of Israel. He reminded the saints during the general conference of October, 1936, of Moses who, on one occasion, told the camp of Israel in the wilderness to do certain things. Some of the princes of Israel who were of high esteem, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, refused to comply with the instructions and informed Moses that they were holy. Elder Smith continued by saying:

They refused to do what the Lord wanted them to do--not what Moses desired of them but what the Lord required of them. And then they defied Moses and criticized him and found fault with him. The result was that a large number of them were swallowed up in one earthquake, and about fourteen thousand seven hundred others who complained because of what happened to Korah and his followers were suddenly swept away by a plague.⁵¹

President Smith concluded by saying that down through history when men have refused to follow God's command, they have suffered not only spiritual distresses, but also temporal distresses.⁵²

An Example of Disobedience

Elder Smith's philosophy takes on greater meaning when it is remembered that a great social issue faced the Church during his term as an

⁵⁰IE, Nov., 1943, p. 660. See also CR, Oct., 1936, p. 73.

⁵¹CR, Oct., 1936, p. 72. For the scripture reference to this story, see Numbers 16.

⁵²Ibid.

apostle. In the 1930's, efforts were being made in the United States to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment dealing with legalizing the sale of liquor. In 1933, President Heber J. Grant plead with the saints to cast their vote against repealing the Eighteenth Amendment,⁵³ but history records that the State of Utah cast the deciding vote repealing this amendment. In 1936, George Albert Smith raised his voice in condemnation of those who rejected the advice of President Grant, and ascribed much of the accidents and murders in America to the repealing of this amendment.⁵⁴ However, by 1943, he was

⁵³CR, April, 1933, p. 6. See also CR, Oct., 1933, p. 6.

⁵⁴He said:

"There are those among us today who have been blinded by the philosophies and foolishness of men. There are those who reject the advice and counsel of the man that God has placed at the head of this Church.

I am grieved as I stand here and think of the way we rejected the counsel of President Grant. And I don't want to be counted among the 'we' for I was not - but there were those among us who rejected the advice of the President of the Church and voted to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment and approve of bringing intoxicating liquor back into our community and legalizing it. That action has increased our accidents and murders and thousands of the sons and daughters of America are losing themselves and are being debauched beyond the possibility of recovery.

Had we listened to the man who stands at our head and done our duty we would not in this valley and other places be suffering from the distresses that have come upon us, we would not be responsible for them.

People who haven't very much information suddenly come along with a bright idea, and they suggest "this is the way" or "that is the way", and although it is in conflict with the advice of the Lord some are persuaded to try it. The Lord has given safe advice and appointed the President of the Church to interpret that advice. If we ignore what he advises, as the President of the Church, we may discover that we have made a serious mistake."

CR, Oct., 1935, p. 75.

convinced that the State of Utah was also suffering as a result of the people rejecting President Grant's counsel. He said:

We are fortunate today to have the servant of the Lord who presides over the Church, the mouthpiece of the Lord to us, sitting in our midst. There are thousands of people who would walk any distance they were able, in order that they might see the face and touch the hand of the Prophet of the Lord, and yet there are many of our own people who disregard his guidance and his counsel. From this very stand he pleaded with us to not repeal the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. He didn't speak as Heber J. Grant, the man. He spoke as the President of the Church and representative of our Heavenly Father. And yet in a state where we could have retained what we had, there were enough Latter-day Saints, so-called (some of them hold positions in the Church, or did at that time), who paid no attention to what the Lord wanted, ignored what he had said through His Prophet, and what is the result? Such delinquency as we have never known is in our own community today, and the sons and daughters and grandchildren, and in many cases the fathers and mothers, who defied the advice of our Heavenly Father and said, "We will do as we please," are paying the penalty and will continue to do so until they turn away from their foolishness and desire with all their hearts to do what our Heavenly Father desires us to do.⁵⁵

It was George Albert Smith's hope and prayer that when the Latter-day Saints presented themselves before God at the final judgment they would be able to say: "We sustained the hands of His servants, we understand the spirit of revelation, and we listened to it as it came from God to His servants."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ IE, Nov., 1943, p. 707.

⁵⁶ CR, April, 1904, p. 65.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCES OF THE CHURCH

The Purpose of Conference

General conferences have a significant purpose in the Church. The first conference of the Church was held on the ninth of June, 1830, in Fayette, New York.⁵⁷ A few months later Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord said of those who attended conferences: "And it shall come to pass, that inasmuch as they are faithful, and exercise faith in me, I will pour out my spirit upon them in the day that they assemble themselves together."⁵⁸

George Albert Smith emphasized the importance of the general conferences throughout his discourses as a General Authority. In many of his conference addresses, he expressed his personal joy at being able to meet with the saints and "wait upon the Lord" for a blessing.⁵⁹ He looked on these occasions as times when the saints had "an appointment with our Heavenly Father"⁶⁰ to receive instructions from those inspired of God.⁶¹ President

⁵⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (13 ed; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953), pp. 96-97.

⁵⁸ D&C 44:2.

⁵⁹ CR, Oct., 1948, p. 162.

⁶⁰ IE, Oct., 1946, p. 669.

⁶¹ In 1913, he said:

"It is by faith that we are edified on occasions like this, by those who minister in the name of the Lord, and the Comforter quickens their understanding, bring things past to their remembrance and showing them things to come; thus evidencing the spirit or revelation." CR, Oct., 1913, p. 103.

Smith, in his characteristically humane and loving manner, made reference, in the fall conference of 1917, to a man and his family who had come to conference from North Carolina. Elder Smith contemplated the effect that the meetings might have on this family who had sacrificed so much to be in attendance, and concluded that they would be blessed with an increase of faith in their family.⁶² His feelings were clear in this respect, that conference was a time to receive increased faith in the work of God.

President Smith further emphasized that the purpose of conference was that "we may receive the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord . . . and be taught the things that will be beneficial to us if we apply them in our lives."⁶³ He added, in 1918, that conference was a time to worship and honor God by listening to the whisperings of His spirit made manifest through those who were called to speak.⁶⁴

This theme of the membership attending Conference to receive direction from those inspired of God was a constant emphasis of Elder

⁶²CR, Oct., 1917, p. 40.

⁶³CR, April, 1914, p. 11.

⁶⁴CR, April, 1918, p. 37. President David O. McKay said in a Conference report that the purpose of conferences among other things was "to worship the Lord in sincerity and reverence, and to give and to receive encouragement, exhortation, and instruction." CR, Oct., 1938, pp. 130-131.

Smith.⁶⁵ Conference, then, to him was a time for the saints to "plan" how they might find a place in the celestial kingdom.⁶⁶ He therefore, promised those who attended conference in a spirit of worship that their lives would be enriched and that they would receive guidance that they could obtain in no other way.⁶⁷

The Individuals Preparation for Conference

President Smith was not one to leave members of the Church in a position where they did not understand their duties. In his gentle manner he outlined ways members of the Church could benefit the most from conference. First, he emphasized the importance of individuals coming in the spirit of repentance and humility, the spirit of desiring to receive guidance and instruction. He further indicated that the saints should have the prayer

⁶⁵Ibid. President John Taylor, third President of the Church said:

"How does faith required as the first principle in the plan of salvation or the gospel come? Let Paul answer: 'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' (Romans 10:17) It is not the letter then that bringeth faith, but hearing the word of God dispensed by a living oracle or minister of God, clothed upon with power from on high. It is not a recorded gospel but the preached word which emanates with power from a man of God inspired by the Holy Ghost. . . ." John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, comp. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943), p. 332.

⁶⁶CR, Oct., 1945, p. 117. Marion G. Romney in 1954 indicated: "We have heard enough truth and direction in this conference to bring us into the presence of God if we would follow it." CR, April, 1954, p. 132.

⁶⁷CR, Oct., 1949, p. 172. On another occasion he stated that, "It is not so much what we hear at conference, but what we feel." CR, Oct., 1947, p. 7.

in their heart: "Father in Heaven, teach us."⁶⁸

Second, he stressed the necessity of attending conference in a spirit of worship, setting aside personal affairs so that one could be completely in tune with the proceedings. By coming with this attitude, he promised, the saints would leave conference knowing for themselves by the spirit of God that what the leaders had said was true. He said:

If we have come here with the spirit of worship, if we have set aside our personal affairs to make first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we will go from here renewed with strength and power; the assurance will increase in us that this is God's work, and we will have strength in the communities in which we reside, and preside, to say, "This is the way of the Lord; walk in it," and the people will know by the spirit that we possess that we are really His leaders.⁶⁹

Third, he indicated the importance of the saints praying "that those who address us may be inspired and draw the necessary inspiration from our Heavenly Father to feed His flock." Those who came with this attitude,

⁶⁸ CR, April, 1937, pp. 32-33. In 1949, he said:

"We have been fed the bread of life if we will remember the things we have heard, and there is one thing I hope you will all remember. One time after I had finished talking to a large audience a man came to me and said: 'Brother Smith, you have been talking to me.' I think everyone of us must feel that these brethren have been talking to us, not to somebody else, and if we improve ourselves first then we will be able to improve our neighbor and that is our privilege." CR, Oct., 1949, p. 144.

⁶⁹ CR, April, 1942, p. 14. Boyd K. Packer added in 1965:

"I say again, 'Follow the brethren.' In a few days there opens another general conference of the Church. The servants of the Lord will counsel us. You may listen with anxious ears and hearts, or you may turn that counsel aside. As in these devotionals, what you shall gain will depend . . . upon your preparation for them." Boyd K. Packer, "Follow the Brethren," BYU Speeches of the Year (Provo: BYU Press), p. 10.

he believed, would leave conference satisfied with what they received, and they would also be an influence for good on their fellow saints.⁷⁰ And fourth, he counselled the members as to the necessity of living and disseminating the truths learned at conference.⁷¹ This, he explained could be accomplished by the saints taking notes on the conference proceedings⁷² and then reflecting on the addresses for weeks after.⁷³

For those who attend conference in this spirit, Elder Smith promised a great blessing: an increase in faith, and an increased desire to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁷⁴ Contemplating the inspiring effect of general conference on the lives of the saints, he asked the following question:

"Have I been careful to take advantage of my opportunity and bring my wife and children into this splendid gathering, to enjoy the teachings of the servants of God?" Elder Smith responded to his own question by saying: "If I have not, I have lost for them a blessing, and likewise for myself."⁷⁵

⁷⁰CR, April, 1914, p. 5.

⁷¹CR, Oct., 1946, p. 7. See also CR, April, 1916, p. 124.

⁷²CR, Oct., 1930, p. 65.

⁷³CR, April, 1916, p. 45. Harold B. Lee suggested further:

"As the Latter-day Saints go home from this conference, it would be well if they consider seriously the importance of taking with them the report of this conference and let it be a guide to their walk and talk during the next six months. These are the important matter the Lord sees fit to reveal to this people in this day." CR, April, 1946, p. 68.

⁷⁴CR, April, 1942, p. 14. See also IE, Dec., 1950, p. 963.

⁷⁵CR, Oct., 1917, p. 40.

SUMMARY

George Albert Smith's total theological approach was based on a belief in the principle of modern revelation. He had an abiding love for the scriptures which he looked upon as "letters from Our Heavenly Father" to his spirit children. Perhaps this love for the Standard Works came to President Smith as a result of his home training and his own personal study. His deep feeling for the scriptures prompted him to counsel the saints to read and study them in their homes.

Elder Smith, as explained in Chapter 2, had an ancestry that was represented by men who were prominent leaders in the Church. His own father, John Henry, was a General Authority, and served as a counselor in the First Presidency. As a young boy, George Albert associated with many leaders of the Church. Perhaps it was partially through these personal associations that his testimony of the living prophets was started. It is evident from his discourses and writings that he believed in modern revelation, and his theology was based, not only the Standard Works, but on the words of the living prophets. President Smith, though characteristically positive in his approach, did not hesitate to warn the membership of the Church concerning their responsibilities to sustain the living prophets in both word, and in action. He further taught the saints that the general conferences were special occasions when the Lord speaks to his people and to the world through his chosen leaders.

Chapter 6

THE FAMILY

If we want happiness in the celestial kingdom, we will have to lay the foundation right here; and part of the requirement of the Lord is that we do right in our homes.¹

It has been emphasized previously in this thesis that George Albert Smith's primary concern was not the presentation of an abstract, but of a living theology.² Nevertheless, he was concerned with certain theological doctrines pertaining to marriage, because these formed the basis of the mode of living for husband, wife, and children. These basic doctrines were: (1) the eternal nature of the family unit; (2) the home as a foundation for happiness in the celestial kingdom; (3) the role of the husband as patriarch in the home; (4) the special blessing bestowed upon mothers in the family; (5) the importance of welcoming children into the home; (6) the importance of rearing and educating children who are an inheritance given to man by God; and (7) the need for children to keep the commandments. This chapter will consider these seven points as they relate to Elder Smith's doctrinal teachings on the family.

¹CR, April, 1948, p. 184.

²See Chapter 1.

THE ETERNAL NATURE OF THE FAMILY UNIT

As early as 1905, George Albert Smith stressed the gratitude which men should have for the knowledge revealed in the scriptures pertaining to the eternity of the marriage covenant. He further emphasized that if man had only the hope of a life here on earth he would be "most miserable," but it was the assurance of the continuity of man's earthly life after death that gave hope and joy to fathers, mothers, and children. He also stressed that one of the greatest evidences of the divinity of the restored Church was found in the teaching that not only was there eternal life after death, but that this eternal life in its fulness brought with it a reunion of loved ones. Belief in this doctrine would motivate parents to be patient and loving with their children. He said:

Grateful should we be for the knowledge of the eternity of the marriage covenant. If in this life only had we hope, we would indeed be of all men most miserable. The assurance that our relationship here as parents and children, as husbands and wives will continue in heaven, and that this is but the beginning of a great and glorious kingdom that our Father has destined we shall inherit on the other side, fills us with hope and joy. One of the greatest evidences to me of the divinity of this work is that it teaches there is eternal life on the other side, and that there will be a reunion there of the loved ones who have known each other here. Consequently, as parents, we may well be patient and loving toward our children, for they will eternally abide with us on the other side, if we and they are faithful.³

³CR, Oct., 1905, p. 29.

commented on the high morality among members of the Latter-day Saint faith.

Elder Smith explained:

I confided in him and said: "From my mother's knee I have been taught that this body of mine should be kept sacred, as the tabernacle of an immortal spirit. I was taught when I was a child that to be clean in my living was most important. In fact," I said, "upon one occasion my father called me to him when I was just a young man, and he said, 'My son, I have something I want to say to you.'" And I said to the bishop: "I loved my father; I almost worshipped him, and anything that he said to me sank deep into my soul. He said, 'My son, there are reports of evil in the community; bad men and bad women are coming in from different parts of the country, one or two at a time. I hope that you will avoid them, but if by any chance any wicked man were to enter into our home and attempt to take the virtue of your mother or your sister, I want you to know from your father that I would expect you to defend that virtue with your life. Then,' he said, 'that is not all. I lay the same obligation upon you with reference to every other man's wife and daughter.'"

As the bishop looked at me, I said: "That sank into my soul, and has been as armor to me as I have traveled through the world, and it has been a joy to me to hold up to our Father's other children that standard of virtue: not only shall we not have our own despoiled, but we should see to it that no other man's family should be despoiled."⁶

The Joy of a Righteous Home

The joy that could be experienced through keeping the commandments was a fundamental theme throughout all of the writing of George Albert Smith, and this was to be found primarily in a happy home wherein husband and wife accepted their responsibility to keep the commandments of God.⁷ We find in his discourses the exhortation for Latter-day Saints to sanctify

⁶IE, Nov., 1944, p. 660. See also IE, June, 1943, p. 336.

⁷IE, Nov., 1946, p. 710. See also CR, April, 1948, p. 162.

"the home by teaching that we are now living eternal lives;"⁸ to "search the scriptures, read them in your homes, teach your families what the Lord has said, and let us spend less of our time reading the unimportant and often harmful literature of the day, and go to the fountain of truth and read the word of the Lord;"⁹ to make "our homes . . . sanctuaries of peace and hope,"¹⁰ that they may "be the abiding places of prayer . . . that our sons and daughters may be worthy exemplars of the cause."¹¹

A statement that summarizes Elder Smith's conviction that the home is the foundation of happiness is found in his conference address of October, 1946. He said: "If we will honor God and keep his commandments, our homes will be sacred, the adversary will have no influence, and we will live in happiness and peace."¹²

⁸ CR, Oct., 1948, p. 105.

⁹ CR, Oct., 1917, p. 41. See also, CR, Oct., 1948, p. 164.

¹⁰ CR, Oct., 1941, pp. 100-101.

¹¹ CR, April, 1942, p. 17. See also, CR, Oct., 1948, pp. 167, 185.

¹² IE, Nov., 1946, p. 710. In 1944, he said:

"Now we want to be happy. We want our homes to be happy. If we do, let them be abiding places of prayer, thanksgiving, and gratitude. Ask a blessing upon the food when we partake of it. Fathers, be kind to wives and children, and children be kind to mother and father, 'Love one another. Honor thy father and thy mother.'" IE, May, 1944, p. 321.

THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

The Husband's Chief Responsibility

George Albert Smith taught that men who hold the priesthood are representatives of God on the earth.¹³ The major responsibility of a man who holds the priesthood, he said, was that of being a husband and a father. He stated this very clearly in a talk given to a Seventy's Quorum. "I want to tell you that your chief responsibility is in your home," he declared. "A man assumes this obligation when he brings children into the world. The wife and children belong to him, but they will only be his if he lives worthy of them."¹⁴

Elder Smith again emphasized this sacred responsibility when he said that the home, for the husband, should not be a place "to hang his hat" and "get his meals," but that his home should be "an abiding place of the Spirit of the Lord."¹⁵

Recognizing the influence of the wife in maintaining the "spirit" in the home, President Smith counselled husbands, in the conference of April, 1943, to "put their arms around their wife and tell her that she is appreciated in the home." He posed two questions for husbands to consider:

¹³ IE, May, 1943, p. 336.

¹⁴ GASC, MS-36, Box 104, Fd-1.

¹⁵ CR, April, 1948, pp. 183-184.

"Do we appreciate the daughters of God as he appreciates them?"

"Do we treasure their virtues and their faith and their devotion and their motherhood as Our Heavenly Father does?"

For those husbands who could not give an affirmative answer to these questions Elder Smith stressed the need for repentance. He based this counsel on a story from the scriptures. Referring to the incident in the Book of Mormon of certain Nephite men who wounded the feelings of their wives because of their carelessness in keeping the commandments, he warned: "These were men in the Church, and the Lord reprovved them and gave them to understand that unless they repented, they need not hope for his blessing."¹⁶

President Smith further outlined the responsibilities of the husband in the home when he said:

I would like to emphasize tonight something that has been referred to before and that is that men who have been married to women and have agreed before witnesses that they will keep the commandments of God and live as they should, sometimes are so selfish, so wilful that they forget that their wives have some rights. I want to say that the priesthood does not give any man a right to abuse his wife. The priesthood does give him the right to be kind, to be faithful, to be honorable, to teach the truth and to teach his children the truth, and when he does that he will not fall away into sin. There never has been a time in history of the world when we have needed guidance more than now.¹⁷

¹⁶ IE, May, 1943, p. 336.

¹⁷ CR, April, 1949, p. 189.

He expressed the fear, in 1947, that many men spend too much time on material things, at the neglect of their families. He admonished the fathers:

I do not care how much property you have, what honor you may attain to--it is immaterial to me whether your names are written in the records of history because of your accomplishments, or of mere monetary things. The greatest blessings are your boys and girls.¹⁸

A Warning to Men Who
Hold the Priesthood

While the basic spirit of the teachings of George Albert Smith was the spirit of love, he did not hesitate to warn his brethren of the dangers of believing that holding the priesthood alone was sufficient for salvation. He stated in unequivocal terms: "I want to tell you that you men who hold the priesthood will never get into the celestial kingdom unless you honor your wives and your families and train them and give them the blessings that you want for yourselves."¹⁹ Again, Elder Smith counseled that it was foolhardy for the husband to conclude that it was the wife's responsibility "to take care of the home and everything else while the man goes to meetings."²⁰

President Smith taught the importance of a man accepting his responsibility in the home by references to his own family. Just as he

¹⁸ DNCS, February 22, 1947, p. 8. President David O. McKay said: "No success can compensate for failure in the home."

¹⁹ CR, April, 1948, pp. 183-184.

²⁰ GASC, MS-36, Box 104, Fd-1.

emphasized how he learned to love God at his mother's knee, so he emphasized how he learned from his father. He frequently said such things as the following: "I remember my own father saying to me . . ."; "I loved my father, I almost worshipped him"; and, "My father used to say to me, 'Son . . .'"²¹

We might note here that while Elder Smith was talking primarily of the husband being a light for his wife and children, he also added a further point that was important to his theology. This was the fact that the husband, by living righteously in the home, would not only be an example to his family, but to his neighbors. Like Christ,²² then, President Smith taught that we should be a light to the world:

And so, let us reach out, each of us, help our neighbors as well as ourselves, set the examples in our homes and as sons and daughters of the living God in our great community, working hand in hand.²³

The role of the husband was to Elder Smith a most sacred responsibility. This responsibility required a man to devote his time, love, and talents to the rearing of a family to the glory and honor of God.

²¹IE, May, 1944, p. 320. See also IE, Nov., 1944, p. 660; IE, Nov., 1945, p. 720.

²²Matthew 5:16.

²³CR, April, 1948, pp. 183-184.

THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

The Blessings of Motherhood

It is a historical fact that the role of women in America changed considerably during the years that George Albert Smith was a General Authority. These years saw an increase in the involvement of women in the work force, from ten percent in 1919 to 28.9 percent in 1934.²⁴ During this period and later, Elder Smith emphasized the Lord's role for women. He taught that the greatest duty of a woman was not in joining the work force of the country, but in "bringing into the world and rearing the children of Our Heavenly Father."²⁵ It was his prayer, in 1926, that womankind would continue to desire and feel the responsibility of motherhood which had been given to them by God.²⁶

George Albert Smith emphasized on numerous occasions that the influence of the mother during the tender, young years of a child's life was vitally important.²⁷ He further stressed this fact by indicating that no "good"

²⁴ DNCS, Feb. 22, 1947, p. 8.

²⁵ JH, May, 1926, p. 4.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. This statement is corroborated by other President of the Church, especially David O. McKay, the Tenth President of the Church who said: "My experience has taught me that a mother's control over a child is lost or gained during the first few years of its life. Proper guidance in youth will prevent undesirable tendencies and encourage confidences in later life." David O. McKay, Home Memories of President David O. McKay, comp. by

mother would leave this responsibility to a hired servant or a housekeeper. Motherhood, he taught was a gift from God giving the mother an "opportunity" to safeguard and teach her children. He stated that if mothers would do this, "Our Heavenly Father will be pleased."²⁸

The Duty of Motherhood

George Albert Smith drew on stories both from the scriptures and his own life to give examples of true motherhood. Commenting, in 1943, on the terrible experiences of the war and the many mothers who sent boys to battle, he reminded the Church of the 2,060 young converted Lamanite boys who entered battle with an implicit faith in God. Though many were seriously wounded and many had fainted from the loss of blood, none lost his life. These boys were asked how they had gained faith to be spared. President Smith used their reply to drive home his point: "We knew, our mothers knew."²⁹ He then asked the mothers of the Church if they had been training their sons as these faithful Lamanite mothers had done.³⁰

Llewelyn R. McKay (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1956), pp. 199, 231. Contemporary child psychologists agree with this also, see Benjamin Spock, Baby and Child Care, Simon and Shuster: Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, 1971 and Jean Piaget, The Origins of Intelligence in Children, New York: W. W. Norton and Company; 1963. See also David Elkind, Children and Adolescents: Interpretive Essays on Jean Piaget, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970, Chapter 3.

²⁸ JH, p. 3.

²⁹ B of M, Alma 57:19-22.

³⁰ IE, April, 1943, p. 336.

President Smith further explained the duty of mothers many times by drawing on his own experiences with his "angel mother".³¹ Frequently in his discourses he referred to his mother and how he learned to pray "at her knee". He characterized her as a mother who "gave her life day by day to train us that we might be real Latter-day Saints."³² In this statement is contained Elder Smith's basic philosophy with regards to women: They are to rear their children with love, to be true sons and daughters of God.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN

The Blessing of Children

The period of George Albert Smith's apostleship also saw a radical change in American thinking with regard to children. The years between 1912 and the outbreak of World War II brought forth a social movement in America toward the reduction of family size through birth control. Led by Margaret Sanger, this movement's plea was:

Mother! Can you afford to have a large family?
 Do you want any more children?
 If not, why do you have them?
 Do not kill, do not take life, but prevent.
 Safe, harmless information can be obtained of trained nurses.
 Tell your friends and neighbors.³³

³¹IE, Nov., 1946, pp. 763-764.

³²IE, April, 1943, p. 382.

³³Kennedy, David M., Birth Control in America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 9.

The effects of this movement can be seen in the declining birth rate between 1915 and 1940. The birth rate in 1915 per one thousand people in the United States was 25.0, but by 1940 this had declined to 17.9.³⁴

A Priceless Treasure
from God

Elder Smith reminded the saints throughout this period of social controversy over birth control that there was nothing more precious to them than children, and that their eternal happiness would be conditioned largely on what their children attained.³⁵ Turning to the scriptures, he recounted the number of women in the Old Testament who were childless and who cried unto God that they could have the joy of having "little arms cling around their necks, and sweet innocent lips give them the kiss of childish affection."

He said:

As a people we believe in children. We believe that they are an heritage given to us by our Father in heaven. We can understand how, in the olden times, as recorded in the Scriptures, when some of the grand women of Israel were childless, and deprived of the joy of having little arms cling around their necks, and sweet innocent lips to give them the kiss of childish affection, they cried unto the Lord that they might have children, to take away their reproach. We understand what that means, if we understand the gospel of Jesus Christ; and we comprehend that one child, born under suitable conditions, is worth more than all the cattle and sheep upon a thousand hills, aye, than all the

³⁴ Statistical Abstract of the United States 1947, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., p. 67.

³⁵ CR, April, 1939, p. 124. As early as 1907, he voiced this belief that Latter-day Saints believe in having children.

treasures of the world. That is why, as Latter-day Saints doing our duty, we welcome these priceless treasures from the throne of God when they come into our homes.³⁶

Again it must be stressed that George Albert Smith's social philosophy was deeply rooted in his theology. His teachings regarding children were founded on the belief that (1) children are the offspring of God and are given as a blessing to parents;³⁷ (2) one of the major purposes of life is to rear children in a righteous manner; and (3) the joy experienced in the celestial kingdom will be largely determined on how parents rear their children.³⁸

The Commandment to Have Children

President Smith reminded parents that they were stewards over their children and had the responsibility of educating and preparing their children, that they might live eternally again in the presence of God. It was Elder Smith's conviction that no Latter-day Saint man or woman who truly believed this could refuse the opportunity of bringing children into the world. He issued a solemn warning to members of the Church who disobeyed the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth:

³⁶CR, Oct., 1907, p. 36.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

How will those feel who fail to obey that first great command when they stand in the presence of the Creator, who says to them, as He said to those in olden times, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." How can they comply with that invitation if they have no children to take to the Father? They must remain childless throughout eternity.

I raise my voice among the sons and daughters of Zion, and warn you that if you dry up the springs of life and abuse the power that God has blessed you with, there will come a time of chastening to you, that all the tears you may shed will never remove.³⁹ Remember the first great commandment; fulfill that obligation.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTHOOD

The Home as a Bulwark

Against Evil

One of the themes most frequently stressed by President Smith was the responsibility of parents to train their children. He often praised the work done in the Church by the Primary, Sunday School, Mutual Improvement, and Seminary, but was quick to remind parents that it was their responsibility to teach their children and that this responsibility could not be shifted to any other organization. To do so, "would bring parents under condemnation and cause them to lose the great blessings offered by God."⁴⁰

A basic teaching found in President Smith's discourses was that the home was a major factor in neutralizing the power of the adversary over

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ CR, Oct., 1928, pp. 93-94; See also CR, April, 1929, p. 33.

children.⁴¹ He pointed out that parents who neglected to teach their children and exemplify the gospel in their lives ran the risk of losing their children, not only now, but throughout eternity.⁴² He was convinced that many children of Latter-day Saint parentage who departed from the faith had not understood the meaning of the gospel of Christ.⁴³

⁴¹In 1932, he said:

"My brethren and sisters, I plead with you that with more earnestness, with more thoughtfulness, more patience than ever before, you safeguard the rising generation from the pitfalls that the adversary has laid for their feet. Many of our picture shows, radio programs, magazines, books, etc., are unfit for respectable communities, and unless we neutralize the influence of these things by wholesome teaching and environment, bringing to the youth the benefits derived from knowing the lives of good men and women, teaching them the virtues of the prophets and meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, some of those whom we love may slip away from us, and when it is too late we will realize that we have been sleeping on our privileges." CR, Oct., 1932, p. 25.

⁴²He gave this warning in 1933 when he said:

"We may just as well confront the fact that unless we, as parents in Zion, safeguard our children by teaching them, and by surrounding them by arms of our love, unless we safeguard them by every possible means, the adversary will break down the barriers that are raised by the organizations that protect them, and those that we love more than we love our own lives will be drawn away from the truth; they will lose their faith; they will fall into transgression; and then we, the parents of Zion, will have occasion for sorrow, not only now but throughout the ages of eternity." CR, April, 1933, p. 71.

⁴³He expressed the following in 1906:

"I am persuaded that, if there are any children of Latter-day Saint parentage who depart from the faith, they are those who have not understood the meaning of the doctrines of Christ, who have not had instilled into their hearts faith in our Heavenly Father, and who do not comprehend that it means eternal life to them to keep His commandments. So I say we should be imbued with the desire to labour and teach our sons and daughters those things that will save them in the presence of our Father." CR, Oct., 1906, p. 49.

Commenting on an oft quoted scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 68, where the Lord indicated that parents who neglect to teach their children will be accountable for the sins of their children, Elder Smith emphasized that the "sins of the children" had reference to the sorrow that would be felt by parents who neglected their responsibility. He said:

We are commanded by the Lord to teach our children what they should do, that they should have faith, that they should repent, and that they should be baptised when eight years of age; and He says that if we fail in our responsibility, the sin be upon our heads. What does that mean? It means, to me, that if our children fall away because of our neglect and because of our carelessness, there will come a time when we realize that we did not prepare them for the blessing the Lord wanted to give them, and the result is that they failed to receive the blessings and the sorrow will be upon our own heads.⁴⁴

He challenged parents to specialize in "reading our boys and girls under the influence of the Spirit of God, that the adversary will have no power over them to lead them astray."⁴⁵

The Family Home Evening

Elder Smith advised parents to fulfill the responsibility of teaching their family by following the counsel of President Joseph F. Smith, who suggested that every family should hold a weekly home evening. This program, announced in 1905, asked parents to meet on a weekly basis with their children and teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. President George Albert

⁴⁴CR, April, 1941, p. 26.

⁴⁵CR, April, 1927, p. 87.

Smith stressed in 1927, that "if there is anything needed among the people today more than another, it seems to me it is that we shall honor Home Evening."⁴⁶ One year earlier he indicated that the announcement of this program was inspired, and he further prophesied: "If parents will hold a weekly home evening the Lord will add his blessing."⁴⁷ Said he: Discord shall be replaced

⁴⁶ CR, April, 1927, p. 87.

⁴⁷ Commenting further on this, he said:

"President Joseph F. Smith was inspired to give unto us the wise counsel to be more with our children. Notwithstanding the many things that occupy our time--the business of life, theatres, parties, socials, automobiles, pleasure resorts, the canyons and lakes--all these things that we may enjoy in moderation; notwithstanding the pursuit of life whereby we gain a livelihood, that prophet of the Lord gave to us this advice: that we should so arrange our time that one evening each week would find the Latter-day Saints in their own homes, associated with their own children, and there teach them the things that the Lord has decreed that they should know. It is not sufficient that my children are taught faith, repentance, and baptism, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost in the auxiliary organization. My Father in Heaven has commanded that I should do that myself. I have read you that the Lord told one man that the cause of his distress was that he had not taught his children light and truth. There is anguish in some of the homes of the Latter-day Saints today because we have neglected our opportunity, and have failed to teach our children as we should. If the home evening could only be a fact among the Latter-day Saints, if during one evening a week we would live with our own, under the influence of the spirit of the Lord, at our own firesides surrounded by those with whom the Lord has given unto us, and told us, particularly, that we should instruct them, how many happy homes there would be where today there is sorrow and discord and distress. Fathers and mothers would elicit from their children that respect that is due to parents who are model parents, and who have in their hearts a desire to teach their loved ones. We are told in Luke that there would be a time when men would be choked with the cares and the riches and the pleasures of life. I have in my mind, as I stand here even now, men and women that I love, whose very spirituality is being choked by those very things, and the adversary is leading them along that easy pathway of pleasure and they are neglecting their duty as parents and as members of the Church of Jesus Christ." CR, April, 1926, p. 145.

by happiness."⁴⁸

The Principles to be Taught

In his characteristically concrete way, President Smith did not leave parents unguided as to what they were to teach. Nor did he merely give general ideas, but specified seven main directives.

First, he stressed the reading of the scriptures. The Church is based on the writings found in the Standard Works, and President Smith felt that parents should encourage their children to "read the word of the Lord as it has been revealed to us in all dispensations." He also emphasized that not only was it the task of parents to read the scriptures in their home, but to explain them to their children so that they understood them.⁴⁹ He advised parents:

We take our boys and girls in their tender years and lay a foundation for an understanding of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the History of the Church, so that when they are old enough to come in contact with individuals in the world they have a fund of information by which they are not only able to defend their faith, but are qualified to advocate their faith in such a way that others may be inspired and interested in it.⁵⁰

He felt so strongly about this principle that, in 1917, he advised parents that the Lord would hold them responsible if they failed to teach their

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 146.

⁴⁹ CR, April 1929, pp. 30-33.

⁵⁰ CR, April, 1928, p. 46.

children the scriptures. "Will our Father hold us guiltless when we go home, if we have failed to teach our children the importance of these sacred records?" he asked, then said: "I think not."⁵¹

Second, Elder Smith stressed the necessity of teaching children the principles enunciated in the Doctrine and Covenants 68:25, that is, faith in God, so that they would call upon Him; repentance, so that they would not follow the ways of the world; baptism, so that they would follow the example of the Savior; and, the laying on of hands, so that they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and enjoy his guidance.⁵²

Third, President Smith emphasized the importance of prayer in a child's life. He considered it a "privilege" for fathers and mothers to be able to teach their children to pray, and he recalled with fond memory when he was first taught to pray by his mother.⁵³ Prayer becomes a real power to keep people on the pathway to eternal life,⁵⁴ he emphasized, and children need to know that they can approach their Heavenly Father in times of need, and that he will answer them. He said:

⁵¹CR, Oct., 1917, pp. 43-44. During this same conference he said:

"I admonish you, O Israel, search the scriptures; read them in your homes; teach your families what the Lord has said, and let us spend less of our time reading the unimportant and often harmful literature of the day, and go to the fountain of truth and read the word of the Lord." Ibid., p. 41.

⁵²CR, April, 1916, pp. 46-47.

⁵³CR, Oct., 1948, p. 166.

⁵⁴CR, April, 1933, p. 72.

Now, fathers and mothers, appreciate your children. Don't turn them over to somebody else to train and educate in regard to matters of eternal life. This is your privilege, and it is a privilege. Teach them to pray and walk uprightly before the Lord, and then in time of need they can go to him, and he will answer their prayers. It will be astonishing to you the great happiness that will come into your home that you theretofore have not enjoyed, if you will follow this counsel.⁵⁵

Another teaching Elder Smith learned in his home was the importance of obeying the law of the Sabbath Day. He admonished parents to teach their children a fundamental rule pertaining to happiness, that is, by keeping the Sabbath Day holy children would enjoy happiness. If they broke this sacred commandment, they would experience unhappiness in their lives. He admonished:

Brethren, it is not an insignificant thing to violate the Sabbath day. I want to say that you lose every time you violate the Sabbath day, you lose more than you can gain, no matter what you may think you are going to gain, but your boys and girls sometimes do not understand that. Teach it to them. Teach them that their homes may be the abiding place of prayer.

I remember when I was a child, living right across the street from here and the boys would come over to our place on Sunday after Sunday School, and I was like the boys, I thought it would be lots of fun to play ball and to play other games. But I had a wonderful mother. She did not say, "You cannot do it," but she did say: "Son, you will be happier if you do not do that. Let the boys go home and read a good book."⁵⁶

⁵⁵CR, Oct., 1948, p. 166.

⁵⁶CR, Oct., 1948, p. 188. It might be noted here that George Albert Smith's teachings pertaining to obedience to the laws of God reflect the principle of Christ when He annunciated, "I am come that they might have life, and that more abundantly." Hence, President Smith's theology is a positive one pertaining to the fulness of joy or happiness through keeping the commandments.

Fifth, he taught the importance of Christian morality. During Elder Smith's age there was much talk about the necessity of teaching sex education in schools.⁵⁷ President Smith did not agree with this idea, but stressed, instead, that virtue and the proper role of sex were to be taught in the home. He strongly felt that it was not safe to leave this kind of teaching to schools or any other secular institution outside the home.⁵⁸ Again he was practical in that he did not merely give counsel, but showed how this counsel could be carried out, and he indicated that parents should explain the Lord's plan for marital relationships to their children. He said:

Do not take it for granted that they understand, but in their tender years explain to them the purpose of life and guide them that they may feel that it is a blessing from the Lord to be members of the Church and to be sons and daughters of the living God.⁵⁹

Summarizing his position on the importance of parents teaching their children principles of morality, President Smith warned them that in the final judgment they would be justified only if they taught their children the sacredness of their bodies, inspired in them a desire to build a character beyond reproach, and impressed upon them the dangers that would confront them in their contact with the evils that afflict mankind. He advised:

⁵⁷ See for example Education Index, edited by Dorothy Ross Carpenter (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1941-7), Under "Sex Education," for numerous articles.

⁵⁸ CR, April, 1929, p. 32.

⁵⁹ IE, May, 1947, p. 267.

We should stress the necessity of morality among the rising generation. It is not safe for us to leave to our public schools and to other institutions outside of our homes the training of our boys and girls with reference to a proper conduct in life. If we do not teach them the sacredness of these bodies of ours, if we do not inspire in them a desire to build character that is beyond reproach, if we fail to impress upon them the danger that confronts them in their contact with the evils that afflict mankind, we will not be justified by saying that we did not realize how serious it was.⁶⁰

Sixth, President Smith stressed the necessity of teaching children the importance of work. He was concerned with the growing tendency in the world toward rapid living, and in the increase of pleasure seeking. Referring to his childhood again, he recalled how he felt favored if he could attend two movies a season, or attend the park once a year. "Today," he observed, "many of our young people are devoted to light amusements."⁶¹

Elder Smith reminded parents of the prophecy made by Paul the Apostle when he said that in the last days perilous times would come when people would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,"⁶² and indicated that it would be sad if the evil of laziness were to happen in the homes of the Latter-day Saints.⁶³ He also admonished parents to teach their children industry and an appreciation for the guidance of the Lord. He said:

⁶⁰CR, April, 1929, p. 32.

⁶¹CR, April, 1915, p. 95.

⁶²II Timothy 3:1-7.

⁶³CR, April, 1915, p. 95.

I feel very much concerned, when I think of the temptations that are everywhere present. The very fact that so much wealth has been made available to many people gives the youth in some instances the feeling that because their parents are well-to-do, honest toil is not necessary or desirable; and yet I am satisfied that no people have ever lived upon the earth who have failed to earn their livelihood by integrity and industry, but have gone to decay.

I wish there were some way of inculcating into the minds of our boys and girls a greater feeling of appreciation for the advice and counsel of our Heavenly Father, and a desire to benefit by it.⁶⁴

Seventh, George Albert Smith taught the importance of the Word of Wisdom. Another of the many social changes in his day concerned the loosening of liquor regulations. Elder Smith raised his voice frequently in opposing the changes of such legislation. He consistently advised members of the Church to obey the Word of Wisdom, and he admonished parents to teach this commandment in their homes. He said:

Oh, how I wish the sons and daughters of the Latter-day Saints could understand the importance of this law! How I wish that the fathers and mothers who tamper with these things, and offer excuses for themselves, might understand that they are bringing humiliation and distress upon their children.⁶⁵

Elder Smith gave the following promise to those parents who would live this commandment and teach it to their children:

Fathers and mothers, if they will keep the Word of Wisdom may transmit to their offspring virtues and strength that they could not otherwise give to them. I believe that the companion-

⁶⁴CR, April, 1929, p. 32.

⁶⁵CR, April, 1907, p. 20.

ship of the Spirit of our Father will be in the hearts and homes of those who keep this law, and their desire to be obedient will be transmitted to their children.⁶⁶

ADMONITIONS TO CHILDREN

A Warning to Youth

Not only did President Smith recognize the important role of parents in the home, he also recognized the need for children to be responsive to their parents and to the commandments of the Lord. He said:

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 21. It might be of interest to note here that Elder Smith frequently stressed the importance of the Word of Wisdom. He looked upon it as a test of obedience for the saints. In 1932, he said:

"Our Heavenly Father, knowing the calamities that would exist in the hearts of conspiring men, gave us the Word of Wisdom by revelation and warned us and forewarned us of what would come to pass. It does seem that every attempt of the adversary has been made to neutralize the advice of our Heavenly Father. I hope there are no members of the Church, who have been honored with the priesthood, who would in any way weaken the power of God to bless his children by seeking to place temptation in their way, or who would think it an insignificant thing to try to break down the barriers God has raised for the protection of his children." CR, Oct., 1932, pp. 27-28.

On another occasion he said:

"I firmly believe that by reason of neglect of this simple requirement, faith has diminished in the hearts of some of our people, that by a more general observance of the Word of Wisdom, faith will be increased among the Latter-day Saints, and greater knowledge will flow to us as a result; for, by obedience to it, there will come a disposition to obey other laws of our Father, and compliance with each insures a blessing. If this law, that is adapted to the capacity of the weakest of us, is obeyed, it will be a foundation upon which may be added many great blessings that our Father will be pleased to bestow, that otherwise we would not be entitled to and could not receive. How can any of us feel justified in ignoring a simple law of God that He, by His own voice, has said any of us can obey? Can we expect to be able to keep a higher law, and be able to attain great exaltation, if we fail to keep this simple requirement? CR, Oct., 1908, p. 84.

So, I raise my warning voice this day to the youth of Zion. Be not deceived when storms of persecution break over your heads. There will be unkind things said in the future as there have been in the past. See that your feet are planted upon the rock. See that you learn the desires of the Master toward you, and, knowing those desires, see to it that you keep his laws and commands. See to it that the purity of your lives shall entitle you to the companionship of the Holy Spirit, because if you are pure and virtuous and upright, the evil one will have no power to destroy you. Bear in mind, my young friends, that this is a serious matter. This life is not given to us as a pastime. There was a solemn purpose in our creation, in the life that God has given to us. Let us study what that purpose is that we may progress and obtain eternal life.⁶⁷

Here again Elder Smith counselled the saints by use of experiences from his own life. This particular story had a marked influence on his life, and he used it repeatedly to encourage young people to honor their father and mother. He said:

A number of years ago I was seriously ill. In fact, I think everyone gave me up but my wife. With my family I went to St. George, Utah, to see if it would improve my health. We went as far as we could by train, and then continued the journey in a wagon, in the bottom of which a bed had been made for me.

