

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The seventy-second semi-annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., October 4, 1901. President Snow being absent, on account of sickness, President Joseph F. Smith presided.

There were present, of the general authorities: of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith; (President Snow was absent on account of sickness.) Of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, there were: Brigham Young, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, Rudger Clawson and Reed Smoot; Patriarch John Smith; of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies: Seymour B. Young, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimball, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin; of the Presiding Bishopric: William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and John R. Winder.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins:

Come, let us anew our journey pursue.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Seymour B. Young.

Singing by the choir and congregation:

"Redæmer of Israel,
Our only delight,
On whom for a blessing we call."

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Evils to be corrected—Desecration of the Sabbath
—Use of profane and other improper language
—Tobacco and strong drink habit—Disregard
of the Priesthood—In relation to colonization.

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you this morning, at the opening of this Seventy-second Semi-Annual

Conference, with a hearty welcome. We are glad to see so many present, and we sincerely hope that we all may have a season of rejoicing and of awakening and strengthening of our faith and good determinations.

I regret to have to say that President Snow is suffering with a severe cold, and on account of the inclement weather this morning he deems it prudent not to venture out; but when the weather is more pleasant—possibly this afternoon—we will all rejoice to see him present with us. There is nothing serious the matter with him so far as we know; but we all desire that he shall be careful of himself, to preserve his life as long as it is possible and pleasing in the sight of the Lord for him to remain with us.

There are many subjects of importance which may be dwelt upon during our conference, and we hope that the Spirit of the Lord will lead the Apostles and others who may speak to us, that they may speak words that shall be meat in due season, and that we may all receive such instruction, encouragement, counsel and admonition as will be proper and necessary.

We notice that there are some evils which seem to be increasing somewhat in the land, and we desire to make an effort, as far as it lies in our power with the assistance of the Lord, against the existence and the increase of evils among the Latter-day Saints. One of these evils is a growing tendency, especially on the part of our youth, to pay but little attention to, if not to ignore, the observance of the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a day of rest and of worship, designated and set apart by special commandment of the Lord to

the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we should honor and keep it holy. We should also teach our children this principle.

Another evil we hear of too frequently is the tendency, not only among the youth of Zion, but also among those of more mature years, to use the name of the Lord in vain and to indulge in profane expressions and epithets that are contrary to the law of God, and that are wholly inconsistent and incompatible with the profession of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Behold, the Lord's name is holy, and God will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain. We should stamp out profanity and vulgarity, and everything of that character that exists among us; for all such things are incompatible with the Gospel and inconsistent in the people of God.

The use of tobacco in its various forms and of strong drink to some extent is also to be lamented and deplored, especially among the youth, and this evil should be stamped out.

The people of God should set their faces like flint against these practices, and they should see to it that their children are taught better, and that a better example is set before them by the parents, in order that the children may grow up without sin in these things.

There is also a tendency among the youth, and, I am sorry to say, among some of the older ones, to show but little regard for the sacredness of the Holy Priesthood. What I mean by the Holy Priesthood is that authority which God has delegated to man, by which he may speak the will of God as though the angels were here to speak it themselves; by which men are empowered to bind on earth and it shall be bound in heaven, and to loose on earth and it shall be loosed in heaven; by which the words of men, spoken in the exercise of that power, become the word of the Lord, the law of God unto the people, scripture, and divine commands. It is therefore not good that the Latter-day Saints and the children of the Latter-day Saints should treat lightly this sacred prin-

ciple of authority which has been revealed from the heavens in the dispensation in which we live. It is the authority by which the Lord Almighty governs His people, and by which, in time to come, He will govern the nations of the world. It is sacred, and it must be held sacred by the people. It should be honored and respected by them, in whomsoever it is held, and upon whomsoever responsibility is placed in the Church. The young men and young women and the people generally should honor this principle and recognize it as something that is sacred, and that cannot be trifled with nor spoken lightly of, with impunity. Disregard of this authority leads to darkness and to apostasy, and severance from all the rights and privileges of the house of God; for it is by virtue of this authority that the ordinances of the Gospel are performed throughout the world and in every sacred place, and without it they cannot be performed. Those also who hold this authority should honor it in themselves. They should live so as to be worthy of the authority vested in them, and worthy of the gifts that have been bestowed upon them.

