

ELDER SYLVESTER Q. CANNON*Presiding Bishop of the Church*

I rejoice with you, my brethren and sisters, in the opportunity to attend this conference and to partake of the spirit of this and all meetings that have preceded it. I rejoice that I am in the enjoyment of health and strength, and that the Latter-day Saints generally are in good health. I really thought last night that I should not be able to attend conference today. I was taken rather suddenly with all the symptoms of influenza and at two o'clock this morning I was in such a condition that I thought it would be impossible to be here today. But I am happy to say that I was able to overcome that condition entirely and am feeling happy and in sound health.

APPRECIATION OF LOYALTY AND COOPERATION

I appreciate the privileges that have been extended to me in this Church. My great desire is to promote every interest of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the best of my ability and particularly those matters that are entrusted to my care. I am sure that is the spirit and the feeling of all that are engaged in this work and have the spirit of it. I am happy to sustain those two able and devoted men who have been appointed and sustained at this conference as General Authorities of the Church, as I sustain all of the General Authorities. In like manner I sustain all of the presiding officers of the stakes, the wards, and the missions, and I appreciate the splendid cooperation that we have from the stake presidencies, ward bishoprics and mission presidents with our office, in all of the temporal affairs of the Church.

NATION-WIDE BROADCASTS OF CHOIR AND ORGAN

I would like to call your attention also to the splendid service that is being rendered by the tabernacle choir, by the members of the choir, by the director and by the organists. Do you realize the fact that this choir is not only singing with us in our regular meetings in the tabernacle on Sundays and during General Conferences, but that every Sunday morning all the members of the choir meet and give a nation-wide broadcast that is carried over about sixty radio stations throughout the United States as well as by short wave to other countries; that millions of people are listening every Sunday morning to this broadcast; that it is giving wonderful publicity to this city and state and is making the people of this nation better acquainted with the fact that this Church stands for culture and fine music? These members are not only giving that service on Sunday morning but they are also giving voluntary service in the preparation of these songs; and the director and the organists, of course, in like manner are bending every effort toward preparation of the music for these broadcasts; because it requires largely the preparation and presentation of new music from Sunday to Sunday. These broadcasts have become so popular that now the Columbia Broadcasting System, through whose network these programs are being pre-

sented, has requested that the choir produce an hour's program every Sunday instead of a half hour as heretofore.

CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE HOME

There are some things that I would like to discuss briefly this morning as time may permit. I was greatly impressed with the wonderful discourse given by President Grant with regard to the Word of Wisdom. My only regret is that so many of the young people to whom this should be presented were engaged in school work at the time it was presented and did not have the opportunity of hearing it.

I think that there never was a time when there was so much temptation and so many allurements for the young people in the way of developing habits contrary to the spirit and the teaching of the Word of Wisdom as at the present time. I realize the fact that we cannot get away from these allurements and temptations. Advertisements are being presented in the most insidious way to draw people everywhere, young women as well as young men, to do those things which are contrary to the instructions given in the Word of Wisdom. We cannot escape those things. We cannot shelter our young people from seeing and hearing and reading these advertisements. How then can we help them to overcome and enable them to resist temptation? They are bound to meet it wherever they go. It seems to me that there are no means so potent as that of character education in the homes of the Latter-day Saints, whereby parents teach their children the speciousness of the advertisements presented for increased sales of tobacco and of other things that we know are not for our welfare. It seems to me that it is incumbent primarily on the parents, not particularly to preach to children, but to advise and counsel with them and to inquire of them as to their feelings and of the temptations that will come to them, in a kindly parental way, endeavoring to show to them the mistaken and false statements made in such advertisements.

RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATION

I am sure that if we as parents generally throughout the Church will give the attention needed to correct any wrong impressions on the part of our children, whether they be young or mature, we should be able to help them to form correct conclusions and establish themselves in ability to resist these temptations that will come to them in life. If we will take the time to sit down with them and reason and discuss with them, not with any too great formality, but in kindness and consideration, I am sure it will be helpful to them in overcoming these things that they are bound to meet with in every walk of life in all their contacts and experiences.