In St. George we arranged for a tent for my health and comfort, with a built-in floor raised about a foot above the ground, and we could roll up the south side of the tent to make the sunshine and fresh air available. I became so weak as to be scarcely able to move. It was a slow and exhausting effort for me even to turn over in bed.

One day, under these conditions, I lost consciousness of my surroundings and thought I had passed to the Other Side. I found myself standing with my back to a large and beautiful lake, facing a great forest of trees. There was no one in sight, and there was no boat upon the lake or any other visible means to indicate how I might have arrived there. I realized, or seemed to realize, that I had finished my work in mortality and had gone home. I

⁶⁷ CR, Oct., 1906, p. 48.

began to look around, to see if I could not find someone. There was no evidence of anyone's living there, just those great beautiful trees in front of me and the wonderful lake behind me.

I began to explore and soon I found a trail through the woods which seemed to have been used very little, and which was almost obscured by grass. I followed this trail, and after I had walked for some time and had traveled a considerable distance through the forest, I saw a man coming towards me. I became aware that he was a very large man, and I hurried my steps to reach him, because I recognized him as my grandfather. In mortality he weighed over three hundred pounds, so you may know he was a large man. I remember how happy I was to see him coming. I had been given his name and had always been proud of it.

My grandfather came within a few feet of me, he stopped. His stopping was an invitation for me to stop. Then - and this I would like the boys and girls and young people never to forget - he looked at me very earnestly and said:

"I would like to know what you have done with my name."

Everything I had done passed before me as though it were a flying picture on a screen - everything I had done. Quickly this vivid retrospect came down to the very time I was standing there. My whole life had passed before me. I smiled and looked at my grandfather and said:

"I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed."

He stepped forward and took me in his arms, and as he did so, I became conscious again of my earthly surroundings. My pillow was wet as though water had been poured on it - wet with tears of gratitude that I could answer unashamed.

I have thought of this many times, and I want to tell you that I have been trying, more than ever since that time, to take care of that name. So I want to say to the boys and girls, to the young men and women, to the youth of the Church and all the world: Honor your fathers and your mothers. Honor the names that you bear, because some day you will have the privilege and the obligation of reporting to them (and to your Father in Heaven) what you have done with their name.⁶⁸

It was Elder Smith's plea that youth honor their parents, and it was his promise that if youth did this they would be blessed with a testimony of

⁶⁸IE, March, 1947, p.

the gospel. He said:

Now, to those who are younger in this congregation let me say: Not very many years hence your fathers and mothers will go back to receive the reward of their faithful labors. I plead with you, boys and girls of Isarel, to honor the names that you bear; love and revere the parents God has given you, and so conduct your lives that day by day you will give them joy in their declining years. If you will do this the same firm testimony that has been given to them will be bestowed upon you, and your sons and daughters in due time will be found numbered with the Saints of God, valiant for the cause of truth, and the dissemination of the Gospel in the nations of the earth.⁶⁹

SUMMARY

In his instructions on the role of the family, George Albert Smith's style of teaching involved the sharing of those experiences that were of deep personal meaning to him. His teachings were full of love, and they expressed the joy that he learned from his own father and mother. The path to this kind of joyful family experience was expressed to the saints primarily through a sharing of the fond memories of his youth. His experience of being taught by his own mother and father had a profound impact upon his life, and he encouraged all parents to treat their children as their most important responsibility. This teaching formed the core of President Smith's views on the family.

A detailed analysis cannot be found in Elder Smith's discourses and writings of such doctrines as the nature of the family unit in the celestial kingdom, the role of the temple in the patriarchal order, or the doctrine of

⁶⁹CR, April, 1904, p. 65.

the Holy Spirit of Promise. However, his practical emphasis on the family was crucial to the period of time he served as a General Authority. Hard times demanded a message that was clear, simple, and definite. Such was the message of George Albert Smith on the family.

Chapter 7

CHARITY

Let us love one another. If there ever was a time when we needed to be kind, it is now. If there was a time when we needed to be patient, it is now, and if we would keep one of the commandments of God that he said was second to the greatest, we will love our neighbors as ourselves.¹

These words of George Albert Smith convey the meaning of his ministry more clearly, perhaps more urgently, than any others. His life and teachings were based completely on the two great commandments given by Christ: Love of God and love of neighbor. President Smith's utter devotion to these two commandments can be seen throughout his life and throughout the pages of this thesis.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CHARITY

A Key Phrase for the Saints

President Smith felt that the phrase "love thy neighbor as thyself" was a key phrase for the Latter-day Saints, in bringing them nearer to the Lord.² His frequent plea to the saints was: "Let love abound in your hearts."³

¹IE, May, 1943, p. 383.

²CR, April, 1948, p. 15. See also IE, Nov., 1945, p. 717.

³CR, April, 1948, p. 164.

Elder Smith believed that true love or charity began in the home, and this subject found frequent mention in his discourses. He often encouraged the saints to make their homes "abiding places" of love, prayer and the spirit of the Lord.⁴ It was pointed out in the preceeding chapter that he consistently encouraged husbands and wives to love one another through kindness and righteous living.⁵ He admonished parents to love their children by teaching them the gospel and by being proper examples.⁶ He encouraged children to love their parents by being obedient to them and to the commandments of the Lord.

A Light to Others

Once the saints had begun to practice charity within their homes they could then turn to their fellowmen. Elder Smith taught that no member of the Church could avoid the responsibility of being a "light" to his fellowmen. This "light", he said, was the light of righteousness, the light of faith, the light of honesty, the light of generosity, and the light of truthfulness.⁷

It is stressed in Chapter 8 that Elder Smith encouraged the saints to share the gospel with their non-member friends. He suggested that the major

⁴ It might be noted here that President Smith frequently used the phrase "abiding places" when referring to love, prayer, and the spirit of the Lord in Latter-day Saint homes.

⁵ CR, Oct., 1905, p. 29.

⁶ CR, April, 1948, pp. 183-184.

⁷ Ibid. See also Chapter 8, "Missionary Work", p. 3.

motive in sharing the gospel should be a love for others. He said:

I pray that the love of the gospel will burn in our souls to enrich our lives, that it will cause husbands to be kinder to wives, and wives to be kinder to husbands, parents to children, and children to parents because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is a gospel of love and kindness. It will cause us, if we are living as we should, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and go out of our way, if possible, to help them understand better the purpose of life.⁸

The Need to be Forgiving

President Smith indicated that one of the best ways to love others sincerely was through forgiveness. He emphasized in his first discourse as President of the Church that the saints should learn to forgive one another, as Christ forgave, and that they should call to the attention of God's "other children" that "anger and hatred do not bring peace and happiness."⁹ As early as 1905, he said:

The spirit of forgiveness is something that the Latter-day Saints might with profit exhibit more fully among themselves. Sometimes a brother in authority has offended, in some way, one of the members of the Church, probably unknown to himself, and that child of our Father's silently continues to feel hurt, instead of doing as the Lord has commanded, going to the offending man and stating to him, in kindness, the feelings of his heart, and giving that brother an opportunity to say to him, "I am sorry I have offended you, and I desire that you shall forgive me." The result is that, in some instances, we find

⁸CR, Oct., 1948, pp. 167-168.

⁹IE, Nov., 1945, p. 716. It is to be noted here that Elder Smith consistently referred to non-members of the Church as "our Father's other children."

a resentful feeling existing that has been instigated by Satan. Now, we must get into a condition where we can forgive our brethren.¹⁰

He expressed the wish, in 1934, that the saints be less prone to find fault with each other, and indicated the difference between constructive and destructive criticism:

This morning, not in criticism, not in a spirit of fault-finding I plead with you my brethren and my sisters, let us be generous with one another. Let us be as patient with one another as we would like others to be with us. Let us see the virtues of our neighbors and our friends and speak of those virtues, not find fault and criticize. If we will do that we will radiate sunshine, and those who know us best will love us.

Aren't we rather prone to see the limitations and the weaknesses of our neighbors? Yet that is contrary to the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a class of people who find fault and criticize always in a destructive way. There is a difference in criticism. If we can criticize constructively under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, we may change beneficially and properly some of the things that are being done. But if we have the spirit of fault finding, of pointing out the

¹⁰CR, Oct., 1905, p. 27. At this same conference he said:

"At times we find little difficulties arising among us, and we forget the patience our Father in Heaven exercises towards us, and we magnify in our hearts some trivial thing that our brother or sister may have done or said concerning us. We do not always live that law which the Lord desires us to observe in regard to these matters. We forget the commandment He gave to the Apostles in the words of the prayer, wherein they were told to pray that they might be forgiven their debts even as they forgive their debtors. I feel that we have to learn a great deal in this regard. We have not complied as completely as we should with the requirements of our Heavenly Father."

weaknesses and failings of others in a destructive manner, that never comes as a result of the companionship of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and is always harmful.¹¹

From the above remarks the reader can sense President Smith's deep understanding that hatred begets hatred and that only love begets love.

President Smith believed that another way to show love was through material generosity. He therefore encouraged the saints to support the Church's welfare program. Perhaps no program adopted by the Latter-day Saint Church in the Twentieth Century has received such universal recognition as its welfare program. Begun in 1936, in response to problems brought about by the depression of 1930, it has become a permanent program of the Church. Authorities of the Church felt the need to develop a system which

¹¹CR, Oct., 1934, p. 50. George Albert Smith felt that it was necessary to have a spirit of forgiveness if one was to be worthy to partake of the sacrament. He indicated in 1908:

"When I remember these words that have been given to us as the revelation of our Father's will, I rejoice when I find our brethren and sisters coming to the sanctuary and partaking of these emblems as indicated-worthily; but I desire to call your attention to the fact that there is danger if we do it unworthily. Before partaking of this sacrament, our hearts should be pure; our hands should be clean; we should be divested of all enmity toward our associates; we should be at peace with our fellow men; and we should have in our hearts a desire to do the will of our Father and to keep all of His commandments. If we do this, partaking of the sacrament will be a blessing to us and will renew our spiritual strength.

May the Lord bless us; may his spirit continue to be poured out upon us. May we love each other, as our Father commanded that we should do. If we can partake of the sacrament worthily, we can love each other even as our Father has ordained; remembering that He has said unto us: 'If ye are not one, ye are not mine.' May we be one. May we be His in very deed - exemplars of His cause and His truth, ever ready to teach and expound it in kindness and love, to the convincing of His children who know not of it." CR, April, 1908, p. 35, 37.

would encourage the Saints to become self-sufficient and able to stay off government relief rolls. George Albert Smith was an Apostle during the formation of the Welfare program and, following World War II, as President of the Church, he witnessed a partial fruition of this program when the Church shipped train carloads of welfare supplies to stricken families in Europe.

The First Presidency, when the Welfare Program was announced in 1936, indicated that it was a system under which the curse of idleness could be eliminated. Work was then re-enthroned as an important principle in the lives of membership of the Church.¹² Elder Smith felt that each member of the Church had a great responsibility in this area, and that participation in this program was one way to "love thy neighbor as thyself."¹³ How could each member of the Church support the welfare program? President Smith encouraged the saints to be industrious,¹⁴ to stay out of

¹²Heber J. Grant, CR, Oct., 1936, p. 3.

¹³CR, April, 1947, p. 162. See also CR, Oct., 1921, p. 42.

¹⁴CR, Oct., 1936, pp. 75-76. Here Elder Smith, who rejoiced in the fact that he had always been able to earn his own living, stressed the necessity of the saints learning to be self-sufficient so that they would not have to "lean" on their neighbors for support. He said further: "One of the greatest curses that could come to humanity would be to lose the powers of work, and yet many seem not to appreciate that fact."

debt,¹⁵ to maintain a year's supply of food,¹⁶ and to be obedient to the commandments of God. Members of the Church, following this advice, would be blessed by the Lord and would be in a stronger position to help

¹⁵CR, April, 1915, p. 97. President Smith held that extravagance was the basis of many financial problems. He encouraged the saints to live within their incomes; to be lenders instead of borrowers; to avoid adding mortgages simply for purchasing new conveniences; to sew their own clothes; to save money by patronizing local businesses; and to avoid useless spending by not catering to the whims of fashion.

Fourteen years later, in 1929, he expressed the fear that even the Latter-day Saints were, in many cases, "blinded by their own vanity, by their desire to be what the world is." Elder Smith offered a solemn warning to those who were thus blinded. He said: "Those who desire to be like the world cannot have the spirit of the Lord." CR, April, 1929, pp. 30-35.

¹⁶The membership of the Church, since the announcement of the welfare program in 1936, has been encouraged to keep on hand a year's supply of food and clothing. George Albert Smith continued to stress this counsel and suggested three reasons as to why the saints should follow it: (1) to assist families through difficult financial periods; (2) to teach the saints the importance of obedience to those whom the Lord has called to lead the Church; and (3) to permit the saints to accumulate enough food that, in times of misfortune, they might be able to share with others. He said: "I am sure the Lord loves those humble, faithful souls who are willing to reach out and touch those who are in need, whether it be with food or clothing or bedding or kindness because that is a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ." CR, April, 1947, p. 162. See also CR, Oct., 1921, p. 38. Here Elder Smith suggested a solution to food shortage: "There is no reason why all the children of men should not be provided with the necessities of life, if the products of the earth were equitably distributed, and they could be more evenly divided, if men would turn to the Lord and keep His commandments."

others materially.¹⁷

A LIVING EXAMPLE OF CHARITY

The Principle of Charity Expressed

George Albert Smith's living example of charity inspired those around him to bring love into their lives. Those close to President Smith saw this clearly and movingly as presented in the quotes to follow. President Joseph Fielding Smith said of him:

He kept the second great commandment as faithfully as any man I ever knew. His thoughts were constantly employed in the interest of the wayward whom he tried to bring into a better way of life. He never spoke evil of any man; although he deplored the actions of the wicked, he was ever ready to extend the hand of forgiveness to them if they would repent.¹⁸

¹⁷ CR, Oct., 1921, pp. 41-42. Elder Smith believed that when people live the commandments of God they are blessed financially. It might be noted here that one of President Smith's favorite scripture references was "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." See Appendix A. See also CR, April, 1947, pp. 4, 166, and for Christ's words, Matthew 3:33.

He offered the promise, as President of the Church, that God ". . . will not permit those who do their best to suffer for the necessities of life among the people who are The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." CR, Oct., 1949, pp. 170-171. He indicated, on another occasion, how the Lord might bless these people. He said: "There is no necessity for any man, woman, or child in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to go without, for the Church is organized to help those who lack the necessities of life. There is plenty for all, and to spare." IE, Nov., 1949, p. 787.

¹⁸ IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

Elder Smith exemplified, not only in word but also in deed, his love for mankind.¹⁹ We find, in his words, such expressions as: "Brethren, as one who loves you"; "With love in my heart for every one of you"; "I love my brethren"; and "I bear you my witness of the gospel of love."²⁰ Throughout his discourses can be found many examples of his charity and kindness toward his fellowmen. For example, his expressions of gratitude to the choirs who participated in the conference sessions,²¹ to the gardeners who

¹⁹ Perhaps President J. Reuben Clark best expressed this when he said:

"Throughout our association together which has been close and intimate, and under various and trying circumstances, I have never known him even to indicate that he was impatient, that he had lost his temper, or even that he was under the necessity of controlling it.

Evil slunk away from him at all times. It could not abide the presence of his righteous living. I do not know what more I can say in tribute to him than that. . . .

He was one of those few people of whom you can say that he lived as he taught. That was George Albert Smith." IE, June, 1951, p. 405.

²⁰ CR, Oct., 1947, p. 167. See also CR, April, 1948, pp. 163, 184; IE, May, 1950, p. 363.

²¹ CR, Oct., 1947, p. 166. See also CR, April, 1947, p. 166; CR, Oct., 1948, p. 4; IE, Nov., 1945, p. 676. It might be noted here that President Smith frequently praised the Tabernacle Choir and he exemplified a special affection for this Choir. He said the following:

"This morning we have enjoyed this marvelous Tabernacle Choir. Do you realize what it is doing? I wonder if you know how many people appreciate the members of the Choir. These singers interest them in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that none of the rest of us can because they have the facility of the great organ and the combination of their tuneful voices inspired with a desire to bless mankind.

Some time ago I received a request from a fine Catholic man in Northern California who was injured in the World War. He said, 'I wish you would have the Tabernacle Choir sing something for me on a certain Sunday.' He explained that he had to go on the operating table the next day to have his leg taken off and wanted to have the Tabernacle Choir sing for him. He men-

took such good care of the temple grounds,²² to the ushers who assisted in seating the saints at conference,²³ and to all who had made the conference sessions so successful.²⁴ He also showed concern for all of the visitors who came to conference by asking the saints to make sure that these visitors were welcomed, and made comfortable.²⁵

tioned the song he desired to have sung. I telephoned to the Choir leader and asked if it were possible. He said, 'No the program is already prepared, but say to that good man that if he will listen in we will sing something that will be pleasing to him.'

I wrote him that they were going to sing and that it would be something he would enjoy. He asked the hospital attendant if he could have the privilege of bringing a radio into his room, but was told that radios were not allowed in that hospital. He was greatly disappointed. Then he sent for the Superintendent and finally convinced him that he was entitled to a radio. He told him he was going to lose his leg, that he was an ex-soldier in a government hospital and that the radio would not bother anyone else. And so he gained permission to have the radio in his room. Then he sent for his folks who lived sixty or seventy miles north. They came down and sat around his bed and enjoyed the music. When this great choir was singing he listened with genuine satisfaction, the result of which was that the next morning when the doctor examined him, he said: 'There is no necessity of taking you into the operating room, man, your leg is getting all right. We will not take it off.'

In a few days my friend wrote to me and said: 'I wonder if other people would think what I think,' inferring that he had been healed by hearing the hymns of praise that the Lord loves to hear.

I want to say to this Tabernacle Choir that is only one of the many blessings that we could trace to them if we had time, for others have come to my attention." CR, Oct., 1941, pp. 98-99.

²²CR, Oct., 1948, p. 6.

²³IE, May, 1950, p. 362.

²⁴CR, April, 1947, p. 6. It might also be noted here that President Smith's birthday was near the time of the annual April Conferences, and he consistently thanked those who had sent him birthday wishes.

²⁵CR, April, 1947, p. 6. See also CR, April, 1948, p. 182; CR, Oct., 1950, p. 181.

Elder Smith's concern was not only for the members of the Church; for the early pioneers who sacrificed so much,²⁶ or for those who actively fulfilled their role in the Church²⁷; but also for those outside the Church.²⁸ On one occasion he called on a non-member of the Church, whose grandfather had assisted the early saints, to speak in conference.²⁹ He also had the sensitivity to express his love and appreciation for such non-members of the Church as government officials, and leaders of other churches.³⁰

The Principle of Charity
Exemplified

President Smith's personal secretary, D. Arthur Haycock, recounted some examples of his active love for all classes and types of people.

He said:

He loved people - all kinds of people. On many occasions we would be driving around Salt Lake City and he would say, 'Arthur let's go visit the elderly folks.' He also had a great love for little children and visited the Primary Children's Hospital at Christmas.

²⁶CR, Oct., 1947, pp. 6-7. See also CR, April, 1947, p. 162; CR, April, 1948, p. 13.

²⁷CR, April, 1950, p. 184.

²⁸IE, Nov., 1945, p. 714.

²⁹CR, Oct., 1947, pp. 4, 160-161.

³⁰IE, July, 1949, p. 429.

He would visit every bed and pat each child on the hand and give each a book. Those who wanted a blessing got one. No one ever met George Albert Smith without coming away feeling better.³¹

Mr. Haycock, in writing of President Smith's dedication to the deaf and blind, told how a whole congregation "sang", in sign language, "We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet", to show their appreciation for George Albert Smith and the love he had shown to them. And, on another occasion, how a blind woman expressed her love for Elder Smith. She wrote:

When life beats hard with stormy hands
 And bitter teardrops fall,
 When friendless winter chills my soul
 And empty echoes call,
 'Tis then I turn with eager steps-
 My steps though spent and lame-
 To find an understanding heart
 Where burns a friendly flame.
 A heart where gentle wisdom dwells
 Compassionate and kind,
 Whose faith in God and man has taught
 A like faith to the blind.
 I lay my troubles at his feet;
 Each trial, each bitter loss,
 The burdens of a hundred more-
 He helps us bear the cross.
 Consecrated by our Lord
 With apostolic light.
 Consecrated in his soul
 He makes our darkness bright.
 A loving radiance he sheds
 That comes from God to man.
 And we who walk in life's long night
 Can see as others can,
 Although his tender, loving face

³¹D. Arthur Haycock, personal interview, August 5, 1972. It might be of interest to note here that President Smith had a great love for the Indian people, and it was under his direction that projects and programs were instituted in the Church to bless and aid them. See IE, April, 1950, p. 292.

From us is shut apart,
 We see the gracious wisdom
 Of his understanding heart.
 We feel the peace within his soul
 And know a peace of our own.
 We hear his silent prayer
 And know we do not walk alone.
 His faith in us will give us strength
 As unseen paths we plod,
 Our souls uplifted by this man
 In partnership with God.³²

Just prior to George Albert Smith's death he made a statement that represents his own personal philosophy of the principle of charity. He wrote:

In these eighty years, I have traveled more than a million miles in the world in the interest of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been in many climes and in many lands and in many nations, and from my childhood people have been kind and helpful to me, members of the Church and non-members as well. Wherever I have gone, I have found noble men and women.

