

Eighty-Fifth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

FIRST DAY.

The Eighty-fifth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., Sunday, October 4, 1914, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

AUTHORITIES PRESENT.

There were present of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose; of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, Rudger Clawson, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and James E. Talmage; of the First Council of Seventy, Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin, Charles H. Hart, and Levi Edgar Young; Presiding Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith; of the Presiding Bishopric, Charles W. Nibley, Orrin P. Miller, and David A. Smith; Assistant Historian Andrew Jenson. There were also a large number of Presidents of Stakes with their Counselors, Presidents of Missions, Bishops of Wards, Patriarchs, and numerous other prominent men and women representing various quorums and organizations of the Church.

President Joseph F. Smith called

the assembly to order, and announced that, in consequence of the over-crowded condition in the Tabernacle, another meeting will now convene in the adjoining Assembly Hall, under direction of Elder George F. Richards.

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

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 Joseph W. McMurrin.

The choir sang the anthem, "The Palms."

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Precautions taken for safety of missionaries in Europe—General conditions of Church affairs reported—Missionary service needed at home—Active employment of all the Priesthood advised—Reminder of duty to pray, and give thanks always—Christendom would not war if true Christianity prevailed—God not responsible for war—Peace should be in hearts of Saints that they may disseminate it to the world.

I suppose it is somewhat expected of me to make a few remarks at the opening of this, the first session of

the Eighty-fifth semi-annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and, while I feel entirely inadequate to the task, I will try with the help of the Lord to say a few words as they may be given to me by the good Spirit. I feel truly grateful that my life has been spared to meet with you this morning under so favorable circumstances as those under which we have met. I am also grateful that my counselors have also been spared to be present with us, and also that the number of the Apostles has been unbroken since our last conference. And I am very grateful indeed to behold so many of the Latter-day Saints as are assembled here this morning, apparently in the enjoyment of the many blessings and privileges of life which have been vouchsafed to the people of God and the Church up to the present. I sincerely hope during the sessions of this conference we may be fed with the bread of life, that the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon His servants who may address the conference from time to time, and that the same Spirit may rest abundantly upon all who assemble from day to day to listen to that which may be said.

It may be proper for me to say a few words relative to our foreign missions. I need not spend much time upon that subject as about everything that we have learned of the conditions in Europe, with reference to our elders and the work of the ministry there, has been published from time to time in the *Deseret News* and in other papers. But I think it will be safe for me to say that every precaution has been taken that could be taken for the protection of our elders in those foreign missions where war exists. In Ger-

many, France, Austria, and portions of other countries so dreadfully involved in war, our elders have all been invited to withdraw, to come away from those parts of the country, and so far as we know our German missionaries have largely and almost entirely withdrawn from that country, and also from France. Some of them are located temporarily in Holland and in Scandinavia, and a few of them, quite a number indeed, have come across the Atlantic and have been distributed to the various missions in the United States, while those who had practically completed their missions in Europe have been honorably released to return home. Reports that we receive from England, notwithstanding the conditions of war that exist there, are that our elders are in safety at present, and that the field is opening before them with somewhat better prospects than heretofore. A great many people are beginning to feel the necessity of praying for deliverance and safety, and as the spirit of prayer rests upon their minds, they begin to feel after their spiritual as well as their temporal welfare. Reports which we have received from Holland are very encouraging, indeed, and while the Presidency of that mission and of the Scandinavian missions have been instructed to be very careful about the welfare of the Elders, and if necessity arises to see that they are promptly released to escape any difficulty that might come upon them, the reports from these missions are very encouraging. They do not apprehend, for the present, any difficulty; and those who are laboring there seem to be contented and are doing good work. Nevertheless, they are all under instructions that when the

necessity arises, our Elders who are laboring there now, apparently successfully, will be promptly released and guarded against any danger or evil, so far as it is possible. The poor Saints who are practically left without guidance of the Elders are feeling sadly the want of their presence and regret very much that they have been under the necessity of withdrawing from among them. The best experienced men that could be obtained have been advised to take charge as far as possible of the local interests of the missions abroad, and possibly a few of our Elders will remain among them until the end of the war, provided they can do so without jeopardy to their lives. Now, I don't know that I need to say anything further in regard to these matters. Others who follow me, and who have more clearly in their minds other instances, can express themselves as they feel led. I believe that the best that could possibly be done has been done, and the wisest course that could have been pursued has been pursued with reference to our missions upon the European continent respecting their release and their deliverance from trouble. I feel to thank God for all His mercies and loving kindness to His people.

