

ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH.

Now, my brethren and sisters, we have had a good time. We will not prolong this meeting.

I would like to emphasize the good things, if it were possible, that have been said in this conference, in our lives, that we may go from here better men and better women, more determined to be beneficial to our Father's children, wherever we meet them, and with a determination such as was manifest by the great Israelite, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." God help us to do so, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The authorities were sustained, as in the Tabernacle meeting, the names being presented by Elder George Albert Smith.

The chorus sang: "God be with you till we meet again."

The benediction was pronounced by Patriarch Daniel McRae.

CLOSING SESSION.

In the Tabernacle, the congregation was called to order at 2 p. m., by President Joseph F. Smith, who presided.

The choir sang: "Author of faith, eternal word."

Prayer by Elder Nephi L. Morris, president of the Salt Lake stake of Zion.

The choir sang the hymn, "O awake, my slumbering minstrel."

ELDER SEYMOUR B. YOUNG.

(President of the First Council of Seventy.)

A visit to Jackson County—A good word for "Liahona the Elders' Journal"—Meeting with the old soldiers of the Civil War—Meeting with the Saints and Elders in Independence

—Civil War veterans dying at the rate of five hundred per year—Annual gathering of the Hand-Cart veterans in Salt Lake City—Blessed are the believers—Note on the Black Hawk War veterans.

My beloved brethren and sisters, I realize more fully possibly than any of you can, the responsibility that rests upon me this afternoon in occupying this position. I want to say that I endorse very heartily the remarks that have been made and the sermons that have been preached by my brethren, and the sentiment that has inspired them to give us the word of the Lord, as they have done during the former sessions of this conference. I hope and trust that the prayer offered by Brother Nephi L. Morris will be surely answered this afternoon, that all who may speak now at this time and in this session may be filled with the same spirit that has actuated former speakers. I rejoice with you in being here present at this semi-annual conference of the Latter-day Saints. I am glad I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I rejoice that I have a name and standing among you, and that I am hailed by my brethren and sisters where I go, as a friend, as one who appreciates the society and the love of my fellowmen, my fellow workers in this great cause.

I am reminded now of a recent visit that I paid to the center place of Zion, Jackson county, Missouri. It is more than twenty-five years since my former visit to that hallowed ground, for it is and has been hallowed. It has been dedicated by the Prophet Joseph Smith and by his prophetic utterances designated as the place where the temple of God shall be builded, in the

future, upon which shall rest the glory of God as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. While there I had the privilege of associating with the brethren who are working there in the printing office, who are engaged in issuing *Liahona the Elders' Journal* and doing other works pertaining to the welfare of the Central States mission, and other missions of the United States. I must say a good word for the "*Liahona*," because I believe it is hailed with delight by the elders scattered abroad throughout this great Republic, and it is a means of introducing them into the society of people that their voices alone could not reach. But the literature of that little paper is exceptionally good, and sets forth in a very fair degree the doctrines and principles of our faith. And so I gave a little note to Brother Summerhays, as a visitor to that place, stating that I believed it would do good to the elders, help them in their mission labors, and otherwise advance them, if the Latter-day Saints generally, especially the members of the quorums of the priesthood, would invest a dollar or two every year in *Liahona the Elders' Journal*, and leave it for the elders to distribute abroad in their mission fields.

The primary cause of my visit, however, was to meet with the old soldiers of the Civil war, in their camp fire at Kansas City. When I visited Kansas City twenty-five years ago, it was not nearly as large a town as at present. I am told, it has now some four hundred thousand inhabitants. It has grown much more rapidly than Independence, and I had to notice again the fact that the Latter-day Saints began to build Independence in Jack-

son county as one of the central places of Zion, in fact, the real center place. They placed confidence, properly, in the word of the Prophet Joseph that they should build up that little town by locating there, and finally the word of the Lord also came that the Saints had to make the best of the fact that they were driven from their homes in that town. What I intended to say, and to call your attention to, is that the town of Independence is about what it was in thirty-three, when the Saints left it, not willingly but because they were compelled to. And twenty-five years ago, at my former visit, I found it just as I found it recently, not very greatly improved, in the number of inhabitants nor in the greatness of its buildings. We have, however, a very beautiful little meetinghouse on one portion of the temple block, which originally consisted of about sixty-three acres, and in that house I had the pleasure of meeting with the Saints, the elders and the young lady missionaries, and holding religious service with them, testifying of the gospel, of the truths that the Prophet Joseph brought to light, and the great organization which, under the inspiration of God, he brought to a fulness.

