

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-fifth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 6, 1904, 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; Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, Rudger Clawson, Hyrum M. Smith, George A. Smith and Charles W. Penrose. Presiding Patriarch John Smith. First seven presidents of Seventies: Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, George Reynolds, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin. Of the presiding Bishopric; Robert T. Burton and Orrin P. Miller. There were also many presidents of stakes, their counselors, presidents of missions and other prominent men of the Priesthood.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins:

Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master
appear,

His adorable will, let us gladly fulfill.

The opening prayer was offered by Patriarch Angus M. Cannon.

Singing by the choir:
Sweetly may the blessed Spirit,

On each faithful bosom shine;
May we every grace inherit,
Lord we seek a boon divine.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

(Opening Address.)

General prosperity in settlements of the Latter-day Saints—Reference to their Spiritual Condition—Organization of the Priesthood and their duties—Ruling object of the Church the salvation of Mankind.

I am happy in the privilege that I enjoy of being present at the opening of this, the seventy-fifth semi-annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I am pleased to see the number of brethren and sisters who are present. We realize the difficulty in the way of many of the people attending conference on a week-day like this, as they are compelled to labor; business is in full operation, not only in this city and county, but in every other part of the country, and many are busy attending to secular duties, which makes it difficult for them to leave their homes to attend conference on the week days.

It is gratifying, however, to see the number who are here today at the opening meeting of our conference, and I congratulate you, my brethren and sisters, upon being present, and upon the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, that have been poured out upon the people since our last conference. Taken as a whole, the season has been a prosperous one throughout the land, though some localities have suffered more or

less. The forepart of our season was seriously injured by drouth, and many people in the southern part of this state and in Arizona, New Mexico, and in old Mexico especially, as also in our colonies in Canada, have suffered seriously because of the protracted drouth that has been upon the land. But the prospect is that the long continued spell of drouth has been broken by copious rains that have descended upon the land, making the fields and the plains and the mountains luxuriant with the growth of herbs and grasses for the sustenance of the flocks and herds of the people, and also for the supply of abundant water for irrigation purposes on their farms. Taking a retrospect of the whole condition, throughout the length and breadth of the land, we feel that it is favorable and that the blessings of the Lord and His merciful hand over all the interests of the people have been visible, and we know that we are indebted greatly to His mercy and kindness for the favors and blessings that have been bestowed upon us.

I trust that the spiritual condition of the Latter-day Saints has continued to be as good as the temporal conditions have been, and that we are progressing and growing in the knowledge of the truth and in faithfulness before the Lord in keeping His commandments and His laws as much as He has prospered us temporally; for after all the great desideratum is the faithfulness of the people to the covenants that they have made with the Lord and with each other in righteousness.

Reflecting over the condition of the Church at the present time, since I have been sitting here, I have jotted down a few little items that I wish to refer to briefly. I find that we have now in the United States, Canada and Mexico 55 organized stakes of Zion. As a matter of course, therefore, there are 55 presiding officers over these various stakes, and 110 counselors to the presidents of stakes. In each of these stakes, is an organized High Council, consisting of 12 High Priests, which aggregates 660 High Councilors in the Church today as it is organized, who possess the au-

thority of the Holy Priesthood to minister for the salvation of the souls of men, and who sit as judges, with the presidents of stakes and their counselors, in all the affairs of the Church, and who are called upon and are expected to be exemplars before the people, setting before them examples that are worthy of imitation and of emulation—fathers indeed to the people and judges of righteousness in their midst. This, of course, constitutes quite an army of official workers—men who are expected to be instant in season and out of season; men upon whom rests great responsibility; wise counselors, assisting the presidencies of the various stakes to regulate the affairs of their churches and to set in order the houses of the Saints and the stake organizations throughout the Church.

In connection with the 55 organized stakes of Zion we have in the neighborhood of 20 different organized missions throughout the world, presided over by presidents and counselors, and these missions are supplied with Elders and Seventies that are sent out to preach the Gospel, numbering at the present time in the neighborhood of 1,500 Elders. Of course these Elders are not only traveling throughout the United States, but throughout Europe, in the islands of the sea and in New Zealand and Australia; also in the Holy Land, where we have an organized mission and Elders are there preaching the Gospel to those people.

