

AFTERNOON SESSION

The meeting opened at 2 p. m., President Heber J. Grant presiding.

The choir and congregation sang, "O My Father."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder William T. Jack, president of the Cassia stake of Zion.

The choir and congregation sang, "Guide us, O Thou great Jehovah."

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

If I may be endowed with sufficient breadth of thought and some liberty of expression, I should like to speak for a few moments upon the subject of broad-mindedness. I am led to propose this subject for brief consideration, not because I think it will be particularly attractive, but because my observation in the Church and out of it convinces me that something in the nature of definition and interpretation of that subject might be of advantage, particularly to a large body of young people within the Church.

TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS

There are many, both within the Church and without it who take the position that we are so circumscribed by tradition, practice, customs, and our reverence for that which has been established, that we do not lay hold of new thought, new ideas, and new practices, to carry forward this great work. There are also those within the Church who take a position almost directly converse, who say that we have gone so far beyond the initial understandings, the revelations, practices and traditions, that we are in grave danger of straying away from the genius of the work.

To my thinking, both of these, whose views I have attempted to give, fail in an understanding and a conception of the work, compatible with its genius and its great ideals. I am not sympathetic with those who take some degree of pride in saying that they are not orthodox, while they believe in the main the principles of the gospel, they are liberal in their views, and feel at liberty to go beyond the conceptions and regulations which the leaders of the Church have held and sustained from its beginning until the present time. I am orthodox; I am proud to be orthodox. I cannot conceive how one who is impregnated with the great mission of this work in the earth, and who is convinced of its truth and divinity, can be other than orthodox; and when I say I am orthodox, I do not, for one moment, contemplate a situation in which I am not receptive to all good new thought, to the development of true science, and to the extension of the application of the principles of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all circumstances which may arise in life.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BROAD-MINDEDNESS AND HERESY

In my judgment, there is a vast difference between broad-mindedness and heresy, and I sometimes think that often well-disposed members of the Church do no inconsiderable harm, among the young people of the Church, in particular, when they advocate a departure from some of the established rules, regulations and traditions of the Church, upon the principle of liberality of view and broad-mindedness. It is one thing to be compassionate and sympathetic with him who sins; it is another thing to compromise with or to sin, in the least degree, or tolerate sin. A marked distinction should always be drawn between our ideals and the weak human beings who try to live them.

THE GOSPEL EMBRACES ALL TRUTH

For my part, I construe the great principles of the gospel as being sufficiently broad and comprehensive to embrace all truth, and I circumscribe and limit their definition and operation, only by the broadmindedness of truth itself. Whatever is true, whatever is virtuous, whatever is of good report, lovely or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

HOW TO PRESERVE OUR STANDARDS AND IDEALS

All people are subject to their environment. We react to the persons and to the influences which surround us. It is human so to do. We cannot live in the world without, to some extent, partaking of the things of the world. Every plant, every form of animal life are likewise subjected to the influence of environment; they will respond to light and darkness, warmth and cold, foulness and wholesomeness. We cannot associate with men and women all through the country, who have different ideals and different standards, without, in some degree, being influenced by such contacts. There is no possibility of a territorial isolation of the people of the Church. We mingle with strangers, we live in the same communities with those who entertain vastly different views from the ones we entertain. The only possibility I see, is to maintain a great moral and religious isolation, or segregation, if you will, in order to preserve our own standards, our own ideals, and in order to safeguard our young people from the hazard that must ever be present with them as they associate and mix with the people of the world. We welcome the stranger within our gates. We recognize the fact that we will do business with him, but we do not welcome the influence of the world to dilute and weaken the great exalted principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I look upon it as one of the greatest responsibilities we have, to maintain in their purity and in their absolute integrity, these principles of truth which have been committed to us for dissemination throughout all the world. Any solution into which is poured another solution loses some of its virtue, its strength and potency. You cannot pour

the influences of the world into this great solution of the gospel without diluting it. It is our obligation to keep it undefiled, undiluted, and to maintain it in its present strength and purity and efficacy. Therefore, I feel fully justified in saying to those thoughtful, progressive, admirable people within the Church who are not quite content with present interpretations and procedure, be broadminded, but remember that the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ demand absolute and unvarying loyalty, adherence, and observance.

