

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-eighth Annual General 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 5th, 1907, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

AUTHORITIES PRESENT.

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, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, Rudger Clawson, Reed Smoot, Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney and David O. McKay; Presiding Patriarch John Smith; of the First Council of Seventies, Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin and Charles H. Hart; of the Presiding Bishopric, William B. Preston and Orrin P. Miller. There were also a large number of presidents of stakes and missions, with their counselors, bishops of wards, and numerous other prominent men and women representing various organizations of the Church.

President Joseph F. Smith called the assembly to order, and the ser-

VICES were commenced by the choir and congregation singing the hymn:

Guide us, O Thou great Jehovah,
Lead us to the promised land,
We are weak, but Thou art able—
Hold us with Thy powerful hand.
Holy Spirit,
Feed us till the Savior comes.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder David McKenzie.

The choir and congregation then sang 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.)

Congratulations to Saints on abundant blessings.—Fidelity and diligence of the Priesthood and Saints generally.—Priesthood quorum meetings should be educational.—The work of the auxiliary organizations commended.—Faithfulness in paying tithing.—The Church free from debt.—The general authorities of the Church do not receive support from tithing.

I am delighted to greet you at the opening meeting of our general conference. It is certainly assuring and extremely pleasant to see so

many assembled at the first meeting. I think it indicates an interest in the occasion on the part, especially of the presiding authorities of the Church and the leading members. We are delighted to see you here, and we have only congratulations to offer to you and to all the Latter-day Saints for the abundance of the mercies and blessings of the Lord upon His people throughout the land.

I do not desire to say anything this morning in a boastful spirit, nor with over-confidence in ourselves, but what I shall say I sincerely hope may be prompted by the Spirit of the Lord, which is the spirit of wisdom, that I may not say anything that the Lord would not approve and that would not be acceptable to you in the spirit of truth. I desire to briefly represent before this vast assembly, as the Spirit may give me utterance, the present condition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as I see it. I will speak first of the Presidency of the Church and their associates, the Council of the Apostles. I only wish to refer to them very briefly; for we are here before you, and it is probable that you will hear from us during this conference individually, and will be able to judge for yourselves of our spirit, our faith and our works. I am most happy in saying to you that the Presidency are as united in their spirit, in their faith and in their works as they have ever been since the organization of this Presidency. We leave it to you to judge whether our spirit is right, and whether our faith is founded in the truth or not. The Presidency and the Apostles are united in their feelings and in their love for one another. So far as I am able to discern, there is not a

single thought in the mind of any member of the Presidency or the Twelve Apostles that would not meet with the signal blessing, approval and sanction, of our Great Father and Judge. In saying this much for the brethren who stand at the head, I believe I am only doing them justice and representing briefly but truly the real condition of these two leading councils of the holy priesthood. I am also happy to say that the same goodwill, union love and confidence exist between these two bodies and the presiding Seventies of the Church. The First Seven Presidents of the Seventies are united with us, and we with them. All these brethren are diligent in the performance of their duty. They are willing, ready, and always on hand to meet every call that is made of them. You know them yourselves, they having visited you and preached in your Stakes and Wards, so you can judge of their spirit, and that they are in the faith of the Gospel, to remain forever, if they will continue to enjoy and cultivate the spirit of the Gospel and the love of the truth which pervades their souls today. We expect that; we look for it; and we could not for one moment admit in our thoughts that anything other than that could ever occur with these three leading quorums of the Church.

I am sorry to say that the health and vigor of some of the members of the Presiding Bishopric is not that which we could desire; but they are united, and they have efficient help in their office. They are men who have been tried for years in their bishopric. They are men of God, men of truth and soberness, men of wisdom and judgment, under the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit; and God has been with them, as the presiding quorum over the lesser priesthood of the Church, and they have been wonderfully blessed. They are true men, according to the light and intelligence with which they are endowed.

