

## THIRD DAY

### MORNING SESSION

The Tabernacle was comfortably filled as President Heber J. Grant opened the meeting on Tuesday morning, October 6, 1925, at 10 o'clock.

The choir and congregation sang, "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah."

Elder Heber J. Meeks, president of the Kanab stake, offered the opening prayer.

A sacred baritone solo entitled, "There is no death," was sung by J. H. Wood.

#### ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

*My Brethren and Sisters:* I ask that while I stand before you this forenoon I may be guided by God's holy Spirit, so that the words I speak may be of value to those who have come here this day in hope of spiritual food. As I look back over my life, it seems to me that in halls of learning or among the affairs of men I have had ample self-confidence and sometimes just a little self-assurance; but when engaged in the work of the Lord, in this great latter-day program, I always feel my utter and complete dependence upon the Lord and his Spirit, if I would do my work well. In the high calling which has come to me in the Church—and I do not understand why that calling has come to me—I feel that I must be as clay in the hands of the potter, must be as an instrument in God's hands, by which divine purposes may be accomplished. So, I ask that I may have your assistance in the words that I may speak to you this morning.

#### TESTIMONY AND GRATITUDE

It seems that the theme of this conference has been that this Church is a latter-day witness to the reality and personality of our Father in heaven, of his Son Jesus Christ, and of the divine validity of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. I desire to bear witness with my brethren who have spoken that I know that God lives, that Jesus Christ was his Son, that we are engaged in working out an eternal plan for the salvation of mankind; and that Joseph Smith was called in his boyhood, by God, to initiate the work of the restoration of the gospel in our day. I am grateful beyond my power of expression for this testimony, and I bear it gladly to all who care to listen.

#### THRILLED BY THE CALL FOR MISSIONARIES

I have been fed and instructed by all that has been said by my

brethren during these two days; but I must say that the one thing that pierced my heart and thrilled me during this conference was the call of our President, the living Prophet of God, for an army of mature men, one thousand strong, to go into the mission field to preach the everlasting gospel to those who do not yet understand it. I felt as if I heard the voice of the prophets of old, who asked if there were faith in Israel. I believe that there is faith in Israel, I believe that the call that was made will be answered, that the men who go out will be blessed abundantly, that the wives and the children who remain at home, in sacrifice that their husbands and sons may go out, will likewise be blessed and comforted, and that Zion and the world at large will be blessed by this call and the obedience that we shall give to it. When the call came, it seemed to me that I could see the army going out—an army to battle for righteousness, to battle against wickedness, an army which has no weapon save that of truth, an army devoting itself simply to the cause of truth. I am certain, my brethren and sisters, that we were all touched in our hearts when that call came from the lips of our President.

#### THE WORLD NEEDS THE LIGHT OF THE CHURCH

My own experience tells me that the world has need of such an army, waging the battle for righteousness in the name of the truth of Almighty God. It has been my duty, with the consent and knowledge of the First Presidency, to spend a part of this year in traveling over the Western states as an agent of a department of the government, which has given me intimate association with many men not of our faith. I have come out of this association and this labor with the conviction that the world now, as perhaps never before, needs the light that issues from this Church, and the truth for which we stand. We are indeed ready, as a world of God's children, for the army for which call has been made at this conference.

#### HIGH QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP CAUSED BY PERFECT DOCTRINE

Not long ago in one of the states to the north of us, in the company of a local delegation, I called upon one of our branch presidents. The little branch numbered about a hundred people, had been organized only a few months ago, and was presided over by a young man who has been brought up in one of the stakes of Zion. After we had had a chat with this brother, as we left, the leader of the local delegation, who served as our guide, said to me: "We are keeping our eyes on this young man. He has been here less than two years, but he has in him the qualities of leadership. We believe that if we are not careful that 'Mormon' boy will soon be the leader of our community." Then he added: "Will you tell me why it is that so many of your people appear to possess such high qualities of leadership, that we must recognize them, even in so young a man as the one we have just left? Is it because of your doctrine, or is it because of your wonderful leaders, and their wise

leadership, irrespective of doctrine?" I answered this man as best I could. My thought went back to a statement made by a modern prophet, President Brigham Young, when a similar question was asked him many years ago; and when he paraphrased the words of one of the ancient apostles:

"In conversation not long since with a visitor from the Eastern States, said he, 'You as a people consider that you are perfect.' 'Oh, no,' said I, 'not by any means. Let me define to you. The doctrine that we have embraced is perfect; but when we come to the people, we have as many imperfections as you can ask for. We are not perfect, but the gospel that we preach is calculated to perfect the people, so that they can obtain a glorious resurrection and enter into the presence of the Father and the Son.'"