I am informed also that we have 626 organized wards. Of course, these organizations vary from time to time; that is, they frequently increase, and occasionally a ward is disorganized, being joined with another ward, making two into one. Over these wards there are 626 Bishops presiding, and 1,252 Bishops' counselors, who are a mighty power in the midst of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The officers of these organizations are the officers of the Church who come in immediate contact with the people and who are in direct intercourse with them. It is expected that the Bishop of a ward with his counselors will un-

derstand the necessities of every member of his ward. Then they have as assistants and helpers a large corps of Elders, and Priests, Teachers and Deacons of the Lesser Priesthood, who render assistance to them in the temporal as well as the spiritual affairs of the Church. It devolves upon the Bishopric of the ward to look after the poor, to minister unto the sick and the afflicted and to see that there is no want nor suffering among the people in these organized divisions of the Church. It is also the duty of these presiding officers in the Church to look after the spiritual welfare of the people, to see that they are living moral, pure and upright lives, that they are faithful in the discharge of their duties as Latter-day Saints, that they are honest in their dealings with one another, and with all the world. It is their business to see that spiritual light exists in their hearts, and that the people under their presidency and direction are living the lives of Saints, as far as it is possible for men and women, in the mortal body, beset by the weaknesses and imperfections of mankind, can be Saints. Great responsibility rests upon these, and we have at work in the Church, in this relation, a vast corps of efficient men who are laboring diligently for the welfare of mankind. And all these labor without salaries. They are not paid officers. It is true that they receive assistance from time to time, as they may need, in a small way, but not one obtains what the world would esteem as a salary, nor can they be called paid officers of the Church.

We have also in the Church today, I am informed, 146 quorums of Seventy. These constitute a body of Elders of somewhere in the neighborhood of 10,000 men, whose special duty it is to respond to the call of the Apostles to preach the Gospel, without purse or scrip, to all the nations of the earth. They are minute men. It is expected that they will be ready, whenever they are called, to go out in the world, or to go out to the various organizations of the Church to fulfill missions and to perform such duties as shall be required of them, in order that the work of the Lord and the

work of the ministry may be upheld and sustained and carried on in the Church and throughout the world. These councils or quorums of Seventy are not always full, a full council being 70 Elders. But there are approximately 10,000 Elders who now hold that position in the Church. They are called to an apostolic calling. They are required to be special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is expected of this body of men that they will have burning in their souls the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy; that they will be full of light and of the knowledge of the truth; that they will be enthusiastic in their calling, and in the cause of Zion, and that they will be ready at any moment, when required, to go out into the world, or anywhere throughout the Church and bear testimony of the truth, preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and set examples before the world of purity, love, honesty, uprightness and integrity to the truth.

In addition to these organizations we have in each stake of Zion an organization called the High Priests' quorum, to which all High Priests of the Church belong, including the presidency and high councilors of the stake, and also the Bishops and their counselors, all the Patriarchs and all others who have been ordained to the office of High Priest in the Church, which office is the office of presidency in the Melchisedek Priesthood, not that every man who holds the office of High Priest is a president. Only he who is called, appointed and set apart to preside among the High Priests holds the presiding authority and office. But it is the duty of these quorums of High Priests to act in their calling; not to sit idly down and be indifferent to the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, nor indifferent to the saving of the souls of men. It is expected that this quorum of Priesthood in the various stakes of Zion will look after all the interests of the stake: that is, that they will look after the moral condition of the people; that they will teach righteousness; that they will see that those who are acting in presiding

authority in the stakes of Zion, are upright, honest, pure and humble men, and fit for the positions in which they are called to act. Thus this council of the Priesthood constitutes a council of power and influence in the Church.