I do not have an enemy that I know of, and there is no one in the world that I have any enmity towards. All men and all women are my Father's children, and I have sought during my life to observe the wise direction of the Redeemer of mankind - to love my neighbor as myself.³³

³²IE, April, 1950, p. 288. In this same article, Mr. Haycock shared another experience that exemplified President Smith's love and sensitivity for people. He wrote:

"On a recent trip to the Middle West, he was rushing to catch a train when a mother with four small youngsters stopped him so that her children might have the opportunity of shaking hands with him. Someone took a picture of the incident, and a copy was sent to President Smith with this notation: 'I am sending you this picture because it is a graphic illustration of the man we believe you are. The reason we treasure it so is because, as busy as you were, in spite of the fact you were being hurried to your car and then to your waiting train, you still took time out to shake the hand of each child in this family.'"

³³IE, April, 1950, p. 263.

George Albert Smith gave of his boundless energy in freely dedicating his time to such interdenominational organizations as The Boy Scouts, farm organizations, and historic societies. And, while we might list numerous other examples of his charity toward the poor, the afflicted, the blind, the deaf, and the crippled,³⁴ perhaps the clearest example of his feelings can be found in his personal creed by which he strove to pattern his life:

I would be a friend to the friendless and find joy in ministering to the needs of the poor.

I would visit the sick and afflicted and inspire in them a desire for faith to be healed.

I would teach the truth to the understanding and blessing of all mankind.

I would seek out the erring one and try to bring him back to a righteous and a happy life.

I would not seek to force people to live up to my ideals but rather love them into doing the thing that is right.

³⁴President Henry D. Moyle said, for example:

"I was greatly impressed when President Smith became President of this Church. One of his early responsibilities as president was to attend a welfare meeting of the general committee on Friday morning. His conduct there was indicative of the life that he had lived, the service that he had rendered his people, the knowledge that he had of the individual members of this Church. That first morning a case came before us for his consideration. It was the application for assistance of a humble Saint. He had come from a country in Europe, had not been here long, unknown to most of us although some of us had labored as missionaries in that same country. In the presentation of his case we were just a little impersonal and had not particularly emphasized his name. But the mere mention of it caused President Smith to ask if that man was not a former resident of Berlin. And when we told him that he was, he said, 'How can we refrain from giving consideration to his case? His generosity in the Church deserves our help. It was my privilege to eat at that man's table.' We found out later that he and his family had saved of their earnings for a week and had little or nothing to eat for that week, practically fasted in order that they might have the means with which to spread what they thought was an appropriate dinner before a servant of God who had been sent into their midst, one of the Quorum of the Twelve, George Albert Smith. I tell you, his interest in the people of this Church individually can hardly be excelled. He was interested in the smallest detail." IE, June, 1951, p. 453.

I would live with the masses and help to solve their problems that their earth life may be happy.

I would avoid the publicity of high positions and discourage the flattery of thoughtless friends.

I would not knowingly wound the feeling of any, not even one who may have wronged me, but would seek to do him good and make him my friend.

I would overcome the tendency to selfishness and jealousy and rejoice in the successes of all the children of my Heavenly Father.

I would not be an enemy to any living soul.

Knowing that the Redeemer of mankind has offered to the world the only plan that will fully develop us and make us really happy here and hereafter, I feel it is not only a duty but also a blessed privilege to disseminate this truth.³⁵

A creed such as this could not help but be translated into action.

Charity for George Albert Smith was more than an attitude, it was extending a helping hand to all the children of God. With love for all people, he said in 1936: "Our eternal happiness will be in proportion to the way we devote ourselves to helping others."³⁶

SUMMARY

The spirit of George Albert Smith's love and charity was expressed in his dealings with everyone. He made the love of Christ live through simple gestures, kind words, and a continual readiness to forgive. Elder Smith looked on each human being as a child of God and was sensitive to the feelings and comfort of all those with whom he came in contact. The best

³⁵IE, March, 1932, p. 265. D. Arthur Haycock indicated that President Smith was a living example of every statement in this creed.

³⁶CR, Oct., 1936, p. 71.

example of his depth of feeling was his own personal creed, written in 1914 as a set of ideals. Those who knew him personally said that he epitomized this creed and that it was a fitting epitaph to his life.

Viewed in light of the contribution of other prophets, President Smith did not add much new theology in verbalizing the principle of charity. Elder Smith simply adapted them to his time. The tumultuous years of his term as a General Authority witnessed much hatred and sorrow. His charity for all mankind was the perfect response to the needs of his day. The love of George Albert Smith was the love of Jesus Christ made manifest.

Chapter 8

MISSIONARY WORK

I remember that in revelation after revelation given just before the Church was organized, and in its early day, that men came to the man whom God had chosen as His prophet and asked that he inquire of the Lord what was the most important labor for them to perform. Uniformly, the answer came that the greatest and most profitable labor in which they could engage was to bring souls to a knowledge of the gospel.¹

Missionary work has been a major responsibility of the Church since the first missionary of the Church, Samuel Smith, took up his labors.²

Joseph Smith consistently advised early members of the Church that missionary work was the most important work they could engage in.³ This theme was continued by President George Albert Smith as he taught the need for members of the Church to discharge this responsibility. Evidence of this is found in the emphasis he placed on missionary work during his administration as President of the Church. The following chart indicates the growth of

¹CR, Oct., 1916, p. 32.

²For further details on this missionary journey see Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History, pp. 103-104.

³D&C 15:6. See also D&C 16:6.

missionary activity between 1945 and 1950.⁴

<u>Year</u>	<u>Missions in the Church</u>	<u>Total Missionaries in Missions</u>	<u>Convert Baptisms</u>
1945	38	592	4,957
1946	38	3,213	5,929
1947	42	4,132	10,471
1948	42	4,759	11,356
1949	44	4,477	16,261
1950	43	5,313	14,700

To understand the relationship between President Smith's theology and the emphasis he placed on missionary work in the Church, it is necessary to examine his teachings on: (1) the importance of members sharing the gospel with non-members; (2) the blessings that result from missionary service; (3) the problems encountered in missionary work and some prophecies pertaining to it; and (4) the ways by which members may participate in missionary programs.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSIONARY WORK

A Major Responsibility

One year after becoming an apostle, George Albert Smith stated unequivocally that the mission of the Church was to save souls, to bless

⁴These statistics are from the annual statistical report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints found in the April Conference Report for the years 1945 to 1950.

them, and to prepare them to go back into the presence of God.⁵ Consequently, he taught that members of the Church had two major responsibilities. The first was to keep the commandments of God, and the second was to teach the commandments to those who did not understand them. He said:

Now, I do not understand that we are serving God with all our might if we forsake his children, or if we spend so much of our time selfishly building up ourselves, accumulating things of this life, and leave his children in darkness, when we could bring them into the light. My understanding is that the most important mission that I have in this life is: first, to keep the commandments of God, as they have been taught to me; and next, to teach them to my Father's children who do not understand them. It makes little difference, when I go to the other side, whether I have been a man of wealth in this world or not, unless I have used that wealth to bless my fellow men. Though I be a wanderer in this world, and suffer for the necessities of life, if by reason of the knowledge that my Father has given me, I devote myself to the instruction of his children, to planting faith in their hearts, to dissipating the errors that have come to them by tradition, I believe when I go to the other side that I will find there a bank account that will be beyond compare with what I would have, if I lived for the things of this earth alone.⁶

He stressed this theme in his first conference address as President of the Church. "Our most important obligation. . . ," he said, "is to divide with our Father's children all the fundamental truths, and regulations which prepare us for eternal life, known as the gospel of Jesus Christ."⁷

⁵CR, Oct., 1904, p. 66.

⁶CR, Oct., 1916, pp. 50-51.

⁷CR, Oct., 1945, p. 119.

George Albert looked upon his membership in the Church as a blessing which had brought him peace, happiness, and joy.⁸ He consistently referred to church meetings and assignments as a "privilege" and "opportunity."⁹ But with this "privilege", he taught, there came the obligation for the saints to let their "light shine before men."¹⁰ This reference to the command that Jesus Christ gave to his disciples was a frequent theme in President Smith's discourses.¹¹ He admonished the saints on a number of occasions: "Do not hide your candle under a bushel. Do not conceal the knowledge God has bestowed upon you from your fellows."¹²

A Warning to the Saints

Elder Smith's teachings on the importance of missionary work were based on his view of the purpose of life. Because the gospel brings such joy and happiness, it needs to be shared in this life with others so they can experience the same joy. He saw this as a responsibility that members

⁸ Sharing the Gospel with Others, pp. 214-215.

⁹ See for example CR, Oct., 1948, p. 8; IE, May, 1944, p. 274; IE, May, 1943, p. 336.

¹⁰ CR, April, 1948, pp. 183-184, citing Matthew 5:16. For further reference to Elder Smith's use of the scripture "let your light shine" see Appendix A.

¹¹ See for example: CR, April, 1905, p. 63 ; CR, April, 1913, p. 29 ; CR, April, 1914, p. 13 .

¹² Oct., 1916, pp. 50-51. Note this parallel with Christ's teachings, see Matthew 5:15-16.

needed to fulfill if they were to be truly happy, both now and in eternity.¹³

He reminded members of the Church: "We will attain our exhaltation in the Celestial Kingdom only on the condition that we divide with our Father's other children the blessings of the gospel."¹⁴ He warned the saints, as early as 1916, "The Lord holds us responsible to call His children to repentance and for the promulgation of His truth." He further emphasized that if members failed to share the gospel with their friends and neighbors, the Lord would require at their hands "on the other side of the veil" what they had failed to do.¹⁵ Six months later, at the next general conference, he repeated a similar warning and said that unless the members increased their missionary zeal they would be condemned in the next life by their friends and neighbors for failing to share the truth of the gospel. He warned:

It is my firm conviction, my brethren and sisters, that unless we stir ourselves more than we are doing, that when we go to the other side of the veil, we will meet there men and women who have been our neighbors, and associates, and lived among us, that will condemn us because we have been so inconsiderate of them in not telling them of the truth of the gospel of our Lord.¹⁶

George Albert Smith taught that the saints were under obligation, because of their membership in the Church, to share the gospel with their

¹³ Ibid., pp. 49-50. See also CR, April, 1922, p. 53.

¹⁴ CR, Oct., 1930, p. 31.

¹⁵ CR, April, 1916, p. 48.

¹⁶ CR, Oct., 1916, pp. 49-50.

friends and neighbors and stressed this as their most important duty next to keeping the commandments.¹⁷

THE BLESSING OF MISSIONARY SERVICE

Elder Smith equated the receiving of blessings from God as being in proportion to the degree that people were involved in missionary work.¹⁸

These blessings, he indicated, brought peace and happiness beyond all understanding. He referred specifically to the next life, and centered his theology around the joy that would be experienced between those who had shared the gospel, and those who had accepted it. He said:

What a joy it will be on the other side of the veil, to find these good men and women who are living up to such light as they have, trying to do their duty to God, and by reason of our contact, by reason of our anxiety and willingness to share with them, they will receive other information about the gospel of our Lord and accept the ordinances of His Holy House and be prepared for membership

¹⁷ President Henry D. Moyle explained how Elder Smith practiced what he preached. He said:

"President Smith was a great missionary. As we were going over to Hawaii on the boat, on the night of the captain's dinner President Smith felt that he should do something for the captain and not merely be the recipient of some favor from him. And so, as we went to the dining room that evening, President Smith had in his hand one of his favorite copies of The Improvement Era. It was, of course, a formal affair at the captain's table; the ladies and the men were dressed in formal attire. It took a man of the courage of President Smith to do what he did, because before that dinner was over he had gone to the captain of that ship and given to him The Improvement Era and paid his respects to him and his guests." Henry D. Moyle, "A Tribute to President Smith," The Improvement Era, June, 1951, p. 454.

¹⁸ CR, Oct., 1929, p. 25. See also CR, Oct., 1945, p. 119.

in the Celestial Kingdom. How happy it will make you, if when that times comes, when you stand in the presence of the great Judge to give an account of the few years of life that have been spent in mortality, if these our Father's children that He loves as much as He loves us, standing by us, say, Heavenly Father, it was this man who first brought to me the information of Thy glorious truth that provoked in me a desire to seek after Thee more fervently than I had done before. It was this man or this women who did this blessed thing for me.¹⁹

George Albert Smith taught that two major blessings resulted from missionary service. They were, peace and happiness in this life and eternal joy with those that were brought to a knowledge of the truth.

PROBLEMS AND PROPHECIES

The Problem of Prejudice

President Smith indicated that prejudice was the major problem confronting members of the Church. He pointed out that the source of this prejudice against the Church was the adversary, who wielded his strongest efforts to prevent the spread of the Gospel. It was, therefore, the duty of each member through tact, faith, and brotherly love to overcome this prejudice and to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all those who would accept it.

¹⁹ Sharing the Gospel with Others, pp. 214-215. Note the parallel with the teachings of Joseph Smith, "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my father?"

And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" D&C 18:15-16. See also CR, Oct., 1916, pp. 49-50.

Here again Elder Smith shared his belief in the triumph of God over the adversary. He prophesied that the Lord would "level the conditions of the world and humble the children of men until they are repentant and willing to listen."²⁰

A Series of Prophecies

President Smith gave three other prophecies with regards to the spread of the gospel:

First, the time for the Jews to hear the gospel was rapidly approaching.

The gospel has been offered to the Gentiles for almost a hundred years. The time is rapidly approaching when it will be preached to the Jews, who are gathering in from their long dispersion, upon the land of their inheritance. Palestine is to be inhabited as a city without walls and the glory of the Lord will rest upon His chosen people, when they repent of their sins and turn unto Him.²¹

Second, that all parts of the world were to receive the gospel.

We must preach the gospel to the South American countries which we have scarcely touched. We must preach the gospel to every African section that we haven't been in yet. We must preach the gospel in Asia. And I might go on and say in all parts of the world where we have not yet been permitted to go. I look upon Russia as one of the most fruitful fields for teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if I am not mistaken, it will not be long

²⁰CR, April, 1917, p. 36. See also CR, April, 1927, pp. 82-83, and CR, Oct., 1921, pp. 37-38.

"The adversary is determined that the gospel of Jesus Christ shall not be taught in its purity. We have the truth, and he knows that we have it, and he knows that millions of our Father's children would accept it gladly if they could hear it with unprejudicial minds."

²¹George Albert Smith, "New Year's Greeting," The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star, LXXXIII (January, 1921), 2.

before the people who are there will desire to know something about this work which has reformed the lives of so many people. We have some few from that land, who belong to the Church, fine, capable individuals who may be called to go, when the time comes, back to the homeland of their parents, and deliver the message that is so necessary to all mankind.²²

Third, the Lord would adjust conditions in the world to permit the spread of the gospel.

It will not be long now, until in every part of this world the gospel may be heard through the servants of the Lord proclaiming it in power. Our Heavenly Father will adjust conditions in the world so that the gospel may be preached. The great World War has readjusted the boundary lines and changed conditions in some nations, and the conflict that is now on in China, and the earthquakes and other disturbances that are afflicting mankind, will be in preparation of the further promulgation of the word of the Lord.²³

Elder Smith taught that Satan's greatest efforts would be exerted to stop missionary work. He believed, however, that the Lord would prepare the way for the spread of the gospel.

²²CR, Oct., 1945, p. 119. Note that the first part of this statement pertaining to the mission fields of South America, Africa, and Asia may not at first appear to be prophetic but rather exhortative. However, at the time Elder Smith made this statement these mission fields were somewhat neglected. Following this time, more and more missionaries were sent into these continents.

²³CR, April, 1927, pp. 82-83.

HOW MEMBERS CAN BE MISSIONARIES

The Neighborhood Missionary Program

The keynote of President Smith's theology, as indicated previously, was its practicality.²⁴ He not only enunciated the teaching of missionary work, but he also presented practical ways by which members of the Church could be involved in this work. One way was for all of the saints to share the gospel with their neighbors. Elder Smith said:

It is not necessary for you to be called to go into the mission field in order to proclaim the truth. Begin on the man who lives next door by inspiring confidence in him, by inspiring love in him for you because of your righteousness, and your missionary work has already begun.²⁵

One of Elder Smith's main concerns was that members of the Church have the proper motivation when sharing the gospel. He indicated:

We do not need to annoy people, but let us make them feel and understand that we are interested, not in making them mem-

²⁴See Chapter 3, "The Godhead," p. 2.

²⁵CR, Oct., 1916, p. 51. It might be interesting to note here that Elder Smith felt that Salt Lake City was the greatest mission field in the world. He said:

"Do you realize, brethren and sisters, that in this city, the headquarters of the Church, there are approximately fifty thousand people, who know very little about the gospel of Jesus Christ? They are our neighbors, they are our Father's children, they are identified with the other churches, or else they do not belong to any Church, but I think I am safe in saying that ninety percent of them have no idea what the gospel of Jesus Christ really is. I believe that the greatest mission field in all the world is in the valleys of these great mountains." CR, Oct., 1916, p. 49. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, in April of 1975, announced that a mission was to be opened in Utah with Salt Lake City as the headquarters.

bers of the Church for membership, but in bringing them into the Church that they may enjoy the same blessings that we enjoy.²⁶

The Preparation of Children
for Missions

Members of the Church could also participate in missionary service by preparing their sons and daughters for this important work. President Smith stated that it was not sufficient for a boy to signify his desire to enter the mission field merely to please his parents or to answer a call. It was necessary that he qualify for the work. This a young man could do by studying the scriptures, and by learning what the Lord would have him know, namely, that he was doing "Our Father's Work."²⁷ Elder Smith felt that it was a major responsibility of parents to help their children do this. He stated:

If I, as a father in Israel, fail to impress my children with the importance of this work and later they are called to go into the world to teach, it seems to me that I will regret that I have not done my full part if I have neglected to properly instruct them. A dozen men qualified for the work are worth more in the mission field than a hundred who are ignorant of the truth and who themselves have to be taught before they are capable of explaining it to others. The opportunity to teach the gospel will

²⁶DNCS, April 17, 1948.

²⁷CR, Oct., 1907, p. 39.

increase after the war and preachers of the true gospel will be in demand. I know of no better field in which to qualify than right here at home.²⁸

But how could the saints participate in missionary work if they had "no sons to go into the mission field?" To his question President Smith gave practical advice by telling such individuals that they could look around their neighborhood for some faithful boy whom they could help support financially in the mission field. To these people he said:

If you will provide means whereby that man may go into the world and proclaim the truths of the Gospel of our Lord, and have his faith planted securely in a knowledge of the divinity of Jesus Christ and this Latter-day work, I think the means expended in that way will bring an abundant blessing to you; your compensation will be adequate in the souls brought to Christ.²⁹

SUMMARY

George Albert Smith believed that, next to keeping the commandments, the most important responsibility of the saints was to share the

²⁸ CR, Oct., 1916, p. 48. See also CR, Oct., 1948, p. 166, "Don't let your children grow up without teaching them the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't wait to send them into the mission field to learn what the gospel means." We might also note how frequently Elder Smith was given to prophecying when he is speaking of the missions of the Church. He prophecied in 1916 that the opportunity to preach the gospel would increase after the war and that preachers of the true gospel would be in demand. He said:

"Brethren and sisters, let us do the missionary work that is at our doors, preparing our sons and daughters for missionary work that will be theirs when this awful war is over. It will not be long until there will be a demand for capable men and women in this Church to teach the truth in portions of the earth where heretofore we have been excluded." CR, Oct., 1916, p. 51.

²⁹ CR, Oct., 1907, p. 39.

gospel with others. His life and teachings were punctuated by his concern that "our Father's other children" might receive an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel.

The years of his apostleship and presidency, as indicated previously, were years of turmoil. President Smith's solution to world problems was the teaching and the implementation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of men. Here the responsibility of the saints was to be a light to their fellowmen, that the gospel might be spread throughout the world. In fulfilling this responsibility, Elder Smith stressed three areas: the sharing of the gospel with friends and neighbors, the preparation of children to be missionaries, and the financial support of boys who could not afford to go.

Chapter 9

THE SAINTS AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

I hope that the membership of this Church will not be deceived into thinking that other plans, other forms of government, other systems of direction whatsoever, are desirable. I want to say without hesitation that no form of government in the world can be compared favorably with the government God gave us.¹

George Albert Smith deeply appreciated the opportunities of religious freedom in America, and he re-echoed the statement made by Joseph Smith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."² His patriotism and love of country were demonstrated by the activities of his life. As a young man he served in the Utah National Guard, as a First Sergeant. During World War I he was a member of the State Council of Defense, and chairman of the Armenian and Syrian relief committee. At various other times he served on local, state, and national committees in patriotic service. Reference has already been made to his active involvement in such community-minded efforts as the Boy Scout organization, the International Dry Farm Congress, and the International Irrigation Congress. Elder Smith's deep love for his

¹IE, May, 1947, p. 267.

²CR, Oct., 1917, p. 45, citing HC, 4:535-541.

American heritage was reflected by his membership in The Sons of the American Revolution, and The Mayflower Society.

Throughout his life, President Smith sought to uphold and to preserve the country and its religious freedom by encouraging the saints to give all possible support to the nation, its laws and its leaders. His deep feeling is evident in his statement to the saints in 1947:

If the people of this nation will turn to the Lord and keep His commandments they will enjoy happiness, and our Heavenly Father will continue to bless them. But on the other hand, if we and all other people who dwell upon this favored continent refuse to obey the commandments of our Heavenly Father, it will be only a question of time until the nations now existing and the people who dwell here will suffer destruction.³

In this chapter consideration will be given to George Albert Smith's teachings in two main areas: first, the special significance of the Constitution of the United States; and, second, the responsibility of the members of the Church to the preservation of democracy.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Much of George Albert Smith's teachings on government dealt with the importance of the Constitution of the United States. It is evident from a study of his discourses that he loved this document and considered it to be sacred. The drafting of the Constitution, he said, like the discovery of

³IE, Feb., 1947, pp. 75, 126.

