

After the singing, Elder Wayne H. Redd, President of the San Juan stake of Zion, offered the opening prayer.

Pearl Robbins sang a solo entitled, "The Song of Ruth."

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

IN A GREAT PESENCE

I stand in a great presence. Surrounded by the First Presidency and the General Authorities of the Church, confronted by those who are appointed and set apart as administrators of the Lord's work in the stakes and wards and missions of the Church, and in the midst of other Saints of the Lord, it is not surprising that one should feel the weight of the responsibility of attempting to deliver a message which shall be compatible with the Spirit of our Father and acceptable to these men and women. I am always awed in this great building at one of our general conferences. There devolves upon one such a tremendous sense of responsibility as to make one crave more than under almost any other circumstances, the guidance and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and I sincerely trust that that which I may say may ring true to my brethren, and with the remarks and the testimonies which have been heretofore given.

A COMPARISON

Some few years ago, through the courtesy of Brother Smoot, I had the privilege of attending the second plenary session of the great Disarmament Conference which was held in the city of Washington, where representatives of great nations of the earth met to consider plans for the limitation of the armaments and military operations. I remember distinctly that upon that occasion I was deeply impressed with the importance of the great subject to be discussed, and with the dignity of the men who came to represent the various countries. I saw such men as Balfour of England, the great ex-premier, Ex-premier Briand of France, and the notable Kato of Japan, and other dignitaries, standing in that assembly representing and speaking for their peoples; and I was rather overwhe'med with the transcendent importance of these men and the occasion. But I have since thought that as we gather together here in the semi-annual conferences of the Church, such conferences as that which I attended, and which so impressed me, had no more and greater significance and deep meaning to the people of the world than do these assemblies. Those men met to represent the nations. We meet to represent God and his work in the earth. We come together to hear the voice of his prophet and to feel the flow of his Spirit course through our beings, to stimulate us to higher endeavor in his mighty service, and to give us vision of the great work he designed we shall accomplish as his representatives here on the earth.

HERE ONLY MAY BE HEARD THE WORD OF GOD

I am aware that it always seems a highly presumptuous thing to make the statement that here only may be heard the word of God through his living oracles. In a sense it is embarrassing to make that statement, either to ourselves or to the world. We are, however, constrained to make it, because God himself hath said it, and we do but our duty in proclaiming to the children of men that here with this comparably small people is to be found the word of God, delivered to the people of the world, under the only authority existent upon the earth at this time.

A TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITY

When I contemplate the tremendous responsibility that devolves upon us as a people in the assertion and the statement that we so make, I tremble lest we may not measure up in highest degree to the fulness of the Lord's expectations of us. I say, I stand in a great presence, in the presence of my brethren of the Priesthood. May I not safely conclude, as well, in the presence of my living God? Is it unreasonable to think that after having caused his Church to be established and set up in the world as he has done, that he is "listening in" at these conferences, and that "listening in," he likewise gives inspiration and direction to those who undertake in his name to represent him and to speak his word to the assembled Saints?

REVERENCE FOR GOD ESSENTIAL TO THE PEACE OF MANKIND

I have long been persuaded that a definite, conscious, genuine reverence for God is essential to the peace and joy of mankind, and I know likewise that no wholesome reverence for the Lord will ever come except there be an understanding and comprehension of him. It follows, too, that there may never be a full understanding of him, his personality, his powers, his attributes, unless men live his commandments and do his will. To some, that seems to be a very paradoxical situation, not to be able to understand the Lord without keeping his commandments, and not to be able to keep his commandments unless we understand him. But it is the true condition under which we must come to a realization and testimony of his truth, his supremacy, his Fatherhood and his great and wonderful power. I do not believe that in this great country of ours which has been so lauded during this conference, there will ever be a satisfactory upholding of the Constitution, a decent conformity to laws and statutes and ordinances unless there be at the basis of all patriotism and loyalty to country, a deep-seated conscious reverence for the God of the land. It may seem to some of my fellow citizens an almost fanatic view to take that religion is so inseparably associated with the inception of this great government and its existence as to form an integral part of the loyalty and devotion of true citizens of the State; but I assert it never-

theless. I believe America to be a Christian country. I believe the principles which are set forth in her fundamental laws to be derived from, consciously, the Savior of the world. His precepts, his principles of truth and living, have been set forth by the founders and the fathers in our laws and statutes; and America, in order to continuously and satisfactorily fill her great mission as a mighty nation, must conform to those fundamental laws and principles of truth, in my humble judgment. Reverence for the Lord does not bring forth the class of men and women who today assail the fundamental laws of this land. They who are designated as the Reds, the Anarchists, those who are inimical to our established institutions, I venture, could they all be found out and analyzed, would not be men who love God and who revere his name and who acknowledge his power and his supremacy in the earth. The loyal citizens in this country, in my humble opinion, are to be found among the God-fearing, God-loving people who still trust him and honor him, who recognize his great providence in the inception and growth of this mighty country; and when reverence for God fades and gives way, loyalty, patriotism, devotion to country, will likewise vanish.

OUR COUNTRY AND OUR CHURCH COMMAND OUR ALLEGIANCE

And this is the thought that primarily I would like to give today: that our Country and our Church so command our allegiance and our whole-souled devotion that we have no time, no excess energy to devote to other and extraneous purposes which in any sense might be concluded to be, in the least degree, inimical to the interest of either Church or Country. Every Latter-day Saint finds within the Church so many opportunities for the expression of his service, his good will, and his love for his fellows that he need not go beyond the organizations and agencies of the Church to find places where he can expend his time and his energy and his money for the uplift of mankind.

