

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

The third session of the Conference commenced promptly at ten o'clock Saturday morning, October 5, 1929, with President Heber J. Grant presiding.

The congregation joined in singing the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation," after which the opening prayer was offered by Elder Leo J. Muir, President of the Los Angeles Stake.

The hymn, "Do What is Right," was sung by the congregation.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

I am sure, my brethren and sisters, we were all cheered yesterday morning as we listened to the report of our President concerning the growth of the Church. I was particularly impressed with it because it stands out in such contrast to the reports that are coming from government statistics with reference to other churches in this country. Judging from the records of twenty-three churches and their status between the years 1916 and 1926, six of these twenty-three leading denominations in the United States suffered an actual loss in membership; and while the balance showed an increase, there is none of them whose percentage of increase is greater than that of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

STRENGTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

The record shows that so far as our Church is concerned the amount expended for meeting houses during the past nine months exceeds that for any similar period. This stands in contrast to the record of churches in the United States. On good authority we are informed there are twenty-five thousand vacant churches in the United States without a pastor or a congregation; while here there is growth such as the Church has never had before, with increase and prosperity attending the membership of the Church.

It is delightful to know that in an age when churches are being tested and tried and shaken, and doubt and uncertainty are developing, here there is strength, here there is power, here there is solidity; and in the most enlightened age that the world has ever known for this Church to be making its most rapid progress, surely is hopeful.

But I am not so much concerned with the material growth of the Church or its increase in membership as I am with its growth in good works, in righteousness. I am sure if the Latter-day Saints can be induced to live up to that high standard which God has established for us,

we need not worry about the Church's growth in membership nor its material strength.

"WE BELIEVE IN BEING HONEST"

I want to read the thirteenth Article of Faith, because there is in it something I would like to speak about, as I feel that the attention of the Latter-day Saints needs to be called to it because of conditions that obtain in the world that will naturally affect us.

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

It is that first declaration of the Prophet in announcing items in the faith of the Latter-day Saints that I wish to speak of:

"We believe in being honest."

Why I speak of this is because we are in an age of self-indulgence so far as the world is concerned, and men are endeavoring to accomplish their ends not always with honest methods. Short cuts are being taken to secure those desirable ends. The records of the United States for the last year show, for instance, that there was stolen from the citizens of this country by hold-ups, at the point of a gun, two billion six hundred and fifty millions of dollars, all of course unlawfully taken. No spirit of honesty here. In stock swindling sales, wherein dishonesty is practiced, and sometimes within the law, there was taken from the people of the United States over six billions of dollars last year. There was lost through trusted employees committing forgeries and thefts one hundred million dollars. The total of these three items for one year is something like nine billions of dollars. How long could this order of things continue to increase as it has been doing until this would no longer be a land of safety and security, but of unsafety and insecurity? If the spirit of dishonesty is in the world naturally we will be influenced by its effects, because we live in a very small world today. What affects any portion of this country or the world, naturally affects us. Recently surety companies guaranteeing the honesty and integrity of men in positions of trust have doubled their rates because of the increasing number who are untrue to their trust.

It all impresses me, my brethren and sisters, with the need of our harking back to that high standard of old rugged honesty established by the men who laid the foundations of this work. It is here yet, yes; but if we preserve it we must be vigilant, or we shall succumb to the influences that are in the world to corrupt men.

MR. STUDEBAKER'S TRIBUTE.

I remember being impressed years ago with the standard of Mormon honesty and integrity, when at the close of a street meeting in the city of South Bend, Indiana, an elderly gentleman wearing a high silk hat, who had driven up in a carriage, asked permission to speak,

He was given the privilege and said to the people of that city: "I want you to be kind to these Mormon elders. Their people are my friends. I have known them for many years. They have a motto that appeals to me, and I have discovered that they are living up to their motto, which is that "a Mormon's word is as good as his bond." He remarked that he had sold President Young his first cutter and carriage after arriving in the valley, and that he had sold millions of dollars worth of vehicles to the Mormon people. He declared that he had not lost a single dollar on a Mormon. He further remarked, "I cannot say that of any other community where my company is doing business."

