

condition to comprehend our duties to-day and what is lying before us, that the purposes of God concerning us as Latter-day Saints may be carried out. I trust that the Spirit of God may be with not only those who speak and teach during this Conference, but with those also who sit and hear. My prayer to God is that His blessing may be over us, that our minds may be open to comprehend our duties, our blessings, and those things which are required at our hands; that we may be true and faithful in our labors while we dwell in the flesh, so that when we get through we may be satisfied with our labors here, and be justified when we are called to give an account of the deeds done in the body. I say, God bless you. I pray for His Holy Spirit to rest upon us as the Saints of God, and upon those who may address us; which is my desire in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON.

Dawning of a brighter day—Predictions in relation to the work of God—Gulded by the Spirit of prophecy—Trials and deliverances, past, present and prospective—the missionary department—Advisability of using women as missionaries.

It is gratifying this morning to see so large an assemblage in this building, at the commencement of our Conference, and it is to be hoped that the interest that is manifested today by those who are present will be maintained during the Conference, that through that interest we may obtain a goodly decree of the Spirit of God, and may all feel, when this Conference closes, that it has been the best Conference we ever attended. This is the usual feeling which those who attend the Conferences experience. At each Conference the blessings of God that are received appear to be greater than ever before, and of course this feeling is produced by the interest that each one has in attending the meetings and in listening to the instructions and drinking into the spirit of the Conference. It is most gratifying to all of us to see President Woodruff and to hear his voice. As he has said, he scarcely expected a few days ago to be able to attend this Conference, suffering as he did from a very

severe attack of cold. But he is here with us, and it is a cause of great satisfaction and pleasure to all to see him and to hear his voice, even if it is only for a brief period.

As President Woodruff has said, the progress of the work is very gratifying. It is an important period in which we are living. A great change has taken place in relation to this work and its bearing upon the nations. No doubt the greater portion of this congregation will remember the promises that were made by the servant of God during the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple five years ago. Predictions were made then that seemed unlikely to be fulfilled, looking at affairs as men naturally look at them. But not a word was said concerning the progress of this work and the favor that it would find from that time forward that has not been literally fulfilled.

As I have said, a great change has taken place in relation to the work of the Lord. It occupies a different position, in many respects, to that which it has ever occupied before. It was a cause of consolation to the Saints, in the dark hours that we witnessed some ten or twelve years ago, to hear the Elders predict that a better day was about to dawn upon the people, and that we should emerge from the trials and difficulties and sorrows of those days with greater influence and more power, more respected as a people than we ever had been. It seemed highly improbable that those predictions would be fulfilled, because the bitterness entertained toward the Latter-day Saints and their religion was so widespread and deep-seated. But those predictions have been fulfilled.

We have often been surrounded by very difficult circumstances, and there have been many times in our history when it seemed as though this work of God would be overthrown and all his purposes brought to naught. Those who have fought against this work have indulged in those anticipations. (The measures which they undertook, and which they endeavored to carry out, had for their object the destruction of this organization and the breaking up of this people. They supposed these measures sufficient to accomplish the ends they had in view. If they had not felt sure of this, they would, with-

out doubt, have tried other plans.

That which has sustained the Latter-day Saints during their times of trial has been the spirit of prophecy. The Lord has given to His Elders the spirit of prophecy. In the midst of the most terrible trials, when the people were broken up, driven out from their homes and possessions, in a state of utter destitution, without food, without proper clothing, without shelter, homeless wanderers, scattered by the ruthless hand of violence—in those dark hours the Lord gave unto His servants the spirit of prophecy. It rested upon them in power, and they predicted to the people that a better day would dawn upon them, and they would emerge from their trials stronger and better, more firmly rooted in the faith which the Lord had revealed to them, than they were before, more than once in the history of the Latter-day Saints have mobs driven them from their homes—the places the Lord had designated as places of gathering; and they were a scattered people, broken up, and without an abiding place. But under the inspiration of the Almighty, through the spirit of prophecy that He gave to His servants, and to the people themselves, they were drawn together and held by bonds that were invisible to human eyes. And though at times they were widely separated, they were drawn together to the new gathering place, which under the inspiration of the Almighty through His servants, and in which they themselves also shared, they knew to be the place for them once more to assemble. How numerous soever the temptations all around them to induce them to desert the cause of God, to leave a people who were so persecuted and who had to endure such trials, these invisible bonds of which I speak drew them together and prompted them to again attempt to build up cities and temples, where they could worship the Almighty according to the commandments which He had given unto them.

