

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-sixth 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 Friday, October 6, 1905, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

THE PROCEEDINGS.

There were present 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, Reed Smoot, Hyrum M. Smith, George A. Smith and Charles W. Penrose; of the First Council of Seventies, Seymour B. Young, Christian D. Fjeldsted, Brigham H. Roberts, George Reynolds, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin; of the presiding Bishopric, William B. Preston and Orrin P. Miller. There were also a large number of presidents of stakes, their counselors, presidents of missions, and other prominent men of the Priesthood.

The services were commenced by the choir and congregation singing the hymn which begins:

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor
fear,

But with joy wend your way;
Though hard to you this journey may
appear,

Grace shall be as your day.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder John T. Caine.

The choir and congregation then united in singing the hymn:

Redeemer of Israel, our only delight,
On whom for a blessing we call;
Our shadow by day, and our pillar by
night,
Our King, our Deliv'rer, our all!

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

(Opening Address.)

Reasons for thanksgiving to God.—General condition of the Church highly satisfactory.—Injunction urgently repeated, "Get out of debt."—Many more missionaries needed.—"Zion is growing;" more and larger buildings needed for Church schools, etc.—The tithing accounts can be seen by tithe-payers.—Satan and his agents cannot stop the progress of God's work.

I desire to say, welcome to all the Latter-day Saints, and to our friends and the stranger within our gates, at the opening of this seventy-sixth semi-annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am pleased to be with you, and am exceedingly grateful to the Lord for His kind mercies and preserving care that have been extended to us all during the past six months, in that we have been blessed with life, health and prosperity, and have been preserved to attend this conference in the enjoyment of so many precious gifts and blessings. I think we may consistently congratulate ourselves on the great goodness manifested toward us by Him from whom all blessings come, in pre-

serving us in the truth, putting into our hearts and continuing within us that earnest desire which we all must feel for the upbuilding of Zion, the spread of truth, the accomplishment of the purposes of the Lord, and for the establishment of righteousness in the hearts of our children, our associates and of the people of the world; and that earnest desire also which we all should feel for those who are misled and are sitting in darkness and know not the truth, that we may become instrumental in the hands of the Lord of extending to all such, as far as it may be possible, a knowledge of the Gospel which we have embraced, that they too may see the light, if they choose to do so; and if they choose not the light, but prefer to remain in darkness, that they may be left without excuse. I feel thankful every day of my life for that desire in my heart, and I would fear that the Lord was withdrawing His Spirit from me if I did not entertain that feeling, and did not have an earnest desire in my soul for good, and not for evil. I am thankful to the Lord that He gives me the desire to do good, and not evil; that He leads my thoughts in the channels of honor, virtue, uprightness, and integrity to those principles which I have espoused. And I believe that all Latter-day Saints possess that spirit and feeling in their hearts, and that they have reason to be grateful to the Lord every day of their lives that their ambitions, their hopes and their desires are for good, and not for evil. The Latter-day Saints possess the spirit of salvation, and not the spirit of destruction; the spirit of life, not the spirit of death; the spirit of peace, not of disunion; the spirit of love for their fellowbeings, not the spirit of hate. And for the enjoyment of this spirit by the saints of the Most High we all have great cause to render praise and thanksgiving to Him who has so ordered it, and who has given to us humility to receive and that measure of His Spirit which inclines our hearts to good and not to evil.

Since our last general conference, the general authorities of the Church,

I believe, have been performing their duty to the best of their ability, according to their strength and the gifts of God that they possess. They have been diligent. Not one of them has declined to respond to any call that has been made upon him. The Apostles and the Seventies have been faithful in attending to the various quarterly conferences of the Church; and from all the reports that we have heard of their labors, we are given to understand that the people have not only been satisfied with their ministrations, but the Apostles and Seventies, and the Elders who have accompanied them, have reported most satisfactorily of the condition generally of the Latter-day Saints where they have visited.

The reports that we have received from the various missions are most encouraging, with this one exception: the demand from the missionary fields for Elders to preach the Gospel to the world seems more than we can fill. The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few. It seems impossible for us to meet the requirements that are made of us for missionaries. In this connection it may be proper for me to say that in some instances—far too many—those who have been invited to go on missions have replied that while they felt honored with the call they regretted to say that their circumstances were such that they could not see their way clear to go, as they were involved in debt. They had assumed pecuniary responsibilities that they could not discharge at that time, and they were obliged to ask for further time in order to liquidate their indebtedness and prepare themselves to go into the world to preach the Gospel.

