

NINETIETH SEMI-ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

Of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints



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of the Discourses

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and pray. If they want their children to pay tithing, then the parents must pay tithing. It is not sufficient to say to a child, "Go thou and do so and so," because more than likely the child will not go. But if the parents say, "Come now, with me, and do so and so," the child will go with the parent.

So, my brethren and sisters, I have felt in these few words today to emphasize the grave responsibility which is resting upon us with reference to our children; and, let me say, in addition, we should guard our children against evil companionship and evil doing, against the immoralities of the world today, which are very great.

Do you always know, parents, where your children are? If you are at home in the evening, and they are away, do you know where they are? That is the question. Do you know what company they keep? Do you know what hours they keep? If you would bring them up properly you must know these things; you must be posted; you must keep your eye upon the children, because many of them are weak, and all of them are inexperienced. They are beset by temptations, and they need your counsel and your aid.

Woe unto that man, or woe unto that woman who despises little children, who passes them coldly by, who ignores them, and who has no thought or love for them, because these little ones are the gift of God unto man, precious immortal souls. Let us remember this, brethren and sisters, and let us give the children that care and attention that are essential to their welfare and salvation, which is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

It is three and one-half years since I last had the opportunity of attending a general conference of the Church, and I assure you, my brethren and sisters, that this opportunity affords me much genuine pleasure. I have been delighted with the privilege of meeting so many of the brethren and sisters with whom I have had a personal acquaintance, and I regret that I am unable to entertain in my own home, at conference time, those of whose hospitality I have partaken while visiting the stakes in Zion.

THE SITUATION IN THE BRITISH MISSION

As most of you are aware, I have but recently returned from England, Liverpool being the headquarters of the European mission over which I had the honor of presiding while there. Since my return, many people native of Great Britain, and elders who have labored there, have enquired of me as to the conditions of the people and of the work in that mission. No doubt but there are others to whom a brief recital of conditions over there will be of interest. Before the war there were from three to four hundred missionaries from Zion

laboring in the British Mission. But few local brethren were used as branch presidents and none as conference presidents, nor as traveling elders. A prohibition by the British Government having been placed upon aliens entering the county, it became impossible to keep up the former members. No missionaries arrived in Great Britain between December, 1916, and Mar. 31, 1919, and our force of elders from home was reduced to seven in June of the present year, when we received ten others. This, however, did not represent our entire missionary force, for we had called into the service a number of local brethren and sisters who did yeoman service for the Lord, which labor also proved a great blessing unto those who were thus employed. When I left Liverpool, last July, we had twenty-three local brethren, laboring as traveling elders and in the neighborhood of three hundred seventy-five local lady missionaries laboring in the British mission. All of the seventy-five branches, and ten of the thirteen conferences were presided over by the local elders. The tithes of the mission increased materially each year while I was there and during that period almost doubled in amount. The number of conversions to the Gospel also kept up well; in fact, during the year, 1917 we had more baptisms in Great Britain than during either 1916 or 1915, when there was a considerably larger number of elders employed. There is scarcely anything connected with the church that stimulates the faith of the elders so much as to give them responsibility. Activity in the cause inspires love for, and interest in it. I have proven to my satisfaction that when we work for the Lord we love him more, and as we love him more, we have more desire to work for, and serve him. It works both ways. It is equally true that if we have no appreciation of what the Lord has done for us and what he designs to do for us, we will not have much affection for him, and if we do not love him we will not give to him much valuable service. Love and service to God and man are necessary qualifications in order to obtain eternal life, the greatest gift of God to man.

We have proven that the British Mission is self-sustaining as well in its working arrangement as in its finances. The work can be carried on by the local brethren and sisters if we be not permitted to send missionaries from Zion. What I have said with reference to the British Mission is measurably true in regard to all the European missions.

THE GREAT WAR.

The great European war had been in progress two years before I arrived in England. During my stay in that land, I saw it ended by the signing of the armistice. I was there also during the sitting of the Peace Congress. We had a varied experience and had feelings of great anxiety over there as you had here, and perhaps we had occasion for being more anxious. We were nearer the war zone. The

wounded were brought home to us in England by the train loads. All the hospitals were filled and school buildings and private residences were converted into hospitals and filled to their capacity. It was evidenced on every hand that a terribly destructive war was being waged in close proximity to us. The daily news paper reports of the sinking of ships by the enemy and the frequent raids made upon the coast cities of England by zeppelins and other enemy air craft and by the German war ships were all calculated to unnerve the people and cause them to realize the horrors of it all. I think, too, that the newspapers did not reveal all the damage done to life and property in England. There was a significant purpose in keeping it camouflaged. I am happy to be able to say that through all these experiences there were but few casualties among the Latter-day Saints. We were constantly praying for the protection of the elders and the Saints at home as well as for those who had gone to the front and we acknowledged the protecting care of God which was over them.