BLESSINGS COME AS WE SUBJECT OURSELVES TO THE CONDITIONS
UPON WHICH THEY ARE PREDICATED

The very first section of the Doctrine and Covenants—that great section which is regarded as the preface to that work, and which I have often characterized as the charter of our religion, sets forth that Joseph Smith was called in order that faith might be increased among men, and, mark you this, which I regard as fundamental, in order “that mine everlasting covenant might be established.” I construe the new and everlasting covenant as I would construe, in large measure, a legal contract. I believe that our Father intended that he would obligate himself as well as obligate the beneficiaries of that contract to the performance of it. I believe that no one is entitled to the full measure of its blessings unless he subjects himself to all the conditions upon which those blessings are predicated, and I construe that covenant to be broad enough to embrace every principle of the gospel, so that under that construction, no man or woman can be so broadminded as to fail to observe, in any part, any of the principles of the gospel, and claim the full reward promised to those who keep them all.

BROADMINDEDNESS OFTEN CONFUSED WITH LICENSE

Broadmindedness and liberality of thought and view are often confused with licentiousness and with liberty to do the things which are not in consonance with the principles and regulations of the Church. I am thoroughly satisfied that if our boys and girls attending colleges and universities could be shown the gospel in all its great breadth of view; if they could be made to understand that it will subserve their best interests in life, and that it embraces all that is good and true, they would not think that it is narrow, and they would not think that those who stand up to proclaim it and who contend for an observance of its principles, are contracted in their views and not willing to accept new truth.

NEED OF ADEQUATE INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL

We need an interpretation of the gospel. We need an interpretation that appeals, and we do not need to contravene, in any manner any of the principles of the gospel, to make an appealing interpreta-

tion. I plead for that interpretation to come through the auxiliaries of the Church, as well as from the priesthood of the Church. I think it is the highest degree of misfortune when young folks, kindly disposed toward the gospel and the Church, are not given adequate opportunity to understand it and to appreciate its great, beautiful truths.

We have all been inspired by the testimonies which have been given during this conference. I have been thrilled as I have heard men stand in this pulpit and declare that they know that God lives and that Joseph Smith was his prophet. As I have heard their voices ringing and reverberating through this building, I have shaken and trembled with a sense of obligation, and with a great feeling of joy—an obligation in knowing that all my brethren and sisters must have the opportunity of understanding the gospel and coming to a knowledge of its truth and divinity in the same form and in the same fervor with which our brethren have expounded it and borne their testimonies; and a great feeling of joy that that same testimony rests with me. I appeal to you, my brethren and sisters, you who manifest your great interest in the work of God, by coming here to the general conferences of the Church; I appeal to you, not for your own good particularly, but for the good of the thousands and thousands who are not here, who cannot be thrilled and inspired by these glorious testimonies, to carry back the message of this great gospel to them, to make it appeal to them, to make them know that there is nothing narrow or constricted in it and that there is nothing in the way of their going forward with the utmost progression in the development of all truth, and in the understanding and comprehension of the great principles of truth which God intends should be revealed for the guidance and direction of all the human family.

GOD GIVE US VISION AND UNDERSTANDING

God bless the young people. God give them vision and understanding to see the great truth and beauty of this gospel, and God bless the older ones that they may be sympathetic, compassionate, kind, tolerant, merciful and loving, that these young people may not perish without the faith. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

I think it well for us at times to look at ourselves and take stock to determine what we are, and this both as individuals and as an organization. We may need a mirror to show just how we look as individuals, and I pray you if you use one, be sure that it is a right mirror, unwarped, and that your eyes be clear, that we may see ourselves as we are. And it is well to look at the Church, not that we need separate ourselves from it for the occasion, but to look at it impartially and get its proper perspective in relation to other organizations.