

## SECOND DAY.

Saturday, Oct. 5th, 10 a. m.

Conference was called to order by President Joseph F. Smith.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!

Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer—  
Blessed to open the last dispensation;  
Kings shall extol him and nations revere.

Prayer was offered by Elder John G. McQuarrie.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

"The time is far spent, there is little remaining

To publish glad tidings by sea and by land,

Then hasten ye heralds! go forward proclaiming:

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven's at hand.

### ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.

Importance of observing the first great commandment.—High percentage of children in "Mormon" families.—Remarkable statistics.—Great influence of environment.—Advantages of Church school training.

Brethren and sisters: I trust that I shall be able to make myself heard by this vast congregation. I rejoiced exceedingly yesterday in listening to the strong opening address of President Smith. It was an index to the character of the conference, and of the meetings which have followed.

It was indeed pleasant to listen to the powerful testimony of Presi-

dent Winder, and to see him in such good health. I was also very much impressed with the remarks of President Lund, and of President Lyman, especially with reference to the children of the Latter-day Saints. We are a people who believe in marriage and in children, and we not only believe in them, but this belief has taken an active form, and has become a living principle with us. You will remember that, when the Lord placed Adam in the Garden of Eden He saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and He gave him the woman, Eve, to be his companion and helpmeet. Then again, the Lord saw that it was not good for husband and wife to be alone, and He said unto them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." As a result of obedience to this first great commandment, Adam and Eve were blessed with posterity. Woe unto that nation or people who disregard that sacred obligation of marriage, or interfere with the fountains of life. Every nation which has taken this course has felt the anger of an offended God. We need only to look back to the great Roman Empire for an example, and to other nations before and after. When the nations began to disregard and violate the sacred duty and obligations of marriage, weakness and dissolution came, and they have disappeared, many of them, from the face of the world. As a people, the Lat-

ter-day Saints, I think I may safely say, appreciate the glorious principle of marriage. In my travels I have seen some very large families of children. I met one sister who was the mother of eighteen children. I looked upon her as a veritable queen among women; her crown was studded with eighteen precious jewels. I have met other sisters in the Church who were the mothers of fourteen, fifteen or sixteen children, which we will all concede are very large families. There are hundreds of mothers in Israel who have had eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen children, which reflects great credit and honor upon them.

If we would understand and comprehend something of the great obligation that rests upon us with respect to these children that God has entrusted to our care, it might be well for a moment to consider the following figures, taken from last year's statistical report. Last year there were in the Church 86,742 children under eight years of age, a veritable army. If we should assume that this Tabernacle would accommodate 15,000 children, then this building would be filled five and one-half times with children of the Latter-day Saints under eight years of age. Is not that thought impressive? The percentage of children in some of the stakes of Zion is very high indeed; and I am sure if it were known to the world, it would not only create some amazement but, with many perhaps, would elicit admiration. The highest average is in the Kanab Stake of Zion. In that stake 33 per cent of the population of the Church are children under eight years of age—nearly one-third of the population. Alberta Stake, in Canada, has 32

per cent; San Juan Stake, 32 per cent; Uintah Stake, 32 per cent; Juarez Stake, in Mexico, has 31 per cent; Panguitch Stake, 31 per cent; Woodruff Stake, 30 per cent; and Snowflake Stake 30 per cent. There are thirteen stakes with 29 per cent, eight stakes with 28 per cent; six stakes with 27 per cent, seven stakes with 26 per cent, and three stakes with 25 per cent. I think you will concede with me that these are very high averages. There is one stake with 19 per cent, and two stakes with 18 per cent, which is the lowest average.

Now, if anybody should ask me the question: What do you think is the most important consideration with reference to this vast army of children under eight years of age? and then: What do you think is the most important consideration with reference to the children of the Latter-day Saints who are above eight and up to twenty years of age? (The latter constitute a vast army. We have in the Sunday schools an enrollment of 119,000 souls. There are a few of these Sunday school children, under eight years of age, some who belong to the kindergarten department, but most of them are above the age of eight, and below the age of twenty. There are 24,600 enrolled in the Young Men's Association; 26,200 enrolled in the Young Ladies'; 48,737 enrolled in the Primary, and 25,629 enrolled in the Religion Classes. We have in the Church 4,961 Priests, 6,292 Teachers, and 18,976 Deacons.) I should say that the most important consideration with reference to these children would be the question of environment—environment of the home first, and environment of the Church second. The child is born

into the home, and remains there through the early years of its life, up to manhood or womanhood, and anything that occurs within the sacred precincts of the home must have a powerful influence upon the mind of the child. It is necessarily so, because the youthful mind is very impressionable. When we look into the home of a Latter-day Saint, whenever we reflect about this matter, we naturally ask: Is the home well ordered? Is family prayer observed both morning and evening? Do the parents set a proper example before the children? Is reverence for sacred things impressed upon their minds—reverence for the Priesthood, reverence for the parents? The children should be taught to respect and honor those who gave them birth, and those who are placed to instruct and guide them. Oh, how important these things are to the cause of Zion! Brethren and sisters, I repeat, how very important is the environment of our children in the home! I think they should have first consideration, and our profoundest attention as parents in Israel.