It is truly marvelous to look back upon the history of the Latter-day Saints; to see the power that had been manifested in holding them together as they have been. As I have said, those who framed plans against them, supposed they could not fail in destroying the organization of the Church

and separating the people in such a way that they would never again be united. But the people did gather together again. It was the power of God that did this. It was the spirit of prophecy that rested upon the servants of God, which encouraged the people, which told them that the Lord had revealed and established His Church on the earth, and that there was neither power on earth nor in hell that could destroy it, or that could thwart His purposes, as predicted by the mouths of His holy prophets. As in the past, so it has been of late years. That same spirit has rested upon the people. And there is this grand peculiarity connected with this work; it has not been those men alone who have been chosen by the Lord to lead who have had this spirit. They have not prophesied without a witness on the part of the faithful people themselves that that which they said was the truth and from the Almighty. For in the hearts of all the Latter-day Saints there has been a responsive echo to the words of hope, cheer and comfort and prophecy that have been given by those upon whom the spirit of prophecy has rested. The people have felt the spirit, they have been cheered and sustained by it. We have seen this so often that we know that that which the Lord has spoken concerning His work will be fulfilled.

It is astonishing, when we reflect upon it, what has been done in this respect. We have seen people driven out from their homes in utter destitution, crossing the plains, with improvised wagons, made in the rudest manner, out of the greenest material, with cows, or oxen, or ponies, or anything that could be hitched up to draw them; a few personal effects thrown into the wagon, with a small amount of food, many of the men, and the women, too, almost barefooted, and the children in the same condition—all inspired by one spirit, and that the Spirit of God. There was nothing in their circumstances, that could be seen by the natural eye to cheer or to sustain them. But they were full of hope, buoyant in their feelings, traveling with as much confidence and certainly as though they knew every step they had to take and that there was a good place ahead of them which they would reach and in the

pleasures of which they could partake. We have seen this, I say, and it has been an astonishing illustration of what God can do for a people; of how He can sustain them, and inspire them to do the work that He requires at their hands.

When the Saints were in Iowa (then a territory), traveling through, and afterwards at Winter Quarters, the women, in many instances, took their feather beds, and sent them down to Missouri to sell, in order to get a little provision. All sorts of expedients were resorted to in order to get a little food. There was Missouri on the left, inviting the people—a good land, food in plenty, a land where they could live with comparative ease. But did the Saints swerve? Did they, during the dreadful days of Winter Quarters, think they must desert that place where so many died through exposure and the want of suitable food, and go where they could get some of the comforts and conveniences of life? Were such thoughts in the hearts of the people? No; no such feeling was manifested. If any deserted then, they were so few as not to be remembered. The people had a mission. Each man, woman and child (that was old enough) felt that God had entrusted to him and to her a mission; and with unswerving integrity, with unflinching courage, they maintained their foothold there until the time when they could start further west.

It was that same spirit and intensity of devotion that inspired them in coming to this land. And what was it that kept the people here? What influence was there operating upon them? Was there anything inviting in this land? To look at it now, and to imagine that this was its condition, when the brethren and sisters came here in the first place, you would say, "this is an inviting country, a delightful place to stop." But no such sight as we now witness was beheld by them. Everything was forbidding. It looked as though the people might starve to death; and after the crickets came it certainly looked for a while as though they would starve to death. Did the Latter-day Saints falter then? No, they did not. What was it that sustained them? It was this same spirit of prophecy that I have alluded to—the Spirit of God, which