I do not mean to imply that certain co-operative efforts on the part of people engaged in similar lines of endeavor are not desirable. I believe in co-operation, for the stimulation of our markets and other economic advantages. I believe in the protection of our trade and in the safeguarding of our institutions by proper kinds of co-operation; but I maintain that a man who divides his allegiance and his energy and his endeavor along many lines will usually fail to accomplish anything very significant in any one of them. I believe that the old message which has come to us for years and years past, to confine our endeavor to the spreading of the gospel, to the teaching of its principles, to the people, to the building up of our country, to the sustaining of those great institutions which have been inspired to safeguard liberty, equity, and justice in the earth, comprehends about all that any man may give to people, country or church.

I regard it as unfortunate that there should arise in the midst of

the people of the country institution after institution claiming the allegiance and devotion and energy of the citizens of our country, and in some measure at least winning them away from the one true objective which, in our case, is the establishment of the Lord's work and the maintenance of principles of righteousness and justice in the world. Any man who bears the Priesthood of God has the power to serve mankind. Indeed, others who do not bear it have a power to serve mankind, but not in the same effective way. They cannot perform the ordinances, the great and helpful things so indispensable to the happiness and joy of men. But they who are endowed with this holy Priesthood, who are so favored of God as to share a portion of the power by which he himself rules the world and ministers to man are entitled to go forth in his name and do his work, and that work commands their whole thought, time, and energy, their devotion, their love and their loyalty. I am conscious of the fact when I say this, that, engaged as we are in promoting the great work of the Lord, we have numerous secular—if I may use that word—duties to perform. We are engaged in financial endeavor and enterprise. We seek to build up the country in one way and another; but every true Latter-day Saint does all this with an eye single to the glory of God, consecrating, dedicating and devoting all his time, talent and energy to the great purpose of building up the Lord's kingdom. He does that even in the accumulation of his own private means and property, because in his heart there is a disposition to devote that property and, if need be, all that comes into his possession, to the establishment of our Father's work.

AN APPEAL FOR UNDIVIDED SUPPORT

My brethren and my sisters, too, I appeal for your undivided support for the great work which finds itself in prosperous condition as reported by the President of the Church, and by the brethren who have spoken. We have reason to feel encouraged, but our safety and the eternal progress of the work depends upon our continued vigilance, upon our steadfast devotion and upon giving to this work the utmost of talent and thought and study and prayerful consideration. I know that the work will receive that kind of consideration. I have faith and confidence in my brethren. Personally, I am grateful for their association. When I contemplate the fact that my lot is cast with the men in whose midst I now stand, I raise my voice to God in thanksgiving and in gratitude for that blessed privilege. As I move about among the Presidents of Stakes, and the Bishops of Wards I ever say to myself: where else could I be thrown into such good company? where I could meet such good, honest, upright, noble men whose contact with my life lifts me up and builds me every time I meet them and go among them? God bless the men who preside in and direct the destinies of the people of the stakes and the wards, and the missions; and God let his choice blessings rest upon the man who,

under God, directs the destinies of the Church. I pray for him, I uphold him, and I sustain him, and I know that God gives his word through him. I testify to this, and I appeal, my brethren and sisters, for your undivided support, your devotion, your whole-souled loyalty to the great institutions of the Church and of our beloved Country, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER SEYMOUR B. YOUNG

President of the First Council of Seventy

My Brethren and Sisters: I heartily endorse the remarks that have been made at this conference. The speakers have given to the congregation ideas of helpfulness and encouragement, and with all my heart, I echo the sentiments of the last speaker in regard to the President of the Church and those associated with him.

Today we see evidence of the truth of that prophetic utterance made by the prophet Joseph Smith on the 12th day of August, 1842, on the banks of the Mississippi river, in the little town of Montrose,—that the Saints would finally be driven from city to city, from state to state, and finally from the United States into the midst of the Rocky Mountains where they would become a great people. I am sure today that this prophecy is being fulfilled; that is, the clause referring to the greatness of the people. There is no evidence of lack of loyalty to the cause of truth by many thousands and tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints. The testimonies received when the door of baptism was entered seems to have been lasting, and to have increased in power from the time of the faithful seekers after truth joining the Church until the present day.

The prophet himself desired to know of his relationship with the heavenly Father. He went to the Lord, as the scripture designated to him, and prayed for light and knowledge and for wisdom; and in response to his prayer, the Father and the Son appeared to him and gave to him knowledge of their personality; and his vision and the testimony of it has never been successfully contradicted, although for fourteen years after the call came to him as a prophet of God, he saw nothing but tribulations and trials. There were in conflict with him many leading religious men, men of influence, seemingly, with the world at large. He had all this to face. Finally, as the end drew near, his faith did not fail him, but when he bade farewell to his family and to his friends as he met them on that memorable 23rd day of June, on his way to Carthage, he exclaimed, and it was an exclamation that came from a full heart: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, yet I have a conscience void of offense towards God and man." We are the recipients of blessings through the evidence and call given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. We are in receipt today of all the great prospects that he predicted, and realizing that in the near future