CHURCH RELIEF WORK FOLLOWING EARTHQUAKE

I would like to call your attention to two or three items that are of rather great interest to me and I believe they are to you. One of them is with regard to the earthquake that recently occurred in California. I would like to read to you a portion of a letter received from a coun-

selor in the Bishopric of Long Beach Ward, which was the center of the earthquake and where the greatest damage was done:

"Immediately after the first shock, which was the only one which caused any loss of life, except another this morning which, I am advised, caused the death of two elderly people who were caught in an apartment, we, together with the Relief Society, began to make a canvass, and up to noon Saturday had only found two of our people injured and none dead. One brother was cut on his arm and one sister with several broken ribs. However, they are getting along fine.

"Yesterday we had Radio Station KFOX broadcast messages instructing all of our eighty-four Ward teachers in 42 districts to immediately cover their respective districts; many had done so up to late last night and so far no additional reports of sick or injured other than our ordinary calls from week to week. Relief Society President Julia Hawkins this morning advises all calls to them have been taken care of.

"The church building seems to be but slightly damaged. Several broken windows, some plaster off in the main auditorium and walls slightly cracked and chipped, but seems to be resting well on foundation and not out of line. We are arranging to have the city engineer make inspection today, and of course cannot advise definitely until after that.

"Many of the other churches in down-town districts are totally destroyed, and a majority of the others have been moved at least a foot off their foundation and will have to be torn down."

Here is a letter along the same line from President LeGrand Richards:

"We are very pleased to advise that none of our people was injured and that no property damage has occurred to either our Church buildings or personal property of our members so far as we have been able to ascertain.

"The Bishop of Alhambra Ward advises that the two inspectors who were sent to inspect their building reported it to be the best constructed brick building in Alhambra. We were in the Hollywood Stake tabernacle when it rocked back and forth like a drunken man but there were no cracks or other damage resulting therefrom."

DIVINITY OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

One of the remarkable things about these reports is that such an organization obtains in the Church whereby the bishopric of a ward, the members of which were scattered throughout a large population, were able to get their ward teachers and their Relief Society teachers to do work immediately in checking up on the members of the ward to see that none was suffering from physical injuries or from other troubles or difficulties. That to me is a very remarkable testimony of the thoroughness and effectiveness of the Church organization, and the fine results that are obtainable through the whole-hearted voluntary cooperation of all those who carry responsibility in the Church.

INCREASE IN CHURCH ACTIVITY AND GROWTH

In addition to the figures given yesterday morning relative to the progress of the Church, I would like to call your attention to some other things. There has been an increase in general activity in the wards and stakes during the past year as compared with the previous year. There is quite a marked increase in the amount of ward teaching done generally throughout all the various wards of the Church. There has been an

increase in the attendance at sacrament meetings as compared with 1931. There has been an increase in attendance at the weekly priesthood meetings. These are important items.

The Lord has declared by revelation the sacrament meetings to be of great importance for the teaching and training of the members of the Church in faith and righteousness. The ward teaching is the most effective and potent means of coming in contact with all the members of the Church month by month, of teaching them to live in peace and harmony, to live the Gospel and to be united as families and to overcome weaknesses and shortcomings.

We have had letters come to our office recently from a number of places, among them from ministers asking about our ward teaching system. They have understood that we were having very great success. It was a new idea to them and they have requested us to give them information upon which our system is based and how it is being carried out.

CHURCH AND PRIESTHOOD GROWTH

Of the total number of converts baptized last year, amounting to 7825, as shown in the report presented by President Grant in the opening session of Conference, there was for the first time, I think, a larger number of converts baptized in the various stakes and wards than in the missions. Baptisms of converts in the stakes and wards amounted to 4009 and in the missions to 3816. Another item of interest, I think, is the number of those who have received the priesthood as compared with the previous year. The total increase in the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood throughout the Church was 7433, of which there were 2875 members of the Melchizedek priesthood and 4558 members of the Aaronic priesthood. The total membership in the priesthood, that is, the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood, at the end of last year, was 171,474, a tremendous army of picked men to battle for righteousness in the Church and in the world for the presentation of the Gospel message to mankind, and the promotion of faith and good works among the members.