Then there is the environment of the Church. This army of Priests, Teachers and Deacons, members of the lesser Priesthood, belonging to associations wherein they are taught to become acquainted with authority, and taught to exercise authority in the ordinances of the Gospel,—how important that proper attention should be given these young men in their quorums! Then, again, there is the environment of our auxiliary organizations, mighty engines for good—if that is a proper term—powerful levers in lifting the young people from lower to higher conditions. And last, but

not least, the Church school system. You will remember that, over thirty years ago, President Young directed Karl G. Maeser to go to Provo and open a Church school. A little later, Brother Maeser presented himself to President Young for instructions: no doubt he had prepared his mind to receive very minute and ample directions in respect to this movement, for it was destined to become of great magnitude in Zion. President Young said to him something to this effect: "Brother Maeser, you are not to teach even the A B C's without the Spirit of God. Every study that shall be pursued in the Church school over which you are appointed to preside must be accompanied by the Spirit of God." And he told him that the greatest, the supremest study in the Church school should be theology. Let me say to you, my brethren and sisters, from the time Brother Maeser opened up that school, with only a few in attendance, a handful of students, the system has steadily grown and spread; and this year there will be enrolled in our Church schools about ten thousand students. Is it not a remarkable movement? Does it not impress you? Is it not wonderful what God hath wrought? I can scarcely think of any movement of later times in Zion that will have such a profound effect and influence upon our children as our Church schools. Why is this such an important movement? Simply because it goes beyond the Sabbath day; it may include it, in a way, but it goes beyond, and brings to the child the proper religious instruction, and the influences of the Gospel, every day in the week, every hour in the day, and every minute that he is in

the school room. Now it seems to me that this is beautiful. I remember reading in one of the daily papers that the late President Harper of the Chicago University, complained sadly of the absence of religious influences in the school room; and he freely admitted that students who attended that university in his day, and under his instructions, went forth from the school with less religion and less reverence for sacred things than when they came into it; and those were the kind of educated students who were sent into the world from that great institution. It is the same with many other institutions of learning; and I think the people of the nation are coming to the view that there must be religious instruction of some kind, at least that the Bible should be introduced into the public schools of the land. Well, we have been converted to that idea from the first. One thing that President Young regretted, with respect to the public schools, was that the Lord Almighty was excluded, and I presume that was what prompted him to inaugurate the Church school system.

Brethren and sisters, as I said before, how important is the environment of our children. If you doubt that there is anything in this question of environment, cast your thought back to the children of Israel. You will remember that they went down into Egypt as worshipers of the true and living God. No doubt they continued to be instructed in that worship during their pilgrimage in the land of Egypt, while they were in bondage. After 400 years, they were brought forth out of bondage, through the power of the Almighty, with the fear of God

before their eyes; and they walked through the Red Sea dry shod; and they saw the Lord descend—that is, they saw a mighty manifestation of His power upon Mount Sinai, when the mountain smoked as a furnace, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and they heard the voice of God. And, mind you, when Moses, the prophet, the law-giver, the leader of Israel, withdrew for a short period of time—40 days and 40 nights that he was in the mount communing with the Almighty—the children of Israel rebelled and worshiped an idol, the golden calf; yet they were the people who had just previously witnessed the manifestation of God's power in their great deliverance from bondage. And why did they worship the golden calf? It was due to their environment in Egypt. They had been in bondage 400 years, and had been surrounded by idol worshipers; their children had grown up under these influences, and they were affected, in the wilderness, by the environment of their early life.

May the Lord help us, may He give us wisdom as a people, as parents, as officers of the Church, as men of Priesthood, and women of faith, may He give us wisdom to watch over our children and to give them good counsel, and to set before them examples worthy of all acceptance, because the children of today are the men and women of tomorrow, so to speak; and whatever the children are, the men and the women of the future will be. Let us lay the foundation deep and strong that we may erect there-upon a most glorious building, which I humbly pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.