"Then we have the Elders' organizations. A council or quorum of Elders is composed of 96 Elders. There may be a number of councils or quorums of Elders in each stake. I am not prepared to state how many Elders we have in the Church; but they are very numerous. It is the duty of this body of men to be standing ministers at home; to be ready at the call of the presiding officers of the Church and the stakes, to labor in the ministry at home, and to officiate in any calling that may be required of them, whether it be to work in the temples, or to labor in the ministry at home, or whether it be to go out into the world, along with the Seventies, to preach the Gospel to the world.

"We have a number of Patriarchs in the Church, whose duty it is to bestow blessings upon the heads of those who seek blessings at their hands. They are fathers. They hold the evangelical office in the Church. It is their business and right to bestow blessings upon the people, to make promises unto them in the name of the Lord, as it may be given them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to comfort them in the hours of sorrow and trouble, to strengthen their faith by the promises that shall be made to them through the Spirit of God, and to be fathers indeed of the people, leading them into all truth.

"Then we have the Lesser Priesthood, which attends to the different temporal matters of the Church, consisting of Priests, Teachers and Deacons, who labor under the direction of the Bishopric in the various wards in which they dwell, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, the unifying of the people and bringing them up to the standard of righteousness that they should reach in the flesh, according to the light they possess and the ability and talent which the Lord has given them.

very brief outline of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It has been organized by the wisdom of the Almighty, and not by the wisdom of man. It has been organized to accomplish the purposes that the Lord has in view to be accomplished by it. The people are organized that they may be taught righteousness; that they may be faithful before the Lord in keeping the covenants that they have made with Him in righteousness. Among these covenants are that they will cease from sin and from all unrighteousness; that they will work righteousness in their lives; that they will abstain from the use of intoxicants, from the use of strong drinks of every description, from the use of tobacco, from every vile thing, and from extremes in every phase of life; that they will not take the name of God in vain; that they will not bear false witness against their neighbor; that they will seek to love their neighbors as themselves; to carry out the golden rule of the Lord, 'Do unto others as they would that others should do unto them.' These principles are involved in the covenants that the people have made in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it is expected that these officers and presiding authorities in the Church, whom I have cursorily named, shall see to it that the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will keep these covenants that they have made with the Lord, and that they will observe these principles and adapt them to their lives and carry them out, that they may be indeed the salt of the earth; not salt that has lost its savor and is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of men, but salt that has its savor and that is wholesome; that the people of God may be a light unto this generation and unto the world; that men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven; and that notwithstanding enemies, who are filled with the spirit of persecution, and who say all manner of false things against the Latter-day Saints, those who have entered into the covenant of

the Gospel will keep the commandments of the Lord, will obey the dictates of the Spirit of the Lord unto them, will work righteousness in the earth, and will go right on in the path that Almighty God has marked out for them to pursue, fulfilling and accomplishing His will and His purposes concerning them in the latter day. It does not make any difference to us what the world says about us, we know what our mission is, and we propose to fulfill that mission by the help of Almighty God, and that mission is to save men from the errors of the world, from darkness, from unbelief in the true and living God and in the redeeming sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, that men may not fall into infidelity, that they may not abandon the truth nor the paths of righteousness God has marked out for them to walk in. That is our mission. It is to save men from error, from wickedness and from apostatizing from truth and righteousness, and that men might believe in the true and living God, and in Jesus Christ whom he has sent into the world, whom to know is life eternal. Our mission is to save men from the powers of darkness and from the snares and pitfalls of Satan wherein they are tempted from paths of truth to commit sin, and bring degradation, sorrow and shame upon themselves by transgressing the laws of God and the laws of life.

"We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which we have received; for we know that it is the power of God unto salvation unto all that believe and receive it in their hearts and live it according to the will and purpose of God. Now, my brethren and sisters, I rejoice in these principles. I praise God with all my soul that He has restored the Priesthood. And what is the Priesthood? It is nothing more nor less than the power of God delegated to man by which man can act in the earth for the salvation of the human family, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and act legitimately; not assuming that authority, not borrowing

