

where good records are being kept. We have found it necessary to appoint one day each year for this purpose, and we think that the day on which the ward conference is held is the best time for the presidency of the Stake to inspect the records. It is necessary that these things be kept. The genealogical record is very important. How pleased we are when we go out into the world and find how conscientiously they have kept a record of births, so that we are able to trace our ancestry in some countries for several hundred years. This could not be done if genealogical records were kept in a slovenly manner. Sometimes here they are taken on slips of paper, put away in a drawer, and occasionally lost. This must not be. When we undertake to do a thing, let us do it well. Do not trust to the clerk alone, but let the Bishop feel that it is his business to look after the records in his ward. Statistical records cannot be kept correctly if the records are not correct. Certificates of membership should also be looked after. Bishops should see to it that those who move away receive their certificates to take to the wards where they move to; and the wards that they go to should try to find out their standing, so that they can be received there. There are many that are dropping out because they move away without certificates, and do not join the wards or branches to which they move, while if they were looked after and warmed up, they might be lively members in the Church.

I am pleased, brethren and sisters, with the condition of the people. When Brother Cowley referred yesterday to a time when so many apostatized from the Church, I thought how good it is that today this is not the case, and that excommunications are very rare. In fact, I believe that the discipline of the Church could be stricter and be a blessing unto the people. But it is a healthy sign to see that there are not so many apostatizing as in years past. I believe the people understand the principles of the Gospel better and live the Gospel more perfectly. They have shown during the last two years how they have received the word of the

Prophet in regard to tithing, and I believe the Lord will bless them, both temporally and spiritually, for meeting this requirement. They will be strengthened in their faith and there will not be so much danger of apostasy as when they refused to keep the commandments of God. May the Lord bless you all, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### ELDER M. W. MERRILL.

Spiritual manifestations—Necessity for reformation—Those who should bring it about—Proper procedure in colonization—How to be influential with the honorable of the earth—Influence of Godliness in the home—Importance of Temple work.

I am pleased to be associated with this conference. I have evidence in my heart that this is the work of the Lord, having had many testimonies to this effect; and it is a grand thing that the Lord is so merciful as to manifest to individuals with regard to the plan of life and salvation. It is not known to me whether all the Latter-day Saints have enjoyed manifestations from the Lord to the satisfying of their souls. Apostle Lund has just said to us that there are not so many people turning from the truth now as formerly. That, no doubt, is true, because in these times there are means provided whereby all the people, from the little child to the aged, may learn the Gospel. With these auxiliary organizations that are established in the Church, there are now more opportunities for people to understand the Gospel than we had in former years.

We are gathered together at this general conference, not with the expectation that any new revelation will be given or any new doctrine set forth, but to be reminded of the truth and to have our minds stirred up in remembrance of those things which we have heard or read, and thus be renewed in our spirits and in the prosecution of our labors. There are, no doubt, many things among us that might be improved upon. President Smith, in his opening remarks, alluded to some of them. We all know that he spoke the truth, and there needs to be throughout the Church an effort made towards improvement in those things. He referred to the fact that there was pro-

fanity among the Latter-day Saints. Now, who among the Elders of Israel, with the light and understanding we have and with the teachings that are given to us from time to time, would feel at liberty to indulge in profanity? In other words, what Elder would dare profane the name of Deity? Yet it is done, and those who do it know that it is wrong. Is it not possible for us, organized as we are, to institute reforms in regard to this and other evils that exist? Cannot we call our councils together in the various localities and take to heart the words of President Smith, and see if we cannot devise some measure to lessen these evils, and if possible to do away with them altogether. You brethren and sisters know, as I do, that this ought to be done. We ought to be a chaste and God-fearing people, and not allow ourselves to indulge in the vices and evils that bring sorrow to the heart and condemnation to the soul. I believe, when we return home, that we should assemble together in our organizations and see if something cannot be done so that one of the Presidency of the Church will not be under the necessity of again referring to these things. We ought not to countenance these evils in any degree. If we could only have the right kind of men in our city and town councils, to assist in this good work, a great deal might be done toward subduing these evils. As a people, we should be an example to the world, a light that is set upon a hill, which cannot be hid. Of course, there are many good things that we might talk of; we have, in many respects, an excellent name among our outside friends; yet there is room for improvement. Sometimes boys think it is manly to profane and to frequent saloons. It seems to me that their teaching must have been sadly neglected. Mothers and fathers can do a great deal towards the uplifting of their children, though they may not be able to do it all. They need some help from the Teachers and the Priests.