is the Spirit of prophecy. The Elders testified that this was the place which God had chosen, and which He had appointed as a place of gathering for His Saints; and they themselves had the same testimony, the same spirit. A peculiar love sprung up in the hearts of the people for this land, even in those days. There was something most attractive about its mountains and valleys and these clear streams of water that flowed from the mountains. One thing that added to its charm was, it was a land of liberty, a land of freedom, a land where mobs could not come and attack us, as they had done in the past; a place where the families of the Saints, and the leading men among them, could go to bed in peace and quietness, undisturbed by the fear that they would be attacked during the night. This brought a strange and delightful feeling of relief. If they only had bread to eat, or sufficient to sustain life; if they had only water to drink, I believe that the great bulk of the people—with scarcely an exception, I may say—would have been content to remain here even under those circumstances. The idea of having fruit such as we now have, and in such abundance, was scarcely anticipated. If anticipated at all, it was by but very few, because the seeds that were sown and the little trees that grew up were frozen down the first two or three years. But there was a contented and a happy people here. They went to bed with their doors unlocked. There was no fear among them. They had been relieved from a terrible fear. Those who came under those circumstances could recall the nights and the hours they had spent watching and fearing for a mob to come upon them to drive them out of their homes, to burn their houses, perhaps to inflict upon them personal violence. They remembered, too, that not one of their leading men could go to sleep in his house without having a guard to watch him. The relief from that condition of affairs was such as to bring happiness in and of itself. But I say again, it was the spirit of prophecy that rested upon the Elders and upon the people that sustained them. God revealed by His Holy Spirit the future that awaited the people. The people knew, as they

knew that they lived, that this work was bound to triumph, that it was bound to be successful, that those who clung to it would be successful with it, and that there was a great and glorious triumph awaiting them, not only in this life, but in the realms of bliss in the life to come.

It has been that same spirit that has rested down of late years upon the people. They have been comforted and sustained by the Spirit of God and the predictions of the servants of God. It is a wonderful blessing, my brethren and sisters. It is well for us to think of it today as the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; think that we are in this happy condition; that the heavens are in communication with us, because it is from heaven that we receive these blessings that are so delightful and that have such an effect upon us and upon our movements. It is a blessed thing to think that the heavens are with us in this; that we are guided by the revelations of the Lord Jesus; that the gift of prophecy has been restored in our day, and has been received and enjoyed by men. Not a prediction has been uttered concerning this work, so far as the work itself is concerned, that has not been fulfilled. Not a hope has been inspired, not an encouragement has been given to the Latter-day Saints by the prophets of God, that has not up to the present hour been abundantly fulfilled, as far as we have gone. Much yet remains to be fulfilled. It would be impossible for the human mind to conceive of that which remains; but we see the fulfillment of the predictions as we progress day by day. They are fulfilled in our sight, when our eyes are open to perceive them. Therefore, our hearts ought to be filled with gladness and exceeding thanksgiving to the Lord our God that we are in this condition; that the Lord has not forgotten us; that He has not closed His ears against us, nor His mouth, so that He cannot speak to us; that He has not turned His face away from us; but that He smiles upon us, that He gives unto us the comforting, cheering and enlightening influences of His Holy Spirit to be with us.

Now we are passing through other trials. We have emerged from those that environed us a few years ago. A

great change, as I have said, has taken place in public feeling concerning us. Our Elders are treated generally with a great deal of kindness. Of the thousand Elders that are now laboring in the United States, the report comes from most of them that they are treated with kindness. Traveling without purse and scrip, they are entertained, friends are raised up to them, doors are opened to them, and they are treated kindly, and not persecuted to anything like the extent they were a few years ago. The same report comes from the five hundred Elders who are now engaged in the ministry in Europe. Their testimony agrees with the testimony of the servants of God in the United States. This is particularly the case in the German empire. There was a time when it was almost at the cost of personal liberty that men preached the Gospel there. They had to do so in secrecy, in places where the police could not punish them because of the nature of their gatherings. But now this is changed. Religious freedom has dawned in many of these countries, and the Elders now can preach without being put in jeopardy as they were a few years ago.

On the islands of the Pacific there are some two hundred Elders laboring, and their labors are also attended with good results. They speak of the manifestation of the power and blessings of God in their behalf, and of the kindly feeling that is manifested towards them by those with whom they are brought in contact.

Thus these seventeen hundred Elders are laboring now with an efficiency and with a success that is unparalled in the history of our Church. At no time has this Church held an annual Conference where there was greater cause for gratulation and thanksgiving than there is today in this Sixty-eighth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Never before were there so many Elders in the field. Never before did they meet with such success. Never before were there so many baptized in a single year apparently as there have been during this year. These causes of thanksgiving ought to be remembered by us, and we ought to thank our God from the bottom of our hearts for that which He is doing for

us, for the fulfillment of the words of the servant of God in the Temple when it was dedicated; for he then prophesied what would be the result of that dedication and the glorious effects that would follow that work.