The old gentleman was Mr. Studebaker, the founder of Studebaker Brothers. I was thrilled to hear his testimony after years of association with our people, that he had discovered that their word was as good as their bond. I believe it will be a word in good season to ask the membership of the Church to preserve sacredly this high standard. I believe that the great majority of the Latter-day Saints are doing so.

A RULE OF CONDUCT

I have been thinking about what in this connection I might give as a rule of conduct to follow to preserve this spirit of honesty; and the thing that has impressed me is that God, in the establishment of the law of tithing, of which President Grant spoke yesterday morning, was laying down a course for the Latter-day Saints to follow that would lead them to be honest with Him first. And I believe that it is essential that we shall be honest with God in order to be fully honest with our fellow men. I believe that the man who understands the law of tithing and accepts it as the word of the Lord and is not true to it will find it easy not only to rob the Lord but to be untrue to his fellow men. I believe that the first step that men take toward disregarding the laws of man is to disregard the laws of God.

When France sought to maintain her government, her civilization, by appealing to the rule of Reason, and God was out of the question, she soon came to difficulty. No nation can fully preserve its institutions and wholly disregard God. This government, mighty as it is, and greater as it may become, shall still have to observe and to honor the laws of God, the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ, according to the Book of Mormon prophets, or it cannot stand. So I believe that one of the finest practices to inculcate into the very hearts of men true, genuine honesty is to teach them to be honest before God. "Will a man rob God"? He asked of the children of Israel of old, and yet He charged them with having robbed Him in tithes and in offerings.

Here is a chance for men to develop honesty without fear of oppression, without fear of being sued; for the Lord will not sue a man. He gives him the privilege of practicing the principle of honesty out of the high motives of his own heart, impelled towards justice to God, with only the highest principles moving him, and without fear of the collector. I believe therefore that the Latter-day Saints will do

well to consider this law as the foundation upon which genuine honesty may be built, not only between God and man, but between man and his fellow man.

GOD'S RENTAL

Surely this is a righteous law. It is merely God's rental. A man who gives you right to possess property and the privilege of receiving returns from that property, naturally expects a rental for the use of the land. But what does he guarantee? That the sun will shine; that the moisture will come; that the frost will be stayed; that the soil will germinate? No, he guarantees none of these things, — only right and title to the land. And still we expect to pay rental for that right and title. Who supplies these more essential things — the moisture, the fertility of the soil, the sunshine, the harvest? God Almighty, who provided the earth itself, the proprietor. He wants men to recognize that He is the proprietor, through observing the law of tithing. Any man who fails to pay his just tribute to the provider of these more important and essential things for the sustenance of life, is robbing the Lord and is not just in his dealings.

A HIGHER LAW

When the Lord gave this Church the correct principles that shall ultimately be established, known as the Order of Enoch, or the United Order, it was a high ideal for them to aim towards, something to work for, but they lacked preparation for it. When he introduced the law of tithing, he called it a schoolmaster to bring us to that higher law. Men and women who can live up to this law of tithing will be better prepared for that day to come, for come it will, when there will be some prepared and ready to maintain that higher law which shall be established in the just economy of God, when Christ reigns with men upon earth.

THE LAW OF INHERITANCE

And further than that, do we not hope and expect to have an inheritance in the celestial kingdom, even upon this earth in its redeemed and sanctified state? What are the terms under which we may obtain that inheritance? The law of tithing is the law of inheritance. It leads to it. No man may hope or expect to have an inheritance on this celestial globe who has failed to pay his tithing. By the payment of his honest tithing he is establishing a right and a title to this inheritance, and he cannot secure it upon any other terms but by complying with this and other just requirements; and this is one of the very essential things.

THEY WHO ENTER THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM.