✠ I have before me a few memoranda to which I will briefly refer. I am reminded that the winter season is coming and that it is advisable that all the Bishops should exercise fatherly and kind consideration to the needs of the worthy poor in their midst whether Latter-day Saints or not. The purpose of the Relief Societies is to assist the Bishops in relieving the necessities of the worthy poor; it is part of their first duty. ✠ We should endeavor to take care, as far as possible, of the

refugees who have been driven from their homes in Mexico, many of whom have established themselves in various parts of the country, and in various stakes of Zion. Some few have returned to their homes in Mexico, not without more or less risk of further trouble, and at present Bishop Bentley is in charge of the colonies, or of the people who have returned to Mexico. How long they will be suffered to remain there in peace we cannot tell, but we sincerely hope and pray for peace throughout all the land, and in this hope we desire that the people will exercise all the faith they can in behalf of our associates our fellow members of the Church, in their endeavor to recover their homes and property from which they have been driven and very largely despoiled.

In connection with the Presiding Bishop and one of his counselors I had the privilege of visiting, in August last, our settlements in Canada, and of holding conferences there in the two stakes. The walls of the temple, which is being erected at Cardston, are in process of building. We have decided to build them of granite, and have already expended a little over fifty thousand dollars toward the erection of that building. Had it not been for the great drought that has prevailed in that country for the last two or three years, and especially during this season, the temple, without doubt, would have been farther in progress than it is today.

I am happy to announce, also, to the conference that we have completed a magnificent new wing to the Latter-day Saints hospital. It has seventy-three private bedrooms, splendid suites of operating rooms on the sixth floor, and an

open-air ward, on the roof, with a capacity of about thirty beds. It has ample kitchens and storage plants, and sub-basements, etc. It is one of the most beautiful hospital buildings in the United States, and the Latter-day Saints should remember that we have a hospital of our own.

We are also erecting what is called the General Church Office Building. It is progressing slowly but satisfactorily. It will provide offices for the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, the Presiding Patriarch, the Historian's office the Genealogical Society, and other Church organizations. I might add possibly without inconsistency that the progress of this building might have been a little more rapid if we had seen clearly our way to supply the means necessary to force it along a little faster. But we can only provide means for the improvements that are being made, not only for this building, the very costly addition to the hospital, and that required for the building of the temple in Canada, but means also required for schools and the assistance of the various wards and stakes of Zion to build numerous meeting-houses, amusement halls, and other places that are necessary for the use of the people throughout the Church. We have been pretty closely run for means and can only supply the money for these improvements and necessities as we obtain it from the Church. As the people pay their tithings, we are able to direct the application of it toward the improvements necessary to be made, as well as toward the meeting of all the current and reasonable expenses of the Church, the accounts of which are correctly kept to the very cent in the Presiding

Bishop's Office, and also in the office of the Trustee-in-Trust.

Efforts to secure employment for immigrants, and for missionaries upon their return from their missions, have been put forth to the best of our ability; and it is requested of the bishops everywhere throughout the Church to look after those who come to them from foreign countries, who immigrate to Zion, that they may be assisted as far as possible, and put in position to acquire a livelihood, to build homes for themselves, and to feel at home amongst us. They come here strangers, meeting new conditions, and depending much upon the fellowship of their brethren for their success in obtaining new homes.

It is also a good thing for the bishops in all the wards to look after their returned missionaries. It is a pity that after so many of our boys who go abroad and fill good missions return home, they should be apparently dropped or ignored by the presiding authorities of the Church, and be permitted to drift away again into carelessness and indifference, and eventually, perhaps, to wander entirely away from their Church duties. They should be kept in the harness, they should be made active in the work of the ministry, in some way that they may the better keep the spirit of the Gospel in their minds and in their hearts and be useful at home as well as abroad.

There is no question as to the fact that missionary service is required and is as necessary in Zion, or here at home, as it is abroad. Many people seem to be careless with reference to the proper training of their children. We see too many boys that are falling into very careless, if not into pernicious, ways

and habits. Every missionary boy who returns from his mission full of faith and good desire should take it upon himself to become a savior as far as possible of his young and less experienced associates at home. When a returned missionary sees a boy falling into bad ways and is becoming accustomed to bad habits, he should feel that it is his duty to take hold of him, in connection with the presiding authorities of the stake or of the ward in which he lives, and exercise all the power and influence he can for the salvation of that erring young man who has not the experience that our Elders abroad have had, and thus become a means of saving many and of establishing them more firmly in the truth.