It was necessary for most of our elders to return home during the war period which was extremely dangerous as the enemy submarines were lying in wait for them. Mines laid by the enemy were also a constant menace. All ships were obliged to travel without lights at night and as a consequence many collisions occurred and some sinkings. A ship on which some of our elders had embarked was run into and damaged so that she had to return to harbor for repairs. These things caused us great anxiety but, thank the Lord, none of our elders lost their lives from such causes. I tried to live near to the Lord so as to receive inspiration from him to direct the affairs of the mission and that his protection might be over us and I encouraged the Saints to do likewise and we feel that our prayers and labors were not in vain.

THE UTAH AND IDAHO SOLDIERS IN ENGLAND.

Many of the United States soldiers came through Liverpool enroute to France. A rest camp was established at Knotty Ash, on the outskirts of Liverpool where there were almost constantly great numbers of American soldiers. Some of our "Mormon" boys were billeted there for weeks. We had the pleasure of a visit at Mission headquarters from Brigadier-General Richard W. Young, Chaplains Brigham H. Roberts and Calvin S. Smith and many others. Chaplains Roberts and Smith addressed the Saints in Liverpool. Some of our soldier boys stationed at London rendered valuable missionary assistance. We were able to help some of our boys while they were in France by providing them with garments, such clothing as could not be obtained elsewhere in that country. Some of the boys had the spirit of missionary work having previously had that kind of experience. We supplied them with literature for distribution and very much good and some conversions were accomplished in that way.

BURYING GROUND OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS.

Before leaving for home, accompanied by Sister Richards, Elder Arnold G. Holland of Rexburg and Albert Smith, son of President George Albert Smith, I went out to Ellerton cemetery on the outskirts of Liverpool where six hundred forty American soldiers were buried, they having died from the influenza and other causes, and by permission of the care taker dedicated those graves. The section of the cemetery used for these burials is apart from the main burial ground and is a beautiful place. The graves are made in systematic order and the name and number of each person buried there are plainly indicated by lettering and numbering on a cross made of 2 x 4 hardwood standing about two and a half feet above ground. A register is also kept in the sexton's office. This information should be of special interest to those having friends or relatives buried there. The influenza plague afflicted the people there as it did the people in this country causing wide-spread fatality among soldiers and civilians, the strong and fit seeming to be special objects for its attack.

THE HAND OF GOD IN THE VICTORY FOR THE ALLIES.

While the war was in progress we were naturally anxious and were praying that the Lord would give the victory to the Allies, with the United States associated, believing that they were in the right. When the war did come to an end with the signing of the armistice we believed that God had given us the victory that militarism might be crushed and that those glorious principles vouchsafed to us through the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of this great country might be established in the countries of Europe. I think I would be doing less than my duty if I did not acknowledge the hand of the Lord in this victory and did not praise and thank him with all my soul for this deliverance.

I believe that the field of God's activity is not confined to his Church, and that inspirations from him is not limited to the general authorities of the Church or its membership. There are millions of our Father's children in other countries, whom he loves and in whose welfare here and hereafter he has deep interest. He desires that this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to them as it has been preached to us and to our fathers.

GOSPEL DOOR TO THE NATIONS WILL BE OPENED AS RESULT OF THE WAR.

It is my firm belief that as a result of the war and the victory to the Allies that the doors of nations hitherto closed against us to the preaching of the gospel, will be opened and that we will be permitted to enter into those new fields and into fields which have been restricted in the past, and preach the everlasting gospel. This will help compensate for the loss sustained.

While the Peace Congress was in session we were praying in secret and in public that the members of that body might be inspired to produce a treaty which would be just to all the nations, one which would be acceptable to all. We were also praying that some provision might be made by which such wars might forever be prevented. When that important body of men, after months of careful, prayerful deliberation brought forth the Peace Treaty including the League of Nations Covenants, I believed that God had been instrumental in its accomplishment. Why should we not expect answer to our prayers and theirs?