America,⁴ was no accident: "Our Heavenly Father knew what would be needed, and so he paved the way to give us the Constitution. It came under the influence of prayer, and he guided those who framed that wonderful document."⁵ When speaking of the Constitution, he used such expressions as the following: "a rule of life," "the greatest Palladium of human rights," "cleave to the Constitution," "pray for and sustain the Constitution," and "the Constitution . . . is just as much from my heavenly Father as the Ten Commandments."⁶

George Albert Smith felt that the American form of government was the best possible form because it was based on a divinely inspired constitution. He therefore felt that efforts to change this inspired government were wrong. He said:

⁴ Speaking on this subject he said:

"Think of the blessings that came to America. How Columbus was inspired to go out upon the great waters and find his way to this western land. Then the settlers of Jamestown, the pilgrim fathers, and all those early pioneers who came to America because they desired to serve God according to the dictates of their conscience. The Lord blessed them and finally raised up a nation that is the wonder and the admiration of the earth. Those men who framed the Constitution of the United States were not only wise in the things of this world, but they were inspired by our Heavenly Father who raised them up for that very purpose. This marvelous government that we enjoy in this favored land of liberty, was given to man that it might be a blessing to him. Here men and women are permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience." CR, Oct., 1928, p. 92.

⁵ CR, April, 1947, p. 163. See also IE, Dec., 1950, p. 964. "No nation in the world has a constitution that was given to it by our Heavenly Father except the United States of America." and IE, May, 1949, p. 303. CR, Oct., 1936, p. 73.

⁶ Ibid.

We have people who would like to change that and bring some of those forms of government that have failed absolutely to make peace and happiness and comfort any other place in the world, and exchange what God has given to us--the fulness of the earth and the riches of liberty and happiness. Yet, there are those who go around whispering and talking and saying, "Let us change this thing." I am saying to you that to me the Constitution of the United States of America is just as much from my Heavenly Father as the Ten Commandments. When that is my feeling, I am not going to go very far away from the Constitution, and I am going to try to keep it where the Lord started it, and not let anti-Christ come into this country that began because people wanted to serve God.⁷

President Smith taught that there were at least three reasons why the Lord inspired the drafting of the Constitution. The first was that God has always intended or desired that His children live in a climate of freedom, which permitted them to exercise their agency. The second was that the American nation was to stand as an example to other nations of the world. The third was that the American nation, with its freedoms, was to be used as the Lord's base of operation to spread the gospel and prepare the people of the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Outlining this important doctrine, he said in 1918:

⁷ CR, April, 1948, p. 182. See also IE, May, 1947, p. 267:

"I hope that the membership of this Church will not be deceived into thinking that other plans, other forms of government, other systems of direction whatsoever, are desirable. I want to say to you without hesitation that no form of government in the world can be compared favorably with the government God gave us." It is to be noted that while George Albert Smith is thinking primarily in terms of the United States, his teachings are also applicable to other countries where democracy is a cherished form of government.

When our Father in heaven inspired men to write the Constitution and give unto us the great charter that vouchsafed to us the liberty we enjoy, he did it in order that men might develop and be free, as the gospel of Jesus Christ intends that all men shall be. So the government of the United States was begun under the direction of our Father in heaven, as declared by his own word of mouth to be an ensample unto the nations of the earth, and the liberties that we enjoy are pointed out in a most forceful way to the children of men. The fact that we were a free people, that we were not a military nation, brought upon us the contempt and ridicule of some of the great armed powers, because they thought we were helpless. They did not understand that underlying this apparent peacefulness in this great land there was a fixed determination that men should be free; that God himself had written it, as it were, by his own finger, in the Constitution of our great government, but that was the case, and then, when the time came, he inspired his sons to rally around Old Glory and, if need be, give their lives that liberty might be perpetuated in the earth.

Today this wonderful land is not only a land of liberty and hope to us, but there goes out from these shores across the mighty ocean to other people encouragement in the struggle that they are making, that they may have something to do with the government that directs their destinies.

The signs of the times, point to the fact that the second coming of the Son of God is not far distant. Preparation must be made, before that time for the proclamation of his truth. Men and women everywhere must be called to repentance. The obligation is upon this people that they do that work because our Heavenly Father has so placed it. While our boys are going away, and our girls, in the service of our Nation, rendering, if need be, the very highest and most perfect gift that they can offer--that of life itself--in the interest of humanity, we must keep in mind the fact that the Master has determined that his gospel shall be preached in all the world. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, nor has there been, in the outcome of the war, because liberty must triumph in order that the gospel may be proclaimed.⁸

From the above presentation the reader may feel that George Albert Smith was provincial. On the contrary, his love and respect for the people of other nations was evident throughout his discourses. Though he taught

⁸ JH, Sept. 15, 1918, p. 4.

that the American form of government was inspired and was to be an example to the world, Elder Smith realized that it could only be such on conditions of righteousness. His constant plea was for the American people to sustain the constitutional law of the land through prayer, service, and righteousness.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SAINTS TO FREE GOVERNMENT

In his typical manner of not merely expounding objective theology, but of stressing the practical role which members of the Church should take in living their beliefs, George Albert Smith gave five main directives as to how the saints could help in the preservation of free government. First, he counselled the saints to uphold and sustain the United States Constitution and the laws of the land. Elder Smith taught that it was the duty of every person in the Church to sustain the Constitution, "if need be with life itself."⁹ This does not mean that he desired war. On the contrary, he desired peace; but he taught that citizens should be willing to fight to preserve their freedom.

He said:

I am not a pacifist in the sense in which that word is being used and I cannot be as long as there are those in the world who seek by brute force to compel their fellows to become subserviant to them. As long as there are vicious, irresponsible men in the world who seek to dominate their fellows I am heartily in favor of an orderly police force either locally, nationally or world-wide that will, under the direction of sane and thoughtful men, protect the weak

⁹CR, Oct., 1940, p. 65. See also CR, Oct., 1935, p. 122.

against the strong. I am the kind of a pacifist who desires peace and I desire it so much that if absolutely necessary I am willing to fight for it. During the last great war seventy-six of my blood relatives were in the ranks to help to preserve liberty to mankind. Some of them never returned to their homes. They gave their all that we might enjoy the blessing of liberty and peace. I am proud of the fine men who are in the United States Army and who, by their conduct, are truly representative of the ideals of America.¹⁰

Elder Smith declared in an editorial to the membership of the Church: "No man is a faithful member of this church, in good standing, who refuses to sustain the constitutional law of the land, and who lends himself in any way to break down that organized system of laws that has been prepared for the good of the community."¹¹

The second area of concern was the need for members of the Church to support local governmental authorities. When speaking on this subject, he dealt with it positively rather than negatively. His basic approach can be seen in his belief that the saints should stand by the lawmakers, encour-

¹⁰GASC, Box 104, Fd-1.

¹¹IE, July, 1949, p. 429. This theme was part of his theology as early as 1911 when he plead with the membership of the Church to raise their voices in interest of law as it had been established. He warned the saints not to be among those who encouraged the spirit of anarchy for: "Our only hope . . . to enjoy peace and liberty in this land, is in standing by the constitution that God has inspired to direct this government." CR, Oct., 1911, p. 45. See also CR, Oct., 1921, p. 162, where he said: "Any man who refuses to assist in carrying into effect the constitutional law of the land not only is he a lawbreaker in the sense that he consents to things that are evil, but I want to say that he is in opposition to the will of our Heavenly Father."

aging them to do right, rather than to criticize and tear down.¹²

While recognizing the evil of lawlessness in the land, he offered a practical solution by encouraging people to support their local police. He said:

There is in our land today a spirit of lawlessness that is alarming to all thoughtful people. It is not our duty to go and make arrests. It is not our duty to carry into effect the laws by acting as peace-officers, but I take it that it is the duty of every man and every woman, who is worthy of the name Latter-day Saint, to give such information to the officers of the land as will enable them to enforce the law.¹³

Elder Smith pointed out further that this kind of support would require individual service. "We not only believe in honoring the law," he said, "but we

¹²Ibid. This belief was also exemplified during World War I. While there were those who criticized the leaders of the United States for entering the war, George Albert Smith said:

"There is one church whose members cannot remain in good fellowship in it if they criticize and find fault and tear down and oppose the legal action of the constituted authorities of the land, with reference to going into this war; and why? Because we have been trained by the gospel in a knowledge of the purpose of this government. We have been taught by inspired men, who have pointed the way, and all Israel, to a man, comes forward in the crucial hour and says: 'If I am needed, Lord, here am I.' If my country requires it, my all is on the altar, and my life is need be. God help us to be worthy of our heritage, help us to sustain the government that has been so good to us, that has made it possible for the establishment of this work." CR, Oct., 1917, p. 45. See also CR, Oct., 1945, p. 174. He indicated at this time "It will be our responsibility, with the added information that has been bestowed upon us, to carry the message to them [government leaders] in love, not in criticism and faultfinding, but with love in our hearts." CR, Oct., 1948, p. 184.

¹³JH, June 6, 1924.

believe in sustaining the law, and that can only be obtained by individual service."¹⁴

Third, he counselled the saints to seek the Lord's guidance in voting. Elder Smith believed that the franchise to vote was a gift from God and that people should seek His help in making the best possible choices at election time. "Brothers and sisters, you are approaching a political campaign," he counselled in 1950. "Go to the Lord in prayer. Seek His guidance. We do not want to turn this nation over to the folly of the teachings of other nations that have failed."¹⁵

Fourth, he admonished the saints to pray for their national leaders. President Smith had a strong faith in the power of prayer, and he believed that the prayers of the saints could influence and help the elected leaders. He advised:

It is your duty and mine to remember in our prayers the President of the United States of America, to remember the men who represent us in the congress of the United States, to remember the executives of the states of the nation, and to pray for them that they may have divine aid. They are God's sons, every one of them, and he wants them saved and exalted.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ IE, Dec., 1950, p. 964.

¹⁶ CR, Oct., 1945, p. 174. He pointed out in 1933:

"Today the world is confused. There never has been a time within my memory when there was so much uncertainty as to what we should do. Reference has been made to the President of the United States, that he is the leader of this nation; and I am sure that as members of this Church we ought to pray for the president of the United States. We ought to ask the Lord to inspire and bless him. We ought to be what the Lord would have us be-- real helpers in a great nation such as the one in which we live." CR, Oct., 1933, p. 25. See also IE, Nov., 1950, pp. 869-870.

Again he said:

No loyal member of this Church will raise his voice against the constitutional law of the land, but he will be found praying for those who make the laws under the Constitution. He will petition Father in Heaven for all those who are chosen from time to time to administer the laws that are calculated to continue unto us our liberty, that they may be wise and just exemplars to the people.¹⁷

Finally, he talked about the need for the people to live righteously and to take a stand against evil. Latter-day Saint theology teaches that freedom can be enjoyed only when people are righteous. George Albert Smith reaffirmed this doctrine and returned to his favorite theme, that of obedience.

He taught:

Happiness is a result of obedience to righteous laws that are inspired by the Father of us all. If America is to continue to be the land of the free and the home of the brave we must bequeath to posterity the determination to live righteously.¹⁸

Elder Smith further taught that the saints should take a positive stand against evil and, in particular, against the encroachment of the "anti-Christ" philosophy on the American form of government. While in his address of

¹⁷IE, Nov., 1950, pp. 869-870. He indicated in this same talk the obligation that rests on the members of the Church:

"Upon you men of Israel--to whom the priesthood of the Holy One has been given--there rests an obligation. You must serve the Lord and keep his commandments. It matters not what others may do, but for you there is only one course, and that is to sustain the Constitution of this great land, and to sustain those influences and powers, whatever they may be, that are calculated to uplift the human family.

There should go forth from this great Church an influence intended to leaven the whole lump."

¹⁸GASC, Box 104, Fd-1.

April, 1948, he did not specifically mention the Communists, instead he referred to "those people across the sea" and stressed the danger of "anti-Christ's". He said that while it was not the business of the Church to criticize these people, it was the duty of the Church to see that they did not bring their "policies and falsehoods and wickedness" into America to pervert the government inspired by God. He admonished:

In our own country we are in danger of anti-Christ's; we are in danger of those who prefer to have their own way regardless of whether it is right or wrong. And I want to say that there are in our own community men and women who are looking with toleration and with some anxiety that we do not say anything unkind about those people across the sea who are just as wicked as they can be. It is not our business to criticize them. But it is our business to see that they do not bring into our community the policies and falsehoods and wickedness that control them in their own land.

The newspapers give us a little information now and again--not very much. And there comes in through the mails, to many of us, magazines of various kinds. I wonder if we are paying attention to what is going on, as a people, and realizing that if we do not prevent anti-Christ's from controlling our Government of the United States, we have got to take a stand on the side of the Savior. We cannot be on the other side of the fence.

After exhorting the saints to take an active role in the preservation of democracy, George Albert Smith made an important prophecy in which he also summarized his beliefs on government and the special role America was to have in the plan of God. He said:

It is important that our liberties be preserved, and all should be interested, and it seems to me that we can be consistent Church members and take part in politics, while we accord to others the privileges we claim for ourselves. We should be deeply concerned in the welfare of the nation, and sustain good and great men, as the Lord has commanded us, in order that we may continue to enjoy freedom. . . .

Remember that, after the great political nations of this world have crumbled and fallen to decay, the Church of Jesus Christ,

with which you are identified, will be in existence, and the Master himself will continue to be its head. Let us not become so worked up in our feelings that we shut our eyes to the greater blessings, to the most important thing, the salvation of our souls. Let us not ally ourselves with bodies of men who would tear down and break in pieces this government, that was founded under the inspiration of God, the Eternal Father. We cannot belong to any political party that is opposed to this free government and be consistent Latter-day Saints.²⁰

SUMMARY

President George Albert Smith was a devoted patriot. He believed in the constitutional law of the United States as the basis of true freedom. He further believed that God's gift of a free land to the people of America was one to be cherished and preserved at all costs; and that no sacrifice, even the sacrifice of one's life, was too great for the preservation of freedom.

President Smith's teachings to the saints often followed a definite pattern. He would first emphasize the importance of a specific blessing given by God to the saints, then explain that such a wonderful blessing could only be preserved through righteousness and obedience. In his teachings on freedom he followed this same pattern. He first outlined the privilege of the saints to live in a free land established under divine inspiration. He then emphasized that this freedom could only be preserved by the saints and the people of America sustaining the constitutional laws of the land, supporting

²⁰CR, April, 1914, p. 11.

governmental authorities, seeking for inspiration as they voted, praying for national leaders, and living righteous lives. He also warned against the dangers of false ideologies destructive of freedom.

Chapter 10

THE LATTER DAYS

If men are thinking seriously, if they are reading the scriptures, they must know the happenings that the Lord said would occur in the last days are occurring.¹

In order to reveal George Albert Smith's teachings on the latter days it was important to emphasize: (1) what Elder Smith meant by the latter days, (2) his perception as to the cause of world problems, (3) how he differed in his proposed solution to peace from the majority of world leaders, and (4) his special teachings to the people of America and to the membership of the Church. These four points, viewed in proper relationship to each other, enable the reader to understand the teachings of Elder Smith on the latter days.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE LATTER DAYS

While some Old Testament prophets refer to the latter days,² Jesus Christ gave the clearest picture of the events that would precede the

¹CR, April, 1932, p. 44.

²See, for example, Joel 3:15. Joel prophesied that before the Second Coming, the moon would be darkened and the stars would withdraw their shining. See also Zacharias 14:3 and Malachi 3:1. Malachi indicates that before the Second Coming a messenger will be sent to prepare the way and then the Lord will appear suddenly in His temple.

end of the world. Some of these events were that false prophets would arise; that there would be wars and rumors of wars; that nation would rise against nation and kingdoms would be against kingdoms; that catastrophes would occur such as pestilences, famines, and earthquakes; that the followers of Christ would be afflicted and killed because the love of men would wax cold; and, before Christ's appearance in glory, the sun would be darkened and the moon turned to blood. Though Christ represented the latter days as a time of trial and persecution, he gave hope that those who endured to the end would be saved. He added further hope by stating that his gospel would be preached to the whole world as a witness to all nations before the end of the world.³ In the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith characterized the last days as a time when peace would be taken from the earth and the devil would have power over his own dominion.⁴ President George Albert Smith referred to this statement in the Doctrine and Covenants and said that the time when peace would be taken from the earth was dangerously near. He stated in the general conference of October, 1945: "We are living in the latter days; we are approaching a time, if we are not already in that time, when peace shall be taken from the earth and the devil shall have power over his own

³ Matthew 24:6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 29. See also Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-36.

⁴ D&C 1:35. See also D&C 45:16-75, where Joseph Smith added further light to these passages concerning the Second Coming. He indicated that there would be other signs such as men's hearts failing them and a desolating sickness to cover the land. For further references see D&C 88:101, 133.

dominion."⁵ However, by 1948 he not only was convinced that the time was dangerously near, but was present. He described the world at this time as being in the same degraded state that it was in immediately prior to the flood, and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. He stated:

It seems to me that the world never could have been in any worse condition than it is now, even at the time of the flood, or at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the time of the destruction of other places in the world. . . .⁶

George Albert Smith added two major prophecies concerning the future state of the world. The first prophecy concerned calamities which he said would be much worse than the world war that had just occurred. He said:

I fear that the time is coming, unless we can find some way not only to prevent this destruction of human life by careless accidents, but also unless we can call the people of this world to repent

⁵CR, Oct., 1945, p. 117. See also CR, April, 1949, pp. 116-168.

⁶CR, April, 1948, p. 179. George Albert Smith frequently compared the wickedness of the past peoples and nations to that of his own day. Often he referred to the wickedness in the days of Noah and felt that current society was equally wicked. It is interesting to note that one of the specific signs mentioned by Christ was that society at that time of his Second Coming would be as wicked as it was in the days of Noah. See Matthew 24:37-41. For further references on the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah see the Old Testament, Genesis 18, 19 and the New Testament, Matthew 10:15, Romans 9:29, 2 Peter 2:6, and Jude 7. Joseph Fielding Smith, Eleventh President of the Church, said in a talk to the Brigham Young student body, in 1967, that D&C 1:35 had been fulfilled and that peace had been taken from the earth. See BYU Speeches of the Year, March 21, 1967, p. 6. As early as 1935, Elder Smith expressed the following view about the state of the world:

"If we only understood how near we are to the Judgment Day there are men and women in the various communities of this world who would now be on their knees in sackcloth and ashes; but they think that time is so far off that they procrastinate the day of repentance." CR, Oct., 1935, p. 121.

of their sins and turn from the error of their ways, that the great war that has just passed will be an insignificant thing, as far as calamity is concerned, compared to that which is before us.⁷

The second prophecy indicated that the time was coming when people would die by the millions, if they did not repent. He declared:

It will not be long until calamities will overtake the human family unless there is speedy repentance. It will not be long before those who are scattered over the face of the earth by millions will die like flies because of what will come.⁸

A TIME OF TURMOIL

The Period of His Administration

The years 1903 to 1951, when George Albert Smith was a General Authority of the Church, were among the most trying times in U. S. history. These times were characterized by the outbreak of World War I, the turmoil of the Roaring 20's, the crash of 1929, and the ensuing depression which was relieved only the advent of World War II. Not only was this age marked by war, but by various forms of pestilences and social ills such as labor strikes, rising divorce rates, flu epidemics, increased crime during the

⁷CR, Oct., 1946, p. 149.

⁸IE, May, 1950, p. 412. Some may feel that the present state of the world-wars, intrigues, scandals in government; with the prevalence of birth control measures, abortions, and soaring divorce rates, fulfills these prophecies.

time of prohibition, food shortages and rampant inflation.⁹ Yet with so many problems facing the nations of the earth, the world was filled with the false hope of a universal peace established through international cooperation and legislation.

Even before the outbreak of World War I, hopes and plans for peace were centered in the belief that the nations of the world were fast becoming a community of uniform ideas and ideals. It was felt that this was being accomplished through improved communication and economic interdependence among nations. Proponents of this philosophy saw a tendency toward world cooperation and solidarity through the establishment of organizations which crossed national boundaries such as the Rotary Club, the Boy Scout Movement, and The International Postal Service. The establishment of the Hague Court in 1899 was felt by some to be a major step toward the prevention of international disputes. But even this proved to be purely idealistic as Russia and Japan resorted to war in 1904 to settle their differences. Italy also waged war against Turkey to gain colonial territory in northern Africa (1911-1912); The Balkan states rose in arms against the sultan to advance their nationalist

⁹Goldman, Eric F., The Crucial Decade and After, America 1945-1960, Vintage Books, New York, 1960, p. 155. See also, Brunn, Geoffrey, The World in the Twentieth Century, Third Edition, Boston, DC Heath and Company, 1957, pp. 233-251 and Wish, Harvey, Society and Thought in Modern America, Vol. II, Second Edition, New York, David McKay Co., Inc., 1962.

program (1912-1913); and, after a series of dual and triple ententes, World War I began in 1914.¹⁰

The World's Solution for Peace

Following the Great War, hopes for universal peace again ran high with the organization of the Paris Peace Conference, in 1919, and the establishment of the League of Nations. As a consequence, Winston Churchill characterized the 1920's as the end of world crisis.¹¹ Shortly after this pronouncement, however, came the depression of 1929 and World War II, beginning in 1939. It was at the conclusion of this war that George Albert Smith was called to assume the heavy burden of the Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The era following World War II once again saw the renewal of hopes for world peace. One of the main plans for establishing peace in the world was initiated by the Atlantic Charter (1941) which was devised by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. They stressed as their first point that there would be no territorial aggrandizement at the conclusion of the war. However, Joseph Stalin was brought into the negotiations at a later time and, as early as the Yalta Conference, Stalin announced his policy of aggrandizement, which included the absorption of Estonia, Latvia,

¹⁰Benns, F. Lee, Europe Since 1914 in its World Setting, Seventh Edition, New York, Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., 1949, pp. 3-6.