I need not say very much about our Presiding Patriarch. He is before the people. He has not been able to travel among the people and counsel with the patriarchs in the different Stakes of Zion as much as we would like him to do, on account of family illness; but we hope that the Presiding Patriarch of the Church will find himself strengthened and relieved from embarrassments and obligations that tie him down, and be able to exert himself to visit the Saints and administer consolation and blessings to them, to strengthen their faith in bearing testimony of the truth to them, and in this way magnify and honor his holy and high calling; for it is his duty. Indeed it is expected of every man on whom responsibility is placed, and who is called by the voice of the Spirit and sustained by the vote of the people, that he will do his duty to the uttermost, according to his ability and the inspiration that he is entitled to enjoy in the discharge of the duties of his office and calling.

I can speak heartily and warmly of the fidelity, intelligence and wisdom, strength and influence of those who today are acting as presidents of stakes. With exceedingly few exceptions—and I would hardly desire to admit that there is any exception, but if there are exceptions they are very, very few—the presidents of Stakes and their Counsellors are men after God's own heart, true to their callings and their bishoprics, true to the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, true to their office, faithful and united in the discharge of their duty, and diligently looking after the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Stakes of Zion over which they preside. They are men in whom we repose the most absolute confidence, men of integrity, of tried faith, of noble character, of pure lives, fathers to the people, whose mission it is to look after the welfare of Zion and the building up of that portion of the kingdom of God submitted to their care. I speak well of the Presidents of Stakes and their Counsellors. The members of the various High Councils we cannot speak so comprehensively of, because they are too numerous for us to be individually acquainted with them. But we know the Presidents of Stakes, and we are more or less familiar with their Counsellors, and we believe that care is being taken in all the Stakes of Zion to have efficient High Councilors, men who are exemplary in their lives, men of good influence in the Stake in which they are called to be twelve counsellors to the Presidency, and twelve judges also, to sit with the Presidency of the Stake and adjudicate and adjust difficulties and differences that may arise in the Stake, and to look after the proclamation of the Gospel, both by precept and by example. We believe that great care is being taken to select and to maintain efficient High Councils throughout Zion. Where there is weakness and any necessity for change, it is our counsel to the Presidencies of the Stakes of Zion to make such changes, to fill up the High Councils, and to be provided with alternates who will be efficient in the discharge of the duty that devolves upon them.

The same may be said almost universally of the Bishops of the Church and their counselors. Of course, Bishoprics are frequently changed. It is often the case that Bishops remove to other sections of the country, and it becomes necessary to reorganize the bishoprics. Then wards are frequently divided into two or more, and this calls for more Bishops and Counselors. Occasionally men become feeble from age, and after serving many years it becomes necessary to relieve them from the great responsibility of their calling, and to call younger and stronger men to fill their places. In this way our bishoprics are more frequently changed probably than any other council of the priesthood. But we do not know of any particular deficiency in this important part of the priesthood. I do not think there is any organization in the Church of greater importance than that of the Bishopric. They are indeed fathers to the people. It is their duty to look after the widow, the fatherless, the poor, the needy, the sick and the afflicted. They are expected to not only be temporal fathers of the people, but spiritual fathers also. A double duty rests upon them with mighty force. It is their business to look after the erring as well as the feeble, and to feel after those who are inclined to stray from the paths of virtue and honor. It is expected that the Bishoprics of Wards will be in constant touch with their people, and that the Bishop will know every member in his ward, through the agencies that are established in the Church by divine revelation, by means of which every member of the Church can be reached and his or her condition, spiritual and temporal, be known. This is a great responsibility resting

upon our Bishops, and as a rule they are faithful men chosen by inspiration. The choice of our Bishops is not made by the body. Let me say just a word in regard to that principle. There is no officer in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chosen by the body. The Lord has given us His way to do these things. He has revealed to us that it is the duty of the presiding authorities to appoint and call; and then those whom they choose for any official position in the Church shall be presented to the body. If the body reject them, they are responsible for that rejection. They have the right to reject, if they will, or to receive them and sustain them by their faith and prayers. That is strictly in accordance with the rule laid down of the Lord. If any officer in the Church has my sympathy, it is the Bishop. If any officer in the Church deserves credit for patience, for longsuffering, kindness, charity, and for love unfeigned, it is the Bishop who does his duty. And we feel to sustain in our faith and love the Bishops and Counselors in Zion. We say to the Bishoprics of the various Wards, Be united; see eye to eye, even if you have to go down on your knees before the Lord and humble yourselves until your spirits will mingle and your hearts will be united one with the other. When you see the truth, you will see eye to eye and you will be united.

