

surround ourselves with those things that will preserve us from the difficulties that are now coming upon the world, the judgments of the Lord. We can see, as we read in the newspapers, that they are coming upon the nations of the ungodly; and they would have been upon us if we had stayed among the nations, if the Lord had not inclined our ears and brought salvation to us, we would have been as they are.

Brethren and sisters, I feel to say God bless you. Here are my counselors. We are one. We are united. We do not quarrel with each other. We speak well of one another because we ought to do it, and we think we are worthy of being well spoken of by each other. And here we have twelve men sitting in front with us—Twelve Apostles. There are many of these that you know. You know them from hearing what they have accomplished. You have a personal acquaintance with some of us. Now they are with us heart and soul. We are united together. We do not quarrel with each other. We do not slander one another, but we go where counsel requires and we are heart and soul together. What for? Not to make ourselves rich, not to make ourselves wealthy, but to see what we can accomplish in the interests of the people, and we are laboring continually to see what we can do. We come together every week and we talk about what we can do for the people. What can we do for these forty-two or forty-three Stakes of Zion? Are some of the presiding Elders, some of the presidents of these Stakes, getting too old to administer to the people? Are some of them neglecting their interests? We talk these things over. We study and consider them. We try to ascertain what they are doing and what their feelings are and how they manifest them in the presence of the people. Are they working for themselves? Are they trying to see how much money they can get into this bank or the other, or are they engaged heart and soul in doing what should be done in their respective responsibilities? Well, we are not idle in these things.

You will have a number of speakers here during this conference, you

will probably have in the neighborhood of Twenty speeches here. When the brethren arise to speak you should ask the Lord to let them say something that you want to know, that they may suggest something to you that will be of some advantage. If you have any desire to know certain matters that you do not understand, pray that these brethren in their talks may say something that shall enlighten your mind in reference to that which troubles you, and we will have a grand and glorious Conference, a better one than we have ever had before. Strange as it may appear, our last Conference always seems the best, and may this be the case; and you brethren and sisters, let your hearts rise up to the Lord and exercise faith while our brethren are talking to you. We will not be disappointed, and you will not go home, you will not retire from this Conference, without feeling you have been greatly and abundantly blessed. Amen.

ELDER REED SMOOT.

Spirit of Union among the Presidency and Twelve
—Indebtedness is bondage—Labor should be created for the young—Beneficent results of tithe-paying—Avoid Procrastination.

I am truly grateful to our Heavenly Father for this privilege of speaking at our Semi-annual conference to the Saints of the Most High, and I shall claim an interest in the opening prayer made by Brother Young, that the Spirit of the Lord will attend those who address this congregation. I shall also ask you, my dear brethren and sisters, to give me your faith and prayers, as requested by the Prophet of the Lord; for I have had experience enough in speaking to the Saints to know that without their faith and prayers and the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, I can say nothing that will be of interest to the people. I have no desire in my heart to say aught this morning but that will be for the benefit of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I am of the opinion that there is not a soul present in this vast audience but can say that the Lord has truly blessed them in more ways than one since our last conference. I am thankful that the principles of the Church to which we belong are so broad that they not

only cover our spiritual welfare, but extend farther and cover our temporal welfare. As President Snow referred this morning to our material interests, I wished to myself that the people of this Church knew the true feelings and desires of the Presidency and Twelve Apostles of this Church with regard to the material interests of every member of the Church. I bear testimony to you concerning what President Snow said in regard to the unity that exists among the Presidency of this Church and the Twelve Apostles. Unity and love truly exist with them, and I would that the same spirit extended to every member of the Church. My belief is that if that unity and love existed among all the people, together with a determination to do only that which God requires, the power of the Church and of the members thereof would be so far-reaching that all hell and the devil himself could have no power over this organization. I do not believe that the love, union and determination of the Presidency and Twelve were ever greater since the Church was organized than at the present time. Our desire is to do nothing but that will advance the interests of the Church and Kingdom of God. We want the people to be prepared for the coming of the Son of God—which I say to you, my brethren and sisters, is nearer than many of us anticipate.