¹¹Chambers, Frank P., This Age of Conflict, Third Edition, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962, p. 314.

and Lithuania, as well as the destruction of the Polish government in exile. This he proposed in order that the Communist Party might control Poland, which Britain and France had declared war to save. At the time of the Atlantic Charter and the series of conferences that followed at Yalta, Potsdam, and San Francisco, in which the structure of the United Nations was established, men still believed that legislation would bring peace. Perhaps President Harry S. Truman best summarized this world-wide hope when he stated in reference to America's ratification of the United Nations Charter:

This charter points down the only road to enduring peace. There is no other. Let us not hesitate to join hands with peace-loving peoples of the earth and start down the road--with firm resolve that we can and will reach our goal.¹²

Men still believed that the failure of the League of Nations would not be duplicated in the case of the United Nations, because the United States was a part of the latter organization, and in place of the ineffective embargo of the League of Nations the United Nations had established its own army to ensure peace in the world. Before long, however, the world realized that the United Nations could not bring peace to the world. One reason for this was that Russia had the power of veto, which she used repeatedly to frustrate some of the altruistic objectives of the U. N. Added to this was the issue in the United Nations of the Republic of China in Taiwan versus the newly formed Communist government in Peking which, while controlling the major

¹²Craven, Avery, and Johnson, Walter, The U. S. Experiment in Democracy, Chicago, Ginn and Co., 1950, p. 826.

portion of the Chinese people, did not have a seat in the U. N. The failure of this world organization was soon apparent in the outbreak of the Korean War, which was followed by other wars in Vietnam and the Middle East.

The True Situation: A Spiritual
Sickness

Though world leaders placed their hopes in peace through legislation, George Albert Smith did not. He consistently taught that legislation by itself could never be an effective means of establishing peace.¹³ He believed that the problems of society were more deeply rooted than was understood by world leaders, and that they included not only the problem of war, but the problem of a universal spiritual sickness which had its roots in the corruption which men allowed to come into their hearts.¹⁴

President Smith held that there were two prime influences in the world. There was the influence of God, our Heavenly Father, and the influence of Satan, the adversary.¹⁵ He maintained that those who apply the principles of the kingdom of God find happiness, peace, and joy. Repeatedly he preached that man must keep the commandments of the Lord.¹⁶ By this

¹³ CR, April, 1950, pp. 5, 169.

¹⁴ CR, Oct., 1949, p. 167. "The world is sick. It is not the first time it has been sick." See also IE, Oct., 1945, p. 697.

¹⁵ CR, Oct., 1949, p. 699.

¹⁶ CR, Oct., 1945, p. 117. See also CR, Oct., 1936, p. 75; IE, June, 1943, p. 382.

he meant not only to pray, but to apply the teachings of Christ's gospel:

What about America? I was in a meeting, not very long ago, where a group of Boy Scouts stood and sang, "God Bless America," and they sang it beautifully, and all the time they were singing I asked myself the question, "How can he bless America until America repents?" Every great blessing that we desire is promised by our Heavenly Father on condition that we honor him and keep his commandments. Praying is not sufficient. Not only must we pray but we must live to be worthy of the blessing.¹⁷

Elder Smith saw man's life on earth as having to do with four major relationships.¹⁸ First, he taught that man as an individual was a child of God and, therefore, he preached the necessity of individual prayer and study of the gospel and stressed also obedience to the word of God and purity of heart.

Second, man is a member of the family unit. Here President Smith, as indicated in Chapter 5, stressed the family as the foundation of all social harmony, and consequently both fathers and mothers must set an example for their children both in righteous living and in teaching. Seldom did he end a sermon or a talk without stressing the importance of parents teaching their children. To the youth in the family he preached the joy of obedience, the

¹⁷CR, Oct., 1948, p. 184. See also IE, April, 1943, p. 336; IE, Nov., 1944, p. 659.

¹⁸Though Riesman, Glazer, and Denney, in their work The Lonely Crowd, seemed to present a parallel division for mankind in their traditional-directed types, inner-directed types, and other-directed types, they did not present a solution for the perfecting of man in society through obedience to the laws of God. See David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Reuel Denney, The Lonely Crowd, Doubleday and Company, Inc.: Garden City, New York, 1953.

joy of studying the word of God, and the joy of following our Heavenly Father's commandments.¹⁹

Third, man is a member of the Church. Again, he stressed repeatedly the two words "gratitude" and "privilege" in relation to man's membership in the Church--that man should be grateful for the privilege of living in the age when the Church had been restored. This privilege involved a tremendous responsibility of which he said:

You who are here today must know that it is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of His holy Priesthood to magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows in such a way that the people will be glad to follow you.²⁰

Fourth, President Smith emphasized the role of man as a member of society. It followed that after man had purified his heart and had studied the word and plan of God that he needed to live a Christ-like life. This implied an obligation on the part of members of the Church not to hide their light under a bushel,²¹ but to love their neighbors as themselves and to preach the Father's plan for world peace and world happiness.²²

President Smith also held that the major cause of world disorder and unhappiness was that man followed his own narrow views or that of the

¹⁹IE, May, 1944, p. 321. See also IE, May, 1949, p. 304, CR, April, 1904, p. 65, CR, Oct., 1906, p. 48.

²⁰CR, April, 1942, p. 14.

²¹For reference to his use of this scripture, see Appendix A.

²²IE, May, 1942, pp. 287, 321. See also IE, June, 1943, p. 383.

adversary. He maintained that the fruits of the adversary's rule were blindness, selfishness, covetousness, and sensuality as manifested in so many ways in contemporary society. He taught that the cures for these ills could not be found in legislation alone. Commenting on the effects of World War II he stated:

I doubt that the people of the world realize that the reason they are in the predicament they are in today is because they have neglected to follow the advice of our Heavenly Father. The uncertainty, the distress, the anguish that is prevalent in so many parts of the world is traceable directly to violating His commandments.²³

The Four Major Causes of World Sickness

President Smith spoke of four major causes of the universal sickness of the world. The first was the lack of humility and charity in the world. He said:

What is our trouble? It is that we have sought the creature comforts, we have sought the honors of men, we have sought those things that selfishness puts into our souls. We have sought to set ourselves up and have preferred ourselves to our Father's other children. I am speaking now of the world. We have ignored the commandments that we should honor God and keep his commandments, that we should love our neighbor. We have failed to pray in the way we were taught to pray, and men and women have set their judgment up against the teachings of an all-wise Father, and of course we are paying the price.²⁴

The second stemmed from the failure of man to understand the true purpose of life. He stated:

²³ CR, April, 1941, p. 25.

²⁴ CR, April, 1932, pp. 44-45.

I fear that the condition of the world is due to a lack of understanding of the purpose of our being. They do not know about pre-existence. There are so many that seem to have no conception of it, and have no desire to know where we are going when our mortal life is ended.²⁵

The third cause for world sorrow was the breaking of the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day holy. He declared:

This very day upon which we meet here to worship, viz, the Sabbath, has become the play-day of this great nation--the day set apart by thousands to violate the commandment that God gave long long ago, and I am persuaded that much of the sorrow and distress that is afflicting and will continue to afflict mankind is traceable to the fact that they have ignored his admonition to keep the Sabbath day holy.²⁶

The fourth was a failure on the part of men and women to keep the moral law of Christ. He warned: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Do you believe that the Lord said that? Do you believe that he meant what he said? I say to you that this world is suffering from the very fact that they ignore God's loving, kind advice, and there is sorrow and disaster abroad in the land because men and women refuse to observe the moral law and earn the blessings that result from obedience to the same.²⁷

President Smith sincerely believed that if mankind could overcome its selfishness and disobedience to the commandments of God, world strife and suffering could be solved.

²⁵ CR, April, 1915, p. 94. See also CR, Oct., 1948, p. 7, CR, Oct., 1946, p. 9.

²⁶ CR, April, 1934, p. 26. See also CR, Oct., 1935, p. 120 and CR, April, 1946, p. 125.

²⁷ CR, Oct., 1935, p. 120. See also IE, Nov., 1944, pp. 660, 710.

THE DIVINE SOLUTION

The Gospel as the Answer

President Smith was no pessimist. He firmly believed in the triumph of God over the adversary.²⁸ This is clearly seen in his talk of April, 1942, wherein he said:

No matter whether the clouds may gather, no matter how the war drums may beat, no matter what conditions may arise in the world, here in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, wherever we are honoring and keeping the commandments of God, there will be protection from the powers of evil, and men and women will be permitted to live upon the earth until their lives are finished in honor and glory if they will keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father.²⁹

He felt strongly that there was a way, and only one way, to solve the problems of the world. He said, for instance:

We can legislate until doomsday but that will not make men righteous. It will be necessary for people who are in the dark to repent of their sins, correct their lives, and live in a righteous way that they can enjoy the spirit of our Heavenly Father.³⁰

The Path of Safety--Obedience

Throughout his discourses, Elder Smith stressed that the basic solution for the ills of the world could be found only by men turning to God by faith and repentance. In this way they could receive the influence of the Holy Ghost which would inspire them to love one another. He outlined his

²⁸ CR, Oct., 1948, p. 8.

²⁹ CR, April, 1942, p. 15.

³⁰ CR, Oct., 1949, p. 6.

unequivocal stand as early as 1934:

There is much confusion in the world and there seems to be no way to remove it except by the power of our Heavenly Father. The wisdom of the world is failing, the scripture is fulfilled, and today the wisest of all men are seeking by means of legislation, to bring about a better condition and a more wholesome life among the human family. They may strive in that way, but unless men have faith in God, unless they understand the purpose of life, they will not go very far. The people of the world must repent of their sins before the Lord can give to them the peace and happiness desired. No other plan will succeed.³¹

To show the absolute importance of man obeying the commandments of God, President Smith used what to some might have been a trite example. This incident was not based as usual on the scriptures, but on a casual conversation between the Governor of Utah and his children, involving obedience to the state traffic law.

The Governor made a pact with his children to set a universal example for the state of Utah by both he and his family promising to obey the speed laws. While this conversation was a mere incident, it was vital to President Smith's entire philosophy. Just as children can be saved from car accidents only by the citizens obeying traffic laws, so the world could be saved from universal catastrophe by man's obedience to the universal laws

³¹CR, April, 1934, p. 27. Underlining added. He added the following in 1949:

"If the people of this world were keeping the Ten Commandments, honoring them, there would be no war. There could be no sorrow and distress to afflict mankind, but because there are so many who cannot put themselves in a frame of mind to live righteously, they are in confusion and they are in distress." CR, Oct., 1949, p. 6.

of God.³²

TO THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA

The Promises of God Condi- tioned on Righteousness

Latter-day Saints believe that the American nation with all of its freedoms, rights and constitutional guarantees came into being and must continue to exist so that a proper climate of freedom could prevail for the restoration and spread of the gospel.³³ The saints also believe that the land of America will remain free only as long as the people serve the God of the land who is Jesus Christ. Freedom, for America as well as for the rest of the world, is conditioned upon righteousness.³⁴

President Smith continually stressed this doctrine.³⁵ He stated further that should large numbers of people on this land turn their backs on God and become immoral and wicked, it would only be a question of time until misery and destruction would follow.³⁶

He declared, in 1949, that America was in danger of losing her freedom because of wickedness. Here he said:

³² CR, Oct., 1946, p. 148.

³³ Mormon Doctrine, p. 32.

³⁴ B of M, 3 Nephi 21; 1 Nephi 1; Ether 2:12.

³⁵ For further information see Chapter 9.

³⁶ IE, Feb., 1947, pp. 75, 126.

If the people of this nation will turn to the Lord and keep his commandments they will enjoy happiness, and our Heavenly Father will continue to bless them. But on the other hand, if we and all other people who dwell upon this favored continent refuse to obey the commandments of our Heavenly Father, it will only be a question of time until the nations now existing and the people who dwell here will suffer destruction. The promises of the Lord concerning peace and happiness are always conditioned upon righteousness.³⁷

The people of America, therefore, had a responsibility above all other nations to set their lives in order, because of the blessings of God to them. This was uppermost in his mind as early as 1922, when he said:

' The Lord has watched over this land, he directed Columbus to these shores, he led the Pilgrims here, he established the Constitution of the United States, and through the Prophet Joseph Smith, restored the everlasting gospel to bless the children of men, and if they will accept it and obey it, it will be the salvation of the human family.

There is no other remedy for the ills of this world but repentance; there is no preservation from the evils that will overtake mankind but on the score of righteousness. Unless men turn to the Lord history will repeat itself and destruction overtake the wicked.³⁸

Elder Smith was fearless in his teaching that America was a choice land and would remain free only as long as the people who inhabited it were righteous.

President Smith did not feel that membership in the Church alone was a guarantee of protection from the calamities to come in the latter days. In order to qualify for this protection during the perilous times ahead

³⁷ CR, Oct., 1949, p. 167.

³⁸ CR, Oct., 1922, p. 97.

only those who were worthy to be called saints could hope to be protected.

He said:

When I think of the condition of the world and realize that the only place where there is any semblance of peace is the land that we live in, and with the promise of God that He will be with--not the members of the Church, I don't interpret it that way; not the men who hold the Priesthood necessarily, I don't interpret it that way--He will be with His saints who are worthy to be called Saints and His power and protection will be over them until their life's labors are completed.³⁹

³⁹IE, June, 1943, p. 383. This theme was amplified further by Elder Smith when, in 1950, he said:

"The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means by which we may hope to find a place in the celestial kingdom. Sometimes we feel that we are sure of it because we have membership in the Church. I take this occasion to call to the attention of the older members of the Church, who have lived a part of their lives and feel quite secure, the fact that nobody is secure unless he is on the Lord's side of the line.

All temptation and evil are on the devil's side. If I had time, I could tell you of an experience of a man who was magnified and was a great preacher of the gospel, and because of his failure to stay on the Lord's side of the line, he went into the dark and died a bitter apostate. None of us are secure except we keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father. IE, May, 1950, p. 410 It might be noted here the influence a statement of George Albert Smith's grandfather had on him throughout his life. He referred on numerous occasions to this statement:

"I have many times repeated what my grandfather said. He, too, talked from this stand, and it was he who gave me his name. In advising his family he said, 'There is a line of demarcation, well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord's territory. On the other side of the line is the devil's territory.' And he said, 'If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you are perfectly safe, because the adversary of all righteousness cannot cross that line.'

What does that mean? It means to me that those who are living righteous lives, keeping all of the commandments of our Heavenly Father are perfectly safe, but not those who trifle with his advice and counsel. IE, Nov., 1949, pp. 699, 784. See also IE, May, 1949, p. 302; CR, April, 1945, p. 185; CR, Oct., 1948, p. 188.

He expressed the fear, in 1929, that the members of the Church were becoming too much like the world.⁴⁰ He continued this theme in 1941, and gave the following challenge to the Church:

The Gospel of Jesus Christ can only be a benefit and blessing to us if we keep the commandments of the Lord. We cannot live like the world and hope to have the favor of our Heavenly Father. We must live as the Lord indicates that we should live. It is true that He has said that if we will keep His commandments, if we will be worthy of His blessings He will exalt us; and when the final test comes when Satan and his cohorts will be trying in every way to destroy the world, the Lord says, "I will come down from heaven for the preservation of my people."

Are we going to be worthy of that preservation? Because only those who are worthy will be preserved. And after all He has given to us--and He has bestowed upon us everything that He has given anybody that ever lived in the world that is worthwhile--He has said that unless we keep His commandments we will forfeit our blessings and the calamities that are already abroad in the earth and are spreading day by day will find us.

Now brethren, the storm is on--not the snowstorm--but the storm of malice and hatefulness and disagreeable feeling, and bitterness in the hearts of the children of men. Let us not partake of it; no matter what group we may have belonged to in the past, let us come into the sanctuary of the House of the Lord and tune ourselves to the spirit that is always present when He is there. Then when we go out, we can resist the temptations that sometimes threaten to destroy us, and in turn destroy our families.⁴¹

A Message to the Membership of the Church

Joseph Smith declared in 1830 that the purpose of the gospel was to avert world calamity.⁴² George Albert Smith continued this theme, and he

⁴⁰ CR, April, 1929, p. 3.

⁴¹ CR, Oct., 1941, pp. 99-101. Underlining added.

⁴² D&C 1:17-18.

stressed that the special mission of the Church and its membership was to set the proper example for the world.⁴³ He also emphasized that this was a sacred trust that could not be taken lightly, and that the Lord would hold the membership of the Church responsible for how they fulfilled this obligation. He said:

Looking back through the experience of those who have lived upon the earth, and remembering the privations and afflictions of those nations that have turned away from our Heavenly Father, let us not be among those who unwisely and foolishly set our judgment up against the wisdom of the Lord. Let us acknowledge his wisdom, let us set our hands to the work that he has entrusted to our care, let us bless our Father's children wherever they may be, and our lives will be enriched and this world will be made happier. This is the mission that has been placed upon our shoulders. Our Heavenly Father will hold us responsible for the manner in which we fulfill it. God grant that in the humility of our souls we will go about with the desire in our hearts to do good to all people wherever they may be, and bring to them the joy that can only come through observing his laws and keeping the commandments. That peace may abide in our hearts and in our homes, that we may radiate sunshine and cheer wherever we may go, that we may prove to the world that we do know that God lives, by the lives that we lead, and receive his blessings therefore, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.⁴⁴

He further explained the duties of the saints, in 1947:

But the promises of the Lord can be relied upon in the future as they have been in the past. Each passing year brings us nearer the date of His Coming in power and glory. True, the hour and the day, no man knoweth. But the duty of the Latter-day Saints is to watch and pray, being valiant for the truth and abounding in good works. Despite the discontent in the world and the apparent growth of the power of evil, those who continue to stand in holy places can

⁴³ CR, Oct., 1946, p. 153.

⁴⁴ CR, April, 1932, p. 45.

discern through it all the handiwork of the Lord in the consummation of his own purposes. The Almighty reigns and will continue to reign.⁴⁵

SUMMARY

One who is familiar with the outpouring of love in the writings of George Albert Smith might be surprised to find such a straightforward and blunt presentation of the latter-days as was just presented. Love, however, would be less than true if it simply presented a comfortable picture and ignored the facts. It has been the responsibility of every prophet to cry repentance, and George Albert Smith was no exception. We find in his teachings on the latter days that the basic theme of obedience was once again stressed, not only as a source of happiness but also as a source of protection from the evils to come. This point is also forcefully stated in the negative; that disobedience is the root cause of the evils of the latter days.

⁴⁵IE, Dec., 1947, p. 797.

Chapter 11

FINAL THESIS SUMMARY

This chapter consists of a study of the frequency of the several doctrinal teachings of President George Albert Smith, and a final summary of these doctrines, with a concentration in the following areas: the Godhead, man, the purpose of earth life, Lucifer, the agency of man, the fall and the atonement, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God, accountability and judgment, and salvation and exaltation.

THE FREQUENCY OF HIS BASIC DOCTRINES

In order to facilitate this study the writer has made use of a guide which was used by the Church Education System and which reflects the basic doctrines currently taught in the Church. A thorough reading of all of George Albert Smith's one hundred conference addresses was completed and a record kept of the number of times he stressed the several doctrines of the Church. A given doctrine was counted as being stressed more than once in the same discourse if it was mentioned or emphasized after a change of subject. However, the same doctrine from a given discourse was not counted more than twice.