In our own country here we also have cause for thanksgiving. It is interesting to the Saints, no doubt, to know, as many probably do know, that Brothers Lyman and Cowley have visited the conferences and the Elders in the Southern, Eastern and Northern States, and their ministrations among those whom they have visited have been attended with good effects, in regulating affairs, giving instructions, correcting anything that was improper or that was likely to become improper. We have been greatly gratified at hearing the reports which they have given to us of the results of their labors. The Presidents and Elders in the Southern, Eastern, Northern and Southwestern States missions are doing excellent work.

As you know probably, Brother Anthon H. Lund has left here since our last Conference for Palestine, accompanied by Brother Hintze (who formerly labored in the Turkish mission and who has a knowledge of the language) and an Armenian brother, who wished to return to his own country. The object of their going is to endeavor to secure a place of gathering for the Saints of the Orient, so that they may not be subjected to the restrictions that are imposed upon immigrants to this land from those countries. We do not know how successful they may be in their labors; but the word we have received is hopeful and encouraging. The Elders have been greatly blessed so far in their journey, and have been successful at their first meeting in baptizing quite a large number of people who were prepared to receive the Gospel, and also confirming a number who had been baptized, but who had not been confirmed because of the absence of a bearer of the Melchisedek Priesthood. The brethren write very encouragingly on these matters, and we hope they will be successful in finding a spot, if it be the Lord's will, where the Saints of the Orient can commence to gather in that land, so that the principle of gathering, which the Lord

is impressing strongly upon the minds of the converts to His Gospel, may be carried out there.

The Twelve Apostles at home, as you all know, have been untiring in their labors in visiting the various conferences and laboring with the Saints to the extent of their ability. Brothers John Henry Smith and John W. Taylor, during a few weeks' absence, held 100 meetings with the Saints in the various Stakes where they visited, and the reports that come to us show that these labors have been attended with excellent effects.

The Seven Presidents of Seventies, also, either accompany the Twelve or go themselves. They are a traveling ministry, laboring very assiduously in their calling among the various Stakes—those of them who are home. As you know, two of their number are now in Europe, presiding over the European Mission—Brothers Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin.

A new step has been taken, that is, to preach to the surrounding peoples. Our attention has been drawn to the states surrounding us. Brother John W. Taylor has been laboring in Colorado with a number of Elders, and with great success. In Denver, Pueblo and other places they have been the means of bringing many to the knowledge of the truth. In Idaho and Montana, also, the Elders have been laboring and have done and are doing a good work in different places there, and they report excellent results. The people are listening to them, and furnishing them with places where they can meet and preach to the people. In our own State we have heard of the brethren taking hold and visiting their neighbors who are not of our faith.

There is a class of people in Utah who think what they do not know about the Mormons and their doctrines is not worth knowing, and they are filled with conceit respecting their knowledge of our principles, while they are densely ignorant concerning us. That which they do know is of so shallow a character that it deceives them. They sometimes go away and talk to newspaper people, and tell what they know, and how long they have resided here, and yet they really do not know anything about us. But besides this class there is another, composed

of honest people who are not of our faith—honest, I mean, in regard to morality and in their conception of the truth. A man may be a very honest man financially, and yet not be honest enough to receive the truth of heaven. It is, therefore, no impugment of a man's financial honesty to talk about his not being honest enough to receive the truth. Some of the brethren thought they could do a good work in the different wards by visiting those who are not of our faith. Where this has been done, the reports are that it has been attended with excellent results. Many of the people in the State have read our works with pleasure, and have expressed their confidence in their truth.

This is a good thing. It is a labor that should be encouraged among us. Some of these people have complained of our exclusiveness. Of course, we can understand why we are exclusive. We have had such a training as to make us to a great extent exclusive. They have had cause doubtless for thinking that we in our treatment of them, were exclusive; but where they have been brought in contact with our people, especially with our sisters, the effects, as reported to us, have invariably been good. We have felt to encourage the Presidents of Stakes and the Bishops of wards in this labor, because we believe it will be attended with most excellent effects, and many may thus be brought to the knowledge of the truth.