The truth will never divide councils of the priesthood. It will never divide Presidents from their Counselors, nor Counselors from their Presidents, nor members of the Church from one another, nor from the Church. The truth will unite us and cement us together. It will

make us strong, for it is a foundation that cannot be destroyed. Therefore, when Bishops and their Counselors do not see eye to eye, or when Presidents and their Counselors have any difference whatever in their sentiments or in their policy, it is their duty to get together, to go before the Lord together and humble themselves before Him until they get revelation from the Lord and see the truth alike, that they may go before their people unitedly. It is the duty of the Presidents of Stakes and High Councilors to meet often, to pray together, to counsel together, to learn each other's spirit, to understand each other, and unite together, that there may be no dissension nor division among them. The same with the Bishops and their Counselors. The same may be said of the councils of the priesthood from first to last. Let them get together and become united in their understanding of what is right, just and true, and then go as one man to the accomplishment of the purpose they have in view.

There is an effort being made (it has come more particularly to our notice in the near Stakes of Zion) by the Presidents of Stakes and the presidents of the various quorums of the priesthood to induce the members of these councils to attend to their priestly duties. The High Priests' quorums should have their regular meetings. They should meet together as often as circumstances will permit or as necessity requires, and grow and unite together. They should establish their schools of instruction and enlightenment; for it is the duty of the High Priests' quorum to teach the principles of government, of union, of advancement and of growth in the kingdom of God. They are in-

deed the fathers of the people at large. In our High Priests' quorums are numbered the Presidents of Stakes and their Counselors, Bishops and Counselors, Patriarchs, and all that have been ordained to the office of High Priest in the Melchisedek Priesthood. All such belong to the High Priests' quorum. They come under its supervision, and they should have a lively union with it, not a dead connection. They should be united with the quorum in such a way that they give it all the force that they can impart for good. They should give it their individual influence, their hearty support, their confidence, and the benefit of their advice and counsel. They should not pull apart nor be disinterested in these matters.

The same may be said of the Seventies' quorums. I believe that the Seven Presidents of the Seventies have it in their hearts and minds to establish a better system of growth, advancement and instruction in those quorums. The Seventies are called to be assistants to the Twelve Apostles; indeed they *are* apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, subject to the direction of the Twelve, and it is their duty to respond to the call of the Twelve, under the direction of the First Presidency of the Church, to preach the Gospel to every creature, to every tongue and people under the heavens to whom they may be sent. Hence they should understand the Gospel, and they should not be wholly dependent upon our auxiliary organizations for instruction, neither should they be wholly dependent upon the missionary classes in our Church schools for their knowledge of the Gospel and for their qualifications to preach that Gospel to the world. They

should take up the study of the Gospel, the study of the scriptures and the history of the dealings of God with the peoples of the earth, in their own quorums, and make those quorums schools of learning and instruction, wherein they may qualify themselves for every labor and duty that may be required at their hands. The Bishops should take especial charge of the lesser priesthood, and train them in the duties of their callings—the Priests, Teachers and Deacons. Our young men should be looked after. The boys, as soon as it is prudent, should be called to take part in the lesser priesthood. If it were possible to grade them, from the Deacon to the Priest, and from the Priest upward through all the offices that will eventually devolve upon them, it would be one of the best things that could be done. All these things should be looked after by the presiding authorities of the Church, especially those who preside over the quorums. I will repeat what I said before, it is expected that every man on whom responsibility is placed will do his duty faithfully, and be diligent in the performance thereof.