The basis for evaluating the frequency of his doctrinal teachings in all of his conference addresses was arbitrarily designated as follows:

Very Frequently - 31 or more times mentioned

Frequently - 20-30 times

Moderately - 11-19 times

Infrequently - 1-10 times

No emphasis - 0

Table 1

The Frequency of George Albert Smith's Emphasis
of the Basic Doctrines of the Church

Doctrine	Emphasis
I. Doctrine on the Godhead	
1. The Gods who preside over this universe are our Heavenly Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost	Infrequently
2. Our Heavenly Father is sovereign and supreme in this universe. God, our Heavenly Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, are immortal, glorified, and exalted. Each has an eternal spirit inseparably connected with a body of flesh and bones.	Infrequently
3. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have all knowledge, virtue, and power. Their influence is everywhere present as they operate through the principles of eternal law.	Very frequently
4. The work and the glory of the Godhead is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.	Infrequently

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
5. Our Heavenly Father (God the Father)	
a. God is the greatest intelligence. He understands and lives in harmony with celestial law	Very frequently
b. Our Heavenly Father is the Father of the spirit body of Jesus Christ and of the spirit bodies of all mankind, and he is also the Father of the physical body of Jesus Christ.	Very frequently
c. Our Heavenly Father presides over and administers the work of the Godhead.	No emphasis
6. Jesus Christ (God the Son)	
a. Jesus Christ is the Firstborn Son of God in the spirit and is the Only Begotten Son in the flesh.	Infrequently
b. Jehovah, the creator, known in mortality as Jesus Christ, was the Lawgiver to Moses and other Old Testament prophets.	Infrequently
c. Jesus Christ was foreordained to become the Savior and Redeemer of Mankind.	Infrequently
d. Because of his Divine Sonship and his perfect, sinless life, Jesus Christ was able to redeem mankind from spiritual death upon the condition of repentance by the individual sinner.	Infrequently
e. Because of his great love for us and because he wanted to be obedient to all the commandments of God, Jesus Christ was willing to redeem mankind from both the physical and spiritual deaths which re-	

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
sulted from the Fall of Adam. This act of love is called the Atonement.	Infrequently
f. Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God the Father and mankind. No man can come unto the Father except through Christ.	Infrequently
7. The Holy Ghost (God the Testator or Witness)	
a. The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit and is the Witness and Messenger of the Father and the Son.	Infrequently
b. Through the Holy Ghost, revelations are given.	Moderately
c. The Holy Ghost is a cleansing and purifying agent to all who receive him, his gifts, and blessings.	Infrequently
II. Doctrines on Man	
1. All mankind were (as intelligences) in the beginning with God.	No emphasis
2. All mankind are literal spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents and dwelt with them before coming to this earth. All mankind are spirit brothers and sisters.	Very frequently
3. Every individual born on this earth comes into a lineage according to a pre-earth-life determination.	Infrequently
4. Mankind may become exalted sons and daughters unto God as they learn celestial laws and ordinances and live in perfect harmony with them.	Infrequently

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
III. Doctrines on the Purpose of Earth Life	
1. This earth was organized so that each man could obtain a body of flesh and bones with the power of procreation. Each resurrected person will have his body forever.	Infrequently
2. Men come on earth to gain experience and to be tested.	Infrequently
3. Men are that they might have joy. Eternal happiness is the object and design of man's existence.	Infrequently
4. All things on earth have a purpose in their creation.	Infrequently
IV. Doctrines on Lucifer (Satan)	
1. Lucifer was one of God's spirit sons having high status in the first estate. When he and his followers rebelled against God, he became Satan.	No emphasis
2. The rebellious spirits were cast out of heaven to this earth. They are allowed to tempt man, thus providing for opposition in all things.	Frequently
V. Doctrines on the Agency of Man	
1. All beings are subject to divine law, obedience to which brings blessings. Disobedience results in suffering and damnation.	Very frequently
2. Man has the divine gift of agency to choose good or evil. He may worship how, where, or what he may, but only by learning and obeying celestial laws can man be exalted.	Moderately

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
3. Man can choose and act for himself only as he gains knowledge of good and evil and is influenced by one or the other	Infrequently
VI. Doctrines on the Fall and the Atonement	
1. Adam was the first man and Eve the first woman on this earth. They were created in the image of God, with bodies of flesh, bones, and spirit, capable of falling and being redeemed.	Infrequently
2. Adam and Eve were placed on earth in a state of innocence. They, the earth, and all things in it were pronounced very good, and without transgression would have remained in that state forever.	Infrequently
3. When Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, transgressing the law given to them by God, their nature was changed and they became subject to both spiritual and temporal deaths.	Infrequently
4. Only after Adam and Eve became mortal did they begin to multiply and replenish the earth. Because of their transgression they, their posterity, and all other things on earth became subject to the conditions of mortality.	Infrequently
5. An infinite atonement had to be made to overcome the power of death and sin, thereby making possible the redemption and resurrection of Adam and Eve and their posterity.	Infrequently

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
6. Jesus Christ was chosen in the grand council in heaven and foreordained to come to earth to perform the atoning sacrifice. As the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, our Savior received from his Eternal Father power over death; from his mortal mother he received the capacity to die.	Infrequently
7. The atonement by the Son of God saves all creatures from the permanent effects of temporal death and redeems every individual from spiritual death (the lasting penalties of his own transgressions) if he accepts and lives the gospel of Jesus Christ.	Infrequently
VII. Doctrines on the Gospel of Jesus Christ	
1. The eternal principles, laws, and ordinances by which mankind may obtain immortality and eternal life through the Atonement are known as the gospel of Jesus Christ.	Infrequently
2. The first principles and ordinances of the gospel, which must be received and obeyed by those who are accountable, are-	
a. Faith in God the Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost	Very frequently
b. Repentance from all sins.	Very frequently
c. Baptism for the remission of sins.	Moderately
d. Laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.	Frequently
3. Man must also prove faithful in giving willing obedience to all gospel principles and ordinances.	Very frequently

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
VIII. Doctrines on the Kingdom of God	
1. The Priesthood was first given to Adam. He is the head of all gospel dispensations. Through the priesthood, the kingdom of God (the Church) was established on earth in order to help man govern himself properly.	Infrequently
2. Because of man's departure from this true order of priesthood, it was necessary that the Church of Jesus Christ be restored during the Meridian of Time. Again an apostasy occurred and the Church ceased to exist on the earth.	Infrequently
3. The Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith and initiated a restoration of the gospel.	Very frequently
4. Men must be called of God by prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances.	Infrequently
5. The power of the priesthood, through the divine patriarchal order, aids the home in fulfilling its function as the basis of the righteous life.	Very frequently
6. As the kingdom of God is extended through the earth, the ideal society, known as Zion, is developed.	Very frequently
7. The Lord has provided the following guides by which his children may be led to a Zion condition:	
a. The standard works of the Church.	Very frequently

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
b. The prophet of the Church, who receives revelation from the Lord for the Church and for the world. Other Prophets, seers, and revelators who assist in teaching, directing and governing the Church.	Very frequently
c. Individuals receive revelation for their stewardships.	Very frequently
d. The priesthood and its quorums.	Moderately
e. The Church organizations and priesthood quorums.	Very frequently
8. Through the preaching of the gospel to the nations of the earth, Israel will be gathered.	Very frequently
9. Preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ, Zion must be established as a place and a people. The earth will again receive its paradisiacal glory.	Frequently
10. Conditions of Zion will prevail during the millennial reign of the Savior on earth.	Infrequently
IX. Doctrines on Accountability and Judgment	
1. Individuals are judged according to the light and knowledge received. All men are held accountable for their attitudes, thoughts, and words.	Frequently
X. Doctrines on Salvation and Exaltation	
1. Salvation means a man's being placed beyond all enemies, including the powers of death and hell. After the death of the mortal body, the spirits of all men go into the post-mortal spirit world.	Moderately

Table 1 (Continued)

Doctrine	Emphasis
2. Every person who has lived or will live upon this earth will be resurrected and receive a degree of glory (except the sons of perdition) according to his faithfulness in keeping the commandments of God. The order of body received will be determined by the type of life lived upon this earth.	Moderately
3. Exaltation means eternal life or godhood, the kind of life our Heavenly Father lives.	Infrequently
4. Priesthood ordinances, including celestial marriage, are essential for exaltation.	Moderately
5. Those who die without hearing the gospel in this life have the opportunity to hear the gospel in the postmortal spirit world and thus become potential heirs of salvation and exaltation.	Infrequently
6. Ordinance work for the dead, performed in the temples of God, will continue during the millenium until every worthy soul has the opportunity of receiving all the blessings of the fulness of the gospel.	Infrequently

From the above table of doctrines the following two tables are derived.

These two tables indicate the fifteen doctrines most emphasized and the ten doctrines least emphasized by President George Albert Smith (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2

The Fifteen Doctrines Most Frequently Emphasized
by President George Albert Smith

Doctrine	Number of times stressed
1. V-1 All beings are subject to divine law, obedience to which brings blessings. Disobedience results in suffering and damnation.	80
2. VII-3 Man must prove faithful in giving willing obedience to all gospel principles and ordinances.	60
3. I-3 The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have all knowledge, virtue, and power. Their influence is everywhere present as they operate through the principles of eternal law.	55
4. VIII-3 The Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith and initiated a restoration of the gospel.	53
5. VIII-5 The power of the priesthood, through the divine patriarchal order, aids the home in fulfilling its function as the basis of the righteous life.	50
6. VIII-8 Through the preaching of the gospel to the nations of the earth, Israel will be gathered.	45

Table 2 (Continued)

Doctrine	Number of times stressed
7. VIII-7a	
The standard works of the Church	44
8. VIII-7b	
The prophet of the Church, who receives revelation from the Lord for the Church and for the world. Other prophets, seers, and revelators who assist in teaching, directing and governing the Church.	43
9. VIII-7e	
The Church organizations and priesthood programs.	37
10. II-2	
All mankind are literal spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Parents and dwelt with them before coming to this earth. All mankind are spirit brothers and sisters.	35
11. VIII-6	
As the kingdom of God is extended through the earth, the ideal society, known as Zion, is developed.	35
12. I-5b	
Our Heavenly Father is the Father of the spirit body of Jesus Christ and of the spirit bodies of all mankind, and he is also the Father of the physical body of Jesus Christ.	34

Table 2 (Continued)

Doctrine	Number of times stressed
13. I-5a	
God is the greatest intelligence. He understands and lives in harmony with celestial law.	32
14. VII-2a	
Faith in God the Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.	31
15. VII-2b	
Repentance from all sins.	31

Table 3

The Ten Doctrines Least Emphasized by
President George Albert Smith

Doctrine	Number of times stressed
1. Our Heavenly Father presides over and administers the work of the God-head.	0
2. All mankind were intelligences in the beginning.	0
3. Lucifer rebelled in pre-earth life.	0
4. When Adam and Eve partook of the fruit they became subject to both spiritual and temporal death.	0
5. Jesus Christ was foreordained to become the Savior.	1
6. Only after Adam and Eve became mortal did they have children.	1
7. Jesus was chosen in the grand council in heaven to be the Savior.	1
8. The eternal principles, laws, and ordinances by which mankind may obtain immortality and eternal life through the Atonement are known as the gospel of Jesus Christ.	1
9. Men must be called of God by prophecy and laying on of hands by those who are in authority to preach the gospel.	1
10. Ordinance work for the dead will continue during the millenium.	2

SUMMARY STATEMENT

From the above tables we can see an over all view of the doctrinal emphasis of George Albert Smith. It is perhaps evident to the reader by now that President Smith emphasized certain doctrines as a means to the end that all who heard his messages would be inspired to live the Christ-like life. In his teachings he was not, therefore, primarily philosophical or theological. His major concern was the practical application of the gospel in the lives of people. To achieve this goal he constantly and consistently emphasized those doctrines that would enable the saints and all people to gain a deeper love for God and for their fellowmen. The fact that he did not emphasize certain theological doctrines tends to strengthen this conclusion.

President George Albert Smith was a prophet for his time, a man of inspiration and love. He saw clearly that obedience and charity were fundamental steps along the pathway of happiness and salvation. The reading of his discourses inspires and motivates one to renewed desires of Christian love and service. The tribute given at his passing by the Presiding Bishopric of the Church is a fitting conclusion to this thesis: "Centuries will pass into oblivion; we will pay but little heed to the fleeting millenniums of time; but while these pass and multiply themselves into eternities, the influence of the life of President George Albert Smith will go about lifting and blessing men's souls forever."¹

¹IE, April, 1950, p. 304.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Table 4

Favorite Scripture References of
President George Albert Smith

Scripture	Main Content	Number of times quoted in general conference addresses, 1904-1950
Matt. 25:23	Well done, good and faithful servant	19
Matt. 5:16	Let your light so shine before men	17
Matt. 22:37-39	Love thy neighbor	12
Romans 1:16	The gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation	12
John 13:34	Love one another	12
Matt. 6:33	Seek ye first the kingdom of God	11
Matt. 18:20	Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them	9
D&C 1	Peace shall be taken from the earth	
Amos 3:7	Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets	7
Rev. 18:4	Come out of her (meaning the world)	8

Table 4 (Continued)

Scripture	Main content	Number of times quoted in general conference addresses, 1904-1950
James 1:5	If any of ye lack wisdom, let him ask of God	8
D&C 89	Reference to particular pas- sage on word of wisdom	5
1 Sam. 3:1-7	Here am I (referring to the willingness of the saints to accept calls from the Lord	5
John 1:43-46	Come and see	4
Matt. 7:21	Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord	4
Matt. 6:19-20	Lay up treasures in heaven	4
D & C 68:25	Inasmuch as parents have children in zion	4
Isaiah 29:14	Wisdom of wise men to perish	4
Job 32:8	There is a spirit in man	4
Joshua 24:15	As for me and my house we will serve the Lord	3
Matt. 25:40	Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least	3
Galatians 6:7	God will not be mocked	3
John 5:39	Search the scriptures	3

Table 5

Total Number of Times George Albert Smith Made
Reference to Each of the Standard Works

Standard Work	Times Quoted
New Testament	151
Old Testament (From 53 quotations, 23 were in reference the 10 commandments)	53
Doctrine and Covenants	48
Book of Mormon	20
Pearl of Great Price	3

Table 6

Most Often Quoted Stories from Scripture

Story	Times referred to
Joseph Smith's First Vision	26
Noah	14
Pioneers (who crossed plains)	13
Moses	12
Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith	10
Daniel	10
Sodom and Gomorrah	8
Lehi Coming to America	7
Three Hebrew Children in Fiery Furnace	5
Abraham	5
Jaredites	5
Jonah	4
Joseph - Sold Into Egypt	4

APPENDIX B

Epitaph on the Tombstone of the
Grave of George Albert Smith

GEORGE ABLERT SMITH

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
1945-1951

Born April 4, 1870 - Died April 4, 1951
In Salt Lake City, Utah

Son of John Henry and Sarah Farr Smith
Married May 25, 1892 to
Lucy Emily Woodruff

Attended Salt Lake City Schools, Brigham Young Academy
University of Utah

Ordained an Apostle October 8, 1903

Missionary - Mission President - Church Worker in Many Capacities
Particularly Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

Businessman, Executive and Corporation Director
Public Servant in City, State and Nation.

Patriot and leader in Social Service and Public Welfare organizations
including international farm Congress, Boy Scouts of America, Sons of
American Revolution, Mayflower Descendants, Utah Pioneer Trails and Land-
marks Association, Sons of Utah Pioneers, Utah Society for Aid to the Sight-
less.

He understood and disseminated the teachings of Christ and was uncom-
monly successful in putting them into practice, he was kindly, patient, wise,
tolerant, and understanding.

He went about doing good.

He loved Utah and America, but was not provincial. He had faith, with-
out reservation, in the need for and in the power of love. For his Church and
his family he had unbounded affection and served them passionately. Yet his
love was not limited; it included all men, regardless of race, faith, or station
to them and of he frequently said "WE ARE ALL OUR FATHER'S CHILDREN."

APPENDIX C

Highlights in the Life of George Albert Smith
(1870 - 1951)

Age

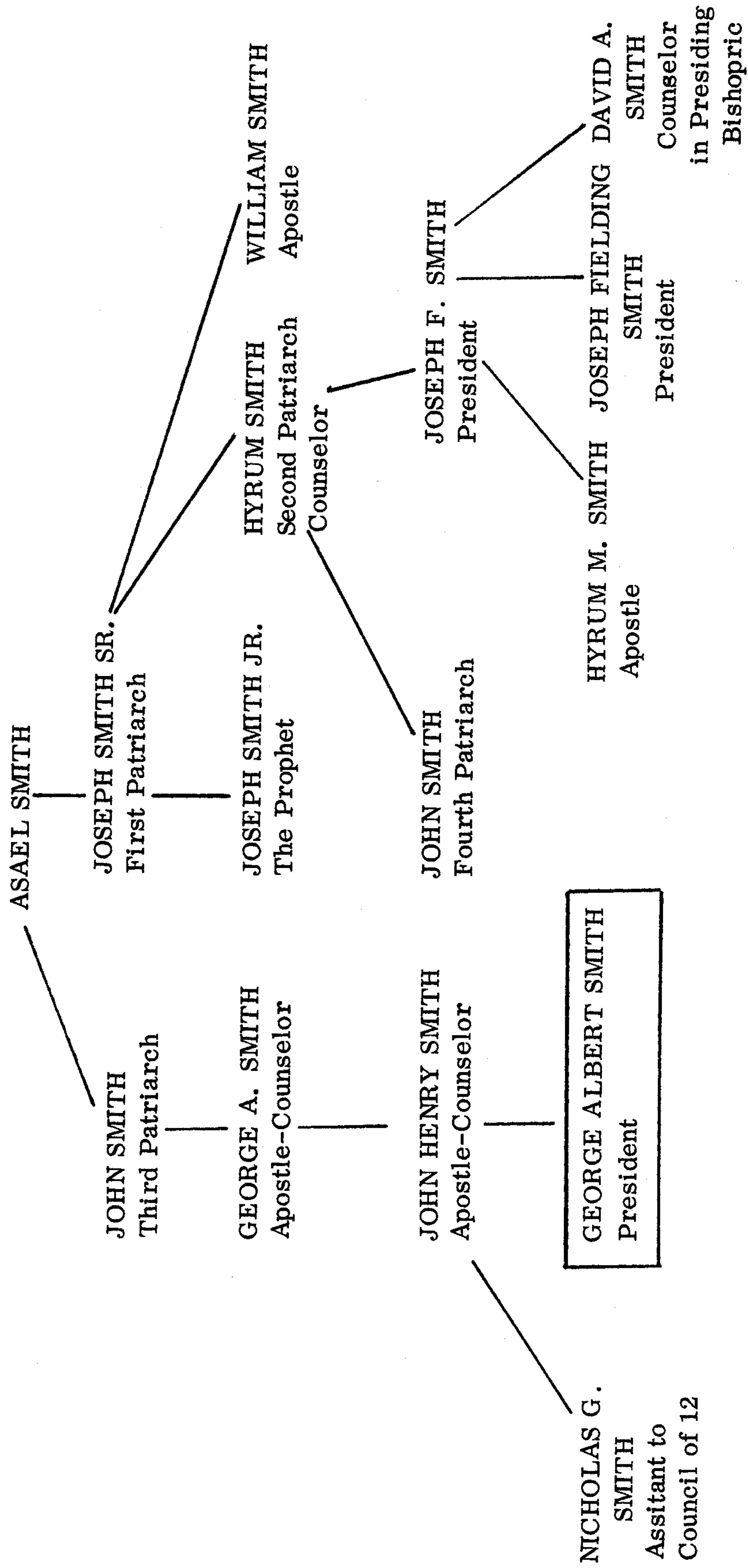
- ... Born in Salt Lake City, Utah (April 4, 1870).
- 4-5 His father, John Henry Smith, serves a mission in Britain (1874-1875).
- 7 Death of President Brigham Young (1877).
- 10 His father is ordained an apostle (1880).
- 13 Begins work in ZCMI overall factory (1883).
- 14 Receives his patriarchal blessing which foretells his future calling to the Quorum of the Twelve (1884).
- 17 Death of President John Taylor (1887).
- 21 Mission to Southern Utah in the interests of the YMMIA (1891).
- 22 Married Lucy Emily Woodruff (1892).
- 22-24 Mission to Southern States (1892-1894).
- 28 Appointed Receiver of the U. S. Land Office and Special Disbursing Agent for Utah by President McKinley; death of President Wilford Woodruff (1898).
- 31 Death of President Lorenzo Snow (1901).
- 33 Sustained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1903).
- 39-42 Illness prevents him from being active in the Quorum (1909-1912).
- 46 Elected President of International Irrigation Congress (1916).
- 47 Elected President of International Dry Farm Congress (1917).
- 48 Death of President Joseph F. Smith (1918).

Age

- 49-51 President of European Mission (1919-1921).
- 51 Appointed General Superintendent of YMMIA (1921).
- 52 Elected Vice-President of National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (1922).
- 61 Elected member of National Executive Board of Boy Scouts of America (1931).
- 68 Tour of missions of the Church in the South Pacific (1938).
- 73 Set apart as president of the Quorum of the Twelve (1943).
- 75 Sustained as President of the Church (1945).
- 77 Utah Centennial (1947).
- 81 Dies at Salt Lake City (April 4, 1951).

APPENDIX D

Pedigree Chart of President George Albert Smith



APPENDIX E

Overview of the Ancestry of
George Albert Smith

President George Albert Smith's great grandfather, John Smith, was converted to the Church in the summer of 1830. His conversion came as a result of a visit made by Joseph Smith, Sr., to his father, Asael. Throughout his life, John Smith remained a faithful follower of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

George Albert's grandfather, George A. Smith, was born the summer of 1817. He first became acquainted with Mormonism during the before mentioned visit of Joseph Sr. to his father Asael. George A. read the "Golden Bible" with his mother and after some objection joined the Church. He was later called to the apostleship in 1839.

John Henry Smith, George Albert's father, was baptized and confirmed by his father, George A., in 1856. His life was one of service and devotion to his fellowmen and God. It is probable that his personality was a factor influencing his oldest son, George Albert Smith, to become the great leader that he was. An example of the guidance he gave George Albert was when he signed his son's autograph book. He wrote in October, 1882:

My dear Son, guard thine honor as thy life, be charitable, virtuous, just, honest and truthful, and life's stream will be a continual scene of happiness and success. Your loving father,
John Henry Smith.¹

¹Paper and collections of Emily Smith Stewart, Church Historian's Office.

His mother's line is equally as impressive as his father's. Sarah Farr Smith, George Albert Smith's mother, was born of goodly parents. Lorin and Nancy Farr were children of converts in the Church's early infancy. Lorin's parents, Winslow and Olive, were converted to the Church when Lorin was eleven years of age. They first heard the gospel in May, 1832, from two missionaries, Orson Pratt and Lyman E. Johnson, who had walked about eight hundred miles from Ohio to Vermont.

Lorin stated that his family was prepared for the gospel before the missionaries arrived, for he had often heard his grandfather Freeman say that the true church of Jesus Christ was not on the earth.

Six years after his conversion, Lorin and his brother, Aaron, left on foot for Far West, Missouri. Upon their arrival, Lorin made his home with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Lorin was in Far West with Joseph during most of the persecutions.²

Shortly after returning to Nauvoo the family decided Lorin should marry. A few weeks after this discussion, Lorin swung a bucket over his arm and went to the well to obtain fresh water for the night. As he arrived at the well, he saw a girl who caused his heart to beat harder. As Jacob of old met Rachael at the well of Haran as he came to draw water for her father, so Lorin Farr assisted Nancy B. Chase to carry some buckets of

²Edward Tullidge, History of Northern Utah and Southern Idaho (Salt Lake City: Star Printing Co., 1881-85), II, pp. 174-176.

water. He knew instantly that she was the one to be his wife. They were married New Year's Day 1845 by Brigham Young.³

To this wonderful couple was born a choice daughter, who was to become the mother of President George Albert Smith. Sarah Farr was born October 30, 1849. She passed through the experience of pioneer life in such a manner as to develop many important qualities. She began life with a strong physique and cheerful disposition. Because of her pioneer training she developed traits of frugality and economy.⁴ As a young girl, she took active part in the Tabernacle Choir of Ogden until her marriage at the age of 17 to John Henry Smith.⁵

Due to poor financial circumstances of the time, her training in frugality proved to be an asset to the marriage. John Henry made their furniture, and they began married life in a log house with a mud roof. Sarah was a very industrious woman, being the first to rise in the morning and the last to retire at night. She gave birth to eleven children, rearing eight to man and womanhood. She was a strict disciplinarian, and the children always knew that when she told them to do something she expected them to obey.

