

let us fight valiantly on until we have achieved a glorious victory. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH W. M'MURRIN.

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

It is quite an experience, my brethren and sisters, to sit here in the stand hour after hour for three days, in more or less fear all the time because of the thought that the time is approaching to be called upon to occupy this very important position as spokesman. It is always a very great relief when the duty has been performed, and one is permitted again to take his seat. Some of the brethren have been extending to members of the First Council what I think I may call mock sympathy, it has been given good-naturedly, the brethren indicating by their words that we had awaiting us the performance of a duty which they had no need to worry about, as their part had been accomplished. While it is a considerable trial and anxiety to undertake to stand before a great congregation of this character, there is nevertheless connected with it a goodly degree of pleasure, also; the pleasure comes from an understanding that the work that is being advocated is the work of the Lord, and that the testimony that is to be delivered is to be in favor of the cause that our Father is seeking to establish among men. It is the teaching of the Lord, Jesus Christ, that those who hear His words and do them shall be likened unto men who have digged down deep and laid a foundation upon bedrock, with such foundation the winds may blow and the rains descend and beat upon the building, and it will not fall because it is

founded in a substantial manner. I hope, my brethren and sisters, that there is a disposition on the part of all the people to receive and put into practice the counsels that have been given by the presiding authorities of the Church in the meetings of this Conference.

During recent months the brethren who have visited the various stakes of Zion have been engaged in looking after auxiliary work in addition to the regular work that demands attention at stake conference time. For the past two months, the Mutual Improvement Associations and the Religion Class organizations have been featured at stake conferences. I feel impressed this afternoon to say a few words in regard to the latter organization. It seems to be the organization that has the most difficult pathway to travel at the present time. Other church organizations have had a longer existence. They have apparently in many instances found a more complete lodgment in the hearts of the people. It is still said in some localities that the support that should be given to the Religion class organization is not altogether given. I hope this is a mistake. The Religion class organization has a righteous claim upon all Church officers for support, as it has come into the Church by proper appointment. Twenty-four years ago this month a very strong letter was sent out by the First Presidency of the Church to the stake presidents and to the bishops of the various wards, calling upon them to seek out in the wards brethren and sisters who gave evidence of ability in the teaching of the young, and who had love for the young people, to take up this important labor. They were to be called as upon a mission and

instructed to give attention to this new organization. That letter indicated that the Presidency of the Church had a feeling that the very best of material was necessary for the accomplishment of the work they had in mind. The fact that careful selection for the work oft times was not made was in my mind when I quoted the scripture that, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." I am convinced, my brethren and sisters that if the counsel imparted by the presidency of the Church twenty-four years ago had been received by local presiding men in the spirit of the communication then sent out, and earnest efforts had been made to find men and women of proper spirit and capacity, and they had been taught the importance and necessity of establishing the work as suggested and recommended by this high authority, there would not have been as many questionings in the minds of people in relation to this the infant organization in the Church of Christ.

In the letter on religion class work, 24 years ago the First Presidency declare that many of the people had, through the toil of making a living, lost sight of the purpose that had brought them to this land, and had given way in many instances to less noble aims; they then say:

"This numbing influence on our spiritual life is widely felt in our homes, and more particularly affects our children, whose faith in the great latter-day work has not been developed and strengthened by the experience which our elders have had in lands beyond the borders of Zion. Nor does the training which our youth receive in the district schools increase their feelings of devotion to God and

love for this cause, for, as is well known, all teachings of a religious character are rigorously excluded from the studies permitted in these institutions.

"To lessen this great evil, and counteract the tendencies that grow out of a Godless education, the Church Schools of the Saints have been established. But while these accomplish great good, the sphere of their usefulness does not cover the entire field. There are many places where the Church Schools cannot, at present, be established; and also many Saints in those places where such schools exist, who, for various reasons, cannot send their children thereto. For these causes we have deemed it prudent to suggest to the various local authorities other measures which, while not occupying the place of the Church Schools, will work on the same lines, and aid in the same work in which the Church educational institutions are engaged.

"We suggest that in every ward where a Church School is not established, that some brother or sister, or brethren or sisters, well adapted to such a responsible position by their intelligence and devotion as well as their love for the young, be called, as on a mission, by the Bishop, after consultation with the president of the stake, to take charge of a school in which the first principles of the Gospel, Church history, and kindred subjects shall be taught."

I have been pleased and interested just recently in discovering in various periodicals a strong spirit in harmony with these instructions of the Presiding Authorities. Thoughtful men in other religious denominations, have discovered that there is great need for the children of school age to receive a training similar to the instruction provided for the Religion Class organization. In the *Literary Digest* of June 13, we read the following:

"What looks like the beginning of the end of the Godlessness of the public schools was pointed out recently by the Reverend Doctor Wilbur F. Crafts. Their Godless character is

what the Catholics criticize and the parochial schools exist to supply this lack. As superintendent of the International Reform Bureau, Doctor Crafts has been conferring, by correspondence and otherwise, with Catholics, Jews, and Protestants in all parts of the world. Doctor Crafts also forms one of a committee appointed by the educational boards of the great evangelical churches, representing nineteen million members, which has had conferences with committees appointed by the Federal Council of Churches and the Young Men's Christian Association, and has kept in touch with the National Reform Association, the pioneer of the movement.