Our auxiliary organizations, I believe, are in excellent condition. I need only to mention to you that our Sunday Schools probably have never had a better organization than they have today. There never has been a time in the Church when more attention has been given to imparting instruction and to forming outlines for guidance of teachers, in our Sunday Schools than has been given of late; and there is a good, lively spirit and influence felt among the Sunday School workers. I will speak of the Relief Society as one great organization in the Church, organized by the Prophet

Joseph Smith, whose duty it is to look after the interests of the women of Zion and of all the women that may come under their supervision and care, irrespective of religion, color or condition. I expect to see the day when this organization will be one of the most perfect, most efficient and effective organizations for good in the Church; but that day will be when we shall have women who are not only imbued with the Spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and with the testimony of Christ in their hearts, but also with youth, vigor and intelligence to enable them to discharge the great duties and responsibilities that rest upon them. Today it is too much the case that our young, vigorous, intelligent women feel that only the aged should be connected with the Relief Society. This is a mistake. We want the young women, the intelligent women, women of faith, of courage and of purity, to be associated with the Relief Societies of the various Stakes and Wards of Zion. We want them to take hold of this work with vigor, with intelligence and unitedly, for the building up of Zion and the instruction of women in their duties—domestic duties, public duties, and every duty that may devolve upon them. Our Mutual Improvement Associations are in excellent condition, and doing a good work. I think Brother Heber J. Grant, just returned from the mission field, will bear me out in the statement that the young men who have had training in the Mutual Improvement Associations make the most effective and successful missionaries in the world. We want this work continued, not only among the young men, but among

the young women also. The Primary Associations are doing a vast amount of good, as are our Religion Class workers also. The Religion Class work has been hampered considerably, in consequence of the prejudice of some people and a disposition to hedge up the way of the Gospel; nevertheless it is accomplishing good. Whatever is most effective of good is most hated and opposed by the enemy of truth.

I want to say to my brethren and sisters here this morning, that in my opinion there never was a time when the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were living better lives, were more faithful and more diligent, than they are today. We have various means of judging of this. One very accurate way of knowing is the fact that the law of tithing is being observed. There never has been a time in the history of the Church, I believe, when the law of tithing was observed more universally and more honestly than it has been observed by the Latter-day Saints of late. The tithes of the people during the year 1906, have surpassed the tithing of any other year. This is a good indication that the Latter-day Saints are doing their duty, that they have faith in the Gospel, that they are willing to keep the commandments of God, and that they are working up to the line more faithfully perhaps than ever before. I want to say another thing to you, and I do so by way of congratulation, and that is, that we have, by the blessing of the Lord and the faithfulness of the Saints in paying their tithing, been able to pay off our bonded indebtedness. Today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes not a dollar that it cannot pay at

once. At last we are in a position that we can pay as we go. We do not have to borrow any more, and we wont have to if the Latter-day Saints continue to live their religion and observe this law of tithing. It is the law of revenue to the Church. Furthermore, I want to say to you, we may not be able to reach it right away, but we expect to see the day when we will not have to ask you for one dollar of donation for any purpose, except that which you volunteer to give of your own accord, because we will have tithes sufficient in the storehouse of the Lord to pay everything that is needful for the advancement of the kingdom of God. I want to live to see that day, if the Lord will spare my life. It does not make any difference, though, so far as that is concerned, whether I live or not. That is the true policy, the true purpose of the Lord in the management of the affairs of His Church.

Before I sit down I would like to make another statement. Our enemies have been publishing to the world that the Presidency of the Church and the leading officers are consuming the tithes of the people. Now, I am going to tell you a little secret, and it is this: there is not one of the general authorities in the Church that draws one dollar from the tithes of the people for his own use. Well, you may say, how do they live? I will give you the key: The Church helped to support in its infancy the sugar industry in this country, and it has some means invested in that enterprise. The Church helped to establish Z. C. M. I., and it has a little interest in that, and in some other institutions which pay dividends. In other words, tithing funds were invested in these institutions, which give employment

to many, for which the Trustee-in-Trust holds stock certificates, which are worth more today than what was given for them; and the dividends from these investments more than pay for the support of the general authorities of the Church. So we do not use one dollar of your tithing. I thought I would like to tell you that much, so that when you hear men talking about Joseph F. Smith and his associates consuming the tithes of the people you can throw it back into their teeth that they do not use a dollar of the tithing for their support. I would like our "friends," if I might be permitted to use a vulgar expression, to "put that in their pipe and smoke it." (Laughter.)