#### A SYSTEM OF TRUTH LEADING TO PERFECTION

Here is a definition given by one of the great prophets of our Church. We do possess a perfect doctrine; and what a gift it is! I wonder if the Latter-day Saints are fully appreciative of the fact that they are in possession of a system of truth which, if applied and used, embraced and wholly consumed by man, may lead man into perfection. As I read human history, ever since the beginning of time, the great thinkers and leaders of the world have sought to formulate systems of government, doctrine or thought, to lead people into a perfect state of living. Thus, we have the great men of the ages: A Confucius, arises in China, in search of a perfect guide to human conduct and achievement. We have a Buddha in India; a Mohammed in Arabia, a Plato in Greece, and many others seeking for this one thing that we declare to all the world that we possess. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a system perfect in itself, which, if used by human beings, may lead every soul into a perfected state of life, both on this earth and in the life to come. Perfection is the ideal of Latter-day Saints—nothing short of it. A tremendous ideal it is; smiled at by those who do not understand; nevertheless our ideal.

We live by our ideals, we die by our ideals. Nations grow large, or they dwindle, according to their ideals. A humble people, years ago, found the truth of God,—the only God, the living God, the personal God,—and Israel ever since its foundation has been a teacher of nations because of that high ideal. In our own day, within the memory of children in this congregation, a nation arose which formed as its ideal a godless superman, a man who would be like unto God, but without God; and as a result of that ideal came the bloodiest battles and the most destructive warfare recorded in history.

#### CAN PERFECTION BE ATTAINED?

Our ideal is perfection; but, no doubt, the question arises in the minds of every one of us: "Is it possible for man to win perfection? Do we have reason to believe that there lies in the gospel

of Jesus Christ the power to lead us into a perfected state of existence?" As I have attended these conferences, these many years, I have often heard statistics read concerning the birth rate and death rate and other vital statistics, which point out that those who live the gospel of Jesus Christ are indeed being perfected. I had the privilege a short time ago to read the manuscript of a book written by Dr. Franklin S. Harris, the President of the Brigham Young University, in which he has taken the statistical facts concerning the Latter-day Saints, recognized by the world at large, and used them, according to the methods accepted by the world at large, to test out the fruits of "Mormonism." From chapter to chapter it is shown that the fruits of "Mormonism," when "Mormonism" is properly lived, are a condition of increasing perfection, or a perfected state of living.

#### AN AID TO PHYSICAL PERFECTION

Let me call your attention to one principle which has in it the power of producing physical perfection. More than ninety years ago the Prophet Joseph Smith was inspired to write for us the Word of Wisdom. We know by our own experience that physical perfection may be achieved in part—that we may at least be on the road to physical perfection—by obedience to the Word of Wisdom. It is interesting to note that, ever since that Word was given, men of science have discovered, and are discovering, evidence upon evidence confirming the soundness of the statements in the Word of Wisdom. Alcohol is no longer regarded as a good thing for the human body; and I am glad to know that our Nation is now a dry Nation, that we by acts of our Congress and Legislatures have declared that alcohol is not a good thing for man. Brother Ballard stated yesterday that the use of tobacco is increasing. Nevertheless, the findings of men of science, in their laboratories and studies, are to the effect that tobacco is not good for the human body. Likewise it has been shown that tea and coffee and all other stimulants are harmful and retard physical development.

#### SMOKING A CAUSE OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY

The last bulletin of Antioch College, one of the colleges in the East, has just reached me. This bulletin is devoted entirely to a study of the effect of tobacco on the students in that institution. I shall not take the time to read this to you, but only to quote the summary, on the first page, of the man who wrote it. Further on in the body of the bulletin he tells how very carefully the work had been done. He says:

"A careful study of smoking among men students at Antioch does not disclose any permanent effects of smoking upon blood pressure, lung capacity, or pulse rate; but a definite relationship is established between smoking and low scholarship. Among men students, 31.8 per cent of nonsmokers fail to maintain required grades, while 62.3 per cent of heavy smokers similarly fail. Inhalers fail most often. Before this study began

the more susceptible smokers had been eliminated, since many more smokers than non-smokers had failed and been dropped from college."

