

convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah. This historic building is crowded to overflowing and there is also an audience in the Assembly Hall.

President George Albert Smith is presiding at this session.

Of the General Authorities, Elder Matthew Cowley is absent, in charge of the Pacific Missions, and Elder Alma Sonne is in Europe in charge of the European Missions. President George F. Richards, president of the Council of the Twelve, is resting at home at the suggestion of his doctor. Elder Albert E. Bowen has been with us throughout the Conference but we shall not be privileged to hear from him because his physician advises that we refrain from placing that responsibility upon him. He is recuperating from a recent operation.

The proceedings of this session will be broadcast over KSL, Salt Lake City, and by arrangement through KSL over the stations at Cedar City, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Richfield, Vernal, and at Mesa by transcription.

As we have heretofore announced, any important messages or calls that come for persons supposed to be in attendance at the Conference will be announced at the dismissal of this meeting over the loudspeaking system on the grounds.

The choir music for this session will be rendered by the Brigham Young University Mixed Chorus, Elder Franklin Madsen conducting and Elder Frank W. Asper at the organ.

We shall begin the afternoon services by the Brigham Young University Chorus singing, "Praise Ye the Lord in Heaven."

The opening prayer will be offered by President James H. Walker of the Taylor Stake, Alberta, Canada.

The choir sang "Praise Ye the Lord in Heaven."

The opening prayer was offered by President James H. Walker of the Taylor Stake.

The Brigham Young University Mixed Chorus sang "Lord of All Being."

ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, it is very customary in the Church to pray for the least and the last in the kingdom of God. I have always felt myself among the least, and this afternoon. I am certain I am very nearly among the last. However that may be, I need your prayers and invite them, so that while I speak to you I may be an instrument in the hands of God to offer something of value to us all.

PROPHECY BEING FULFILLED

This forenoon when the statistics of the Church were read I

*Wednesday, April 6**Third Day*

felt as I always feel on occasions of this kind, that prophecy is being fulfilled. Before the Church was organized the Lord spoke to the Prophet Joseph and said to him that a marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men. The six young men who sat around the table on April 6, 1830, and under divine instruction organized the Church, believed it to be true that they were setting out, and putting into operation, a marvelous work of the latter days. No prophecy has been more completely fulfilled than that. From six men in an obscure home near a remote village in New York state has grown this great institution. The statistical condition of the Church as outlined to us today is almost beyond the dreams of men.

I bear my testimony to the reality of this great work, that it is of God, that God instituted it, that he spoke to Joseph Smith, and has spoken to his Church every since, and that we are engaged in the great work of redeeming the human race.

It is good to be with you, good to meet together, knowing our destiny, the work we have to do, and the great reward that the Lord will offer us, in course of time, if, as was said this forenoon, we keep close to the commandments of the Lord.

Those of us who expect to be called upon at these great conferences always have to cast about for some suitable theme to speak upon, some subject of special importance to the people of the Church at the time. I did so myself and finally hit upon a subject that I thought represented a problem of the day of sufficient importance to occupy a part of the time at this great conference. My thoughts were pretty well organized, and I was ready to deliver the message as best I could until last Sunday forenoon when President Smith dropped a remark in his introductory speech, which President McKay also mentioned. One or two other speakers touched upon it also. I was so impressed that I had to change my subject, not because they covered the ground I intended to cover, but because I was impressed to say something in the field that they had mentioned.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

President Smith spoke of education among the Latter-day Saints. With proper humility he spoke of our great achievements in the educational field. It is a pardonable pride that we have in our educational achievements. We have the right to feel glad that we have achieved great things educationally. We have always known that we cannot get very far in any worthy endeavor without education. "The glory of God is intelligence," which means knowledge, plus the proper use of knowledge, has been a beacon light of the Church. We have talked about education, we have tried to secure it ever since the beginning of the Church to these days. We do have a remarkable educational history. You see, I spent a good part of my life in the profession of teaching, and whenever the subject is mentioned, I respond much as the old, retired, fire-engine horse responds when the fire bell rings.