In California the work has been progressing also in a very satisfactory manner. The President of the California Mission wrote a letter to the First Presidency a short time since, and said there were three Elders there that would like to have their wives sent to them, as they thought they could do a good work. About the same time we received a letter from the European Mission, the Presidency of which suggested that where the Elders could take their wives with them, and they were prudent women, they might do a great deal of good. Just about those days a letter came from a president of a Stake, saying there was a young couple in his Stake who were about to be married; but the young man had been called on a mission, and they delayed their mar-

riage till they could ask some counsel. The young man and the young woman were both morally and physically capable of going on a mission, and they had sufficient means also. The question was asked, Would it be right for them to get married, and for the young lady to accompany her husband? The First Presidency wrote back, "Yes, if she is such a young woman as you describe; let her be set apart as a missionary and go with her husband and preach the Gospel as well as she can." We said the same to the president of the California mission; we said, "Yes, if these wives are prudent women." We do not want unwise women sent any more than unwise men, because they could do more injury than they could do good. But if they can get a recommend from their Bishops as wise, suitable women, we will set them apart and send them to their husbands, if their husbands can bear the expense of their transportation. Since then two other ladies were going to Europe, and the application came up from the President of the Stake and his counselors to know whether they could not go in the capacity of missionaries. They were capable young ladies; they had kindred in Europe, one a brother and the other an affianced, and the question was, what should be done about them. We sent word back, "Yes, if they are the kind you describe, set them apart and let them go as missionaries to preach the Gospel, as far as they can, to their own sex and to others who will listen to them." It seems as though the Lord is preparing the way for the women of this Church to do some good in this direction. To some lands and under some circumstances suitable women might go with their husbands as missionaries and be able to do a great deal of good.

The Presidency of the European mission wrote to us of several sisters who had been there with their husbands, and they described the good they had done and the good influence they had carried. It was illustrated by a conversation that was had a short time ago at one of our social gatherings. Brother George D. Pyper and his wife had been East, and in the branch where they had visited there had been frequent expressions among

those who had not joined the Church to this effect: "Well, we have seen the Mormon Elders, but we have not seen the Mormon women; we would like to see some Mormon women, and see what kind of people they are." There was one woman of some prominence that had not joined the Church, though her husband had; but she had expressed herself several times in this manner. Sister Pyper visited there, and became acquainted with this lady, and the lady was so pleased at meeting one of our sisters—an intelligent woman, and a woman that did not look as though she was a poor, down-trodden slave—that she entered the Church. No doubt, it was due to the fact that she had found that the women were as intelligent, as presentable and as ladylike in their sphere as the gentlemen were in their sphere. This is encouraging, and it no doubt will enlarge our field of operations to a very great extent. There will be an opportunity, doubtless, for women who are capable and who desire to do good, to go out, under proper conditions; not to go unattended and alone—that would not be prudent—but where they have husbands who are going, and they are suitable in other respects, it would seem as though there would be no impropriety in their going and bearing their testimony. Of course, they cannot administer the ordinances. It is not their province to officiate in the ordinances of the Gospel. But they can bear testimony; they can teach; they can distribute tracts, and they can do a great many things that would assist in the propagation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, brethren and sisters, looking at all the work in its entirety, have we not cause to glorify God this day, at this Sixty-eighth Annual Conference? Sixty-eight years the Church has been organized. We look back to our sorrows, our tribulations and that which the Saints have endured, but for those who have been faithful to the truth there is no sorrow mingled with our contemplation of those scenes. There is no cause to regret being steadfast and maintaining our integrity until today. And how does the future look? Radiant with promise,

bright with hope, everything to encourage us.