For three years and more my text, and the text of my brethren, to the Latter-day Saints and to ourselves, has been, pay your debts; get out of debt, and then remain out of debt, by living economically, by being prudent with means, by saving up and gathering in our resources, thus preparing ourselves to meet our necessities with ready means, instead

of being inclined to go to the stores, to the implement shops, and to the various establishments, to purchase goods on credit—goods which it might be possible for us to do without, at least until we could pay down for them and get the cash price. Reports have come to us from various parts of the Church that many of our people are still being gulled by traveling agents, and persuaded to enter into obligations for wagons, for agricultural implements, for sewing machines, for stoves and heaters, and for almost every imaginable thing, giving therefor ironclad notes, at highest prices, with agreements compelling them to surrender the goods whenever they fail to pay interest and principal as specified, under which they are liable to have the goods taken from them and lose all they have paid thereon. Many of our people are unwise enough to deal with men in this way. If they would only save their means, and live so that they will have means on hand instead of being obligated to others, it would be far better for them, and there would be fewer excuses on the part of Elders who are invited to take missions, in consequence of their being involved in debt. Besides it would not cost them so much to live. We do not mind when a young man is not able to take a mission because he is building a home for his wife and is under contract for it. That is all right. We will excuse him, he is at liberty to remain until he has accomplished his home work, and when he is ready he can report himself as prepared to take his mission. Now, I repeat to the people present at this conference: My injunction, and the injunction of my brethren of the Presidency and of the Twelve, is, Get out of debt; pay your honest obligations, free yourselves so that you will be at liberty to perform any duty that you desire or that may be asked of you for the upbuilding of Zion and the spread of truth. We do not care what the world says with reference to our preaching the Gospel, nor with reference to the necessity of young men being asked to go out into the world to

preach the Gospel. In nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand and the young men who are asked to take missions to the nations of the earth respond cheerfully and gladly, and rejoice that they are considered worthy to go out bearing the message of life and salvation to their fellowmen. It is a privilege, it is an honor to them to be accounted worthy to bear the name of God and the message of life and salvation to the world, and no amount of ridicule, no amount of false accusations and malicious charges, will ever change their thoughts and feelings with respect to this work. They know what they are doing. And there is no coercion used in matters of this kind. It is all free will, all free grace. Never was there a man required to go on a mission to the world, or sent on a mission, who had any objection to going or who declined to go. Those who have gone out to preach the Gospel have gone willingly, cheerfully, gladly, because they have felt it was to their own advantage and a great honor.

Then I repeat, the only difficulty we have to meet now with reference to the preaching of the Gospel in the various missions in the earth is that we are unable to furnish the number and the character of the help required. We would like the young men to prepare themselves, financially and intellectually, and above all spiritually, having the testimony of the Gospel in their hearts, that when they shall be called to go upon missions they will be ready to go, so that we may be in a position to supply the Elders necessary to preach the Gospel to the world.

A large amount of means has been expended in the erection of meeting-houses in the various wards and stakes of Zion, and the Trustee-in-Trust has been called upon to furnish large sums of money to assist; and also, in many instances, to assist the people in the erection of church schoolhouses and houses of amusement. We would like all the world to know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints aims not only to provide houses of