The Church had scarcely been organized when our people began to talk about education. They wanted to provide schools and books for schools. In the difficult times of the earliest days, the Prophet wrote a letter to the Church and said that not only were the people to secure schools and schoolbooks, but also if such means were not available, then the fathers and the mothers should act as instructors to the youth in their homes. The Church began its work on the foundation of moral, mental, and spiritual education.

SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

Later on, when the Church was still young, hard-handed toilers on the farm and in the shop, who had been made converts to the Church, entered the school of the prophets which had been founded for the mature. It is thrilling to look back over our history to the time of the Kirtland Temple. The men left their farms, fields, and shops in the evenings and climbed to the top story, the attic story of the Kirtland Temple, there, in provided classrooms, to study various subjects, languages, mathematics, history, geography, and a variety of subjects. Really our people began there what we call today adult education. It was thought that an older man could not learn; only young people could learn. Since that time the world has come to quite a different conclusion. Today a man is never too old to learn. A woman is never too old to learn. The power to assimilate knowledge remains with us to the last day. Somehow these forebears of ours in the Church understood that.

UNIVERSITIES ESTABLISHED

Then a little later they came to Nauvoo and organized a university. I am not certain for I have not looked it up, but I suspect that the University of the City of Nauvoo was one of the first city tax-supported universities in America. The Church made educational history there.

In time we came here, to Utah, to a barren wilderness. There was work to be done here. Roads, irrigation ditches were to be made; crops were to be raised. A living was to be won from the desert. It was a difficult time. Yet one of the first acts of our territorial legislature was to found a great university, the University of Deseret (now the University of Utah), making it the first university founded west of the Missouri River.

The Church has a noble educational history. We all know that.

What I want to say is something about education itself. It will not take me long. Education may or may not be a good thing. It depends on what we learn. Education is really the accumulated knowledge of mankind, passed on from generation to generation. Each teacher passes on to his pupils that which the world knows. In that way we all benefit from that knowledge and we preserve that

knowledge for those who come after us. This accumulated knowledge of mankind, the knowledge of the world, falls into several distinct parts. Two of the major parts I would like to mention.

FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE

All knowledge falls first into a part or division or group that we call factual. Sometimes we call it truth, which amounts to the same thing. Facts of observation, that which we hear with our ears, see with our eyes, that we recognize through the various senses that the Lord has bestowed upon us make up the first and most important part of knowledge. That kind of knowledge is everlasting, unchanging. Under the same conditions a fact will appear the same throughout the countless coming ages.

HUMAN INTERPRETATIONS

The other division of human knowledge, speaking of the major divisions only, is made up of the human interpretations, explanations, and inferences of the observed facts, the truths in our possession. These inferences, explanations, and theories, interpretations of truth, may or may not be correct. They usually change as more knowledge is acquired by humanity. If education consists chiefly of learning what men have said or thought about the facts of nature and existence, it may mislead students, may lead them into difficult places, often into places of untruth. It is only when education confines itself primarily as to truth, to facts, as observed, it becomes worth while. That is not saying anything against the interpretations of truth. We have the scriptures as an example. We have the right to interpret them as we see fit, but we have no right to teach them as we see fit. We must teach truth as it is given us, whether it be in the domain of revelation or of science or any other field of human activity.

OBLIGATION OF TEACHERS

Therein lies a tremendous danger to our young people and the coming generations. An honest teacher, unless he is ignorant will place before his students—I speak both of students in the Church schools and in state schools, I draw no distinctions—the truth as discovered by many, or revealed by God, and when interpretations are taught, he will label them as such, and say, "This is an interpretation by man of existing truth." That should be done in our priesthood quorums, in auxiliary organizations and in all schools of learning attended by our young people. This is important, of the greatest importance, in the building of happy lives, in a world of peace. President Smith said something last Sunday that pointed in that direction, and it has clung to my mind until I had to speak of it this afternoon.