"Doctor Crafts recently told a New York Presbyterian preachers' meeting of a resolution that may have a large place in history. It provided for the appointment in behalf of the Presbyterian church of a committee to cooperate with the committees of other Protestant denominations and with committees which Jews and Catholics will be requested to appoint for the purposes of adopting some plan for religious training in connection with the public schools.

"It is proposed that this shall be done either in the school buildings themselves or in the neighboring churches, or in both, by which during a part of the school time, or at some other hour, pastors and teachers of the various denominations will teach religion to the children of their own faith as an essential part of their education, in recognition of the fact that thirty minutes of Bible teaching in the Sunday Schools is not sufficient, but must be supplemented not only in the home and church service, but also in the public schools."

A similar condition and work of like character has been taken up, I have discovered, in Australia, where the very opportunity that the representatives of various religious denominations here in America are seeking to obtain has in Australia already been granted.

A recent number of *The Dominion*, a paper published at Wellington, New Zealand, devotes several

columns to a report of the proceedings of the Presbyterian General Assembly, most of the time being occupied by a discussion of the question whether the Bible should be read in the public schools. The general sentiment was in favor of the adoption of the "Australian system." It was explained that:

"The system consists of (a) simple Scriptural lessons read during school hours by the children from a book provided by the Department of Public Instruction exclusively for this purpose. The work of the state school teacher is restricted to seeing that the child understands the lesson as intelligently as any other lesson. The teacher does not give either sectarian or dogmatic teaching.

"(b) The churches have the opportunity afforded them to sending their ministers of religion or other accredited teachers into the schools during school hours to teach the children the faith of their fathers in their respective denominations. In the larger centers, such as cities and towns, ministers of religion, or accredited substitutes, would have an opportunity of instructing their own children. In many cases, and especially in those of smaller churches, mutual arrangements are made between the churches by which the children are grouped together, and, with the consent of the individual parent, attend the class of a minister not of their own church. In the smaller schools in the country districts, these visits are paid less frequently than in towns. The executive of the league includes representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches; also the Salvation Army."

"In support of the action that this system be adopted in New Zealand, it was stated that its introduction in the schools would settle the controversy concerning denominational schools for Roman Catholics. Under this proposed system, it was said, the Roman Catholic clergy, equally with others, would be permitted to give a certain measure of religious instruction to children of their own faith. It would end once and for all what was a most difficult problem."

It is my understanding that in our neighbor on the north, the Dominion of Canada, the law provides for the children of various faiths to receive religious instruction from ministers who have been appointed for the purpose by and with the approval of the parents of the children who are to be so taught.

Recently there was received in the Religion Class Board offices in this city a letter from Garry, Indiana, asking that literature in relation to the Religion Class work of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints might be forwarded to give assistance in the preparation of material for the children of the public schools in that section of the country. I will read a paragraph or two:

"My dear Sirs:

"I presume that you are acquainted with the movement in Garry for the establishment of week-day church schools by the Protestant denominations, worked out on the basis of co-operation and co-relation with the public school system.

"The various denominations at large are beginning to focus their attention and strength in an effort to standardize the curriculum for the entire denomination. At the outset, we shall be led into federation along several lines, especially the literature from which we will build up our new courses of study to serve as a teacher's working library, and as a reference and reading list for the pupils. This new and inevitable type of school will call for a searching evolution of all religious literature. The plan which the librarian and I have in view will show the country a new use and demand for religious educational literature, and the result will certainly have direct bearing upon the publishing interest.

"I am a member of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal church, and have been appointed since April, and have been here since June 1. I realize that all kinds of demands and requests are made for the courtesy of your pub-

lications. Did I not know that our aim is to use religious literature as never before, but in such a way as the public schools use reference and text books, I would not feel justified as a representative of the Methodist church to ask that you put at our disposal literature which would help me in building up our courses of study, and serve as a standard text and references for reading and consultation."

We must conclude from this communication that the religion class work of the Latter-day Saints is attracting attention far away from our mountain home.

My brethren and sisters, when we think of nineteen million souls being more or less interested in the need of religious training in the public schools, here in our own land, to say nothing of the same sentiment so strongly working upon the minds of men in other countries, we should discern the wisdom of our leaders as shown in their action of twenty-four years ago.

