

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY

The Seventy-third Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m. on April 4th, 1903, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

THE PROCEEDINGS.

There were present of the general authorities: Of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund. Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles: John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, Rudger Clawson, Reed Smoot and Hyrum M. Smith; Presiding Patriarch of the Church, John Smith; First Seven Presidents of Seventies: Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimball, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin; of the presiding Bishops: William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and Orrin P. Miller. There were likewise a large number of presidents of stakes, their counselors, presidents of missions and other leading men of the Priesthood.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins:

Our God we raise to Thee,
Thanks for Thy blessings free
We here enjoy;
In this far distant land,
A true and chosen band,
Led hither by Thy hand,
Would sing for joy.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder David H. Cannon, of St. George Stake.

The choir sang:

High on the mountain top
A banner is unfurled,
Ye nations now look up,
It waves to all the world.
In Deseret's sweet peaceful land—
On Zion's mount behold it stand.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

Opening Address.

Leading subjects for the Conference—Get out of debt while prosperity prevails—How to accomplish it—Saints should live their religion The young should be taught mechanism and industrial arts generally.

My brethren and sisters, I feel very grateful to the Lord, the Giver of all good, for the privilege that we enjoy this morning of assembling here, where we are wont to gather, at our annual and semi-annual conferences, for the purpose of attending to such business and matters of duty that may present themselves to us during this conference, and for the purpose of giving out, so far as the Spirit of the Lord may dictate to us, the word of the Lord, in counsel, admonition and instruction to the people.

I am pleased to see the large number who have assembled on this opening day of the conference, and I sincerely hope that we may all enjoy our coming together as we have enjoyed this privilege in days past, and, if pleasing before the Lord, even more abundantly.

We desire to have the privilege of listening to as many of the brethren as time will permit. We would like to hear from as many of the presidents of stakes as we can, and we shall endeavor to select those who did not

have the privilege of speaking at the last conference, among whom were the First Presidents of Seventies. There is a vast field for remarks and for reflection by those who shall speak to the people, which will be interesting and instructive, and which will be beneficial to the cause we are engaged in.

It is not my intention to prolong my remarks this morning, but I desire to mention one or two subjects that I think worthy of the attention of the brethren, who may be led to enlarge upon them and to speak to the people as the Spirit may give them utterance.

One of these subjects is, that in the time of prosperity which we are now enjoying, it is highly proper for the Latter-day Saints to get out of debt. I have unceasingly urged this thought upon the brethren for the past year or more. Wherever I have had the opportunity of speaking I have scarcely ever forgotten to hold out to the people the necessity—that I feel, at least—of our settling our obligations and freeing ourselves from debt in the day of prosperity. Our experience in the years that have past must have led us to the conclusion that we have periods of prosperity, followed by periods of depression. We have now had a long period of success and prosperity, and we may expect, almost at any time, to see these conditions change and a time of depression spread over the land and over the people. I would say, in connection with this subject, that one of the best ways that I know of to pay my obligations to my brother, my neighbor or business associate, is for me first to pay my obligations to the Lord. I can pay more of my debts to my neighbors, if I have contracted them, after I have met my honest obligations with the Lord, than I can by neglecting the latter; and you can do the same. If you desire to prosper, and to be free men and women and a free people, first meet your just obligations to God, and then meet your obligations to your fellowmen. Bishop Hunter used to put the matter in these words: "Brethren, pay your tithing and be blessed;" and that is just what I mean.

It is not necessary, perhaps, for me to say that there never was a time since the organization of the Church

when it was more necessary than it is at present for all the Latter-day Saints to live their religion and to keep the commandments of the Lord, to purge from their midst iniquity, folly and sin and the transgression of the commandments of the laws of God unto them. I may add to this that perhaps there never was a time when the work of the Lord in the earth was in greater earnest or reality than it is today. As a proof of this, we need only to open our eyes and see the energy and activity of the enemies of this people at the present time. When the wicked rage and the heathen imagine a vain thing relative to this people, we may set it down as a fact that the devil is not dead, and that the work of the Lord is not dead, either.