Efforts have been made by the Presiding Bishopric and others to locate the Saints, who gather from other lands, where they can get a livelihood. All are employed as far as the records show. Many bishops have taken fatherly interest in the Saints who have immigrated to Zion. Homes have been provided, employment secured as far as possible, and through the united efforts of the Saints, supplies and furniture have been obtained and given them to help them to get started again in life. This should be the policy of all the organizations of the Church.

Since the last April conference the Shelley stake of Zion has been organized from a part of the Blackfoot stake. Nine new wards, and seven new branches, have been organized. Thirty-four bishops have been ordained to replace those who have been released. The presidencies of the Jordan, Juab, Union and North Sanpete stakes have been reorganized. Three bishops have passed away since our last confer-

ence. There are now sixty-six stakes of Zion, and seven hundred and thirty-five bishops' wards. There have been entered on the records of the Church, by baptism, in the stakes and missions, six thousand one hundred and ninety-eight souls during the six months of the year. The presiding bishopric have issued quarterly bulletins which have kept presidencies of stakes in closer touch with the general conditions in all the stakes of Zion, than in the past. Ward teaching is being rapidly developed in many of the stakes of Zion. Some stakes are still indifferent to this important movement. There is a splendid opportunity in this work to use every ordained priest and teacher and man holding the priesthood, and it would seem rather strange that there should be any of the presidencies of the stakes, or any of the presiding officers in the Church, who would be indifferent to the subject of keeping in contact and in harmony with the progress of all the other stakes. It is good to be in possession of the knowledge of things as they are and as they are going along.

We have inaugurated a movement to encourage the monthly payment of tithing. The stake and ward officers are complying with this request as far as they can. Really, the only practical method and proper way to pay our tithes is when we receive that which we earn into our hands. It is quite proper to remember what we owe to the Lord before we expend our means otherwise.

There are two companies each day passing through this Temple to perform the ordinances of the House of the Lord for the living and for the dead, and our genealogical work is bearing fruit as we

see in the attendance upon the temples for the performance of these ordinances, and we hope that this good work will go on. The work of the bishopric is both temporal and spiritual. The average bishop gives all his time and efforts for the betterment of the people over whom he presides. The bishop should not try to do all the work that is necessary to be done in his ward. His counselors are there to help him, and a due portion of the responsibility of the bishop of the ward should be placed upon his counselors. Neither is it wise that the bishopric of the ward should feel they are compelled to do all that is necessary to be done in their wards. They should exercise their right to call upon the priesthood to visit the people as teachers and preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that they may give to all as far as possible an opportunity to exercise their talents and to do good in their wards. It is sometimes advisable to give to each counselor special duties, and assign each of the counselors his proportion of the responsibilities which belong to the bishopric, each one doing some special work for which he is adapted, so that all may be active.

Now, these are a few things I think worthy of note, and there are very many more. But I desire to call attention to one thing; it is this: I fear the Latter-day Saints, in the midst of the prosperity with which they are blessed, sometimes fail to observe that great commandment given of the Master, always to remember the Lord, to pray in the morning, and in the evening, and always remember to thank Him for the blessings that they receive day by day. I fear that there is more neglect than there should be among the Latter-day Saaints in regard to

following out this rule of the Church. It is the commandment of the Lord that we shall remember God morning and evening, and, as the Book of Mormon tells us, "at all times." We should carry with us the spirit of prayer throughout every duty that we have to perform in life. Why should we? One of the simple reasons that appeals to my mind with great force is that man is so utterly dependent upon God! How helpless we are without Him; how little can we do without His merciful providence in our behalf! I have often been led to make the remark, that not one of us, not a human being in all the world can make even a single spear of grass grow without the help of God. We have to use His earth, we must avail ourselves of the benefit of His soil, His air and His sunshine, and the moisture that God provides and gives to the earth, to enable us to produce even a single blade of grass; and the same applies to everything that ministers to our existence in the world. You can't raise an ear of corn or wheat without God's help. You cannot produce a single thing essential to the existence of man or beast without the help of God. Then, why should we not feel dependent upon the Lord? Why should we not call upon His name? Why should we not remember Him in our prayers? Why should we not love Him with all our heart and mind and strength, since He has given us life, since He has formed us in His own likeness and image, since He has placed us here that we may become like unto His only begotten Son and to inherit the glory, exaltation and reward provided for God's own children.