I simply refer to these matters to bring to the attention of presiding men the fact that the work that was introduced under the inspiration of the Spirit of God by the Presidency of the Church at the time mentioned, begins to work its way in the world. It has taken a long time for some men to make the discovery that there is necessity of training of this character, but the light is beginning to come, and it ought to be an evidence to those who are engaged in religion class work, that it is most important, and those upon whom responsibility rests in seeking the establishment of the work, should go forward with determination, for surely the Lord is in the work. I would like to bring to the attention of this congregation the fact that in this organization we have one of the First Presidency of the Church as general superintendent, President

Anthon H. Lund; we have two of the Council of the Apostles as his assistants, Rudger Clawson and Hyrum M. Smith. President Charles W. Penrose and more than half of the entire quorum of the apostles are members of the Religion Class Board; there is no better authority in any board. We have voted for many, many years in the general conferences of the Church sustaining this organization, making covenant that we will support these brethren who have been called to preside and direct in the work.

The time for discussion as to the advisability of the establishment of the organization has passed away many years ago. It is one of the organizations of the Church. There is abundant room for it in every settlement where there are children of the Latter-day Saints. As this is the time of the year when the work is particularly taken up I have felt that it would not be inappropriate to call the attention of local presiding authorities to the necessity that exists in the organization for encouragement, and for assistance from these presiding men. I wish to say to those who are engaged in the work that there cannot be anything that is of greater importance, or that can be more honorable in the labors with which men and women have to do, than the planting of a knowledge of the truth in the hearts of the rising generation. The men who have occupied this position during the past three days, testify that they know this work as a whole has been revealed from on High, that Joseph Smith was raised up as an instrument in the hands of our Father to usher in the great dispensation of the fulness of times. I suppose we all believe the solemn testimonies that have been delivered, and

if we believe, then we should receive with all our hearts the organizations that have been given of our Father in heaven for the education of the rising generation, that our children after us may be established in the faith of the everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of salvation, the Gospel of power, the Gospel of living faith that has come down from the heavens for the blessing of men. I encourage with all my soul those who are engaged in this good organization to lend their very best efforts to the accomplishment of the work allotted to them, that the truth of God may be planted in the hearts of the children who are in the public schools. Oh how great is the need of that truth, for there is much in the schools of today that is in opposition to the things of God, much that undermines faith in the existence of our Father in heaven. We need to bring to the children in every possible manner those principles that will establish them in the faith, and that will prepare them for the responsibilities of the future.

I gladly join my brethren in testimony concerning the work of God. Testimony has come to me as it has come to my brethren, not by birth, not by information obtained from books alone, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God has made me understand measureably the truth of the great work He planted when the Father and the Son were revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when holy angels laid their hands upon his head and bestowed upon him the authority of the Holy Priesthood, the power to minister in the name of the Redeemer. The preaching of that gospel found the hearts of my father and mother, they obeyed it while they were in a far-off distant land years before my

birth, the truth then received was powerful enough to bring them to this Zion of our God. It filled their souls with peace, and joy, and contentment, as long as they lived upon the earth. I know now better than I used to know, how anxious that good father and mother were that their sons and daughters should receive the truth and know that the message that found lodgment in their hearts was the power of God unto salvation. When their children were brought to understand the truth, it was through searching for it, when they manifested that they were willing to practice the principles revealed, and keep the commandments of God, they discovered as their parents before them discovered, that our Father in heaven was near at hand, no respecter of persons. He revealed to those children by the power of the Holy Ghost the truth of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the power of God. Truth has come down from the heavens. It is the decree of our Father in heaven that it shall remain, and be, the marvelous work and wonder as the Father said in the very beginning of this dispensation, through the mouth of the Prophet Joseph. Thank God that knowledge has come into my soul. I hope to keep it, I hope to see it come to the souls of my sons and daughters, and that from generation to generation there shall be found in the midst of Israel the sons and daughters of that good old father and mother who gave up all for the Gospel's sake. God grant it to all fathers and mothers, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

"My Friend Divine," a soprano solo, was sung by Sister Nellie Druce Pugsley.

ELDER CHARLES H. HART.

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

During the early part of the excellent reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, he failed in some particular to stand to the covenants of the fathers, and he was prevailed against by the Assyrians, under King Shalmaneser. Later, this great young ruler realized his mistake, and as the Assyrians came against him again, under their then king, Sennecherib, Hezekiah sent word to them:

"I have offended; return to me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria."

The king was not only willing to arbitrate, but he was willing that his enemy should be the arbiter. Then, when he had placed himself right, he became the recipient of divine aid against the enemy by the angel of the Lord, as recounted by the poet Byron.

The principle of arbitration is a plant of very slow growth; like the century plant, its periods of flowering are far between. The historian Xenophon tells us that Cyrus was willing to arbitrate interstate questions, and submitted to an Indian king one such question with Assyria. Thucydides the Greek, declares that "it is wicked to proceed against him as a wrong doer who is ready to refer the question to an arbitrator." That declaration, I might say inspired declaration, (for