We are lacking in much that is good and necessary. One of the things that I think is very necessary is that we should teach our boys mechanism, teach them the arts of industry, and not allow our sons to grow up with the idea that there is nothing honorable in labor, except it be in the profession of law, or in some other light, practically unproductive and, I was going to say, unremunerative employment, but I know of scarcely any employment more remunerative than is the practise of law, to those, at least, who are proficient. But what do they do to build up the country? What do they produce to benefit the world? There may be a few of them who have farms; there may be a few of them who have manufacturing; there may be a few of them who may be interested and engaged in other productive labor, something that will build up the country and the people and establish permanence, stability and prosperity in the land; but the vast majority of them are leeches upon the body politic and are worthless as to the building up of any community. There are a good many of our boys who feel that they could not be farmers, and that the pursuit of farming and stock-raising is beneath their dignity. There are some who think it is menial and low for them to engage in building enterprises as masons, carpenters or builders in general. There are but a few of our boys who take to the hammer and the anvil and to those pursuits of labor that are essential to the per-

manence of any community in the world and that are necessary to build up the country.

I say that we are remiss and slack in relation to these things, that we are not instilling them sufficiently in the minds of our children, and that we are not giving them the opportunity that they should enjoy of learning how to produce from the earth and the materials that are on the face of it or in the bowels of it, that which is necessary for the advancement and prosperity of mankind. Some of us have the idea that it is degrading for our daughters to learn how to cook, how to keep house, or to make a dress, apron or bonnet, if necessary. No. Daughters in families that are blessed with plenty of means are taught to play the piano, to sing, to go out in society and spend their time in idle, useless pleasure, instead of being taught how to be economical, industrious and frugal and how to become good housewives. That is degrading! I would like to say to this congregation, and to the world, that if I possessed millions of dollars I would not be satisfied or content in my mind unless my boys knew how to do something that would bring them in a living, how to handle a pitchfork, or to run a mowing machine or reaper, or how to plow the ground and sow the seed; nor would I be satisfied if my daughters did not know how to keep a house. I would be ashamed of my children if they did not know something of these things.

We need manual training schools instead of so much book-learning and the stuffing of fairy tales and fables, which are contained in many of our school books of today. If we would devote more money and time, more energy and attention to teaching our children manual labor in our schools than we do, it would be a better thing for the rising generation.

There are many subjects of this character, in addition to the principles of the Gospel of eternal truth and the plan of life and salvation, that can be dwelt upon with profit by those who may speak to us.

Now, I do not desire to prolong my remarks this morning. I pray God to

bless those who may speak to us and inspire them to say those things that will be instructive and beneficial, and that we may all enjoy that measure of the spirit of intelligence that we may divide rightly the word of truth, and that we all may receive meat in due season. That God may grant us these privileges and blessings is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER SEYMOUR B. YOUNG.

Manual training should be embodied in educational system. Devotion and progress in Sabbath Schools—Material and spiritual progress among the people—Missionary success paralleled by opposition—Joseph Smith a genuine Prophet.

My beloved brethren and sisters, I desire very much that you will grant me your faith and prayers and earnest attention. I feel highly honored this morning in being called to address this large congregation. We have another privilege of assembling together in our annual conference, and I feel, for one, very thankful for this privilege. My heart goes out in gratitude to my heavenly Father for the conditions of prosperity that surround His people today. I have a testimony to bear, and it is the same testimony that I have been able to bear for many years. It is the truth, as I have heard it from the lips of my father before me, and from the lips of my brethren.

When I observe, as I do, the conditions of the Latter-day Saints in the different Stakes of Zion where I have the privilege of visiting occasionally; when I see the chances that our young people have to advance along the lines of mind and spirit culture, I rejoice exceedingly to find so many of our young men and young ladies taking the opportunity offered them, and preparing themselves fairly well on the lines of culture for the great work that is before them. But, with the feelings expressed by President Joseph F. Smith, I have sometimes regretted, and do regret today, the lack of physical or manual training in our general system of education. President Young used to say that the education of the youth was incomplete without this manual training and the cultivation of those attributes of the human mind which would lead to the development of strength and ability to produce from