³Thomas Romney, The Gospel in Action (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union Board, 1949), pp. 59-61.

⁴George Albert Smith, "Mothers of our Leaders," The Relief Society Magazine, VI (June 1919), pp. 313-314.

⁵James T. Jakeman, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and their Mothers (The Western Album Publishing Co.), p. 63.

Her children in later years commented on what a wonderful house-keeper she was. She loved beautiful things, and could make a dollar go as far as anyone. Sarah retained her youth to the extent that when her son George Albert Smith was a young man, many thought they were brother and sister. She always had a good word for people, and it was a rare thing to hear her speak of anyone except in a complementary way. When John Henry wanted to take Josephine as his second wife, Sarah gave her consent and the two women were loyal to and affectionate with each other.⁶

After the death of John Henry, the family met together to decide his estate. George Albert, being the eldest son, took charge of the meeting. He reminded the family that Aunt Josephine had no claim to the George A. Smith estate under the law because she was a second wife and not recognized by the law. At that point, Sarah stood and said, "We will share and share alike." George Albert Smith then stated that that was what he had hoped, and he felt that all of the children had the same idea.⁷

Sarah gave birth on April 4, 1870, to a baby boy, George Albert, named for his grandfather. This young baby received a rich heritage in the Church because of his noble ancestry and his own desire to serve and honor his Heavenly Father.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Edith Elliott, personal interview, Aug. 12, 1972.

APPENDIX F

Three Occasions When George Albert Smith's
Life Was Preserved

"You children have been so patient and good. You have waited a long time to have me tell you the story that I have promised you. I believe I will tell you three stories -- three short ones of very important events in my life. Each of them was an occasion when I feel certain the Lord blessed me and spared my life. I would like you to hear me tell the experiences myself. I want to impress on you that the Lord will take care of you in times of danger, if you will give him the opportunity.

The first story I am going to tell you is an experience I had in the mission field. I was just a young man when I went on my mission to the Southern States. Your grandmother and I both labored in Tennessee. Most of the time she stayed at the mission home while I went out into the country sections. On this particular occasion I was traveling with President J. Golden Kimball. We were in a wooded rural area. During the day we had held meetings with the people in the neighborhood who were very friendly and very receptive to our message. One of the local saints had invited us to accept the hospitality of his home for the night. It was a humble home, built of split logs. It consisted of two rooms and a small log lean-to. There were six missionaries in the group, so it strained the capacity of the little house to be there.

About midnight we were awakened with a terrible shouting and yelling from the outside. Foul language greeted our ears as we sat up in bed to acquaint ourselves with the circumstances. It was a bright moonlight night and we would see many people on the outside. President Kimball jumped up and started to dress. The men pounded on the door and used filthy language ordering the Mormons to come out that they were going to shoot them. President Kimball asked me if I wasn't going to get up and dress and I told him No, I was going to stay in bed, that I was sure the Lord would take care of us. In just a few seconds the room was filled with shots. Apparently the mob had divided itself into four groups and were shooting into the corners of the house. Splinters were flying over our heads in every direction. There were a few moments of quiet, then another volley of shots was fired and more splinters flew. I felt absolutely no terror. I was very calm as I lay there, experiencing one of the most horrible events of my life, but I was sure that as long as I was preaching the word of God and following his teachings that the Lord would protect me, and he did.

Apparently the mob became discouraged and left. The next morning when we opened the door, there was a huge bundle of heavy hickory sticks such as the mob used to beat the missionaries in the south.

The scene of my second story is also laid in the southern states during my first mission there. Late one evening in a pitch-dark night Elder Stout and I were travelling along a high precipice. Our little walk was

narrow; on one side was the wall of the mountain, on the other side, the deep, deep river. We had no light and there were no stars and no moon to guide us. We had been traveling all day and we knew that we would have hospitality extended to us if we could reach the McKelvin home, which was on the other side of a high valley. We had to cross this little mountain in order to reach the home of Mr. McKelvin. Our mode of travel of necessity was very halting. We walked almost with a shuffle, feeling each foot of ground as we advanced, with one hand extended toward the wall of the mountain. Elder Stout was ahead of me and as I walked along I felt the hard surface of the trail under my feet. In doing so I left the wall of the mountain which had acted as a guide and a steadying force. After I had taken a few steps away from the mountain wall itself, I felt impressed to stop immediately, that something was wrong. I called to Elder Stout and he answered me. The direction from which his voice came indicated I was on the wrong trail so I backed up until I reached the wall of the mountain and again proceeded forward. He was just a few steps in front of me, and as I reached him we came to a fence piling. In the dark we carefully explored it with our hands and feet to see whether it would be safe for us to climb over. We decided that it would be secure and made the effort. While I was on the top of this big pile of logs, my little suitcase popped open and the contents were scattered around. In the dark I felt around for them and was quite convinced that I had recovered practically everything. We arrived safely at our destination about eleven o'clock at night. I soon discovered I had lost my comb and brush, and the next morning we returned

to the scene of my accident. I recovered my property and while there my curiosity was stimulated and aroused to see what had happened the night before when I had lost my way in the dark. As missionaries we wore hob-nails in the bottom of our shoes to make them last longer, so that I could easily follow our tracks in the soft dirt. I retraced my steps to the point where my tracks left the mountainside and discovered that in the darkness I had wandered to the edge of a deep precipice. Just one more step and I would have fallen over into the river and been drowned. I felt very ill when I realized how close I had come to death. I also was very grateful to my Heavenly Father for protecting me. I have always felt that if we are doing the Lord's work and ask him for his help and protection, he will guide and take care of us.

Children, my next story is going to be about the Pacific Ocean, and the wonderful swim I had in its beautiful blue waters off the shore of California. I was considered a very good swimmer and thoroughly enjoyed the sport. This particular day the tide was very high and very swift. As I left the shore and swam out into the ocean, I dived through the big breakers as they would crest and spray over me. My objective was the large swells beyond the breakers, where I could lie on my back and ride the big swells up and down. While engaging in this interesting sport, one very huge wave crested and broke before I could right myself following the dive through the previous one. The second one caught me and threw me to the floor of the

ocean. I could feel myself being dragged out by the undertow. At this particular time many waves came in rapid succession and I was not able to right myself before I had to dive from one into another. I realized that my strength was rapidly leaving me, that it was going to be necessary for me to find some means of help. As I rode to the crest of one huge wave, I saw the underpilings of a pier close at hand, and I thought if with super-human effort I could reach the security of the pilings that I would be able to save my life. I silently asked my Heavenly Father to give me the strength to reach my objective. As I was washed into arms length of the pier, I reached out and put my arms around one of the posts. They were covered with sharp dark blue barnacles, and as I wound my leg and arms around its security, they cut my chest, legs and thighs. I hung on as long as I could stand the pain and watched for a big friendly swell to come my way that I might throw myself on it and travel to a piling closer to shore. Each time with a prayer in my heart I would make the effort of traveling from one pile to another with the aid of the rolling swell. Slowly but surely and with great difficulty, I made my way to the shore where the water was shallow enough for me to walk to the beach. When I reached the safety of the warm sand, I fell exhausted. I was so weak, so nearly drowned I was unable to walk home until I had rested for some time. Lying on the sand with its warmth and security, I thought of the harrowing experience that I had just endured and my heart was filled with gratitude and humility that the Lord had again spared my life.

APPENDIX G

George Albert Smith's Feelings at the Time of His Call to
the Council of the Twelve Apostles

All the brethren spoke briefly in turn, expressing words of love, good fellowship and confidence in Brother George A., and welcoming him into the quorum as their associate and fellow apostle. And on being asked to express his own feelings, he said:

"Brethren, you doubtless have all experienced the sensations I have been feeling while listening to you, and which I now feel in addressing you. The sentiments of affection voiced by you can be reciprocated in part only by one who is ungrateful; but I feel to reciprocate every kind word, and especially the words of welcome to this quorum extended to me by all of you. I need not say to you that this position has come to me entirely unsought; in fact, I have not given it any thought whatever, and therefore it has come to me as a total surprise. I may say however that when I was blessed it was predicted upon my head that I should be one of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and when I have read that blessing I have sometimes wondered if it ever could be fulfilled; but not having read it for a number of years it had become but a vague impression in my mind; and I may say further that the only idea I ever had about it was that possibly I might be counted worthy to succeed my father in the quorum. I have thought too that these things are regulated by our Heavenly Father, and that perhaps this blessing might be realized by me in the flesh, and possibly not. When I was sick with typhoid

fever I said to the Lord that if he would spare my life and provide for my family, I would devote the balance of my life to His work. He has done His part, and I hope to do mine. I feel weak and lack judgment compared with men of maturer years; but my heart is right, and I desire sincerely the onward progress of the work of the Lord. The statement made that the duties of my office are my first duties, is responded to with every sentiment of my heart, and corresponds with the instruction given to me from my boyhood, and it will be my pleasure to receive this instruction in the spirit in which it is given with all that that implies. I have a living testimony of the divinity of this work; I know that the gospel has come to earth under the direction and guidance of the Lord himself, and that those chosen to preside were and are His servants in very deed. I desire and pray that I may live pure and humble, so that I may be entitled to the prompting and admonitions of the Spirit to guide me throughout my life; and when the end shall come, that I may say that I have acted my part well; and when my eyes shall be closed in death, that I may go to my grandfather and those of my kindred, taking with me the honor that is due to their name, and that too with a consciousness of having done no injustice to any of our Father's children. I desire to do all the good I can, to keep the faith, and do the will of my Heavenly Father and to assist you, my brethren, in every way possible in carrying on this work, that I may feel worthy of your association and confidence. I feel honored in being called to this position, but without the assurance of your faith and prayers, your love and confidence I shall be weak. However with

that aid, together with the assistance and favor of the Lord, I feel that I may be able to merit your fellowship and the continued blessings of my Heavenly Father.

GASC, Box 104.

APPENDIX H

George Albert Smith's Feelings at the Time of His call as
President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

President Grant and Brethren: I have always been grateful for my association with this body of men. I have felt my limitations many times and I have known that I needed the faith and prayers of the Latter-day Saints in order to carry on. I have never sought the position to which I have been called. I have been glad to labor in any place that I have been required to labor. From the time I was ordained a deacon until the present time I have never failed to do my duty in any calling that has come to me. I have felt that it was the Lord's work, and I was but a humble servant in His hands to carry on. I have appreciated the love and kindness of President Grant ever since I came into the Council of the Twelve. I have rejoiced in the fact that the Lord has prolonged his life not once but several times to complete the work that was assigned to him long long ago. With all my heart I pray that he may retain his faculties and his physical strength to carry on in his leadership in this Church until he himself shall feel that he has done all that he desires to do and that the Lord is ready to receive him home.

I do not think a group of men could have worked with greater harmony than this group. I realize that we are individual entities, we all have our own ideas, we are expected to express ourselves fearlessly and patiently and considerately on all matters. I have appreciated the kindness of my Brethren,

of the Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve during the years I have been permitted to associate with you. It was a great anxiety to me to see President Clawson gradually fail in his ability to carry on. It was marvelous to me how he took care of himself almost to the end, and I tried to be helpful to him.

I know that this is God's work. I know that each of us is directly responsible to our Heavenly Father for our own conduct. I realize that we should not have selfish ambitions, such as do not come from the Lord but from the other source. I feel as your associate, Brethren, as your fellow servant, to say to you with all my heart, God bless you and give each of you wisdom that you may continue faithful, and I pray that patience, love and charity may always prevail with the Presidency and with the Quorum of the Twelve, as a council and as individuals, that in all important matters we may be one, because He has said we should be one, and He has warned us that if we were not one we were not His. I pray that we may be His, and that the love that is in our hearts may not diminish but increase for one another, and that from day to day our love for our fellows may be enlarged and that we may have spiritual guidance and physical power and mentality to carry on to the acceptance of our Lord in this day of uncertainty and doubt. May we be an example of righteousness to the Church and to all people, and discharge our responsibility in such a way that we may know every day that the favor of our Heavenly Father rests upon us because of our devotion and because of our determination to do right.

With all my heart I thank you, my Brethren, for your kindness, for your helpfulness, and for your patience with me in the years that have passed. I assure you that as far as I know how I shall try to be worthy of you, to be worthy of the cause that we represent, to be worthy of our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who gives us all that we enjoy. I pray that our meetings together in the future may continue not only to be delightful as they have been in the past, but that we may if possible be drawn nearer to the Lord that we may indeed have the inspiration of the Almighty on all occasions and be real servants of the living God. This I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

GASC, Box 104 Fd-2

APPENDIX I

Blessing by President Heber J. Grant upon the Head of
Elder George Albert Smith, Setting Him Apart as
President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles
(July 8, 1943)

Brother George Albert Smith: As the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints I lay my hands upon your head, and I bless you and set you apart to be the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and I bestow upon you this blessing and pray that the Spirit of the living God may be and abide with you during your administration as the President of the Twelve Apostles.

I bless you for your devotion. No more devoted and splendid worker has ever been among the leaders of the Church than yourself, excepting, of course, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I bless you for blessing me upon two occasions when I was nigh unto death, and I was immediately touched with healing power and restored to my wonted strength.

I bless you for your many travels. I bless you for the many comforting sermons you have preached to those who have lost their loved ones. You have been particularly willing to go and come and to preach.

I bless you that your life has been spared, and I pray that you may have better strength of body in the future of your life, notwithstanding your age, than you have had for years past. You have been doing more work than your body was capable of doing. You have overdone in preaching and working

for other people, and I bless you that you may have wisdom to take care of yourself and to prolong your life. I do not forget that you went to St. George for nearly if not quite a year, and I feel that Brother Joseph F. Smith and some of the others of the Quorum lacked the faith that you would return to health. I thank the Lord that I felt that you would return, and you did.

I feel that you will magnify this office. I bless you with every gift, grace, and power necessary to be in a very deed one of the strong Presidents of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I bless you with vigor of body and of mind, and with all the blessings that you need to continue your labor, but do so with wisdom and not overdo yourself.

I bestow these blessings upon you in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and by the power and authority that I hold as the Prophet of God in the last days, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

GASC MSS 610

APPENDIX J

Table 6

Favorite Key Words of
George Albert Smith

Word(s)	Times used in general conference address, 1904-1950
Heavenly Father or Father	1101
Lord	897
Church	823
Jesus Christ or Jesus or Christ	608
Brethren or Brothers	451
Gospel	444
Latter-day Saint	269
Sisters	229
Love	208
Grateful	192
Joseph Smith	160
Spirit or Lord's Spirit or Spirit of God	153
Privilege	113

APPENDIX K

A Listing of Some of the Prophecies of
George Albert Smith from 1904-1950

1. April 1918 - Strife in world to continue unless repentance.

I want to tell you that this war will not cease and the strife in this world will not end until the children of men repent of their sins and turn to God and serve him and keep his commandments; and in the words of Patrick Henry, "Men may cry peace, peace, but there is not peace" until the children of men conform their lives to the teachings of the Father of us all, who gave us our being and who placed within our reach wholesome advice and counsel from the creation until now, and has said to us, "This is the path, walk ye in it."

CR, April, 1918, p. 41.

2. January 1921 - The gospel to be preached to Jews.

The gospel has been offered to the Gentiles for almost a hundred years. The time is rapidly approaching when it will be preached to the Jews, who are to gather in from their long dispersion, upon the land of their inheritance. Palestine is to be inhabited as a city without walls and the glory of the Lord will rest upon His chosen people, when they repent of their sins and turn unto him.

MS 83:2

3. October 1921 - History repeats itself.

Unless men turn to the Lord history will repeat itself and destruction overtake the wicked.

CR, Oct., 1921, p. 97

4. April 1923 - If church members disobey Sabbath they will lose their faith.

Some people appear to think that if they have attended religious meetings, or performed some portion of the service required of them on Sunday, they are then at liberty to go to ballgames, picture shows, or resorts of various kinds, and still continue to enjoy the

favor of the Master. I say to you that if they persist in doing things of that kind, members of the Church will lose their faith; and the Spirit of our heavenly Father will withdraw from them.

5. April, 1927 - The gospel will be taught in every part of the world.

It will not be long now, until in every part of this world the gospel may be heard through the servants of the Lord proclaiming it in power. Our heavenly Father will adjust conditions in the world so that the gospel may be preached. The great World War has readjusted the boundary lines and changed conditions in some nations, and the conflict that is now on in China, and the earthquakes and other disturbances that are afflicting mankind, will be in preparation of the further promulgation of the word of the Lord.

CR, April, 1927, p. 83.

6. April 1937 - The world will be devastated unless people repent.

God has spoken. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, is upon the earth with power and authority. We live in the evening of the fulness of times. The world will soon be devastated with war and carnage with plague and all the distresses that the Lord has promised unless they repent; but he has indicated that they will not repent, and distress must come.

CR, April, 1937, p. 36.

7. April 1940 - A prophecy about President Heber J. Grant and those who were critical of him.

And so it has been to our day. There are among us today some misguided men. I have no anger in my heart for them. I pity them because they do not know better. They are finding fault with the leadership of the Church, particularly the President of the Church. And I stand here to say that no President that we have had has been more loyal to the Gospel of Jesus Christ than President Heber J. Grant. No President that we have had has been more willing to give his all that the Truth might be known among the nations of the earth, and yet there are those who are influenced by the adversary of all righteousness, who would belittle him and destroy his influence. I say unto you that his name

will continue to be held in honor as a servant of the living God, while those who traduce him and misrepresent him will disappear from the earth and the Lord has said their sins will be visited upon their children unless they repent.

CR, April, 1940, p. 86.

8. April 1946 - A statement about those who belittle the prophet, Joseph Smith .

There have been some who have belittled him [Joseph Smith] but I would like to say that those who have done so will be forgotten and their remains will go back to mother earth, if they have not already gone, and the odor of their infamy will never die, while the glory and honor and majesty and courage and fidelity manifested by the Prophet Joseph Smith will attach to his name forever.

CR, April, 1946, p. 182

9. August 1946 - A promise to those who seek out their genealogy.

If we do our part our genealogies will be unfolded to us - sometimes in one way, sometimes in another.

IE, Aug., 1946, p. 541.

10. April 1947 - The Church will continue to grow.

I want to say that this Church will continue to grow and expand, and instead of approximately a million souls as we have now, if we shall do our duty, the membership of this Church will continue to increase, and the good men and women, those who are seeking God, will get the inspiration and accept the truth as some of your forebears did.

11. October 1948 - A prophecy about Jerusalem.

I am thinking of Jerusalem today. After all these years and experience after experience, it is a battleground, and one of the most undesirable places to be living that you can think

of in all the world. But this will change. Repentance will come and when that repentance comes and is accepted by the Lord, Jerusalem will be redeemed.

CR, Oct., 1948, p. 1821

12. September 1949 - The work with the Lamanites will increase.

I say to Brother Kimball and those who work with him, their work has just begun, and the opportunities for these people to understand will multiply because we have the history of their forebears. The Lord gave to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the history of the ancestors of the American Indian. When they find out that they are descendants of a prophet of God and are entitled to blessings that they cannot enjoy other than as members of the Church, their hearts will be filled with joy.

IE, Sept., 1949, p. 605.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DOCTRINAL TEACHINGS OF
PRESIDENT GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

Robert K. McIntosh

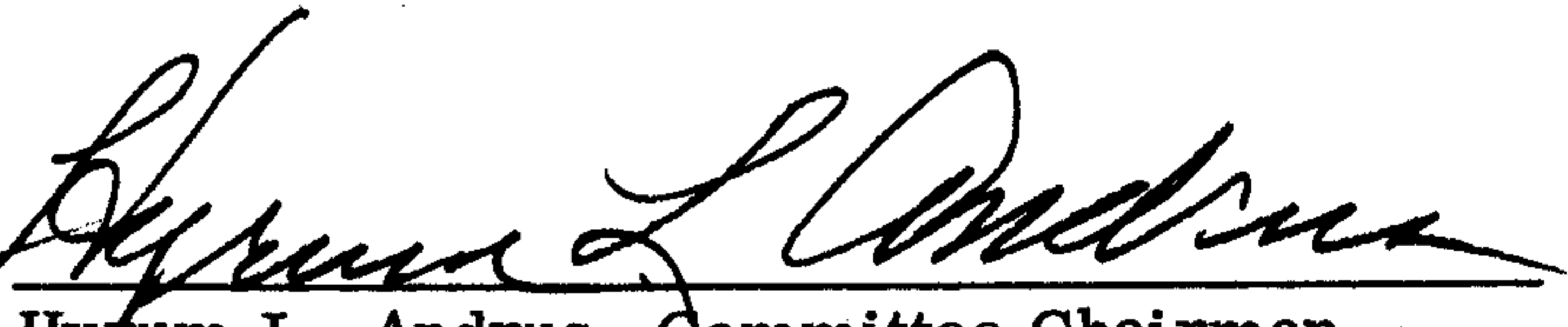
Department of Church History and Doctrine

M. A. Degree, August 1975

ABSTRACT

George Albert Smith, Eighth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was a General Authority during some of the most traumatic years in world history. His teachings and doctrines were practical, rather than philosophical or theoretical, and were applicable to a time when the world needed a message of hope and love. The two key ideas of his teachings were based on the two great commandments of Christ: love of God and love of neighbor. In addition, he also gave vital messages on the importance of obedience to God's laws, the character and attributes of God, the divine nature of man, the Standard Works and the living prophets, the home as the basis of the righteous life, the importance of missionary work, the Constitution of the United States, and the Christian path to peace in these latter days. All of these teachings were centered in the theme that we are all "Our Father's Children."

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:


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