We have also the field of speculation, very closely related to the

field of interpreting truth. If one wants to see how absolutely confusing and useless and untruthful the field of speculation is, let him go to the philosophers of the ages. Begin with the old philosophers and go down to the philosophers of today. Every one has tried to explain or describe God. Not one has failed to try his hand at it. Every one has set up his own explanation and presented his own kind of God. As you read after them, you find yourself in a state of confusion. Great minds, great thinkers, have tried throughout the ages to solve the same problem and have failed utterly to agree. That is because they have not begun with truth. Therein we are strong. Joseph Smith, on his knees in the grove, saw God and spoke to him. There is no question about the beginnings of this work. God does live, a personal being. We are made in his image. We are carrying out his purposes.

The distinction between a fact and an inference is, or should be, pretty generally understood. I bear you my testimony here this afternoon that in all of our teachings we must discriminate, distinguish between the facts of human knowledge and the interpretation of the facts. Interpretations change from day to day. Once in a great while an interpretation of a great truth becomes a truth itself, but very seldom. Usually there is too much of the humanity of us, mixed in with explained truth. So that we can not well trust our interpretations.

RIGHTS OF CITIZENS

I do not like to have my taxes spent, or my tithing spent, for that matter, in the support of a teacher who does not understand the difference here discussed and who will not be honest enough as he stands before classes to say, "This is a fact, as far as we understand it, and this is but an attempted inference of the fact which may or may not be right." I have no objection to a man who is an atheist, teaching outside of the Church. His faith is his concern, not mine. I would like to convert him to a knowledge of God. But, when he stands before his classes and talks about God and his own atheism, he is going beyond his rights. He is not employed for that purpose. As a citizen I have rights. It is my money and your money used to support the schools whether in our out of the Church.

This may be a schoolroom talk this afternoon, but if so, blame it on President Smith and President McKay. It was their remarks Sunday that started my mind thinking about this very important subject. We have truth. We are not concerned much with interpretation of truth. The sorrows of the world may be traced back, now or in the past to false interpretations of eternal truth. I hope you will also think about the applications of knowledge to daily life, but that is another subject.

My time is up. I am very happy, may I say again, to be in this conference. Not the words alone have made this a great conference.

*Wednesday, April 6**Third Day*

but the spirit which has been present and which has touched our hearts. I do not remember all that has been said; I shall read the sermons when they are printed; but I have felt the spirit of the Church and its people who are building the kingdom of God, and in so doing are moving on toward the completion of the great plan of salvation laid out by the Father himself in the pre-existent state.

God bless us, keep us faithful and true, helpful in this great work, and may we be given the blessings of health and strength, the things we need to carry on this work, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I humbly pray that I may enjoy the blessings of this hour. This has been a great conference in my personal life. I have greatly enjoyed the sessions that have taken place between the conference sessions, when great groups of friends have met on these lovely grounds. I purposely walked up to five or six groups to hear what might be the conversation and in all but one it reflected the preaching services. I rejoice in that.

APPRECIATION OF CONFERENCE

I want to express personally a word of appreciation for the centennial celebration of the Sabbath schools held Sunday evening. I was sitting by my grandson—a little fellow. When they opened the treasure box, he suddenly woke up and said, "Boy, this is now going to be good." I guess he was reflecting his grandfather's spirit. One letter from the box which Brother Royall read impressed me. Brother George Q. Cannon expressed the wish that he might be here when it was opened, and when I heard his grandson pray, I said in my heart, George Q. Cannon is here.

Also during conference time, when I visited the fine reunions of missionaries—two of which I attended—I saw two young men in one reunion meet after not having seen each other for years. They couldn't express their feeling in a handshake. They couldn't express it in words. They embraced as they met. It was beautiful to see. I went to another reunion where the place was crowded with returned missionaries, and I had another experience that greatly delighted me. Missionaries were chatting about their companionship in the missionary field, but their own tongue couldn't quite tell it, and away they went into the Maori tongue, the language of the people where they had labored as missionaries. These things have greatly impressed me: the great spirit of this occasion, the glorious sermons that have been uttered, the testimony of our President, and the narrative of his life which deeply impressed me.