In the march through Kansas City, the ranks of the old soldiers were not as well filled as in former years, for every year now sees them pass away, five hundred or more. This last year has reached beyond that mark, and the coming year will probably double it, and so on in the near future. In a few years more, the old soldier of the Union Army will be a memory of the past, as near as we can guess from present appearances and experience. As they marched through the city of

Kansas, headed by bands of music, led by the mayor of the city, by the governor of the state, and honored in any way that they could honor the old soldier, the people shouted many times "hooray for Utah." Some, however, did so in derision, for, you must remember that in that city of Kansas, right in that little town of Independence, there are other people who do not feel very friendly to Utah and her people, and the Latter-day Saints generally. So they expressed themselves, a very few, in jeering remarks, in regard to Brigham Young, and the people here generally. This, however, was only casually, not very common, but the greatest part of the reception there was friendly and cordial, and especially so for the old soldiers of the G. A. R.

In company with two of the old soldiers we went up to Independence and, as I said, held meeting there. I was never more pleased in my life than I was to hear Comrade Kenard, an old soldier of the Union, and Comrade Westwood, another, bear faithful testimonies of the truth of "Mormonism." The gospel never found them until after they had left the army, but when it did find them it fastened itself upon their hearts, minds, and thoughts, and from that testimony, that inspiring thought, they have not departed, and could not change.

I recently visited the hand-cart gathering, which we usually hold on Saturday evening in the Fourteenth ward meeting house. After the Saturday session, of conference yesterday, at 4:30, we met as usual. There were about between fifty and sixty of the old hand-cart veterans present. Our meeting was especially for a business which we

transacted. With the exception of the recitation of a poem, composed by the sister who spoke it, no program was instituted. The poem was beautifully rendered, and was a glowing tribute of a very warm-hearted Latter-day Saint sister. I have to express my approbation, good will and fellowship for those old hand-cart veterans who endured so much to come across the plains, and to gather here with the Latter-day Saints, in their early gathering years, in the days when President Young and his brethren of the apostles instituted the hand-cart system for the gathering of Israel. For three years the Latter-day Saints gathered in this way. They pulled hand-carts from the Missouri river, and in some cases from Iowa, two hundred miles beyond, making twelve hundred miles that the first companies, in 1856, traveled to reach Zion. They pulled their hand-carts all that distance, excepting that a few of the later companies, which were caught in the snow storms, along about the South Pass, and on the Sweetwater, were met mercifully by bands of brethren with teams and wagons for their relief, to bring them the remainder of the way through the snowy roads to Zion. But many of them, or quite a number, sacrificed their lives in that journey through the cold and hunger which they had to endure; but these remaining whom I met yesterday were glad that they were permitted to reach the land which they desired, in safety. They have always expressed their gratitude to those brethren who came so stoutly and so earnestly and so self-sacrificingly forth, to meet them and deliver them from their very painful experiences.

I rejoice with you, my brethren

and sisters, that our fathers and mothers, the Prophet Joseph, the Prophet Brigham Young, and those who followed them and the pioneers of this great work, instituted means and plans for the gathering of the Saints from other countries, for soon it was found that there was a better way. Better means were established for the gathering of the people, and large companies of our brethren were sent back in the days of President Brigham Young, with their teams and wagons well fitted with provisions, sufficient for the journey to and from the Missouri river in the one season of the year. They met at the frontiers, the Latter-day Saints who had come up from other countries, and who were ready and waiting for transportation across the plains,—in comfortable wagons drawn by able teams and pioneered and captained by able men and drivers. And this was a very great improvement over the hand-cart system. But Brother Margetts composed a hymn on his hand-cart journey down to the Missouri river, which read something like this:

“Cheer up, ye elders, you to the world
will show
That Israel must be gathered soon,
and oxen are too slow.”

