

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

Conference reconvened Saturday morning, April 9th, at 10 o'clock, with President Heber J. Grant presiding.

The hymn, "Come, come, ye Saints," was sung by the congregation. Elder Abel John Evans offered the opening prayer.

A sacred solo, "The Penitent," was sung by Sister Bertha Sessions.

ELDER SYLVESTER Q. CANNON

Presiding Bishop of the Church

I can assure you, my brethren and sisters, and friends, that I feel keenly the responsibility of this position. I rejoice with you in the spirit of the Conference sessions that we have had and the instruction and testimony that have been given to us.

GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I appreciate the fact that we are living in important times, and that it is proper for us so to live and act that we may be guided by the influence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has promised to all of us who have taken upon us his name, who have been baptized in water and by the power of the Holy Spirit, that if we will live in accordance with his commandments we shall enjoy the light of his Spirit to guide us. Surely there has never been a time in the history of the Church when that guidance was so necessary for every individual.

We have our free agency. We shall be responsible for the deeds that we perform and for the failure to perform those things that will be for our progress and development. The Lord is desirous that every one of us shall go forward, do his will, keep his commandments, and enjoy his blessings.

I realize the fact that if we will listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, and be alert to follow promptly that inspiration that may come to us from time to time, we shall be enabled to avoid difficulties and troubles, and have joy, satisfaction and contentment in our daily lives.

CHURCH ADVANCEMENT

I rejoice in the leadership of this Church. I realize that they are men who are inspired of God to advise and counsel us in the way of truth and progress. I am sure that if we will listen to them and observe to do what they suggest to us, we shall be able to make satisfactory progress.

I was impressed with the instructions and the report given by our President at the beginning of this Conference. As was stated by him,

the Church is growing in membership, and it is growing in activity. It is true that the tithes in total have not been so large this past year as the previous year. Yet there are instances in various stakes and missions where there has been an increase in tithes. There has been an increase in the number of tithepayers in the Church. There has been quite a material increase in the fast offerings donated for the benefit of the poor. I am quite sure that the spirit of the present prevailing conditions has influenced many who may have been neglectful, possibly, or inappreciative of conditions of unemployment, in the realization of the fact that we should donate more liberally for those in need in these times. The result has been somewhat more evident in the observance of the fast offerings.

PRIESTHOOD ACTIVITY

It is to be noted that the activity of the priesthood is increasing. I am particularly familiar with the Aaronic priesthood, and that interest is evident. We are striving in cooperation with the stake presidencies, ward bishoprics, mission presidents, and all others who are concerned with the welfare and progress of this important work, to stimulate the young men who receive this priesthood, to greater faith and activity and an appreciation of the blessings that come through the fulfillment of their responsibilities in the Aaronic priesthood.

Also, in other respects, the work of the Church is increasing. In the matter of ward teaching, this important labor has been carried on to a larger extent, month by month, in all of the various stakes and wards throughout the Church.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

With reference to building construction, the Church spent, as was reported by President Grant, over a half million dollars last year in the erection of ward buildings. That amount has been matched by the labor and the cash subscriptions of members of the Church and others in the various wards that have built meeting houses; so that, in total, the expenditures for this purpose aggregate a very considerable sum. I believe that there has been more care exercised on the part of those who have had charge of building construction in the various wards, to see that the funds were efficiently expended. I am sure that, throughout the various wards and stakes, consistent efforts are being made to exercise the greatest economy possible in this, as in every other phase of material affairs in the Church.

CLARITY OF CONSCIENCE

In connection with the matter that I have referred to, of cultivating the Spirit of the Lord, I am reminded of a maxim, adopted by George Washington, whose two-hundredth anniversary we are celebrating this entire year, as a rule of conduct for him as a young man. I think the last one of the rules of conduct that he adopted is as follows: "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience." The development of conscience is one of the most helpful

means to promote right living and fair dealing. I am sure that the Latter-day Saints are possessed of that spark of celestial fire. As a result of developing the spirit of frankness, of stimulating the sense of right and wrong, of not allowing their consciences to be dulled by those things which interfere with straightforwardness and uprightness, they are in a position to have that sense touched by the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, to lead them in righteousness and faith and truth.

