

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

FIRST DAY

The Eighty-sixth 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 3, 1915, 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, Reed Smoot, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and James E. Talmage; Presiding Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith; 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; of the Presiding Bishopric, Charles W. Nibley, Orrin P. Miller, and David A. Smith; Assistant Historians Andrew Jenson and A. Wm. Lund. There were also a large number of Presidents of Stakes with their Counselors, Presidents of Missions, Patriarchs, Bishops of Wards, and numerous other prom-

inent 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, overflow meetings will be held this morning and afternoon, in the adjoining Assembly Hall and in front of the Bureau of Information building.

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 William McLaughlan.

The choir sang the anthem, "From afar, gracious Lord."

(The choir was greatly augmented by members of other choirs from various stakes and wards of Zion.)

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

Blessings Enjoyed by the Saints—
Growth of the Church—Church
Schools and Education—Care of the
Worthy Poor—Teaching in the
Home—Personal Duty and Power
of Presidency—Why a Temple was

Built in Canada—A New Temple
Authorized to be Built in Hawaii.

I am delighted and most thankful for the privilege I enjoy of being with you to attend our 86th semi-annual general conference of the Church. I am thankful, also, to see the very large number of our brethren and sisters who are assembled here this morning, and I sincerely hope that throughout our conference sessions the Spirit of the Lord may pervade our meetings and influence those who shall speak to us; and bless everything that may be done for the upbuilding of Zion and for the continuance of the work of the Lord.

I feel today, as I have always felt at the opening of our conferences, that the Church was never in a better condition spiritually or temporally, since its organization, than it is today. I believe that the people have never been more united nor come nearer seeing eye to eye on doctrine and policy and principle than they now do. I cannot recall the time when the Church, or the members of the Church, were more prosperous temporally than they are now. The earth has been blessed of the Lord. It has been made fruitful to those who have toiled upon it and tilled it; the people have reaped a bounteous harvest this season, the elements have been propitious, and all things seem to have conduced to the well-being; happiness and prosperity of the people throughout the length and breadth of the land. There is no great reason for wonderment that under these circumstances the adversary is active on the other side, and that his satanic majesty is still alive; he is not dead, nor is he conquered, but to a very large extent his power is

curtailed. He cannot now inflict upon us the trouble and injury that he once did; neither can the agencies do so whom he employs in the work of opposition to the truth. I believe that from year to year this increase in the power of truth, and decrease in the power of evil, will grow in greater proportion, both as to the prosperity and happiness of the people of God, and also as to the curtailment of the power of their enemies, until the power of God shall prevail throughout the land; and the power of the adversary will wane, and truth will triumph and righteousness will reign.

I feel very thankful for the general good health that prevails throughout the land, among all the people. It is true the great reaper, Death, has gathered some of the aged, the weak and infirm from among us, but our number has continued to increase from month to month and from year to year. I pray that the blessings of the Lord may abundantly rest upon His people, and upon all the people of our land. We live in the midst of our great country, and our interests continue unabated in the welfare and prosperity of all the people of our land, from ocean to ocean, and from the north to the south; not only toward our own people but our desire and our prayers are that all the people of the earth may be blessed of God, that they may so conform to His will and so unite themselves together in good works and upright purposes that they may be worthy of His favor and blessing.

We earnestly plead and hope and pray that the spirit of peace may come upon the warring nations of the earth, that they may cease their strife one against another and learn the peaceable things of the kingdom

of God. We would that it were possible for our elders and messengers of truth to penetrate every land and nation upon the earth, and carry to them the olive branch of peace, the principles of life, and the opening of the door of salvation to all the inhabitants of the world.

I have a few items to be mentioned at this meeting and I will read them:

Since our last conference we have organized four new stakes. Curlew, North Davis, Portneuf and Raft River, are the names which have been given to these four newly organized stakes of Zion. Of course, these new organizations are offshoots of older organized stakes. The people are increasing, spreading out, and settling upon the land. Therefore, it becomes necessary, to insure the proper teaching and organization of our young as well as the old, that new stakes should be organized to give opportunity for the people to enjoy the benefits and privileges of Church organization.