I ask you, my brethren and sisters, to be prayerful and humble, and to seek the same spirit that the Presidency and the Apostles have; and I promise you that you shall have a testimony that they are working for your interest and for the advancement of the Church of God upon this earth. The quorum of the Twelve Apostles visit every Stake in the Church. They go into the homes of the people; they listen, not only to the complaints of the people, but also to the desires of the Saints, and they know the true feelings of their hearts, they know their virtues and their short-comings. I do not believe, therefore, that there are any better capable of judging as to what the members of this Church require than the Apostles and the Presidency of the Church. Moreover, they labor to this end, to advance not only the spiritual wel-

fare of the Saints, but also their temporal interests. There is scarcely a day passes without some of them meeting together to consider matters of great importance to the people, and among them none greater than the salvation of our youth. These questions are talked over and the brethren become familiar with and instructed regarding them, and then they go forth to teach the people how to avoid many conditions and evils that are existing, some of which have been so trying to the souls of the Later-day Saints.

I desire now to mention one thing that has brought sorrow to many a home, and that is, so many Latter-day Saints running in debt and not knowing how to get out of it. It is my hope and desire that the warning which has been sounded among the Stakes of Zion for the last year or more, advising the Saints to keep out of debt, and those who are in debt to get out as soon as possible, will be heeded by the Latter-day Saints; for I tell you that to an honest man there is no bondage controlled by human laws upon the face of the earth greater than the bondage of debt. I trust that the note of warning which has been given by the Apostles in all the Stakes of Zion, at the quarterly conferences, will be heeded by those who are in debt and by all people. Ask God's blessings upon your efforts in this direction, and at the same time remember the Lord in your tithes and your offerings, and He will bless you and so shape your circumstances that relief will come unto you who are in debt. And when you are relieved, do not go in debt any more. The improvement made by the people in this regard during the past six months is marvelous, from all I hear, and I pray God that this improvement will continue until the time shall come when not only the Church will be absolutely out of debt, but when each of the members of the Church will be able to say, "I owe no man a dollar that I cannot pay." Then when we are in this position, whatever call may be made upon us or wherever we may be called to go by the servants of the Lord, we can say that we are ready to go and fulfill the call without being under obligations to anyone; we can perform

the duty that God requires at our hands, because we are free. How much better this would be than to be in the position that some of the brethren are in at present. President Snow reported this morning that some who were called on missions replied that they had a desire to go, but their circumstances were such that they really could not leave. These "buts" are put in a great many times when they have no right to be put in by men holding the Priesthood of the Son of God, who are supposed to be minute men and ready to go anywhere when called.

I also desire this morning to call your attention to the early days of this great commonwealth of ours. Allow me to refer you to the memory of that great man, President Brigham Young, and to some of the fundamental principles pertaining to our temporal welfare which he taught so strongly. One thing that he advocated long and loud was that the people should place themselves in a position to create labor for their sons and daughters. Are we doing this? I am afraid that we have almost forgotten that there was such a principle advanced. Who taught home manufacture more than President Brigham Young? Who preached oftener and stronger and put his money into those institutions more than did President Brigham Young? We are raising young men by the thousands in this fair State of ours, and do we ever stop to think what they are going to do for a living? I hope my brethren and sisters, that we will think of this, and that we will, so far as possible, establish such industries here as will give employment to our young men and young women. I also feel that the fathers and mothers of this Church should begin to realize the importance of instructing their boys to prepare themselves for future life by learning some kind of trade. Our boys, as a rule—and I think that the parents are at fault in many instances—seem to drift along without caring anything about the responsibilities of life, or thinking of how they are going to fulfill the requirements that will be made of them as husbands and fathers. They do not stop to consider these things. I want to say that this is not an undeveloped country now as it used to be, nor has it unlimited homesteads for all

new comers, and we ought to begin to think what our sons and daughters, especially our sons, are going to do for a living in the future. Take almost every institution that is started now by the people here, where skilled labor is required, and do we find Utah boys at the head of the different departments? Take, for example, the Provo Woolen Mills. Can I get a Utah boy to start in the dye room and learn the trade, and stick to it until he knows every requirement of this department? No, I cannot. The result is, we are compelled to send east to get a man who has lived in a community where it was absolutely necessary for him to learn every detail of the business, in order to take charge of that department, and it is so with other departments. I hope we will begin, as fathers and mothers, to see our responsibility in regard to our children, and take care that they learn a trade. So far as I am personally concerned, if I were possessed of millions of money I would desire every son of mine to have a trade at his fingers' ends, so that if everything were swept away from him he could fall back on his trade and make an honest living. I wish that every son in this fair State, and especially in this Church, was in this position.