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, GOD'S WAY TO PEACE.

I returned from my mission on the 25th of July and on the 27th spoke from this stand. Without any previous intention of mentioning the League of Nations, and not knowing that in this country there was strong opposition to the League Covenant, I stated as my belief that President Woodrow Wilson is one of the greatest men of his time, and that in his work pertaining to the war and peace that he had been inspired of the Lord. Nothing I have read or heard from the opponents to the League Covenant has caused me to change my mind. I am glad to know that my attitude towards this the most important question under consideration by the nations at this time, is in harmony with that of the President of the United States and with the views of the President of the Church.

The constitution of the United States, though established by the Lord, through wise men whom he raised up for that purpose, was not perfect and later had to be amended. It, too, was opposed by men who were considered wise, but the greater wisdom prevailed. The League Covenant may not be perfect but I believe that it is the product of wisdom and of inspiration, the same as was the constitution of this country, and that the Lord will see it through, also that it will be effective in preventing wars between the nations which are conceded to be the most calamitous.

I believe that had there been a League of Nations such as the one now offered, when Germany launched this war, it never would have been accomplished and the world would have been saved all the loss of life and property and the broken hearts the war entailed. Think of it, my brethren and sisters—seven and one half millions of people killed on the battle field. It would require seven hundred fifty tabernacles of the capacity of this one, ten thousand, to hold that number. A destruction of one hundred eighty-six billions of the world's wealth can only be comprehended by those who have been accustomed to considering enormous sums of money. Do we want a repetition of such catastrophe? Something is in need of being done to prevent it. A League of Nations as a part of the Peace Treaty is the only thing offered. Even the opponents to the League offer no substitute. It is a case of negating that which is offered as the best and only solu-

tion of a much perplexed question. The cause of the proposed League of Nations like that of "Mormonism," is a positive one. Its opponents are negative. We say that the League can be used to prevent wars between nations; they say it will fail of its purpose, and are trying to make their predictions come true. We say, let us give it a trial; they say no, it is useless to do so. There was a certain wise man in the days of the primitive church, educated at the feet of the great Gamaliel. He was a persecutor of the Saints, but through the special providence of God he was made to see his mistake. According to his own testimony he had acted conscientiously. We can afford to give those who oppose the League credit for being conscientious, and we should ask ourselves: Is it not possible that I am mistaken in this matter?

I have asked myself that question and have analyzed my position the best I could but have not been able to arrive at any other conclusion than that in this thing I am right. I have been used to the inspiration of the Spirit of God and if I am not mistaken, I have inspiration upon this subject; that it is God's way of helping to establish peace and good will on earth, and I am not sure but that a fight against the League of Nations, as it has been presented to the Senate of the United States for ratification is a fight against God. May he deliver us, I pray, and guide us aright in all things. May he inspire the members of the United States Senate who have the responsibility of ratifying the Treaty, including the Covenant of the League of Nations, as he inspired our fathers in the forming of the Constitution of the United States. Surely the interests of many nations surpass the interests of one. God remembered the needs of this nation in times of great peril, and I believe that he will not be unmindful of us now, and of those who fought with us for such great and glorious principles, and of the other nations, for they are as much in need of his divine providence as we. May the Lord add his blessing, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang:

High on the mountain top
 A banner is unfurled;
 Ye nations, now look up;
 It waves to all the world;
 In Deseret's sweet, peaceful land—
 On Zion's mount behold it stand!

For God remembers still
 His promise made of old,
 That He on Zion's hill
 Truth's standard would unfold!
 Her light should there attract the gaze
 Of all the world in latter days.

His house shall there be reared
 His glory to display;

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And people shall be heard
 In distant lands to say,
 We'll now go up and serve the Lord,
 Obey His truth, and learn His word.

For there we shall be taught
 The law that will go forth,
 With truth and wisdom fraught
 To govern all the earth;
 Forever there His ways we'll tread,
 And save ourselves with all our dead.

Then hail to Deseret!
 A refuge for the good,
 And safety for the great,
 If they but understood
 That God with plagues will shake the world
 Till all its thrones shall down be hurled.

In Deseret doth truth
 Rear up its royal head;
 Though nations may oppose,
 Still wider it shall spread;
 Yes, truth and justice, love and grace,
 In Deseret find ample place.

Conference adjourned until Saturday morning, 10 o'clock.
 The benediction was pronounced by Elder David R. Langlois,
 President of the Burley stake of Zion.