There have been organized twelve new wards, and five branches not connected with any wards. We have a number of branch organizations which are a part of wards, and are looked after and presided over by the bishops of the wards, a presiding elder being appointed over the branch; but in this mention they are independent branches, and are rapidly growing into sufficient numbers and strength soon to be organized into wards.

There are now seventy-two organized stakes of Zion with 764 wards and thirty-eight branches, which are not connected with any ward, making a total of 203 wards and branches.

During the past six months there have been changes made in the pres-

idency of the Tahitian Mission, Ernest C. Rossiter succeeding Frank J. Fullmer; and in the Japan Mission, Joseph H. Stimpson succeeding Heber Grant Ivins.

During the current year eighty wards have been assisted in erecting ward meetinghouses, amusement halls, or to pay for indebtedness incurred on such buildings already erected; and we are continually receiving applications for assistance in the erection of new meetinghouses in the newly organized wards. We are continually contributing, out of the funds of the tithing so far as we have it at our command, to fill the promises that we have made to the various wards of the Church who are erecting their houses. We give to them from month to month, or from time to time, as they demand, and as they raise their proportion, that which we have promised to them. We have a large amount on our records which has been promised, and which is gradually being drawn upon.

I am happy to say, so far as the records show, that the tithing funds of the Church have been a little over the average of 1914. So far throughout this year (1915), the tithing funds have been a little in advance of those of the previous year. This is certainly very necessary, as the work is growing, the demands upon the Church are increasing, our schools are enlarging, and needing more and more assistance; we have already appropriated a very large sum of the yearly tithing to maintain our various Church schools. These schools need no praise from me on this occasion. Those who are associated with them or live within the stakes where they are conducted have come to realize what a great benefit they are to the youth of Zion,

and we hope that they will continue to be conducted in the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The object, I may say almost the only purpose, for the maintenance of Church schools is that true religion and undefiled before God the Father, may be inculcated in the minds and hearts of our children while they are getting an education. to enable the heart, the soul and the spirit of our children to develop with proper teaching, in connection with the secular training that they receive in schools.

I hope that I may be pardoned for giving expression to my real conviction with reference to the question of education in the State of Utah. The government of the State has provided for the common schools up to the eighth grade, and meets the general expenses of these schools. The treasury of this state has provided for one of the best universities that can be found in any state in the Union; thoroughly equipped for the highest education in the land. The State Legislature has also provided out of the State treasury, for an agricultural college, a most worthy and efficient institution of instruction and training for the youth of the people of the state. In addition to these, we are having forced upon the people high schools throughout every part of the land. I believe that we are running education mad. I believe that we are taxing the people more for education than they should be taxed. This is my sentiment. And especially is it my sentiment when the fact is known that all these burdens are placed upon the tax payers of the state to teach the learning or education of this world. God is not in it. Religion is excluded from it. The Bible is excluded from it. And those

who desire to have their children receive the advantages of moral and religious education are excluded from all these state organizations, and if we will have our children properly taught in principles of righteousness, morality and religion, we have to establish Church schools or institutions of education of our own, and thus the burdens of taxation are increased upon the people. We have to do it in order that our children may have the advantages of moral training in their youth. I know that I shall be criticized by professional "lovers of education," for expressing my idea in relation to this matter.

We are striving to the best of our ability to provide for the poor; that is, for God's poor. You know there are several kinds of poor, and we want to provide out of the funds of the tithing and of the offerings of the Saints as far as we possibly can, for the honest and the worthy poor, and not for the drunken poor or for those who bring poverty, and distress upon themselves by "riotous living," extravagance, folly and sin. They should be put to work by some means or power, and kept at work until they learn to abstain from that which is vicious, and they will observe and do that which is essential to life and to the well-being of mankind. I am not prepared to give you exact figures with reference to our fast offering fund, but it would be safe to say in view of past references to this matter, that if the Latter-day Saints would carefully, (I will not say honestly, because I do not believe they intend to be dishonest about it,) and thoughtfully observe the rule or law of fasting one day in each month, and give for the benefit of the poor just what it would cost them to maintain them-

selves and their families with food on that one day, we would have sufficient funds in the Church to feed all our poor without taking a dollar of tithing to do it. When it comes to the fact that the fast offering represents perhaps about three or four cents per head per year, it does not figure out to be a very unexhaustive fund, and does not, of course, meet the necessities of the really worthy poor.

