

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-Sixth 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, April 6, 1906, 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, Hyrum M. Smith, George A. Smith and Charles W. Penrose; Presiding Patriarch John Smith; of the First Council of Seventies, Seymour B. Young, 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:

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

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Joseph E. Taylor.

The choir sang the hymn beginning,
High on the mountain top

A banner is unfurled,
Ye nations now look up,
It waves to all the world.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.
(Opening address.)

Prosperity general among the Saints.—Harmony and faithfulness characterize the Quorums of Priesthood, and auxiliary organizations.—Duties defined, and efficiency to be increased.—Mechanical and Agricultural training in Church schools.—Striking example of the advantages of technical education in farming.—1906 the "banner year" for tithing contributions.—Books open for inspection of tithepayers.—Object and purpose of the Church organization.—Wickedness will not be tolerated.

I feel very grateful for the privilege of again meeting with you at one of our general conferences, it being the seventy-sixth anniversary of the organization of the Church, and am pleased to see the number in attendance this morning. I sincerely hope that the Spirit of the Lord may dwell in our hearts throughout this conference, that at the conclusion we may feel that our coming together has not been in vain, but that much good has been accomplished and the requirements of the law of the Church fulfilled. We are grateful to the Lord for this beautiful morning, and I trust that we may be blessed with good weather, as well as with a rich outpouring of the Spirit of God, throughout the conference.

It is six months since we last assembled in general conference, and many interesting things have transpired since then. Prosperity seems

to have crowned the efforts of the Latter-day Saints throughout the land; and I do not say this boastingly at all, but in the very depths of humility and gratitude. I believe that the spirit of devotion to the cause of Zion has prevailed in the Church during the last six months as much as if not more than ever before in its history. I believe that, speaking in a general way, we have been as united as ever before; and were it not that some might think we were boasting, I would venture to say that in my judgment the Priesthood and the people as a whole have never been more united than we are today.

I can assure you, my brethren and sisters, that, so far as my knowledge extends, the Presidency of the Church are united, and the spirit of love and confidence possesses our souls. The Lord has blessed us abundantly with health and with a reasonable outpouring of His Spirit. We have endeavored to meet the obligations that have devolved upon us, to the best of our ability and to the utmost of the strength and wisdom the Lord has given us. We have not shrunk from any duty. We have sought to meet every requirement made of us as best we could, and we have reasonable assurance that so far the Lord has been pleased with our efforts and has accepted our labors. We desire to continue in the labor required at our hands, so long as the Lord shall desire it; and I believe my counselors feel just as I do when I say that whenever the Father is satisfied with our services, we shall bow humbly and gratefully to His will.

With reference to the brethren of the Twelve, with whom we meet from week to week, and often from day to day, in council, I have to say that those of them who have been with us are united together and in full harmony with us. I believe that the brethren of the Twelve who have been at their posts, performing their duty, stand solid for the advancement of the kingdom of God, and are united in their views and labors for the up-

building of Zion. There are circumstances connected with these matters which are not altogether pleasant, and which are fraught, in some respects, with very serious consequences. But I have no hesitancy in recommending to you, brethren of the Priesthood and members of the Church, those members of the Council of the Apostles who have kept within the spirit of their calling, who have sought to magnify the same, and who have been instant in season and out of season in the performance of the duties that have devolved upon them. They are worthy of the confidence of the Latter-day Saints, are valiant in their testimony for the truth, are earnest and vigilant in their watchcare over the interests of Zion submitted to them, and have labored diligently in the mission field, at home and abroad, as much as opportunity has afforded.

With reference to the brethren of the Presiding Council of Seventy, I desire to express my commendation of them. They have always been on hand, ready to respond to every call made upon them, so far as their health and other important duties would permit. It is understood generally that Brother B. H. Roberts, one of the presidents, is engaged on the History of the Church, and is connected in this labor with the Historian's office. A large proportion of his time is required in this duty. Nevertheless he has responded to the calls that have been made upon him, dropping his work and going out to visit the conferences whenever required. The same may be said with reference to the other members of the Council. Brother George Reynolds another member, is a man much encumbered with duties in connection with the missionary work, the calling of Elders for missions, the keeping of their records, and also the labor of the Sunday school, and other matters associated with the President's office. He is a man who labors from morning till night, early and late, and is most faithful and diligent in the performance of his duty. Moreover, he is most capable, being blessed of the Lord abund-

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antly in the calling to which he is assigned. I mention these two brethren for the reason that they are occupied in clerical work to a great extent, and are therefore not at liberty so much as the others to visit the conferences and labor in the ministry.