We have our trials today of a financial character. Our people, many of them, are unemployed. In consequence of this, the counsel has been given to not send the Saints here from abroad, but rather to keep them in the branches until they get grounded in the faith. After a while, when they are established in the truth and are better able to endure the trials they will have to meet with in Zion, they can gather. But now it is not the voice of the Spirit that the Saints should gather from the nations of the earth as they have been doing, coming here full of inexperience, and then unable to endure the trials that they have to contend with, and apostatize. Let them stay in their branches, and if they wish to apostatize let them apostatize there, without being at the trouble and expense of coming to Zion. In this way we may raise up strong branches, that will assist the Elders in the various fields of labor, and sustain and comfort them. This is the counsel that has been given to the Elders, and we think it correct counsel. In the meantime those at home can be strengthening themselves as best they can. As I say, we are passing through trials of this character. There never has been a time since we have been in these mountains that we have had such things to contend with. In the early days there was scarcity of comforts and of money; but there was no debt. Now the great bulk of the people—that is, of the leading people—are in debt. The most prudent men among us have got entangled. This is the condition of the people. Shall we remain in this condition? President Woodruff says he hopes not. Now it is a good chance to prophesy; but I do not want to assume that role today. I feel assured, however, that we shall emerge from these financial troubles just as we have from other trials. I do not have the shadow of a doubt in my mind about it. But I do not wish to say what I feel, for I do not want to say too much about these things. But I think we have great cause for hope and encouragement. Looking at the past, and remembering the blessings that God has given

to us, the promises He has made to us, and the deliverances He has wrought out for us, I think we have cause to rejoice today and to put our trust in Him. He will bring us through if we will only serve Him. He will teach us where we are ignorant; He will give us knowledge, and knowledge is power. Because there is knowledge among the people is what makes this Church a powerful organization. The Lord has given unto us knowledge concerning many things.

At the present time all Europe is preparing for war. They do not know what may arise out of these Chinese complications. America is disturbed by the prospects of war with Spain. Capitalists are endeavoring to keep their money in a position where they can handle and control it. A general feeling of unrest prevails throughout the nation. Now, as far as we are concerned, while we share to a certain extent in all these feelings (for we are part of this nation, and nothing can happen to the nation that will not affect us), there is among us an absence of fear, a feeling of rest, an absence of trepidation concerning the movements of the nation, and a sense of security that I believe no other people on the earth have. The reason of it is that we know that God doeth nothing, except He revealeth it unto His servants the Prophets. We know the spirit of prophecy is in our midst, and that if there is any danger threatening us we shall be prepared for it. The Lord will inspire His servants and His people so that they will not be found unprepared.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters. God bless us all during this Conference; bless every man that shall speak, and inspire him with the Spirit and power of God; bless every one that shall listen that all may rejoice together and be mutually edified; which I humbly ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

Righteousness brings temporal as well as spiritual blessings—Some professing to be Saints not consistent.

As a few minutes remain, I have been requested to bear my testimony. I think I can safely declare that the

testimony which we have heard this morning from President George Q. Cannon is, from first to last, true; and I do not hesitate to believe that all this congregation of Latter-day Saints can bear testimony to the truth of the remarks which we have heard. I certainly bear my testimony to these things; for I not only know by experience of their truth, but the Spirit of the Lord bears record of it to my heart, as I know it must do to all the Latter-day Saints. The Lord has sustained His people. He has guided His servants. He has opened up our way, and from time to time has lifted the clouds of persecution and of darkness that have lowered over our heads, and caused the sunlight of joy and truth to shine down upon the Latter-day Saints. The Lord has blessed us in these valleys of the mountains, and has given us of His abundance; for He has made the earth fruitful for our sake. He has blessed us abundantly with the products of the earth and with rich return for our labors, wherein we have labored wisely and with prudence have used the blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon us. Many of us may have been unwise in the management of our affairs, and because of this un wisdom we today suffer the results of our own short-sightedness and folly. Where this has been the case, I hope and pray that we may profit by this experience for all time to come, and that in the future we will live nearer unto the Lord, that we may have more abundantly the light of His Spirit to guide us, not only in our spiritual affairs, but also in all temporal affairs. The work that we are engaged in is not designed to be limited by the spiritual necessities of the people alone. It is the purpose of God in restoring the Gospel and the holy Priesthood, not only to benefit mankind spiritually, but also to benefit them temporally. The Lord has expressed this many times, in the word that He gave to His servant Joseph Smith the Prophet; He designed that His people should become the richest of all people. And this not only means the richest of all people in heavenly gifts—in spiritual blessings and riches, but it also means that the people of God shall be the richest of all people