I was asked by one of my brethren recently, as he closed the vaults of one of the great banks, to lock up the treasures, whether I thought the day would ever come when treasures could be and would be preserved without fear of being stolen and it would not be necessary

to lock them up. I remarked that surely that day will come, for all those who will enter into the celestial kingdom will be so honest that they could live and walk within hand's reach of that which is not theirs with nothing to prevent them from possessing it, following that high standard established in the gospel of Christ, and the rectitude of their own intentions being worked out in actual living. For they who enter that state will be so honest that God can pave the streets with gold and set the walls with jasper and diamonds, without any fear of their being stolen. Yes, there will come such a day. Now, however, we are being proven to see whether we are worthy to enter into these high and holy privileges.

When Pope said that "an honest man is the noblest work of God," he uttered a truth. I care not how many privileges and blessings come to men, what their ordinations and baptisms may have been, there is no possibility of their entering into the presence of God by dishonest means.

Peter said unto the baptized saints in his day, that unto their baptism, they must add faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. What is godliness? It is honesty, integrity, purity and virtue. These qualities must be added if men shall seek to gain admittance into that high presence. We cannot for a moment consent to the conceptions of many in the world, that mere ceremonies and ordinances, important as they are, are the all-fundamental and important things. They are fundamental, they are important, but the more important thing is the living of the gospel, preparing to enter into that presence by receiving the training necessary and essential; and one of those essential things is to develop within us the spirit of honesty, so that we will be honest with God and honest with our fellow men.

THE BANKRUPTCY LAW

There is a law called into existence for the relief of men who are oppressed because of their creditors, and through taking bankruptcy men may be released from their obligations. I have many times been asked the question, who is justified in taking bankruptcy to avoid an obligation? My answer has been—and I would like to make it here, and if I am wrong I stand to be corrected—that no Latter-day Saint, so long as his creditors give him the chance, the faintest chance, to work out and meet his obligations, ought to resort to accepting the law of bankruptcy. It is only for those who are oppressed, those who have no chance, no hope, and nothing but oppression following them. They may be justified, but surely no one who can possibly work out his problems with his creditors, ought to resort to this means of relieving himself of his obligations.

A PRECIOUS HERITAGE

When my father died he was a poor man with a large family, but he left us a credit that I have counted as worth more than millions. I never knew him to do a dishonest thing in all his life, nor would I be

ashamed for the whole world to see his acts revealed. I confess to you that has been a greater joy and strength to me than money would have been. I plead with you to leave that kind of an inheritance to your sons and your daughters, that they may be stimulated and inspired by your honesty, by your integrity, by your dependability, to be honest with God and with their fellow men; that that heritage may be left with them that may inspire them to go on and perpetuate these high standards in preparation for the more glorious things that are to come to those who can maintain such high ideals.

God bless the Latter-day Saints that we may not forget, in this season of harvesting our bountiful crops, to settle with the Lord and to settle honestly and justly and fully; that we may see growing in ourselves that spirit of honesty that shall support and sustain us during these perilous times that are upon us and that shall come. I pray for it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER JOHN WELLS

of the Presiding Bishopric

I desire to express appreciation for my membership in this Church and how thankful I am that the gospel found me in my youth; how glad I am to be in the service of the Lord, and my desire is to be loyal to my brethren.

The Lord has blessed me with a testimony of the truth. I am so thankful that I am not tossed about with every wind of doctrine that blows. I firmly believe in my God, the Father; and in my Redeemer, Jesus Christ; and in the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I want to call attention to an incident in the life of our Master. This was the last day of his public ministry. He was in Jerusalem on that fateful Tuesday before his crucifixion. There, near the Temple treasury, he was questioned by Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes. First, the Pharisees asked him this question: "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?" Then a group of Sadducees questioned him concerning a woman who had seven husbands and whose wife would shall be in the resurrection? Then there came to him out of the crowd a lawyer or scribe who propounded a very important question. May I quote from the 12th chapter of the gospel of St Mark:

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?"

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is' one Lord:

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

"And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.