I had a young man come to me a short time ago and ask for an explanation of some remarks he had heard Brother Grant make concerning tithing. He said that at a meeting the other day he had heard Brother Grant express the belief that a man who paid his tithing honestly—one-tenth of all God gave him—would be better prepared to meet his obligations with nine-tenths and it would go further than the whole, and he did not believe it. He said he came to me as one who had studied financial matters, and would like to have me explain how ninety cents could go farther than one dollar. I thought a minute or two and then decided to take his own case for an example. I asked him if he would object to my taking his own case to prove to him the truth of what Brother Grant had said. Certainly not, he said. All right, said I, I will prove to you by your own acts that what Brother Grant said was an absolute fact, and I believe it is so in nine hundred and ninety-

nine cases out of a thousand, if not in every case. I then remarked to him, "I was going to a conference not long ago, and I saw you out driving on the Sabbath with a two-seated rig, at a time when you ought to have been at meeting." "Yes," he said, "I remember." "What did you pay for that rig?" I asked. "It only cost me four dollars," he replied. "What are you getting a month?" "Forty-five dollars a month." "Then," said I, "this would almost have paid your tithing on your wages for that month and you could have claimed the blessings of the Lord instead of breaking the law of God pertaining to the Sabbath." I want to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that the law of tithing is not a question of dollars and cents alone. I believe that the man who pays his honest tithing to God will not only be blessed by God himself, but that the nine-tenths will reach farther than would the ten-tenths if he did not obey that law; for the man who believes in the law of tithes and offerings, believes also in the other requirements made by God of him, and he does not spend money in breaking the Sabbath day, nor in going to places where his very soul is in danger of partaking of things that are not good for a Latter-day Saint to receive. I testify as Brother Grant testified; I testified to that young man that I believed what Brother Grant had said, and he was compelled to say that he had never thought of it in that light before. Brethren and sisters, there are thousands of dollars spent by the people in breaking the Word of Wisdom more each year than all your cash tithing amounts to. This vast sum is sent out of this State and for what? Not for the necessities of life, but for articles the use of which cause the people to break a commandment that God has given us. Let us remind ourselves of the positions that we hold. Let us understand what we are—that we are members of the Church of Christ, that we are the children of God, that we have a special work to do here, and that the Priesthood which has been given us has been given for a purpose. We should realize the importance of this authority, and labor to the end

that we will not do anything contrary to the spirit of God or the laws of this Church.

There is another thing with our young people, as well as the people generally, that I desire to call you attention to and that is, procrastination—putting off till tomorrow what we ought to do today, and thinking that we will live our religion a little better next year. The old saying that to travel by the road of bye and bye will reach the home of never, is just as true today as it ever was. Let us live our religion today. Let us do the duty of today. Let us pay our tithes that we owe today. Let us do everything required of us today, and not put it off for some future time.

My testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, is that this is the Church of God; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Living God; that his successors down to and including President Snow have been called of God, and that they have given the people the word of God. I hope and trust that this same testimony will be so strong in the hearts of every member of this Church, and especially in the hearts of the young men and young women, that no matter what trial or temptation may come in our way, we can say, Thy will, O Father, be done, and not mine. If we get in this position this Church will grow and increase, and we will be blessed, not only spiritually, but in every way that God can bless a son or daughter of His. To this end I ask God's blessings upon the Church and upon the people, and may peace and plenty be yours forever, with a glorious salvation in the kingdom of God, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

Growth of the spirit of Union—Building of Temples and vicarious work for the dead—Thoughts and desires of the Saints should be directed to their ancestors—Valuable suggestions upon this subject.

Brethren and sisters: I have greatly rejoiced in the remarks that have been made to us this morning, and in the spirit of union alluded to by President Snow. I can testify that, so far as I have been able to observe, the most perfect union exists among the First Presidency and Twelve; and so far as