

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 20.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, MAY 5, 1894.

Vol. XLVIII.

DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday, April 7, 1894, by

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I shall require the assistance of the congregation this afternoon in order that I may make myself heard and speak of those things which will do good. I feel my dependence upon the Lord for His Spirit and for strength to do my duty on this occasion. We have had a variety of subjects treated upon during our meetings, ten of the Twelve Apostles having addressed you, each of them having spoken upon one or more different subjects—all of interest to the people, and it is necessary that these things should be weighed carefully by us, that our coming together may not be in vain.

THE TABERNACLE CHOIR.

There are a few things which I would like to call to your attention. One thing is the concert that is to be given here this evening by the Tabernacle Choir. Perhaps many of the Latter-day Saints are not aware of the fact that it is through the proceeds of these concerts that Brother Evan Stephens and the Choir are able to meet their legitimate and necessary expenses—and the expenses of so large a choir are by no means inconsiderable. They have their music to procure, and many other expenses attending their labors; and they raise means to meet these expenses by giving to the people their delightful music. It is through practice and indefatigable labor that they have attained the proficiency which they have reached, by which, as you are aware, they went to the World's Fair last summer, and if justice had been done them they would undoubtedly have carried away the first prize as the best singers in competition with all those contestants from the United States and from foreign countries. Without being an authority on the subject, my decision was rendered on the spot that the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir carried off the first prize at the Fair, but they were awarded the second. Having said this much, I invite this whole congregation to be present this evening, no matter what it costs. It will not cost you a great deal, and you will get your money's worth, if you love music. If you don't love music, you ought to come here and get a little of the love of it stirred up within you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND Y. M. M. I. A. NORMAL CLASSES.

I suppose the Latter-day Saints are

generally aware of the fact that we have Sabbath schools, which are of vast importance to our children, and which are necessary for the good of our youth. It is requisite at this advanced stage of our proceedings and experience that men and women should have opportunity of becoming qualified for the labor and duty of Sabbath school instructors. For this purpose we have established in the Brigham Young Academy at Provo a normal class, to which Sunday school teachers may go and receive instruction from the best intelligence and under the best rules that we know of, by which they may become qualified to more efficiently and effectively teach the children in the Sabbath schools. To meet the expenses of this normal class in the Brigham Young Academy provisions have been made by the Sunday school authorities.

There are also Mutual Improvement Associations organized throughout the land. In these associations many a young man has received that impetus in the work of the Lord which has made of him in after life a successful minister of the Gospel to the nations of the earth. Your sons who attend these associations will give you pride and joy when they are called to go out to the world to preach the Gospel, because having attended these associations and qualified themselves to preach the Gospel, they go out prepared to meet the errors and traditions of men, and to advocate the principles of the Gospel with power and in the demonstration of the Spirit of God. They do themselves and the cause which they represent honor; they do their parents honor; and they do honor to the associations in which they have received their preparation. Yet these associations are comparatively in their incipency and much more labor is necessary to make them more effective in the education and qualification of our young men for this work. In order that we may the better teach our young men in regard to these matters, we have also established a normal class in the Brigham Young Academy at Provo, where today there are in attendance from sixty to ninety young men, from all parts of the country, taking a ten weeks' course of instruction, that they may go home and become in turn teachers to the young men of the associations to which they belong. But, unfortunately for the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations, we have not been so successful as the Sunday schools have been in collecting means for the payment of the expenses of teaching this large class of our young brethren; and it has been agreed by the General Superintendency that fifty cents a year shall be required of every member of the associations in order to pay for this and for other ex-

penses connected with publishing the record books, certificates and circular letters which are necessary. The object in referring to this matter here is to say, before the President of the Church (who is also the General Superintendent of the Y. M. M. I. A.) and the Twelve Apostles, and the Presidents of Stakes and Bishops, as well as those who are associated more directly with the mutual improvement work, that we expect to collect from the members of these associations the sum of fifty cents a year from each one, in order that we may meet our legitimate expenses; as the choir have to have means to meet their expenses so do we to meet ours; in getting theirs they give you music and enjoyment; we help to educate your sons. So with the Sunday schools. What benefit do the people receive from these sources? Can you compute the value of these institutions in dollars and cents? You cannot; and yet it costs you very little, while you are preparing a corps of intelligent and valiant men and women for this good work by the little contribution required. So you are preparing your sons to be ministers of the Gospel, defenders of the faith, and exponents of the principles of life and salvation to the world by merely contributing this insignificant sum of fifty cents per year. Parents ought to urge their children to be faithful to this little duty; and children who are not able to furnish this themselves ought to ask their parents to assist them, that we may not allow these interests to be uncared for and not sustained while they are such means of benefit to the whole people of the Church.

CARD-PLAYING.

Brother M. W. Merrill referred yesterday to the subject of card-playing. I desire not to prolong the meeting by going over this subject again, but merely to refer to it by way of emphasizing, if I can, that which he said. I want to tell you a circumstance that I heard of. I think the person is in this house who told me, and I shall therefore be very careful to tell you only what I heard from that person, for fear I might be charged with overstating matters. This person is aged, reliable, and a good Latter-day Saint. I am not going to tell you whether it was a woman or a man; at all events, I shall not tell you if I can help it, though it may slip out. This person told me that he or she went to Manti to attend to some Temple work. While at Manti she (laughter) or he was stopping at a house where a number of other people were stopping who had gone to Manti for a similar purpose that my informant had gone for. After supper, a number having gathered together, the question arose, "What shall we do to pass the time?" And it was determined that the best and most profitable, the