I think I am quite safe in saying that throughout the whole Church there is a great neglect on the part of the lesser Priesthood in the performance of their duties as ministers of Christ and

as the guardians of the people, whose duty it is to see that there is no iniquity in the Church. While there may be many who do their full duty, there are many who do not. I speak from an experience of over fifty years, and I know whereof I speak in regard to these matters. I acted for years in the capacity of a Teacher, under the direction of Jedediah M. Grant, our former President, and I know how strict his instructions were to the Teachers.

It is not only the young people that are culpable, but you will find that the older ones sometimes require attention. They need to have somebody to instruct them and to see if they are walking day by day in the line of duty. The Presidents of Stakes and counselors, the High Councilors, the Bishops and the sisters also, ought to have this labor at heart; and let us see if we can not bring about a reformation in these evils which lead down to death. In this connection, we ought to hold ourselves under the advice and counsel of the Priesthood. In early days here we did not think of doing anything or going anywhere without first counseling with our brethren; and we usually went to President Young. When I first came to this country, I did not know any better than to go to President Young, to ask his counsel and to receive his blessing. From that day to this I have always felt that it is good for the people of the Church to seek counsel from their brethren. Let us work in harmony, whether it be to colonize some new country or to build up our own homes.

I do not think it a proper thing for any of the Elders of the Church to go off somewhere on their own responsibility, without saying a word to anybody. It shows that they are following their own inclinations, and are not directed by the Spirit of the Lord. In the colonizing of this country you know the course President Young adopted, and we can see that it was attended with success all along the line. Success has always attended the observance of the counsel of the President of the Church. And are we going to depart from it now? Are we going to go off on our own responsibility? We

might as well break off and try to establish a church of our own. I want to tell you that we will learn by and by, if we have not already, that we will never, in this life or in the life to come, get from under the authority of the Priesthood. Hence it is not advisable for Latter-day Saints to run to and fro in the land without counsel and without discipline. The Church of God is a Church of order. We who bear the Holy Priesthood and are called to responsible positions should seek the counsel of our brethren; we should counsel together; for in the midst of counsel there is safety. Many people unfortunately have a restless disposition, and they want to be moving all the time. You can see them going north at almost any time of the year, and I suppose it is the same south. Now, it is a good thing to colonize under the direction of the proper authority; but when we go off by ourselves we lose the spirit of this work; and when we lose that we are in a miserable condition. Let us be in harmony with the work and with the Spirit of God, and consistent in our movings to and fro.

The Lord designs to make us a power in the land, and if we will be good Latter-day Saints we will be good citizens of the country in which we live, and we can be depended upon as being honest and upright. Many of our outside friends trust us now, and they say we are a good people. A few days ago I met some of the officers of the Burlington railroad, and they gave us an excellent character for enterprise and sterling worth in developing and building up the country. I repeat, if we will be true Latter-day Saints and observe the counsels of the Lord, we will be good in the eyes of all honorable men. But we have got to educate ourselves and our families in this direction. We must teach our children, as one of old said, to "remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Our brethren are appointed to be watchmen on the walls of Zion, to be fathers to the people, and to counsel with them for their best interest. When the president of your Stake

does not know what to say to you, he will find out in a very short time. It is not necessary for every man to run to the President of the Church for advice; you can get it right at home. We must be in harmony with the counsels of the Priesthood. The Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants are excellent books; but take away the counsels of the Priesthood and how long would these good books lead us in the path of life? We must have the living oracles. Their counsels will harmonize with these precious books, and with both together we will go on from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, until we come to a perfect understanding of the truth. We do not know it all yet; in fact, I sometimes think we know but very little; but we are learning, and if I can only persuade my brethren and sisters to seek the counsel of the Lord I may get the credit of doing some good in my time.