A TIME OF TRIAL

We live in times when we are being tested and proven. All the dross, all that is not pure metal is, so to speak, being burned up or skimmed off, leaving the pure metal. To the extent that mankind have had to undergo trials and suffering, and that they have, in courage and faith, made sacrifice of material things that they have previously enjoyed, they have emerged so much stronger and finer. I believe adverse conditions are bringing men generally to an understanding of the elementals of life; and to a better appreciation of the measure of the values of things which really count in life.

THE POWER OF TRUE RELIGION

I am impressed with the fact that the acceptance of this Gospel involves our willingness to deny ourselves, if necessary, of anything that we may be called upon to sacrifice. I am reminded of a statement made in one of the Lectures on Faith in the Doctrine and Covenants. Though the lectures are not accepted by us as revelation, yet we are told they were prepared by the Prophet Joseph, and were for the benefit of the people of the Church. This statement is as follows:

“A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”

ABRAHAM'S WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE

Now, that is a very strong saying. Yet, the experiences of some of those of whom we have record, who have developed great spiritual power, demonstrate the fact that sacrifice has produced such results in their lives. I am reminded of Abraham, who was told by the Lord to take his son—the son of promise—born to him in his old age, through whom the divine assurance to Abraham regarding his posterity should be fulfilled, and offer him as a sacrifice. When this son was grown to be a youth his father was told by the Lord to offer him as a sacrifice upon Mount Moriah. Abraham did so. He took his son to that place and there was prepared to do what the Lord had commanded. He had proven his determination to carry out the will of the Lord, even though it meant the taking of the life of his son.

There are those who would utter condemnation against such a course, as being contrary to all equity and righteousness. Yet Abraham recognized that the Lord had the power to give and to take away. He had that confidence in the Lord that the course of life that he was pursuing, and the instruction he was receiving from God, were such

that the Lord could save his son's life if it were necessary. So he proved his willingness to sacrifice the life of his beloved son. But when it came to the final test, after he had proven himself, the Lord did not require that sacrifice at his hands. However, he did greatly magnify Abraham, and he became, we are told, the friend of God, because of his sacrifice and his faith. He mingled with the great of the earth at that time, and was recognized by them as a power. Among the Mohammedans today Abraham is recognized as the greatest prophet of all. Likewise, among the Hebrews and Christians, he is recognized as a wonderful man.

THE SAVIOR'S GREAT SACRIFICE

Now, another example is that of the Savior himself. He was called upon to sacrifice his life because it was the will of God. It was his mission. He had the assurance that the course of life he was pursuing was pleasing to God. The final achievement of his mortal life was to undergo that atoning sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. He realized the terrible agony that he would have to suffer, as well as the mental crucifixion that he must endure through the shame and ridicule that was to be heaped upon him. Yet he was prepared to accept and undergo the sacrifice that was before him. Thereby he became the Redeemer of the world; and the mediator between men and God. He is the one who stands between us and our eternal Father. Through him alone can we gain the resurrection and come to salvation by the acceptance of his teachings, and the observance of his commandments.

MARTYRDOM OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH

There have been others who have been called upon to make great sacrifice for their devotion to divine truth. The Prophet Joseph Smith demonstrated in his life the very thing that is contained in the statement, that only that religion which has the power to call for the sacrifice of all things, even of life itself, if necessary, has the power to produce the faith necessary to bring mankind to life and salvation. The Prophet Joseph went to his martyrdom assured that the faith he possessed and the principles that he had adopted were of God. He had had the assurance from the Lord himself, from his personal visitation to him, that he should become an instrument in his hands for the accomplishment of divine purposes. Through his faith and sacrifice we understand that he is appointed to stand at the head of this last dispensation.

I do not assume that the Lord is going to require of every one of us such sacrifices. But I do maintain that the living of the Gospel will develop the spirit of sacrifice. If we are to gain salvation we must first have assurance that the course of life we are pursuing is in accordance with the will of the Lord. In other words, we must have a testimony of the divinity of this work. If we do not, we cannot, of course, be willing to make sacrifices. So it is important that every one of us should gain assurance of the divinity of this work, and of the fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith was ordained of God for the establishment of this work. To him were consigned the keys of divine authority

to direct the work. All who have succeeded him have been appointed to bear the keys of authority in the Church, and have been inspired of God. That authority permeates the entire body of the Church.