I am sorry to say that all the Presiding Bishopric of the Church are not in the enjoyment of perfect health, but they are united, diligent and faithful in the discharge of their duties, and their integrity is unquestioned. With the assistance they have in their office, which is most capable and efficient, the duties and responsibilities of their office are well and faithfully performed. I regret to say that Bishop Burton's health is very poor at present, but I understand he is improving, and I trust he will soon be himself again.

I would like to say a few words in regard to the various quorums of the Priesthood in the Church—the High Priests, the Seventies, the Elders, and the lesser Priesthood. The aim of those in charge of these quorums has been to awaken within the hearts of those who compose them a livelier interest in their work; and I believe it may be said in all candor and consistency that there never has been a time when the various quorums of the Priesthood were more interested in their work, more alive to their duties, looking more directly to their legitimate calling, and paying more attention to the responsibilities that devolve upon them, than they are today. The Presidents of the Stakes are taking up the work of the quorums, especially of the lesser Priesthood, and they are endeavoring to arouse the members of the Priesthood to a realization of the great responsibilities that devolve upon them by reason of the Priesthood they hold and their connection with the quorums thereof. We expect to see the day, if we live long enough (and if some of us do not live long enough to see it, there are others who will), when every council of the Priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will understand its duty, will assume its own responsibility, will magnify its

calling, and fill its place in the Church, to the uttermost, according to the intelligence and ability possessed by it. When that day shall come, there will not be so much necessity for work that is now being done by the auxiliary organizations, because it will be done by the regular quorums of the Priesthood. The Lord designed and comprehended it from the beginning, and He has made provision in the Church whereby every need may be met and satisfied through the regular organizations of the Priesthood. It has truly been said that the Church is perfectly organized. The only trouble is that these organizations are not fully alive to the obligations that rest upon them. When they become thoroughly awakened to the requirements made of them, they will fulfill their duties more faithfully, and the work of the Lord will be all the stronger and more powerful and influential in the world.

A word or two in relation to the Relief society. This is an organization that was established by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is, therefore, the oldest auxiliary organization of the Church and it is of the first importance. It has not only to deal with the necessities of the poor, the sick and the needy, but a part of its duty—and the larger part, too—is to look after the spiritual welfare and salvation of the mothers and daughters of Zion; to see that none is neglected, but that all are guarded against misfortune, calamity, the powers of darkness, and the evils that threaten them in the world. It is the duty of the Relief Societies to look after the spiritual welfare of themselves and of all the female members of the Church. It is their duty to collect means from those who have in abundance, and distribute it wisely unto those in need. It is a part of their duty to see that there are those capable of being nurses as well as teachers and exemplars in Zion, and that they have an opportunity to become thoroughly prepared for this great labor and responsibility. I have heard of a disposition on the part of some of our sisters to become a law

unto themselves in relation to these things. I would like to say that it is expected of the Relief Society, especially the general authorities of that great organization, that they will have a watchcare over all the organizations among the women of Zion. They stand at the head of all such; they ought to stand at the head, and they should magnify their calling, and see to it that error is not permitted to creep in, that cabals are not formed, that secret combinations may not get a foothold, to mislead the sisters. They should see to it that the other organizations of women in the Church correspond and are in harmony with their organization. Why should this be? In order that the women of Zion may be united, that their interests may be in common, and not conflicting or segregated, and that the purpose of this organization may be realized and the organization itself be effective for good in every part of the Church throughout the world, wherever the Gospel is preached. We realize that it is impossible for men or women possessing physical weaknesses on account of age or infirmities, to meet every requirement; but we expect that every man and woman entrusted with responsibility in the Church will do their duty to the utmost of their ability. That we look for; that we pray for; for that we labor to the best of the ability and strength we possess.