And he concludes with this statement:

"With these figures before us, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that smoking is actually a cause of mental inefficiency."

A Latter-day Saint cannot read a statement like this without remembering the promise which is contained in Section 89, that those who obey this Word of Wisdom shall find "wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures of knowledge"—it seems to be a literal confirmation. So, in every field of Church activity, or teachings, whether with respect to the physical, mental or spiritual aspects of life, we find that within the teachings of the Church lie the germs and powers of achieving perfection on the part of human beings.

#### THE GOSPEL A POWER THROUGH WHICH PERFECTION IS ACHIEVED

Brother Stephen L. Richards spoke to us yesterday about the testimony that may be won by a correct approach and search for testimony. I thought, then, of the scientific equivalent of a testimony. In the laboratory the chemist may take an element and, by heat and pressure, change it completely in its physical properties. It is possible to take black amorphous charcoal and, under the influence of heat and pressure, to change it into transparent, crystalline diamonds. If lifeless, inert matter may be changed, a greater transformation may be expected in the souls of men, when, under God's influence, by the power that comes from the use of the truths that God has revealed to his children, men obey the gospel. Such a change, coming into human lives, is greater than that from the black charcoal to the luminous white diamond. The lives of Latter-day Saints, by the tens of thousands, attest that such a transformation is possible; that there lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ the power for man to achieve perfection, even in this life, physically, mentally, spiritually and in every way, if only he will give himself to the ideal of perfection.

The question uppermost in my mind is whether we as a people are using to the full the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ; whether indeed we are perfecting ourselves as we should. We dream of a great day, a day to come when Lord and Master Jesus Christ shall come to reign and rule upon the earth, when he shall be the King, and all shall bow to him. That is our great dream. We are here to hasten the coming of that day; to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. The question with respect to myself and my fellows is always whether we are so living, so conducting ourselves, so approaching perfection, so strong in courage, so fearless that that work is being done in a manner to hasten the great day. The Lord uses us, men and women of flesh and blood, made in his image, possessing his eternal doctrines, to work out his purposes. We must qualify ourselves so that the Lord may

work his purposes rapidly and well through us, men and women. What a tremendous responsibility we are under. We need to go out fearlessly and we can go out with courage, for we have the tremendous fund of knowledge and the irresistible power that come from a knowledge and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not hesitate to do that which lies before us, and which the Lord requires of us.

#### A NEWSBOY'S PROUD ANSWER

I like to recall my experience with a little newsboy. My wife and I stood at the west door of the Hotel Utah, in the company of a most distinguished American and his wife. We were talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Latter-day Saints. Somebody said something about the Priesthood, and mention was made of the fact that in this Church all men may make themselves worthy to hold the Priesthood. Someone remarked—perhaps my wife—that even the boys after a certain age held the Priesthood. Just then a little lad came along the sidewalk calling out the afternoon paper—"Deseret News! Deseret News!" On the spur of the moment I said: "Perhaps that little boy holds the Priesthood." I called him to me. He thought I was a tourist, about to buy a paper. I said: "Are you a 'Mormon,' my boy?"

He straightened up, put his heels together, looked me in the eye, and said: "I am."

I said: "Do you hold the Priesthood?"

He said: "Yes, sir, I hold the Priesthood."

I said: "What office in the Priesthood do you hold?"

The little boy gave me the salute of the Boy Scout and replied: "I am a Deacon, sir."

There was the fearlessness of the child, the pride of his possession, though understanding only as a child, dimly, the meaning, the spirit and the vastness of this latter-day cause. We who have grown to maturity, must possess, in a larger degree, the same fearlessness to conquer ourselves and to make ourselves worthy of the call which has come to us, to go out to teach the nations that which we have received. God bless us and be with us and make us the mighty Church which he designs we shall be, I ask, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER HYRUM G. SMITH

*Presiding Patriarch of the Church*

I desire very much to enjoy that same sweet spirit which has attended the remarks of my brethren. It is a very important privilege to associate with these men whom the Lord has called in this important day and time to proclaim and defend his work. In humility I wish to express my appreciation for the privilege that