

## SECOND DAY

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### MORNING SESSION

President Heber J. Grant presided at the meeting which began at 10 o'clock a. m., Saturday, April 7.

He announced that the choir and congregation would sing, "How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord."

Elder George H. Brimhall, president emeritus of the Brigham Young University, offered the opening prayer, after the singing.

The choir and congregation sang, "Redeemer of Israel, our only delight."

#### ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

I have rejoiced, my brethren and sisters, in the thrilling and remarkable testimonies that have been borne during this conference. My testimony has been strengthened. I shall go out with food for reflection for the next six months and longer, and feel to rejoice that I had the privilege of hearing the address of our President and the testimonies that have been borne at the two meetings that we have had of our conference.

#### HAPPY IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL

I am always happy to bear my testimony, even though it has to be done under the difficult sense of responsibility that rests upon every person who attempts to address the great gathering in this tabernacle on these great occasions. I do know that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear witness to the truth of the testimonies that have already been borne, and wish to add that there is no greater joy in my life than that which comes to me because of this great and abounding knowledge.

#### THE "MORMON" INSTITUTION WORKS

Many thoughts have gone through my mind, as through yours, during the two previous sessions of our conference. I have been reminded especially of a remark made to me just a week ago today when I happened to be at Jerome, Idaho, in the company of a number of people who were not of our faith. One man, a prominent man in the county, said to me: "The enemies of 'Mormonism' may say many things about your faith, but it seems to me that there is one thing that we can all say in behalf of the 'Mormon' people and the 'Mormon' institution,—that it works; it works successfully in behalf

of mankind. It achieves and has achieved that which it sets out to achieve." This remark made me think seriously about a good many things pertaining to the gospel, for it seems to me that there is no higher test of truth than that an organization succeeds in doing that for which men establish it or hold it in honor. In fact, I believe one of the great modern philosophies is based entirely upon the principle that if a thing works in behalf of its cause, if a system is successful in achieving the purposes proposed, there must be a large element of truth in that system and in such attempts. So one of the proofs of the truth of "Mormonism" lies in the fact that during the long period of its existence, approaching a hundred years, it has successfully been able to bring peace, happiness, joy and satisfaction into human lives, into the lives of those who have partaken of its blessings.

#### A SURVEY OF OUR EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

This question of "workability" came to my mind yesterday when our President gave a number of statistics pertaining to the present condition of the Church. Most of my time during the last few months has been given over to educational work in connection with the Church school system. When the President gave the figures as to the number of Latter-day Saints attending college, high school and elementary school I was reminded of the comparative value of those figures as another evidence of how successfully "Mormonism" works in behalf of its people. According to the figures given by President Grant yesterday, we have in this Church 8.6 young people attending college out of every thousand members of the Church; whereas, in the whole United States there are only 4.9 per thousand of population attending college. In this Church we have nearly twice as many college students per capita as in the country at large. I was interested also in the high school figures. According to the figures given us yesterday, there are 60.6 individuals per thousand attending high school in this Church; whereas, in the United States as a whole there are only 20.8. That is, nearly three times as many young people are attending high school in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as are attending high school, on the average, in this great land of ours. In the elementary schools, the difference is not so great, for in our Church there are 223.3 students out of each thousand of membership, attending the elementary schools, as against 204 in the country at large. Nevertheless, this is also a substantial increase, though not so great, because of the fact that elementary education is usually required by law in the states of the Union; but as soon as the high school and the college periods are reached, where men's free agency above and beyond the obligations of the law is manifested, then at once this great Church leaps forward far beyond the average of the people of this country. I have no doubt that there may be other communities in the United States with probably nearly as high a college and high school attendance, but I

doubt whether any survey that may be made will show a higher attendance of college and high school students.