PRIESTHOOD SIGNIFIES ACTIVITY

I am sure we realize the fact that with the ordination of these young men—I am speaking particularly of the Aaronic priesthood—it is expected that every one who shall be ordained and every one who has been ordained shall be given specific duties to perform week by week; that they shall not only be appointed to perform duties pertaining to their calling and labors in the priesthood but that these appointments shall be followed up and these young men be brought to realize the fact that the giving of responsibility requires the fulfillment of that responsibility. It is the finest means of preparation and training for future accountability. It trains them to magnify their callings, to be willing to fill their appointments and to carry out those things that are expected of them.

FULFILMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

The statement is made by Owen D. Young, one of the great industrialists of the country, that there is too much lack of leadership

among American business men and unwillingness to take leadership. He states the reason is they are not ready to accept and fill the responsibilities that follow and are a part of leadership. I think that one of the vital means we have in the Church to produce the finest development in young men is through effective training of all members of the priesthood to accept responsibility and fulfil it, not only in the Church, but in the field of life and the various occupations and civic responsibilities that may come to them.

EXPENDITURE OF TITHES

I think you will realize from the statement made of the expenditure of the tithes that the tithes are used entirely for the various purposes which were enumerated yesterday, and that great care is being given by those who have the responsibility of the same—the First Presidency and those who are associated with them—in expending these means as carefully and efficiently as possible, to the end that they may be most effectively distributed. The tithes that are donated by the members of this Church are serving to advance God's purposes in being used for the widest benefit of the Church members as a whole, and, through missionary work, for the benefit of the world.

The Church is doing a remarkable work in the preaching of the Gospel. The members of the Church are giving of their time and their means extensively without stint for the promotion of the Gospel message among mankind at large. They are engaged in doing work for those who have passed away, through the vicarious service that is being done in the temples. Altogether there is great evidence of unselfishness on the part of Latter-day Saints in what they are doing in a financial way, as well as through their direct efforts for the promotion of the welfare of mankind at large.

TITHING AND TITHEPAYERS

Due to the adverse financial conditions, there has been a decrease of tithes paid last year as compared with 1931. There has also been a decrease in the number of tithepayers. This is not so easy to explain: While it is true that many have been out of employment, it would appear that those who were not working and those who suffered losses during the year, could at least have donated to some extent, no matter how small, to be properly recorded. However, it is remarkable how splendidly the Latter-day Saints have demonstrated their faith and devotion to this and other divine principles. And such faith produces blessings. I would like to read to you briefly a statement made by President Hyrum Jensen of the Norwegian Mission that conforms in general to the statements made heretofore by other mission presidents. In this letter, in telling of the very unfavorable economic conditions in Norway, he states: "I feel that the Saints are trying to do their duty in the matter of tithing, but we are feeling the depression more and more as the days go by. It is reported from the different branches of the mission that no full tithepayers have lost their jobs." It is a rather interesting thing to me that in the midst of distress which exists in that land he can make such a

report regarding those who have been faithful in the performance of their duties in the observance of this important principle.

EFFICIENCY IN CHURCH BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

With regard to the manner of building construction in California: We expect henceforth, and it has been evident in the building construction of Church edifices there in the past, to do those things that will promote protection of the buildings against earthquakes. In other words, to design and construct the buildings which shall be erected in the future in those localities so that they will be able to withstand earthquake shocks. As you realize, the great danger comes in earthquake sections from the damage to buildings and the falling of materials which causes injury and sometimes death to people.

Further, the Church is doing everything possible in the building construction that is being undertaken, to exercise the greatest economy and care in the erection of these buildings, designing them to fit the needs of the people and yet not build extravagantly. The result has been that through the work being done largely by contract rather than day work, as had been done previously, avoiding extravagances in buildings, and through saving in costs of materials and labor, very material savings have been effected both to the members of the various wards concerned and to the Church at large. Altogether we find that within the last two years approximately forty percent has been saved in the costs as compared with previous outlay. The extent of the work done has, of course, been much less than it was previously.

I rejoice, my brethren and sisters, in the progress of this work. I know and realize as you do that it is growing, and that there is a power within it that is not to be obtained in any other organization. I pray the Lord to bless and help every one of us to give ourselves wholeheartedly to the advancement of the work of God. I desire to dedicate myself to that end and to work with you and all the members of this Church in unity and faith and righteousness to build up this cause; and I pray the Lord to bless us in our efforts, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The congregation sang the hymn, "We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder John A. Elison, President of the Raft River Stake, offered the closing prayer, after which the Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.