When I arose this morning I did not design to occupy much time, but I would like to say something in relation to other organizations; and if I do not touch upon all of them, no one need feel slighted, for I feel that the eyes of the Lord and of His servants are over all these organizations. We are cognizant of their existence; we know somewhat of their labors and of the responsibilities that rest upon them; we are not blind to their efforts, nor to the good they are accomplishing. I want to say a few words concerning our Sunday school organization. I do not think any one will claim that at any previous time in the Church the Sunday school organization

was any more perfect or efficient than it is today. Do you think so, Brother Reynolds? (addressing him). [Brother Reynolds: "No, sir; I do not."] I believe that those who are connected with this work and familiar with what is being accomplished by it will be unanimous in the claim I make that never before, since the Sunday schools were organized in the days of our early settlement here, has this organization been so perfect and efficient as it is today. The brethren of the Sunday School Union Board meet every week, and they are interested in their work. Some of the members live at a distance and cannot attend, but most of those who are within reach attend their council meetings every week, where matters connected with the Sunday schools are thoroughly considered and weighed, and conclusions are reached, after much careful deliberation and thought, in relation to the work that is sought to be accomplished in the Sunday schools. I feel thankful to my Father in heaven that we have so many efficient, capable workers in our Sunday schools, who are diligent in the performance of their duty, who wield such a wholesome influence over the minds of the pupils, and whose examples are such as to make them worthy of all commendation. I desire to commend to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the laborers in the Sunday schools, and I trust that the parents will sustain them in their callings, strengthen their hands, by encouraging their children to attend the schools on the Sabbath day and to show deference and respect for their teachers.

Our Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations are in as good care and keeping as could be expected. This is an organization which only continues a portion of the year. During the busy season, when young men are required on the farms, these associations suspended for a time; but the work is carried on all through the winter season, from October to April, when the youth of Zion are able to attend to their duties in these organizations. I desire to

say that our best missionaries are called from these Mutual Improvement Associations. The young men that make the most efficient missionaries are those who have been faithful in these organizations. It is true we have missionary classes in our Church schools, where the young men who have not paid much attention to religious matters and are not well read in the scriptures, may go for a short season and receive instruction. But this work is only temporary compared with the work of the Mutual Improvement Association. It is altogether too brief, and those who attend these classes are generally pushed for time, in a hurry to get home and go to work again, and can scarcely stay long enough to finish the course. Therefore, I repeat that our best and most effective workers in the mission field are those that have given most attention to the Mutual Improvement work at home. So that it is doing good.

The Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations are also prosperous and doing a glorious work. Yet for both of these organizations the field is broad, and the laborers are indeed few. But they are doing the best they can under the circumstances, I believe, and I have only words of commendation for them.

Our Primary Associations are also efficient and doing much good among the little children, and I commend their labor and organization, and exhort them to diligence in the performance of their duty and economy in the use of the means that comes into their hands, as I do the Relief Society. I say to all these organizations that it is expected of them that in all their dealings they will operate on business principles, strictly upon honor, so that it may never be necessary to cover a single track they make, but that every step they take may be above board and open to the scrutiny of all who may be interested. It is expected that they will make reports from time to time, as required, both of their financial and their ecclesiastical work.

We have a number of Church schools

established in Zion. I have not taken the pains to post myself as to the exact number, but I believe there are about 17. The Brigham Young University in Provo, the Latter-day Saints' University in this city, and the Brigham Young College in Logan, are institutions of which the whole Church has reason to be proud. The Trustee-in-Trust, by and with the advice of the First Presidency and the Council of Apostles, has given as liberally as possible, consistent with other obligations, for the maintenance of our Church schools. We have sought to encourage in our Church schools the establishment of departments of mechanic arts and manual training; and so far as I know, everything possible is being done, at least in the principal schools, for the training of our youth, not only in the regular mechanic arts, but also in the art of agriculture. An agricultural course has recently been started in the Brigham Young University, and one of our most proficient scientists has been called to take charge of the class. I am happy to say that some of our oldest farmers are delighted with the information they have obtained by attending this class. I heard a brother who had been farming for many years, say that he had always been under the impression that when a man could not do anything else, all he had to do was to turn his attention to the plow and cultivate the soil, for anybody could make a farmer, but he had found out since attending his class that it required intelligence and intelligent application to be a good farmer, as well as to be a good artisan. In connection with this I may state a circumstance that came under my own observation years ago. A certain brother had lived upon his farm for some fourteen or fifteen years. He had cultivated it every year the best he could, but it had become so impoverished that he could not make a living off it any longer, and he became so disgusted with the country, especially with his farm, that he concluded, if he could only trade the farm off for a team and