Again, we do not desire to encourage the scattering of our people to distant places, separating and drawing themselves apart from the Saints and from the organizations of the Church. We notice a tendency on the part of some, who are restless and discontented, to sell out their homes to anybody who will purchase them and to move off into California or into some distant country, where they will perhaps buy a ranch or locate upon public lands, and thus cut themselves off from all the benefits of the organizations of the Church—from the Sabbath meetings, the Sunday schools, the quorum meetings, the Improvement associations, the Primary associations, etc. When people become dissatisfied with their homes and desire to move, we would suggest that they counsel and advise with some of the authorities of the Church. Let the leading brethren help the young people who are seeking new homes, and direct their course so that they may be located as much as pos-

sible in wards or branches where they can enjoy the benefits and blessings of the Gospel, and that their children may not grow up aliens thereto and be estranged from the cause of Zion. We are in a position where we can see beyond, in some respects, and are able to advise and counsel our brethren for their best good. We do not want the feeling to prevail among our people that every man is independent and free to move and go when and where he pleases, without consultation, because that would be calculated to disintegrate, to pull asunder, to destroy membership, and to scatter abroad. The Gospel that we have received teaches gathering. This is a gathering dispensation, and we are not here to scatter abroad, only so far as God may direct through His servants. When the Lord moves upon us to found a colony or to establish a settlement in some distant place, then it will be right for such of the people as can do so to gather there, under the counsel and direction of the Priesthood, and form settlements or colonies, strictly in accordance with the plan revealed in this dispensation for the establishment of Zion and for the spread of this work in the land. We do not design to make any general call upon the people to move here or there, or to break up their communities; but rather that they should concentrate together and strengthen one another's hands, that we may become strong in the land. As we pull asunder and scatter abroad we weaken ourselves, we destroy our influence, and we become like the rest of the world. This will not do. It is contrary to the principle of gathering that the Lord has revealed through His servant Joseph, the Prophet. Yet I see clearly manifest the hand of God in the formation of our colonies to the south and to the north, in the east and in the west. Wherever this colonization has been directed and counseled by the authority of the Holy Priesthood, it has been strictly in accordance with the mind and will of the Lord and in fulfillment of the predictions of the Prophets. If we emigrate to some distant part of the country we should do so with proper discipline, un-

der direction, with concert of action, and with a perfect understanding among ourselves—not every man become a law unto himself.

Brethren and sisters, I do not desire to prolong my remarks, but these are a few matters that may be dwelt upon by the brethren of the Priesthood during the conference, if they are led by the Spirit of the Lord to do so. These, together with the continuance of faithfulness in observing the Word of Wisdom, in obeying the law of tithing, the law of chastity, promoting purity of life, and every other good thing that pertains to our progress, development and permanency in the land, are subjects that are worthy to be dwelt upon by those who hold the authority of the Priesthood and are called upon to speak to the people who come to attend this conference. God bless the speakers, and all the people; and let peace abide in your souls, and the Spirit of God accompany you in all the labors of your lives, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER REED SMOOT.

The future of Zion—The spirits of good and evil—Importance of implicit obedience—Results of conforming to the law of tithing—The principles and conditions of the world.

I am truly thankful for the privilege of speaking here this morning to so many Latter-day Saints, convened in this semi-annual conference of the Church; and while I realize my weakness I also realize that I can claim the blessings of our Heavenly Father, through the divine Spirit that may be present at this conference. I ask that you invoke the blessings of our Father upon me for the few moments that I stand before you; also that the same blessing may be given to all the speakers during this conference. I ask, too, that you offer a silent prayer to our Father this morning in behalf of our beloved President, who is ill, that he may be blessed and restored, and that he may have the strength to come here and speak to the people.

I have been thinking this morning what subject to speak upon that would be of benefit to the people who have gathered here to receive the word of the Lord. What subject could I touch