worship for its members, but it also aims to provide houses of instruction and houses of amusement as well, that the people of the Church, old and young, may have places where they can assemble in the dance, in concerts, in musical festivals, and in intellectual feasts, that they may have scope for the enjoyment of every desire of their hearts in righteousness. I will say to you that the Church has been as liberal in these matters as it was possible to be in view of the obligations that still rest upon the Trustee-in-Trust. Our Church schools are increasing, and the demand is increasing continually for means with which to keep them going, and also for the purpose of erecting additional buildings to accommodate the children. When we tell you that almost every Church school throughout the land is filled to overflowing, you may perhaps discern the growth of the people of God and the progress and advancement of our educational institutions. No sooner is one building completed than it is discovered that it is too small, and that more room is required. From time to time, therefore, we have to assist in enlarging and in providing accommodation for our children. I think that the Latter-day Saints will be able to discern in this fact a glorious truth. Zion is growing, and interest is being increased in the hearts of the people in proper education and training, to the end that our children may go to schools where the Bible is not excluded, where the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants are admitted, and where true religion may be taught as well as letters and the sciences and arts. The Trustee-in-Trust has also assisted largely in procuring mission houses in Scandinavia, in Great Britain, in the islands of the sea, and in our own land of America. We are now helping to build a place of worship and a dwelling-house at Papeete, Tahiti. We have done the same in Samoa. Assistance has also been rendered to the New Zealand mission for a similar purpose, and to Australia as well. In these island missions we are

extending aid to our people in order to give them a better standing and wider influence, that they may gain the respect they merit; for, as a rule, the people of those islands are very poor.

Since our last conference the Scandinavian mission has been divided in two, for the convenience of the people. Sweden has been organized into a mission of itself, with headquarters at Stockholm; and the Scandinavian mission now consists of Denmark and Norway.

Casting one's thoughts over all the field, we cannot come to any other conclusion than that the work of the Lord is alive, healthy and vigorous, in every land where the Gospel of the Son of God is preached by the Elders of the Church. It is spreading abroad, and the power and influence of the people is growing for good. The strangers who visit us see the contrast between the false and slanderous representations that are sent abroad with reference to the Latter-day Saints and the actual conditions existing here, and they go away agreeably disappointed, delighted with what they see and hear, and convinced that no people, perhaps, upon the earth are so much vilified as are the Latter-day Saints. I sometimes feel that I can see the hand of Providence in the work that is going on in the world; for surely it only takes an eye half open to discover the fraud and misrepresentation, the slanders and the lies that are circulated throughout the world with reference to the Latter-day Saints. If people will only come and see for themselves, if they will only take the pains to inform themselves of the truth, and compare conditions here with the false reports that are circulated, the very contrast will make the truth more forceful to their minds.

Brother Horace S. Ensign, who has presided for a number of years in the Japanese mission, has returned, and the presidency of that mission has been turned over to Brother Alma O. Taylor. A number of young men have recently been sent to that mission. The Elders that have been there have succeeded in

learning the language, as is the case in other foreign missions. Wherever the Elders of the Church go they are remarkable in acquiring speedily and thoroughly the language of the people to whom they are sent. Everywhere the Spirit of the Lord whispers to the honest in heart who are faithful, and gives to them the assurance that His hand is stretched out continually over His people; that as, in the past, He has preserved them and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, so in the future He will continue to preserve and deliver them, and he will make the wrath of the wicked to praise Him and to accomplish the more speedily His purposes. We have every evidence to convince us that the work of the Lord is a reality, a living, active, progressive work in the earth. Let me say to you that the Latter-day Saints throughout the length and breadth of the land have faithfully and honestly, I believe, as ever they did in their lives, observed the law of tithing. I am happy to say to you that the tithes of the people have not diminished, but they have increased, notwithstanding the disasters that have occurred in some portions of the land. In some parts hailstorms have destroyed portions of the crops; in other parts there have been more or less drouth, and insects, which have cut short the crops in some degree; but this has only been to a limited extent; the most of the products of the land have been blessed and are abundant, and the majority of the people have reaped bounteous harvests, through the blessing of God upon their labors. I am happy to say this to you.

I want to say further to the Saints, that your brethren to whom you have entrusted the care and management of the finances of the Church stand ready and willing, any moment, to answer to YOU—to Latter-day Saints, to tithers, to those who are in the faith of the Gospel—for our stewardship. We can give you an account of our doings to the last senine; and I defy any man on earth to point his finger to a dollar that is wilfully wasted, or stolen by the

servants of God. The tithing books are kept as accurately and as perfectly as any books kept in any bank. Every man that pays a dollar tithing gets his credit on the books; and if he wants to see that his credit is there he can go and see for himself. But we do not propose to open our books and show your accounts to every Tom, Dick and Harry in the land that never did pay any tithing. We do not propose to do that, if we can help it. But you Latter-day Saints who pay your tithes and your offerings, if you want to see for yourselves, that you may be eye and ear witnesses, the books are open to you, and you can come and examine your accounts any business day you want.