I call your attention to this not merely because of the interest it always awakens in us to find that we are standing high in the desirable activities of the world, but because it shows how "Mormonism" functions in the life of humanity, how thoroughly it works. Education is placed as one of the great and foremost activities of a civilized world; and here a despised, and sometimes more than despised people, makes a survey of its educational conditions and finds that the spirit of education is stronger within this group of people than in any other, perhaps, throughout the country, and stronger than the average within the country as a whole. Another evidence, another test of the truth of "Mormonism."

#### CAUSES OF THE VITALITY OF "MORMONISM"

Many people have asked how it is that "Mormonism" so functions; how it is able to work in such a fashion in behalf of humanity; because I might take anything else, any other activity, sound and good and designed for the welfare of the human race, and show practically the same conditions that apply to the course and the cause of education. One man will declare that the reason why these things are so in "Mormonism" is merely because by some accidental condition, great men have arisen in "Mormondom." Joseph Smith was a tremendously great character; every student, whether of our people or not, will admit the greatness of the man. And so, those who do not understand us will say we had a great man to found our Church and that explains how we are able to show a condition so favorable. Another will say that Brigham Young was such a great man. And so, as I read recently in a book not long since published, all "Mormonism" may be explained because of the great men that "Mormonism" has had. Another book declares that the reason why this test of truth, this test of fitness to human conditions, measures up as well as it does, is because "Mormonism" has been placed under very difficult conditions. It had to fight its way in Missouri. It had to fight its way out here in the desert. It has been opposed by men, and as a consequence it has been able, through opposition, to develop into the great institution that it is today.

Any such explanation, my brethren and sisters, is insufficient to those of us who have understood the spirit of the remarks that have been made at this conference. There are in this Church great fundamental principles, and reflected from those principles are great fundamental practices. The possession of these principles, the use of these practices, lie at the foundation of any explanation of the vitality and the strength and the fitness of "Mormonism" to serve the human race; and that is my testimony to you, as I understand this great gospel of Jesus Christ.

## SOME GREAT PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES

President Grant spoke of some of these great practices, in his address yesterday. He called our attention to the soil, to the home, to the advantage of placing the family unit in the open country, to deal with nature and the problems of the soil, and he laid it down to all of us who care to follow him, as a fundamental practice in the building of this Church. This Church cannot get very far along unless it does adhere to these fundamental principles and practices, such as were outlined to us yesterday. As to the soil and its products and life on the soil and life under the open sky, and the life of contest, not with men so much as with nature, with the soil, with the water we put on the soil, with the air, the sunshine, and with the various conditions of agriculture; out of such contacts and out of such contests comes the great strength that we need in the building of our world. "Mormonism" is full of just such principles and such practices. The safe road is to be trodden by those who understand these practices, who attempt to live them, and to use them in their daily lives as eternal reflections of fundamental principles of the gospel.

I bear you my testimony that it is easy, if one will but humble himself and keep near to God in prayer and in service, to understand these great fundamental world-shaping principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and almost as easy to practice them.

## A GREAT REBUKE OF DOUBT

Today and yesterday have seemed to me, in this tabernacle, to be a great rebuke of doubt. I am speaking just now before one of the amplifiers, and if I am speaking into this concave device properly. I imagine that my voice is carried much better than it ordinarily is, into the remote parts of this building, and possibly into the Assembly Hall. It is a tremendous advance, a tremendous rebuke to those of my day, unbelievers in God, who have said to me: "What is the use of praying? God cannot hear. Your voice merely stirs waves in the air, and God is so far away that the waves disappear and cannot reach Divinity. You are wasting your time." Yet today we have these great amplifiers under the stand, that I looked at yesterday, by which these waves are taken out of the air, thrown into some other medium, and carried on again into the air until the voice is spread broadcast over the earth, if we so desire. I know, my brethren and sisters, that the main concern of man is to make of himself, by righteous living and by proper attempt, day by day, by doing that which he knows to be right, a great amplifier by which he may understand the whisperings of the Holy Spirit of God. I pray that every one of us may be given such strength, may be given such will and such opportunity as to make ourselves clear instruments for the discovery of the great truth that God has in store for all of us; and I bear you again my testimony that this is the truth, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.