REAL VALUES OF LIFE

Do these sacrifices really mean loss in the real sense of the word? In the mortal or human sense, probably yes. From the standpoint of the pleasures of the world, probably yes. The people of the world consider anything a deprivation that would restrain them from indulging their appetites of whatever nature. But those who have an appreciation of the values of life will realize that the things that the people of the world refer to as the pleasures of life and the satisfying of their appetites, are the petty things. They are the things that will pass. They are the dross that will be thrown away. It has been aptly said that to do without and like it is the first lesson in the art of being happy. The principles that the Lord has revealed are the things that will count as realities in this life and in eternity.

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SACRIFICE

These principles are known to us. I do not need to enumerate them. All that the Lord has commanded us to do are for our benefit. We receive the blessings. There is no sacrifice in the final and permanent sense of the word. The rewards obtained are so much greater than the self-denial necessary. We gain through the observance of divine commandments, because every principle and any deprivation that may be entailed thereby is for our greatest welfare, growth, and development in life, here and hereafter.

TITHING REQUIRES FAITH

I have been impressed with the testimonies at various times in these conferences of the Church relative to the results of the observance of tithing, that have been borne to us, and the evidences shown in our investigations. I think probably that tithing may be considered a principle that from a pecuniary and selfish standpoint requires more power and faith to observe than some other commandments. Yet it brings blessings far outweighing the sacrifice itself.

TITHING IN OTHER CHURCHES

I am reminded, too, of a statement made showing the way in which this principle is growing among other people. I have an article clipped from a magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, known as "The Diocesan Council," in which the subject of tithing is discussed. It refers to a booklet called "The Church has Tithers," written by a Dr. Louis B. Franklin. He writes of the observance of tithing as they understand it. His comment in regard to the principle of tithing is rather interesting: "The practice of tithing is extremely simple. One-tenth of all income, plus one-tenth the rental value of a house wholly owned and used as one's residence, should be set aside as God's property to be administered for him. Help to dependent relatives is a family

obligation and should not be taken out of the tenth. Exercise the same care in administering God's portion as you do in running your own business, or budgeting your household expenses. Whatever the reason, many have recorded it their judgment that it is easier to live on nine-tenths than on ten-tenths. The readjustment of a family budget so as to provide for setting aside the tithes may demand a reconsideration of the whole question of standards of living. Many have found in such a consideration the dawning of a new and happier day."

That is the testimony of people who do not belong to this Church. Does that indicate that the principle of tithing is a natural, divine principle? Surely if it is divine it will produce results for all who practice it in the spirit of it, as far as they have understanding.

FAITHFUL TITHEPAYERS GENERALLY EMPLOYED

From the reports given by some of the mission presidents, and by the stake presidents and bishops, and from our own investigations, it appears that generally the people throughout the Church who pay tithing are making their way forward financially as well as spiritually. Those who need help are largely not those who have been faithful tithe-payers. On the other hand, most of the faithful tithepayers have been able to maintain themselves even under this most extended period of depression. Surely this is a splendid evidence of some of the results of faith and sacrifice. Let it be remembered, however, that faith in the divinity of this or any other principle alone can bring the blessings.

My brethren and sisters, I desire to testify to you that this and every other principle of the Gospel is for our welfare and progress, and that the Gospel itself is the greatest thing that has come to mankind, both for this life and for the life hereafter. I pray that I may be able to stand, with you, firm and faithful, be prompt to accept instructions given, alert to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to measure up to the finest standards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER GIDEON N. HULTERSTROM

Former President of the Swedish Mission

My dear brethren and sisters, I am indeed glad and happy for this opportunity to be in attendance at this General Conference of the Church. I humbly pray that while I stand before you I may have a rich portion of the Holy Spirit of God, to direct my report that I am to give of the Swedish mission.

I bring you greetings and good tidings from your sons in Sweden. They are performing a faithful labor in that far-off land. They are laboring earnestly for the building up of the church and kingdom of God. There seems never to have been a time when there has been a better opportunity to do missionary work than at the present time, and I am pleased to report that the work of the Lord is gaining headway in Sweden.

We are proclaiming the Gospel in the usual way, but also by illus-