My brethren and sisters, let us re-

member and call upon God and implore His blessings and His favor upon us. Let us do it nevertheless in wisdom and in righteousness, and when we pray we should call upon Him in a consistent and reasonable way. We should not ask the Lord for that which is unnecessary or which would not be beneficial to us. We should ask for that which we need, and we should ask in faith, "nothing wavering, "for he that wavereth," as the Apostle said, "is like the wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." But when we ask of God for blessings let us ask in the faith of the Gospel, in that faith that He has promised to give to them who believe in Him and obey His commandments.

We want peace in the world. We want love and good-will to exist throughout the earth, and among all the peoples of the world; but there never can come to the world that spirit of peace and love that should exist until mankind will receive God's truth and God's message unto them and acknowledge His power and authority which is divine, and never found in the wisdom only of men.

The condition of the world today presents a spectacle that is deplorable, so far as it relates to the religious convictions, faith and power of the inhabitants of the earth. Here we have nations arrayed against nations, and yet in every one of these nations are so-called Christian peoples professing to worship the same God, professing to possess belief in the same divine Redeemer, many of them professing to be teachers of God's word, and ministers of life and salvation to the children of men, and yet these nations are divided

one against the other, and each is praying to his God for wrath upon and victory over his enemies and for his own preservation. Would it be possible—could it be possible, for this conditions to exist if the people of the world possessed really the true knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? And if they really possessed the Spirit of the living God—could this condition exist? No; it could not exist, but war would cease, and contention and strife would be at an end. And not only the spirit of war would not exist, but the spirit of contention and strife that now exists among the nations of the earth, which is the primal element of war, would cease to be. We know that the spirit of strife and contention exists to an alarming extent among all the people of the world. Why does it exist? Because they are not one with God, nor with Christ. They have not entered into the true fold, and the result is they do not possess the spirit of the true Shepherd sufficiently to govern and control their acts in the ways of peace and righteousness. Thus they contend and strive one against another, and at last nation rises up against nation in fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets of God that war should be poured out upon all nations. I don't want you to think I believe that God has designed or willed that war should come among the people of the world, that the nations of the world should be divided against each other in war, and engaged in the destruction of each other! God did not design or cause this. It is deplorable to the heavens that such a condition should exist among men, but the conditions do exist, and men precipitate war and destruction upon themselves because

of their wickedness, and that because they will not abide in God's truth, walk in His love, and seek to establish and maintain peace instead of strife and contention in the world.

Now, we wish this morning to remember the admonition of the President of the United States, to offer prayer for peace to come upon the distracted nations of the world, for peace to abide upon those who are at peace, and to abound more abundantly. I pray God that this spirit may especially enter into the hearts of this people, that they may strive for peace among themselves, that peace may dwell in their own hearts and homes, that peace may exist between neighbors, that peace, goodwill, love and union may characterize the associations of members of the Church with their fellow members, and that there may be no contention among them, nor strife, nor bitterness, nor back-sliding, nor back-biting, nor complaint of any description, but that peace on earth and good will to men may pervade the hearts and minds of all the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and that from them this spirit of peace and love for God and for our fellow man may go out into the world, as far as we have power to send it forth through the elders of the Church and otherwise, that men may hear the good tidings and receive them in their hearts, obey the truth, and join the ranks of the peaceful, of the peace-loving, of the peace-makers, of the God-fearing, and of the God-loving people that all Latter-day Saints should be, in every part of the world.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters, I humbly pray; and now we will call upon President Charles W.

Penrose to offer to the Lord a prayer in behalf of this assembly and in behalf of all the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that God will move upon the hearts of the people of the world to accept the spirit of peace in their souls, that peace may come to the distracted world, and that life and union may prevail instead of bloodshed, death and destruction. When Brother Penrose shall pray, he will pray unto the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose image and likeness we are made, or were born into the world, and in whose likeness and image we are, for we are God's children and therefore must resemble His Son in person, and also spiritually, so far as we will obey the principles of the gospel of eternal truth. For we were fore-ordained and predestined to become conformed to His likeness through the wise and proper use of our free agency. So that we may enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God where He dwells, and inherit His glory and the salvation, the reward, and dominion that has been promised unto the faithful of His children, which may God grant is my prayer. Amen.

PREST. CHARLES W. PENROSE.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE.

O God, our Eternal Father Father of the spirits of all men, we come unto Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and worship Thee and render thanks unto Thee for all things that we have received, both spiritual and temporal, for our sustenance, for our guidance, for our enlightenment, for our understanding and knowledge, that we may be prepared to come into Thy presence, eventu-