I am glad to say that the policy to do ward teaching that has been urged upon the bishops and upon the bishops' counselors, and teachers is being carried out to a greater extent than heretofore. It is advised that the bishops and their counselors themselves, by the aid of the teachers called to their assistance in their wards, shall visit every family within their ward, advise with them, and look after their temporal and their spiritual well-being. Not long ago I happened to be at the home of one of my children when the teachers came in. We called the family together and submitted ourselves to the duties of the teachers. The head teacher began by saying that he had been sent there by the bishop of the ward to inquire into the condition of the members of the family. He was instructed to inquire of them if they held family prayer, morning and evening, if they asked the blessing upon their food, at each meal. He was required by the bishop to inquire as to whether they kept the word of wisdom, as to whether they attended to their Sabbath meetings and honored the Sabbath day, as to whether those who were of age to attend the various other organizations of the Church, such as the Relief Society, the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations, the Sunday

Schools, the Primary Associations, and the Religion Class, did so, and if they sustained in their hearts their bishop and his counselors and were united in feeling and sentiment with them, and if they were in harmony in their feelings and sentiment with the presidency of their stake. And as to whether they sustained, by their faith and prayers, the presiding authorities of the Church, the Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles, the Patriarch, the Presidents of Seventies, and the Presiding Bishopric. If they could pray for them in faith and in good feeling, and were in harmony with them. If they believed and observed the law of tithing, and were at peace with their neighbors, etc. Then he asked that the head of the family should arise and open his heart to the teachers and tell them just what he had to say in relation to all these inquiries and requirements that were made of the teacher by the bishop. I admired it. I thought it was just the right thing to do, and I approved of it, and so pronounced my approval of the thoroughness, the simplicity, and the honesty of the teacher to inquire into all these things. I was very happy indeed, to see and hear the young man of the house get up and say that the family were endeavoring, to the best of their ability and knowledge, to comply with every requirement that was made of them as members of the Church in that ward, as required by the bishop. Then I took the liberty to say to the teachers that I was pleased with their mission and with the performance of their duty, and to assure them that from the training and instruction that my children had had from their birth up, I felt quite sure that they would be found, wherever

they were, complying with all the requirements that were there made. Namely: the keeping of the word of wisdom, eschewing the use of intoxicating drinks, the use of tobacco, of strong and hot drinks, etc. The word of wisdom comprises all these things. Do you have your prayers? Do you remember God, the Giver of all the good you get and have in the world? Do you acknowledge His hand in all things, and do you render the gratitude and thankfulness of your souls to the Giver of every good and perfect gift? These are the questions that we should put to the inhabitants and the home-makers in Zion, to the family organizations in the Church. Is the husband and the father conducting himself in such a way as to be worthy of the affection and confidence of his whole family? Is his conduct and his dealings with them such as will secure to him their unstinted love and approval? Are the father and the mother living peacefully together, without strife or contention? Do the children live harmoniously and peacefully together in their homes, and are they taught to be peaceful and gentle with their neighbors' children? All these things should be taught by the teachers in the various wards, and by the bishops, visiting every house as far as possible, confirming the labors of the teachers in this work of love for the benefit of the inhabitants of Zion.