A word about our Church schools. Our Church schools were never more efficient than they are today. We have good men at their head, and good teachers, Latter-day Saints, who are teaching your children principles of righteousness, honor, virtue, truth and uprightness, as well as giving them the benefits of a secular education. Hitherto we have had sufficient means to take care of our schools, but there is nothing that I have anything to do with in the Church that has grown so fast in so short a time as our Church schools. I do not know but they will outgrow the Church by and by, if we do not put a little hedge about them. We will have to exercise some judgment and wisdom in their management, for they may grow so big that we will not be able to carry them at all. We may have to curtail them a little, and gauge their growth and increase somewhat to correspond with the means available for their support.

Many things come to my mind,

but one thing more I will speak of. We have seventeen or more missions in the world, and they are mostly young men who are presiding over them. [There are 23 missions, all told.] My brethren and sisters, let me say to you that these young men are your sons, and they are men after God's own heart. We have absolute confidence in their integrity. We know they are true-born and true metal. We know they can be trusted with the great responsibilities that devolve upon them. They are noble young men, men of intelligence, virtue, honor and integrity, whose word is as good as any man's bond, I do not care how strong the bond may be. Therefore, I commend these young men, and say in my heart, God bless the Presidents of the Missions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world. Elder Charles W. Penrose is presiding now over the European Mission, where he is using the ability the Lord has given him (which we know is of no mean order) in the proclamation of the Gospel, in writing editorials for the *Millennial Star*, and in exercising his influence and intelligence in the defense of the cause of Zion, and in the advocacy of the principles of the Gospel to the world; and he has a large number of most faithful, energetic and worthy young elders seconding his efforts in that Mission.

I feel that I have really trespassed upon your time. I now wish to announce to you, that the Presidency and the Twelve have prepared a document containing our views, our faith and doctrines, and asserting the truth in connection with the up-building of Zion and the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which

document we propose to have read to you this morning by Elder Orson F. Whitney, and then we want to present it to you for your acceptance or rejection, as you desire, that it may go forth from this conference, if approved, as an authoritative statement of our faith, our purposes and our works, as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

God bless you, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ADDRESS TO THE WORLD.

The Address referred to by President Smith in his concluding remarks was then read to the congregation, in a clear and impressive manner, by Elder Orson F. Whitney.

The document in full is inserted as an appendix to this official report of the Conference proceedings.

After the reading of the Address by Elder Whitney, President Francis M. Lyman made the following statement and motion:

President Joseph F. Smith and my Brethren and Sisters—

The council of the Twelve Apostles most heartily approve and endorse the principles and views in the address that has just been read. The tone of this document is admirable. It breathes a spirit of truth and moderation that will commend it to the judgment and approval of all reasonable men. As stated in the document itself, we desire peace; and as the first requisite to this is a proper understanding of the position the Church proposes to take with reference to the questions that have arisen in the recent past, it is very proper that a straight forward statement of the principles and policy by which the Church will

be governed should be made. The address just read covers that ground in a very comprehensive manner; and the times are propitious for issuing it to the world. The storms that have beat upon us for so long have subsided. They have passed over us, thank the Lord, without doing us any material harm. We are laboring under no stress of feeling, and hence we are in the right frame of mind to adopt the address.

I therefore move that, representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in general conference assembled, we do now adopt this document presented by the First Presidency, and that we accept it as an expression of the principles and policy of the Church that we will advocate and sustain.

Elder John Henry Smith, in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address, said: "Believing that the best interests of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are in connection with this matter, and the well-being of the American people and the world at large, I most heartily second this proposition."

President Smith called upon all who favored the adoption of the Address to arise to their feet. In response nearly every person in the congregation arose, thus manifesting their approval of the document. Before calling for the negative vote, President Smith stated that the subject was for the consideration only of Church members, and if any such present were not in sympathy with the contents of the paper read in their hearing, they also should arise. No one responded, and the motion was declared to have been carried unanimously.