

CIVIC REFORM THE CRYING NEED

Forceful and Eloquent Appeal for
Civic Righteousness, Made
By Elder W. H. King.

PRINCIPLE BEFORE PARTY

Three Sessions of the Salt Lake Stake
Quarterly Conference.

Civic righteousness was the theme of an interesting discourse delivered by Elder William H. King, at the tabernacle yesterday afternoon. A large congregation listened attentively to the speaker, as he forcefully pointed out some of the defects of municipal government, and suggested improvements as to existing conditions.

The Galveston and the Des Moines municipal plans of government were referred to by Elder King, but he explained that it was not his intention to suggest either of them as desirable to be adopted locally. His remarks, he said, would be his own views, and were not intended to reflect in any way the attitude of the Church of which he is a member. The theme was one that was receiving attention in several of the churches of the city, having been suggested as a suitable subject for pulpit discussion. The services, which were a continuation of the conference of the Salt Lake stake, were presided over by President Nephi L. Morris. The musical exercises consisted of the following selections by the choir: "Sweet is the Word, My God my King," "The Lord's Prayer," "Thou Through Thy Way," and "Dark Days of Error." Elder Andrew Jensen offered the invocation and benediction was pronounced by Elder August W. Carlson.

ELDER W. H. KING.

Following is a brief synopsis of Elder King's remarks:

A church should not confine itself to mere spiritual things. Many problems present themselves before the public, social, moral and economic, in the solving of which the Church should lend its aid. The duty of the Church is to work for the general welfare of mankind. It should not be confined to building churches, fasting and praying, but should be active in the amelioration of suffering, pain and distress, and to elevate mankind in all phases of life. The Kingdom of God should be brought into the world, into the nation, into the state and into the family. The Kingdom of God should be brought into and made a part of the Kingdom of God.

PRINCIPLE ABOVE PARTY.

There should be a moral awakening in municipal, state and national affairs. Partisanship should not prevail to the detriment of principle. There may easily be too much partisanship. Good government should be the aim and purpose of public endeavor, rather than the accomplishment of private ends.

This great republic was founded because of the wrong use of political power, on the part of the mother country. There are great political evils in this country, and as long as these evils follow the people, their destiny, they should be supported. But if departure is made from the course of right, sanction should cease, and principle be held above party.

Coming to state and municipal affairs, these are always with us. It is generally conceded that municipal governments are generally more or less subject to graft. The graft has not reached the high point that it should have done, and not enough attention is paid to these matters by the public. With governments, as with individuals, the non observance of moral laws brings destruction, and the wrath of an offended Deity. The people should easily become apathetic. Too many think that the government was founded by immortal spirits, and that there is absolute security, and no need of watchfulness and vigilance. Governments do not enhance themselves no matter how great, and good they may be and unless moral, honor and integrity prevail the best government of church must pass away. We can't have a good government in this city and state, except that a moral public sentiment prevails. The temperance movement, now sweeping the country, is a good thing, unless backed by public moral sentiment. The greatness of the future depends upon the actions of today.

CIVIC APATHY.

We owe a duty, a civic duty, to ourselves, to our town, and state and our nation. Too many do not take sufficient interest in civic questions. Only a few are truly public-spirited. The city does not belong to office holders. It belongs to the people, and each individual is a part of the city. If a person is known for his selfishness, for his love of progress, for his love of the reputation of the people within the city. If a town has a bad reputation, the citizens suffer in the opinion of their neighbors.

We want our city to be known for all that is good and praiseworthy. The glory of Athens has come down through the ages, because of the just pride taken by her people in all that made for greatness and renown. We should not be found knocking our own city, but should have a personal pride in its growth and development. We do not want a saloon on every corner, nor questionable places of any kind, as an offense to decency. Better public utilities are wanted, and less partisanship is desirable. Partisanship should cease when the polls are closed, and the hands of public officials should be laid up when they are seeking to do their duty. Failure on the part of an official redounds to the detriment of every person under that government.

How shall the best government be secured? The Galveston plan and Des Moines plans are much talked of, and each has distinctively successful features that commend themselves. Generally speaking there is much that is commendable in the manner in which municipalities are conducted. Reform is needed, very much needed. In private concerns, fitness for place alone is considered, but in municipal affairs common sense and reason are thrown to the wind, and offices are created, offices to be filled by parasites and moral perverts. Men should be chosen because they are men, and have the welfare of the public at heart. In comparison with some municipalities this city has done fairly well, irrespective of which party is in control.

The duty of each individual is to take a personal interest in civic affairs. Each man and woman is a shareholder in this corporation, and the same care should be exercised in it as in private concerns. Men should be selected, not because of politics, but because of their moral fitness and integrity. Without this no plan of government can be successful. The great requisite is a moral sentiment

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of high ideals, an aim for civic righteousness. If we want a great people we must begin in the city, and the result will extend to the state and to the nation. With the individual, the unit under proper control, the rest must necessarily follow. The spirit of self-government should be developed, beginning with the city. The tendency is to pay attention to national and state affairs, to the detriment of the city, having been suggested as going on, and immense changes are being effected. Public ownership of utilities, will soon be the order, when monopolies will not control as they do today, and then will valuable franchises belonging to the people not be thrown into the lap of greed and graft.