But we found that with all the vicissitudes that had to be met, the hand-carts were too great a hardship for women and children to endure, as long as a better way could be found, and it was found.

My brethren and sisters, I testify to you that “Mormonism” is true. I testify, to you, to the integrity of our parents and of your parents who had the love of the gospel so in their hearts that they forsook all for their faith, and for the desire

to gather to the land of Zion. The gathering spirit filled their hearts the moment they received the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment, my father testified, that he met the Prophet Joseph, he was inspired with the thought, with the great thought, that he had then the privilege of meeting and striking hands with a man that had stood face to face with his God, and who was in communication with him constantly by revelation. And this is the testimony of every Latter-day Saint, I believe, that they could bear, for as Jesus said to his disciples, and to doubting Thomas especially, “because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” I have echoed that thought in my heart, ever since I heard my father bear that testimony, “O blessed are the men and women who saw the Prophet Joseph and believed in him; but equally blessed are they who did not see him, but yet believed in his glorious mission.” I testify to you that the gospel is true, and I pray God to help us to be faithful to every principle and to every duty, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOTE TO THE ABOVE.

I desire to add a word in relation to the Black Hawk veterans, for, like the hand-cart veterans and their organization, and the civil war veterans in their organization, so in the Black Hawk war organization, I am deeply interested, and was present in the service of each. And I intend to exert myself in the future, as in the past, for their welfare; and shall especially bend my energies to help to secure a pension for those worthy men who served

in the Black Hawk war, or for their deserving widows, who represent their husbands who have answered the final roll-call.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

We live in a momentous age—Estimates of the lives and fortunes spent in the Great War—The relationship of the Latter-day Saints to the great calamity—Predictions of war to be poured out upon all nations—The warnings given in the word of God, contrasted with the statements of wise men of the world—Our duty to warn the inhabitants of the earth—The promise of the coming of God's Kingdom and the peace and safety to be found therein—The duty of our Nation in the establishment of future peace.

Surely, no man can face this congregation and not be overwhelmed with a sense of his own insignificance, and only in the belief that the Lord will give his Spirit and his strength, may one hope to discharge the responsibility of this position.

It is a mere commonplace to say that we live in a momentous age. The world is now in the third year of the world's greatest and most destructive war. How great it is, is beyond the comprehension of man, but a few outline facts may enable us in part to grasp the greatness of this calamity that has come to the world. Of course, at present, there can only be estimates formed of the casualties in the war, but these that I present, in round numbers, are compiled from sources which I believe the most reliable, by Gen. Hugh Scott, chief of staff in the army of the United States. He gives an itemized statement from each nation, but I shall merely report his totals. Of men

killed outright in all the armies, he gives as 3,522,327. Of those wounded or missing, 10,035,300; total casualties thirteen million—that is, dead, wounded and missing, 13,557,627. These figures were given out at the close of the second year of the war. There must be added to them the terrible losses since then at the battle of Verdun, and the recent great French and British offensive on the Somme. Those who have fallen in the great drives that have taken place on the southern end of the three hundred-mile battle line between Germany and Russia; the tens of thousands that have been killed within the last two months, since the opening of the offensive in Macedonia and Rumania, also in the battles in Asia Minor; so that it is safe to say that you would have of killed outright, more than four millions of men; of wounded and missing, more than twelve millions, and a total of casualties of more than fifteen millions of men! Of treasure employed in this war, some idea may be obtained from the fact that the warring nations have borrowed more than forty thousand millions of dollars (\$40,000,000,000); they have spent from their own exchequers, more than ten thousand millions, that they had on hand, and that has come from taxes. This of course, takes no account of the destruction of property, and laying desolate cities, towns, and countries through which armies have surged back and forth, and by the destructive battles that have been fought. These figures are beyond our comprehension. We may be somewhat educated in thinking in millions, but thousands of millions—billions—are beyond us.

My reason for introducing these matters to this conference is to sub-