My brethren and sisters, these are some of the little things, perhaps. Some people would consider them trivial and of no importance, but I say there isn't anything that I know of in a man's life that is more essential to his happiness, and to the happiness of those with whom he is associated, than these little amen-

ities by which he shows his love and respect for others and he is respected and loved, and his presence is cherished, by those with whom he associates. The father comes home, and the children are glad to see him; the mother welcomes him with all the affection of the true wife and mother, for he is good and true, he does all in his power to provide a home for them, to make them comfortable and to add to their happiness and well being, also to provide for their education and their proper training and instruction. The whole family is united, and the children grow up to honor their parents and say: "My father and mother were honest. They set me the example of their lives. They taught me what was good, and they practiced it. They set the example to me, as well as taught me the precept of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I love them for it. I will always love them for it." When they shall go beyond, the children will carry with them forever a blessing for their parents. But the man who is rough, harsh, unkind and thoughtless, the man who spends his time away from his home and his children, when he should be with them, or who is absent for pleasures of his own, or for associations that are not congenial to the family, what influence for good can he have with his children? Will they not follow in his footsteps? Will they not emulate his example? Will they not grow up to be even less observant of that which is required by the Lord of his children than the parents were, because of the example set before them?

Now, my brethren and sisters, my business, my duty, is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen from the dead

and sitting enthroned in power, glory and majesty on the right hand of his Father, our God. That is my business and my duty, and I love to do that more than anything else in the world. I would deplore and dread the thought that I am neglecting my duty towards those whom I love more than my own life. I can't afford it. I must do the best I can, the best I know how, for those whom God has entrusted to my care. I must also do my duty toward the people of God to whom He has willed that I should be a humble minister and teacher of the Gospel. It is my duty to set an example, to plead with the people to live their religion. I ought to pay my fast offering regularly, right along, as I pay my tithing; when the end of the month comes I go and pay my tithing. Why? So that I won't neglect it nor forget it, and that is one of the things that the good teacher taught us the other evening at our home—the payment of tithing. Are we honest with the Lord? Do we remember him with the first fruits of our increase? If I were as punctual in observing my fast, and as careful to do all I should do for it, and a little more than would be really required of me, as I try to be in paying my tithing, I believe I would feel better over it, but sometimes I am a hundred, or a thousand miles away from my ward on the fast day, and then I can't quite do it; but the family at home can attend to their part of the duty when I am away. It is my duty as the head of my family to set the example before all the members of my household.

I have the right to bless. I hold the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the office and power of patriarch. It is my right to bless;

for all the keys and authority and power pertaining to the government of the Church and to the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood are centered in the presiding officers of the Church. There is no business, nor office, within the Church that the President of the Church may not fill, and may not do, if it is necessary, or if it is required of him to do it. He holds the office of patriarch; he holds the office of high priest and of apostle, of seventy, of elder, of bishop, and of priest, teacher and deacon in the Church; all these belong to the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they can officiate in any and in all of these callings when occasion requires.

God bless you. May peace abide and abound in Israel, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west; and may the favor and mercy of God be extended unto all the nations of the world to their restoration to peace and unity and good will, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

I am reminded of one or two other items that I intended to mention. As you all know, we have been authorized and have undertaken, to build a temple in Alberta, Canada, and we have already expended very large sums of money upon that building. It is in course of erection and is progressing rapidly. The corner stone was laid only a week or so ago. The walls are being put up and it is nearing or will be nearing, soon, its completion, and readiness for the ordinances of the house of God. We took it there—why? Perhaps just one instance that was brought to our minds yesterday, or the day before, may illustrate. A young man, who has filled a good mission and

returned home, living away off in the northern part of British Columbia, still clinging to the faith and wearing the harness of his ministry, doing all that he can for the benefit of mankind, desires to get married and to be married right. He lives hundreds and hundreds of miles away from a temple; he has been on a mission for years and has exhausted all his means, he returns home almost penniless, and has found some good girl who is willing to enter life with him on the ground floor, and he says to us: "What can I do? I want to begin a home for myself, it is according to the law of nature and of God, but I haven't the means to go to the temple. Will it be right for me to be married here, and then when I get the means sufficient to go to a temple, go and be sealed for time and for all eternity?"