ELDER O. F. WHITNEY.

Elder Orson F. Whitney was the next speaker, addressing the meeting, in part as follows:

I have a testimony concerning the work of God. My heart is filled with gratitude because I am a member of His Church. It seems as if I had always been in relationship with His saints. I can not conceive how I could have been so long in the world, and yet have been so near to Him. There was a time in my life when I was more or less indifferent to religion, but God in His mercy broke through that crust of indifference and let light into my soul and gave me an appreciation of truth and righteousness and today I can not understand how it would be possible for me to be indifferent to spiritual things or to be hegetical of the blessings of God.

When our blessings have taken wings and have flown, it is then that we know their value. I do not want to lose my membership in the Church and the light that has been taught me, the worth of the privilege of enjoying the work of God. A man who has a good wife may not realize her worth until she is taken away by death; a woman may not realize the value of her husband until he is taken away by death. We should appreciate our blessings while we have them and before they are taken away from us. I want the light that I have to grow brighter and brighter.

Many have said that they would give much if they could only know that the gospel as taught by the Latter-day Saints is the truth. A man who had left the Church said that he would give everything that he possessed if he could feel sure that Mormonism was not the work of God. His confidence in the great work of God, that a commentary on a wrecker's life represents a class of people who do not know that this is God's work but fear that it is. When a person has once been in the Church and the light goes out, the darkness is tenfold. When a man wants to be placed where he is before he received the light. It is far better never to have received the testimony and then lost it than to have received it and then lost it. But one way to keep the light of the gospel burning, and that is to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

God commands, yet men obey not. Then they say in their hearts, This is not the work of the Lord. But God never fails to fulfill His promises. When looked for results do not come, the trouble is not with Jehovah but with men. There are thousands in this Church who can testify that when they had repented of their sins and had been baptized, they received the Holy Ghost. Every time a sincere man prays his titling he receives an immediate blessing, which is the Spirit of God. To some this may seem of no consequence, but it is more precious than silver and gold, houses and lands. When the Savior was about to go away from His disciples He wanted to give them something of great value. Did He promise them riches and honor and thrones and power? No. He gave them something greater than these. He said, I will send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, that proceedeth from the Father. That was the most precious thing that our Lord could leave behind Him.

The most important man in any age is he who can answer this question: "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" The poet and philosopher the musician and painter may do their wondrous works, but greater than they is he who can solve the problem involved in that question. When will come a time when all earthly things will pass away. In that day what will remain? Eternal life, the greatest gift of God. It is the Prophet Joseph Smith who is the most important man in this age, for he answered the question propounded to the Apostle Peter and pointed out the things necessary to obtain eternal life. Through repentance and baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit we may begin that course which will lead us to eternal life. Let us so live that the Spirit of God will abide with us and we shall never grow dim. May we never deem anything as essential as our membership in the Church of God.

After the singing of an anthem, entitled "Zion's benediction was pronounced by Elder George R. Emery.

EVENING SESSION.

The third and final session of the conference was held in the Assembly hall, at 7 o'clock in the evening. This meeting was devoted to the interests of the priesthood quorums of the stake. The Twenty-second ward choir, assisted by the orchestra, sang "True to the Faith." Prayer was offered by Bishop George R. Jones of the Twenty-third ward. Singing, "How will the saints rejoice to tell and count their sufferings o'er."

President Nephi L. Morris spoke as follows: This is a special conference of the priesthood of the stake, to which the public has been invited, and we are pleased to have so large an attendance here to listen to the plan devised for the strengthening of the priesthood. About a year ago Elder David O. McKay of the quorum of apostles began in Weber stake a movement for making the quorums more efficient. The result of this was a large increase in attendance and interest on the part of those holding the priesthood. The general authorities have decided to make this movement universal throughout the Church. A committee consisting of members of the quorum, the presiding bishopric, and some instructors in the Church schools have been appointed to prepare outlines of study for the use of all the quorums,

from the high priests to the deacons, leaving out the seventies, for whom the first council of seventy had already devised a manual.

On the first Monday of January, 1909, the new work will begin. The lessons are divided into two parts. The first relates to the theoretical studies, the second to the practical duties of religious work. The plan contemplates a course of three years for each of the quorums. These meetings will be held weekly. All the quorums will assemble in general assembly, under the direction of the bishopric. After opening exercises, the quorums will take up their separate work. As there are few high priests in some of the wards, and as many of these brethren are aged and infirm, it may not be possible in all cases to have classes for the high priests, but if there are enough to justify the formation of a class they will take up their part just as the other quorums will do. It is not proper to have the deacons conduct their own exercises. This should be done by some other person. Select some brother who has a conversational ability as a teacher to take charge of the class. 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