wagon that would take him out of the country, he would be glad to go. By and by his man came along, and he sold his farm for a team and wagon, in which he put his wife and children and moved to some other country. The purchaser took possession of this worn-out farm, and within three years, by intelligent operation, he was able to gather from that farm forty bushels of wheat to the acre, and other products in proportion. The nutriment of the soil had been exhausted, and it needed resuscitation; so he went to work, gave it the nourishment it required, and reaped a bountiful harvest as a result of his wisdom. There are too many of our farmers who think it does not need any skill to be a farmer; but this good brother in Provo to whom I alluded found it did. So we are teaching agriculture in our schools, as well as the mechanic arts. The Brigham Young College is putting up a building now wherein are to be taught all sorts of industries; where our youth will be able to learn carpentry, blacksmithing, domestic arts, and other things that will be useful to them. Yet we find it a drag to induce anybody that is possessed of means to contribute very largely to it. Some of our wealthiest men felt they were doing their utmost when they donated perhaps a hundred dollars towards a building that will cost eight or ten thousand dollars, if not more. I mention this for the reason that in my opinion the Church schools are laying the foundation for great usefulness among the people of God, and they should be sustained by the people and by the Church. The Church is sustaining them, and as we acquire more means and become more free from obligations which have been resting upon the Church for years, we will be more freehanded to administer to the needs of our Church schools, as well as other requirements of that nature.

The Religion Class work is an adjunct to the Church schools. It is under the direction of President Anthon H. Lund and his associates, and it

is a necessary and most interesting adjunct to our auxiliary organizations. It was established to assist in the proper training and education of our children, and I commend it to the presiding authorities throughout the Church, and bespeak for it their kind attention, encouragement and assistance, so far as it lies in their power. Let us take care of these things, for they nurture and strengthen our children in the right direction, and there is nothing more important. It is extreme folly for any people to send thousands of missionaries out into the world to preach the Gospel to the nations, and neglect their own children at home. I think our very first interest should be to look after our children, and see that they have every advantage necessary to bring them up in the way they should go, that when they get old they may not depart from it.

I want to say to the Latter-day Saints that the year 1905 has been the banner year for the tithings of the people. You can put that down in your memorandum books, and remember it. Never in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have the people contributed as much tithing as they did in 1905. And yet they have not done anything more than their duty; in fact, there are a great many Latter-day Saints that have not done their duty, as the books will show.

In this connection I may say that a most thorough and searching auditation of the books of the Trustee-in-Trust, the books of the Presiding Bishopric, and the books of the Deseret News Company, has been made by the auditors that were appointed and sustained at our last conference. Before the conclusion of this conference we will read you their report, and I believe you will be perfectly satisfied with it. The man that complains about not knowing what is done with the tithing, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is the man who has no credit on the books of the Church for paying tithing. We do not care to exhibit the books of the Church to

such carpens and to that class of people. But there is not a tithepayer in the Church that cannot go to the Presiding Bishop's Office, or to the office of the Trustee-in-Trust, if he desires, and find his account, and see to it that every dollar he has given to the Lord for tithing is credited to him. Then, if he wants to be more searching as a tithepayer and find out what is done with the tithing, we will set before him the whole thing, and if he has any good counsel to give us we will take it from him. But we will not—because we do not have to, and it is not the business of the world to require it—open our books to the world, unless we wish to. We are not ashamed of them. We are not afraid for them to be inspected. They are honest and straight; and there is not a man in the world that will look at them, but will say so, if he is honest himself.

I do not know but I have trespassed upon your time, but there are other things that pass through my mind. We are contributing means for the purchase and maintenance of mission houses in the world; and today we have more headquarters belonging to the Church in Great Britain, in Scandinavia, in the United States and in the islands of the sea, where our Elders may rendezvous and find a resting place in time of sickness or distress, and where they may meet for counsel, than ever before. When I say that I do not boast at all; I simply give it to you for information and as a statement of fact.

So we may say that notwithstanding the opposition, the bitterness, the hatred, the falsehoods, the slanders and the misrepresentations with which the public press has been filled for years concerning the Latter-day Saints and the authorities of the Church, there never was a time when the Church prospered more than it is doing today; and I do not know but we ought to be thankful that the Lord lets our enemies expose themselves as they do.