Now, we are thankful to the Lord that we are counted worthy to be taken notice of by the devil. I would fear very much for our safety if we had fallen into a condition where the devil ceased to be concerned about us. So long as the Spirit of the Lord is enjoyed by you, so long as you are living your religion and keeping the commandments of the Lord, walking uprightly before Him, I assure you that the adversary of souls will not rest easy; he will be discontented with you, will find fault with you, and he will arraign you before his bar; but that will not hurt you very much if you will only just keep on doing right. You do not need to worry in the least, the Lord will take care of you and bless you. He will also take care of His servants, and will bless them and help them to accomplish His purposes; and all the powers of darkness combined in earth and in hell cannot prevent it. They may take men's lives; they may slay and destroy, if they will; but they cannot destroy the purposes of God, nor stop the progress of His work. He has stretched forth His hand to accomplish His purposes, and the arm of flesh cannot stay it. He will cut His work short in righteousness, and will hasten His purposes in His own time. It is only necessary for us to try with our might to keep pace with the onward progress of the work of the Lord, then God

will preserve and protect us, and will prepare the way before us, that we shall live and multiply and replenish the earth and always do His will; which may God grant is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "Lift up the voice in singing."

PRESIDENT JOHN R. WINDER.

Admonition to the Saints to sustain President Smith as Trustee-in-Trust.—Testimony that he is worthy of their confidence.

My brethren and sisters, my soul is filled with gratitude to my Heavenly Father for permitting me to assemble with you once more in general conference. I have rejoiced exceedingly in what we have heard from our President, and I wish to testify that every word he has spoken is true and faithful. I am here to uphold and sustain him in the position he has taken in every particular. All I want to say to you this morning, my brethren and sisters, is in relation to the Trustee-in-Trust. I say that your funds are perfectly safe in his hands, and, as he has said, not one dollar is used except where it belongs. I testify to this in your presence this morning, and that all things are well. He is doing just right; and the statement that he has made with regard to the books being open to those who have an interest, is a fact, and you can satisfy yourselves of these things. Now, let all doubts be removed from your minds, if you have any, though I do not believe the Latter-day Saints have any doubts in relation to this matter. There may be a few who have, but the true and faithful Latter-day Saints have no doubt in regard to this subject. I say to you this morning, my brethren and sisters, uphold and sustain the President as Trustee-in-Trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and all things will be well with you. May the Lord help us all, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

Willigress and diligence of the missionaries.—Extensive circulation of Church literature.—Difficulties in Turkey.—Success in Greece, South Africa, and Japan.—Satisfactory conditions among the gathered Saints.

I am indeed happy this morning to see this large congregation at the first session of our conference. It shows that the Latter-day Saints are alive in their religion and anxious to meet in these gatherings of the Saints. They want to be built up and refreshed in their holy faith. I was pleased to look at your faces and to note the attention with which you followed the remarks of our President and Brother Winder. Like Brother Winder, I can endorse everything the President has said. We are in a position to know that it is the truth.

I was pleased to follow the President in his sketch of the work being done abroad. We feel indeed interested in the missionary labors, and it is a pleasure to tell you how gladly our brethren respond to the calls made upon them to go upon missions. I do not remember more than one or two refusals during the last six months. The great majority have expressed themselves as honored in being called to go, and they say that they feel it is their duty to go and let the world know what they themselves have received. It is pleasant to read these letters from our young men, middle aged men, and even old men, who have been called to go out and bear their testimonies to the world.

A great deal has been done in diffusing the printed word to the world. I believe the British mission leads in this, but, take all our missions together, the number of tracts and books that have been scattered among the people has run up into millions. Our brethren are faithful in going from house to house, leaving tracts, trying to get into conversation with the people, to let them know the glorious truth that God has again spoken unto man. The Book of Mormon is sought after. The presidents of missions in the United States have printed large editions and are circulating them everywhere, selling them as cheaply as possible, that the world may become acquainted with that sacred volume, which has been given by God unto this generation. Our French edition is gone; another must be published. The Swedish edition of the Book of Mormon is out of print,