

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The seventieth annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle at 10 a. m. on Friday, April 6th, 1900, President Lorenzo Snow presiding.

Of the general authorities present there were, of the First Presidency, Lorenzo Snow, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith; of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff and Rudger Clawson; Patriarch John Smith; of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies—Seymour B. Young, C. D. Fjeldsted, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimball, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin; of the Presiding Bishopric—William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and John R. Winder.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins:

Our God, we raise to thee,
Thanks for thy blessings free
We here enjoy.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder John Nicholson.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn commencing:

Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation,
No longer as strangers on earth need we roam.
Good tidings are sounding to us and each nation,
And shortly the hour of redemption will come.

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

Opening Address.

My brethren and sisters—I desire a deep interest in your faith and prayers. When I say this I express the feelings, I presume, of every Elder who arises to speak to the Latter-day Saints. So far as giving information and assisting the Latter-day Saints in their faith is concerned, we are dependent on the Spirit of the Lord and, in a measure, the exercise of faith by the people of God.

I am thankful for the blessings that have attended me in my endeavors to forward the interests of the Church and for the prayers and support that I have had from the people, who have listened to the requirements of the Lord and have conformed to them at least to a certain extent.

Seventy years ago this Church was organized with six members. We commenced, so to speak, as an infant. We had our prejudices to combat. Our ignorance troubled us in regard to what the Lord intended to do and what He wanted us to do. Through the blessings of the Lord, however, we managed to move along in our stage of infancy, receiving support from the Lord as He saw proper to give it. We advanced into boyhood, and still we undoubtedly made some mistakes, which did not generally arise from a design to make them, but from a lack of experience. We understand very well, when we reflect back upon our own lives, that we did many foolish things when we were

boys, because of our lack of experience and because we had not learned fully to obey the instructions of our fathers and mothers. We could not then comprehend that it was absolutely necessary, for our proper advancement, that we should observe the counsels of our parents. Many of us afterwards learned it, but too late perhaps to correct ourselves. Yet as we advanced the experience of the past materially assisted us to avoid such mistakes as we had made in our boyhood.

It has been so with the Church. Our errors have generally arisen from a lack of comprehending what the Lord required us to do. But now we are pretty well along to manhood; we are seventy years of age, and one would imagine that after a man had lived through his infancy, through his boyhood, and on until he had arrived at the age of seventy years, he would be able, through his long experience, to do a great many things that seemed impossible and in fact were impossible for him to do in his boyhood state. When we examine ourselves, however, we discover that we are still not doing exactly as we ought to do, notwithstanding all our experience. We discern that there are things which we fail to do that the Lord expects us to perform, some of which he required us to do in our boyhood. But we feel thankful and grateful that we are enabled now, through our past experience, to accomplish many things that we could not do in former times and that we are able to escape individual sins that have brought trouble upon us in times past. While we congratulate ourselves in this direction, we certainly ought to feel that we have not yet arrived at perfection. There are many things for us to do yet.

The Lord has prospered us amazingly, and we are doing large things at the present time. We are blessing the people of the world. We are sending well on towards two thousand Elders out into the missionary field, and we learn that they are having very good success; and notwithstanding all the difficulties that seemingly have arisen to make trouble for the Latter-day Saints, we are pleased to find that it has all tended to good. Our Elders in the mission

fields tell us that the excitement which has been created and carried on almost universally throughout the United States has caused people to become wonderfully interested to know what Mormonism is, and, in order to get an understanding of our principles, they flock to our meetings. Because of this the Elders feel very grateful. This is what we wish and what there has been a difficulty in accomplishing, that is, in getting the people out to hear what we have to say, so that they might understand what Mormonism really is from those who understand what it is, instead of receiving it from those who understand nothing at all about it, only as they hear stories concerning it. So this is going on all right and will work all right. We ought to be very grateful that this missionary work is being accomplished so successfully by the many Elders that are now in the various missionary fields.

We are also establishing colonies here and there. We are sending many families into Canada, and they are moving along very successfully. We are about to send a hundred families into the Big Horn region, in the State of Wyoming, and Latter-day Saints are moving into other places and building up the country.

Now that we are approaching our seventy-first year, the Lord expects that we will do something—something that will cause the nations to marvel, as what we have done has caused them already to wonder.

Now, Latter-day Saints, how is it with us? We have received the Gospel. We have received the kingdom of God, established on the earth. We have had trouble; we have been persecuted. We were driven from Ohio; we were driven from Missouri; we were driven from Nauvoo; and once we were driven for a time from this beautiful city. Many have lost thousands of dollars; lost their homes and all they had, and some of the brethren have seen their wives and children lay down their lives because of the hardships they had to experience during these changes, these persecutions, these revolutions and these drivings. The people have