My brethren and sisters in all the Stakes of Zion, let us see to it that we will lend our energies to make righteousness prevail among the people and to do away with wickedness. Saloons ought to be done away with. I do not know whether this city, with its mixed population, could do without them or not; but in a great many of our towns and cities we have no more use for them than a wagon has for a fifth wheel. Yet there are Elders and Seventies, and in some instances High Councilors, who are not willing to assist the presidents of Stakes and Bishops of wards to abolish saloons. President Young once said that an Elder of Israel who would put the deadly cup to his brother's lip would go to hell, if he did not repent. It is a pretty broad saying, but, in my opinion, it is a true one. Now, we have good men everywhere to assist us in this improvement that is necessary, but we want to infuse into them energy and zeal for the salvation of souls. We want to save our children. Oh, how we would grieve if we thought our sons would be lost to us! We are anxious to save them. Therefore, let us labor to the end that the Spirit of the Lord may be in all the home circles of the Saints. I was

pleased to hear one of the brethren relating about a President of a Stake having devotional exercises in his family. The brother that myself and brethren stayed with in the north a while ago did the same thing. He called his family together, one of the girls played the organ, they sang, they read a chapter, and they prayed. How beautiful was the spirit that prevailed in that family circle! Now, there is no law prohibiting us all from engaging in morning and evening exercises before the Lord. What a grand thing it would be if we could only educate ourselves to take the time to do this! Gather around us the family circle, and encourage the family to observe the commandments of the Lord during the day! What a grand spectacle it would be to see this carried out in all the families of the Saints!

There is another subject that I would like to touch upon before sitting down, and that is with regard to temple work. A great deal of temple work has been done, but a great deal more remains to be done. There are many people in the Church who have not yet given attention to their ordinance work in the house of the Lord. They have not thought of their dead kindred. So many of the cares and anxieties of life seem to be pressing upon them that they neglect to remember their dead friends. The Lord has directed the building of temples, and I heard a brother prophesy once that some day there would be temples all over the land of North and South America, with people administering in them for their kindred dead. Just think of the hundreds of millions of people who have passed away without a knowledge of the Gospel; and while we have been privileged to commence the great vicarious work of redemption how little we have done up to date! We have four temples in operation, and work has been performed to a limited extent; but not so much has been done as ought to have been. It seems to me that our minds ought to be stirred up in regard to this work. There are many people who are getting along in life, who have been faithful all the day long, and it looks to me as if they ought to be thinking of their kindred who have

passed behind the veil; for just as sure as we are here we will meet these friends by and by, and they may ask us what we have done for them in life, while we were within convenient reach of the temple. I am afraid many will have to say they have not done anything, and they will have remorse of conscience because of it.

Brethren and sisters, let us think a little of these as well as other things. Our kindred behind the veil are looking for us to do a vicarious work for them in the temple of the Lord. Let us see if we cannot prosecute this labor a little more vigorously than we have done thus far. May the blessings of the Lord be upon the people. I feel that many of you are doing the best you can; you are paying your tithes and offerings and sustaining the work of the Lord to the best of your ability; but some are lacking in these things. The Latter-day Saints as a whole are not yet up to the standard with regard to tithes and offerings; but if we will labor diligently throughout the various Stakes, the time may come when it can be said that the Latter-day Saints do pay their tithes and their offerings in full; and when we do so, God will bless us, and sanctify the land, and it will bring forth in its strength in the times and seasons allotted. God bless you. Amen.

#### ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR.

The principle of revelation—Authority of the Priesthood—How to obtain a knowledge of God—A prophecy—The Gospel to be carried to all the world as a witness.

I feel grateful to our Heavenly Father that my life has been spared to meet with you again in one of our semi-annual conferences. I have greatly rejoiced in my spirit at listening to the testimonies of the brethren who have preceded me, and I humbly pray that the Lord will bless me also with a portion of His Holy Spirit, that what I may say may be in accordance with His mind and will.

To the Latter-day Saints the remarks of Brother Merrill may be somewhat ordinary, because we believe in the living oracles and in revelation; but to those who do not belong to this Church