it from generations that are dead and gone, but authority that has been given in this day in which we live by ministering angels and spirits from above, direct from the presence of Almighty God, who have come to the earth in our day and restored the Priesthood to the children of men, by which they may baptize for the remission of sins and lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and by which they can remit sin, with the sanction and blessing of Almighty God. It is the same power and Priesthood that was committed to the disciples of Christ while He was upon the earth; that whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven, and whomsoever they should bless should be blessed, and if they cursed, in the spirit of righteousness and meekness before God, God would confirm that curse. But men are not called upon to curse mankind; that is not our mission; it is our mission to preach righteousness to them. It is our business to love and to bless men, and to redeem them from the fall and from the wickedness of the world. This is our mission and our special calling. God will curse and will exercise His judgment in those matters. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay. We are perfectly willing to leave vengeance in the hands of God and let Him judge between us and our enemies and let Him reward them according to His own wisdom and mercy.

"Now, may the Lord bless us throughout this conference. I can feel that I am doing injury to my voice in continuing to speak. I have been suffering for the past two or three weeks with a very severe cold, which has greatly affected my voice, and I am only just recovering from it. But I am pleased that I have had the privilege of speaking a few words to you at the opening of this conference. I pray God to bless the people that shall come here, and pour out His spirit upon them, to make their hearts warm up and burn with affection toward Him for His abundant

mercies unto them, and with love for one another and for all mankind; for it is our mission to save the world from sin and darkness and to lead all to a knowledge of God and His truth.

May the Lord help us to consummate the mission He has given unto us, in my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The choir sang the anthem:

The Mountain of the Lord's house.

PRESIDENT JOHN R. WINDER.

Object of Missionary Work—Those who labor in it meeting with Success—Redemption of the Dead.

My brethren and sisters, I feel very thankful to my Heavenly Father that He has spared my life to assemble once more with you in conference. I have listened with a great deal of pleasure to the remarks that have been made by President Smith. What a vast body of men there is in this Church! and what is their object in life? I understand it to be the salvation of the human family. While President Smith was speaking, I looked around here and I saw a large number of presidents of missions. Our Elders go out into the world, leaving their homes and families, and travel without purse or scrip, and their object is to bring salvation to the honest in heart. These presidents of missions send the Elders from house to house, bearing the message of salvation and the printed word to all who will receive it. In reflecting upon this, I thought how strange it is that these missionaries, going forth as they do with the message of peace, offering the people a book or a tract containing the word of God, should be treated in the way they are. Sometimes the doors are closed in their faces, and the people curtly tell them that they will not receive their books or tracts; and in many cases the Elders are treated with contempt, though this is not always the case. Supposing the minister of any denomination was to present himself at my house and respectfully offer me a book setting forth his religious views. I was wondering if I would slam the door in his face and treat him with

contempt. No, I would at least be respectful and say that I did not wish to receive it. You, my brethren, who are abroad in the world, know that you have to meet these conditions; but your object is, as we all know, to promote peace and salvation wherever you go. That is your mission, and I rejoice to know that you are very successful in that mission, and that many are receiving your message and obeying the Gospel.

We rejoice that the work of the Lord is growing and increasing, and we testify that its mission will be prospered in the earth. This is the work of the Lord. He is at the helm, and He will certainly take care of it. It is our duty, of course, to do the very best we can, and as the President has said, we should so order our lives as to be above reproach. We should not only preach the Gospel by precept, but we should do so by our acts. Seeing that we are devoting our lives to this cause, let our lives be such that all men who come in contact with us may see our good works.

In addition to all that has been done in the missionary fields, there are other places where the great work of salvation is being carried on. Thousands and tens of thousands are being added to the Church annually in the temples of the Lord. Those who, during their lifetime, did not have the opportunity that we have had of receiving the Gospel, are now receiving the benefits of salvation. This work is growing and multiplying in the temples, as well as the work abroad. The object of those who work in the temples is also to bring salvation to the fullest extent, both to the living and the dead. Notwithstanding all that may be said in relation to the work in the temple, you know, my brethren and sisters, that when you go to the house of the Lord and receive the ordinances there administered, they are all calculated to make you better men and women, better fathers and mothers; and everything that is done in those houses is for salvation. The testimony of all who go there is that it makes them feel better prepared to bat-