looked with astonishment at the willingness of the Latter-day Saints to suffer these things. Why do we do this? Why do we adhere to these principles that have caused us at times so much grief and sacrifice? What is it that enables us to endure these persecutions and still rejoice? It is because we have had revelations from the Almighty; because He has spoken to us in our souls and has given to us the Holy Ghost, which is a principle of revelation wherever it exists and is promised to every man, as in the days of the former Apostles, who will believe, repent of his sins and be immersed in water for the remission of them by those who have the authority from the Lord to administer this ordinance. Jesus, when he was among the children of men, said that He would build His Church upon this principle of revelation and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. When He was in Cesarea He asked His disciples "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" He had been performing miracles and accomplishing the most astonishing wonders in the midst of the people. What did the people learn from these things and what did they think of Him? As the Apostles replied, some said that He was John the Baptist, risen from the dead; some thought He was one of the former Prophets, while others thought He was Elias. The Savior said to His disciples "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." How did he find it out? On the same principle that you and I have found out that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, who, like Noah, was sent into the world to give the people warning before the great burning should occur and to call upon them to repent of their sins. Peter had found it out by the principle of revelation. He had not learned this of man, nor by reading the ancient Scriptures, but the Lord had revealed it unto him. Jesus said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the

gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Church of Christ today is built upon this same principle, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. They did not prevail against us in our infancy; they did not in our boyhood; they did not in our early manhood; and I will assure you they will not now that we are seventy years old.

This Church will stand, because it is upon a firm basis. It is not from man; it is not from the study of the New Testament or the Old Testament; it is not the result of the learning that we received in colleges nor seminaries, but it has come directly from the Lord. The Lord has shown it to us by the revealing principle of the Holy Spirit of light and every man can receive this same spirit.

In the days of Noah the people of that generation had the privilege of knowing whether Noah spoke from the Lord and whether the message that he claimed to have from the Lord was genuine or not. They could have had a revelation for themselves, because he preached the Gospel as you and I now preach it in the world, and they could have known that their salvation depended upon their receiving and obeying this message which Noah delivered unto them. In the days of Jesus it was the same. But no person can know that Jesus is the Son of God, except by revelation. That was the way Peter received it. The Lord is a consistent being. He does not require the people to do that which is improper, nor does he expect of them anything unreasonable. He gives us a knowledge of what we shall do, inasmuch as we are willing to sacrifice our lives rather than go contrary to that knowledge. He opens to us the secrets of the celestial kingdom, and he is constantly communicating to us things that we never knew before. This knowledge and intelligence is growing upon us continually.

Ought we not to be thankful, therefore, today? Every man and woman within the sound of my voice ought to be grateful that circumstances are as favorable as they are. Everything is for us and nothing can prevent our moving forward now in our seventy-first year. There is no power that can prevent us,

as there has been none in the past. We have received too much knowledge to be thwarted in our purposes. Those who desire to persecute and overthrow Mormonism, let them go on and do their work; that is for them to do. Our work is to grow in the knowledge of God, to keep the commandments of God, to be faithful and to continue to increase and to become more and more perfect as we advance in years.

God bless you, brethren and sisters. We rejoice to see you here. You have come that you might be blessed that you might get information that will be of service to you and knowledge that will increase your intelligence; and there will be from fifteen to twenty speakers, I am sure that every person who has come here for the purpose of receiving information and being blessed will have the opportunity, through some of the speakers, to get something that will be very valuable to them for the future scenes through which they will be called to pass.

God bless you, brethren and sisters, and may we have a glorious time and one of the best conferences that we have ever had, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM YOUNG.

God has brought the Salats through every ordeal—
Tithing—paying not a question of Money, but of
principle—The Redemption of Zion.

I take great pleasure in bearing testimony to the remarks that have been made by President Snow this morning. I am thankful to God and to our President for the testimony that he has given us. It arouses in my mind many reflections, brings before me the past history of this Church and foreshadows the future destiny of this people. God has been merciful to the Latter-day Saints, and if there are any men opposing us that have the idea that we do not pray for them, they are mistaken. We pray the Lord to soften the hearts of our enemies. We pray that they may be turned from their evil ways and not kick against the pricks, but seek to forsake the evil that is within them and to do good. They are, however, in the hands of God, as we are.

We are glad to know that this people have gained victory after victory. They

have marched on, conquering and to conquer. In our youth, as stated by our President, when struggling against fearful odds, we came out greater, nobler, better soldiers of the cross than when we entered into this vortex of persecution; and now in our manhood, in our riper years, thank God that we have heard the voice of our leader saying that we are marching on to success and victory—to the time when men and nations will arise up and say, "Thou blessed people, that have fought the good fight, that have led the way and established righteousness in the land of our fathers." I expect to see this day. There is no power that can battle successfully against our Father and God. If we are His people, we are sure to win. If we are not His, how is it that we have been so successful from the beginning? and have through His power, in which we have trusted, grown to be seventy years old, instead of being a mere child in swaddling clothes? God has done it; He has given us these rights and blessings. I felt in my heart while the President was talking that I could prophesy to those who fight against us, Do your worst; do your best; try to accomplish all the evil that is in your hearts; but as true as God lives this kingdom will sweep on, this Church will progress, and the Kingdom of God will be as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands—it will crush all opposition. Now, that is not disloyal, because God will do it, not man.

I am not opposed to any man who seeks to do right. I am not opposed to any government that seeks to give liberty to the people and the privilege to exercise that free agency which God has given to all men. Every man and woman must have their agency. No man can take it from the sons and daughters of our Father.

It occurred to me this morning while sitting here that if I happened to be called upon to speak, I would read a part of the 29th chapter of Alma, in the Book of Mormon.

"O, that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people;