Well, what can you do under circumstances of that kind? All we could do was to say to him: "Go to the nearest bishop or elder of the Church that you can find, and with our permission and approval ask him to unite you in marriage for time, and as soon as you are able to reach a temple, where you can go to the altar and be united by the power of God, and not of man, for time and for all eternity, go and get your union sealed by the power of God that will unite you for eternity as well as for time, and will bring your children unto you under the bond of the new and everlasting covenant, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." What else could we say to him? Nothing else, so we said it; but by and by we will have a temple up there, and those who are in these circumstances will not be compelled to waste all their substance in travel

to come to a temple here. We were in hopes, not many years ago of being able to build another temple near the borders of the United States, in Mexico; but that nation's unfortunate people, oppressed by rulers ambitious for power at the cost of the lives of their fellowmen, have driven out or expelled practically our people from their land.

Now, away off in the Pacific Ocean are various groups of islands, from the Sandwich Islands down to Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand. On them are thousands of good people, dark-skinned but of the blood of Israel. When you carry the Gospel to them they receive it with open hearts. They need the same privileges that we do, and that we enjoy, but these are out of their power. They are poor, and they can't gather means to come up here to be endowed, and sealed for time and eternity, for their living and their dead, and to be baptized for their dead. What shall we do with them? Heretofore, we have suffered the conditions that exist there, and have adopted the best measures that we knew how, always looking to the better and fuller requirements of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, I say to my brethren and sisters this morning that we have come to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to build a temple that shall be dedicated to the ordinances of the house of God, down upon one of the Sandwich Islands, so that the good people of those islands may reach the blessing of the House of God within their own borders, and that the people from New Zealand, if they do not become strong enough to require a house to be built there also, by and by, can come to Laie, where they can

get their blessings and return home and live in peace, having fulfilled all the requirements of the Gospel the same as we have the privilege of doing here.

It is moved that we build a temple at Laie, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii. All who are in favor of it will please manifest it by raising the right hand [all hands raised]; contrary minded by the same sign. I do not see a contrary vote.

I want you to understand that the Hawaiian mission, and the good Latter-day Saints of that mission, with what help the Church can give, will be able to build their temple. They are a tithe-paying people, and the plantation is in a condition to help us. We have a gathering place there where we bring the people together, and teach them the best we can, in schools and under the various auxiliary organizations of the Church. I tell you that we (Brother Smoot, Bishop Nibley and I) witnessed there some of the most perfect and thorough Sunday School work on the part of the children of the Latter-day Saints that we had ever seen. God bless you. Amen.

A tenor solo, entitled "If with all your heart you truly seek Me," was sung by Elder Melvin J. Ballard, President of Northwestern States Mission.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

Seemingly trivial things important to development—True religion a help to eternal life—Similarity or imitation not evidence of truth—Knowledge imparted by Holy Ghost the one sure evidence—Enduring trials, and overcoming evil, manifest true

Saints—Need to be zealous in God's service—Importance of teachers' visits—Caution against false teachers.

I have enjoyed the remarks of our President, and I believe we will all be united in praying for him that his cold may leave him, and that his speaking to us may have no bad effect upon his system, for we all rejoice in hearing his voice and listening to his advice to the Saints. What he has told us is very essential to our salvation. They are not trivial things, they are the steps by which we can ascend. The steps of a ladder may be trivial in themselves, but we have to use them if we want to get to the top, and the steps he alluded to are necessary for our development.

He said our adversary is not dead. This is true, men are traveling through the states, berating the Latter-day Saints, accusing them of things that have never entered their hearts. Our young men who go out on missions are astonished to hear such things about their homes, things that never came to their knowledge before, but they have to go abroad to learn what a bad people the Mormons are! Why have you and I joined a people so despised by the world? Our answer is, We joined this Church because we were convinced that it was the Church of Jesus Christ. We are told in holy writ that "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This shows the great importance of religion, for religion deals with the knowledge of God. Some may take it in their hearts to speak lightly of the necessity of religion; I have heard such people say: "If we do right to our neighbors and do not take ad-