The Lord bless you. I see before me the leaders of the Church, the presiding

spirits, in the capacity of Presidents of Stakes, Counselors to Presidents of Stakes, High Councilors, Bishops and their counselors, and those who are engaged in our educational institutions and in other responsible positions in the Church. I honor you all. I love you for your integrity to the cause of Zion. It is the kingdom of God or nothing, so far as I am concerned. I cut no figure personally in this work, and I am nothing except in the humble effort to do my duty as the Lord gives me the ability to do it. But it is the kingdom of God. What I mean by the kingdom of God is the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which Jesus Christ is the king and the head; not as an organization in any wise menacing or jeopardizing the liberties or rights of the people throughout the world, but as an organization calculated to lift up and ameliorate the condition of mankind; to make bad men good, if it is possible for them to repent of their sins, and to make good men better. That is the object and purpose of the Church, that is what it is accomplishing in the world. And it is very strict in regard to these matters. Drunkards, whoremongers, liars, thieves, those that betray the confidence of their fellowmen, those who are unworthy of credence, unworthy of love and confidence—all such, when their character becomes known, are disfellowshipped from the Church, and are not permitted to have a standing in it, if we know it. It is true that there are none of us but have our imperfections and shortcomings. Perfection dwells not with mortal man. We all have our weaknesses. But when a man abandons the truth, virtue, his love for the Gospel and for the people of God, and becomes an open, avowed enemy, it becomes the duty of the Church, and the Church would be recreant to its duty if it did not sever him from communion, cut him off, and let him go where he pleases. We would do wrong if we hung on to and tried to nurture such evil creatures in our midst, no matter what the relationship

may be that exists between us and them. Therefore, I say again, the Church of Jesus Christ stands for virtue, honor, truth, purity of life, and good will to all mankind. It stands for God the Eternal Father, and for Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent into the world, and whom to know is life eternal. This is what the Church stands for, and it cannot tolerate abomination crime and wickedness on the part of those who may claim to have some connection with it. We must sever ourselves from them, and let them go. Not that we want to hurt them. We do not want to hurt anybody. We never have, and we do not intend to, hurt anybody. But we do not intend to be hurt by those who are seeking our destruction, if we can help it. It is our right to protect ourselves.

Now, God bless you. May peace abide in your souls, and the love of truth abound in you. May virtue garnish all your ways. May you live uprightly and honestly before the Lord, keep the faith, and be valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ; for he that is valiant will receive his reward. God bless you, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "Let the mountains shout for joy."

UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES.

President Smith explained that according to the deed of the Brigham Young University, the trustees of that institution shall be presented every three years to be sustained at the general conference. He therefore presented the following names for the vote of the Saints:

Joseph F. Smith, David John, Wilson H. Dusenberry, Susa Y. Gates, Reed Smoot, John Henry Smith, Lafayette Holbrook, Stephen L. Chipman, Jesse Knight, Oscar B. Young, Jonathan S. Page, Jr., Richard W. Young. The vote was unanimous.

PRESIDENT JOHN R. WINDER.

Testimony concerning the truth of President Smith's statements.—Gratifying increase of interest in Temple work.—The Lord will bless the faithful.

I feel very thankful this morning to have the privilege of meeting once more with you in general conference. I have listened with much pleasure to the statements made by our President in relation to the condition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have no doubt that you also have listened with the same degree of interest. I rejoice exceedingly that I can bear testimony to the truth of what he has said, in all particulars. I am very thankful that the Lord has been so kind and generous to me as to extend my years until the present time, and I pray and hope that the remainder of my days may be spent in assisting to build up His Church upon the earth.

I remember that in the last sermon preached by the Prophet Joseph Smith, he laid particular stress upon the duties and obligations of the Latter-day Saints in relation to the redemption of their dead. I rejoice to know that the disposition and feeling of the Latter-day Saints in this direction is improving, and that the number attending to this work in the temples is increasing all the time. A little item that has appeared in the statistics we have received is of much interest to me, namely, that during the past year there has been a very decided increase in the number of marriages in the temples. We are much gratified to know that our young people are looking towards the temples of God as the proper places for the performance of the marriage ceremony. We hope they will continue to do so, and that there will be a still greater increase in this direction during the present year. I look upon the payment of tithing, and the desire of the people to perform temple ordinances and work for the redemption of their dead, as good indications of the faithful condition of the Saints.

I am thankful, my brothers and sisters, for this opportunity to bear testimony to what has been said. I do