

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

## THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

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### FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-first Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints opened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., Oct. 5th, 1900:

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, Rudger Clawson and Reed Smoot; 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 conference opened by the choir and congregation singing the hymn which begins:

Our God, we raise to Thee,  
Thanks for Thy blessings free,  
We here enjoy.

After the opening prayer, the choir and congregation sang the hymn commencing:

Redeemer of Israel our only delight,  
On whom for a blessing, we call,  
Our shadow for day and our pillar by  
night,  
Our King, our Deliv'rer, our all!

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Glorious prospects of the faithful—Necessity for personal knowledge as to their source—Philosophy of trials—Care exercised in the selection of presiding officers—Examples of Christ and Job.

Brethren and Sisters, I feel to rejoice greatly in having this opportunity of meeting with you this morning and to deliberate upon all such things and talk about them, as may pertain to our present condition and secure our future prospects. When this Gospel—these principles which we have espoused—came to our ears in the different countries and nations where they found us, of course they opened up to us certain prospects—prospects that relate to the present time, and to present time matters, of the highest consequence in relation to our temporal salvation; and again, prospects in reference to the future; what should be the outcome of keeping the commandments of God; what should follow; what should be the results when we have accomplished these things that are required of us; what would be the results in the next life.

Now, so far as regards our temporal advantages and our temporal prospects, they certainly must be far superior to any that were before us before this Gospel reached us; before the offer of salvation saluted our ears. In the days of Noah the Gospel which we have espoused was proclaimed to the people of

his generation, and the same prospects as are presented to us were presented to them, temporal advantages, temporal salvation, and spiritual exaltation and glory; and the circumstances were of that character that every person that listened to the voice of Noah could receive clear manifestations, satisfactory knowledge, that what he said came from the Almighty. Now when we received these principles it was clear to us, I presume, that we actually received assurances, the most perfect assurances, that what was said to us, was actually of the Lord, that the parties that brought us these principles were actually inspired from the Most High. The nature and character of the work that each one would necessarily have to perform, the circumstances that would surround us and the trials and temptations to which we had to be exposed, would require a perfect understanding, not through the teachings of these individuals that proclaimed to us these principles, but actual manifestations and assurances that should come from the Lord, either by extraordinary faith or by a perfect reception, physical and spiritual, of the Holy Spirit, a baptism of the Holy Ghost, as was promised in former days to those that should receive the Gospel.

I dare say that the people that are before me this morning have learned that it was an absolute necessity to have a perfect understanding, and an understanding that could only come directly from the Lord. It would not be satisfactory simply to turn over the leaves of the New Testament and to see that these principles were in accordance with those preached by the Apostles of old, but to have this knowledge come directly to themselves from the Lord. Now, I say this in order that if there are any Latter-day Saints, who have not advanced to this knowledge and can not see and understand clearly that they have espoused the principles of salvation and exaltation and glory, and that directly from the Lord, it is time they were about receiving this information.

We are not through with our labors yet, although we have got through a great many of them that have been considerable of a trial to us, and temp-

tations, perhaps, have been to some of us of a nature that almost amounted to a disposition to turn away from the principles that we had received. The trials and temptations have been very great to many of our people, and more or less, perhaps, to all of us. The Lord seems to require some proof on our part, something to show that He can depend upon us when He wants us to accomplish certain things in His interest. The reason is that the condition in which we will be placed in the future, as time passes along, as eternity approaches, and as we move forward in eternity and along the line of our existence, we shall be placed in certain conditions that require very great sacrifice in the interests of humanity, in the interests of the Spirit of God, in the interest of His children and our own children, in generations to come, in eternity. Jesus Christ the Son of God was once placed in a condition that it required the highest effort in order to accomplish what was necessary for the salvation of millions of the children of God. It required the highest effort and determination that had to be exercised before the Son of God could pass through the ordeal, the sacrifice that was necessary.

I believe that his Father had educated him, had passed him through scenes that were of a very serious character, of great trials, and he knew just what he could depend upon from the facts that were illustrated and shown by his experience. We place men here from time to time in positions of presidents of Stakes, as Bishops of wards. We are called upon sometimes to take into consideration whom we will place in this Stake or that Stake of Zion to preside over us. Perhaps there are fourteen thousand members, Latter-day Saints, in that Stake, or there may be fifteen or twenty thousand, and the prosperity of the people of that Stake, to a certain extent anyway, depends upon the qualification of that president.

How can we determine in order to make the proper selection? How are we to determine so as to make a wise selection, in placing the responsibilities upon a man that we propose to take this position? The people of

the Stake are greatly concerned; they want a good man; they want a wise man; they want a man that by night and by day will think how he can best improve them, make them happy, place them in circumstances that will be agreeable, and advance them. We look around to find a man that we feel has a thorough interest in the people, and that is a wise and a good man, and it is well that we should. That is our business—to look after the interest of the Saints, and to place such men before them to look after their interests as will be faithful in their calling and will be unselfish, and will not spend their time in any other direction than that which pertains to the general advancement of those they are appointed to look after. Is it possible that we sometimes make a mistake and get the wrong man? Well you perhaps should be the judges. But I can tell you one thing, surely, that we use our best efforts to find the proper man. How do we do it? We send somewhere about eighteen hundred missionaries to the nations of the earth. We keep about that number of missionaries in the different nations. We appoint men here at home, we place responsibilities upon them, large responsibilities. We look over the history of these men. Perhaps this man was a Bishop. Well, how did he act and perform his duties as a Bishop? Did he devote himself to the interest of the people of his ward or was he trying to make himself wealthy? Was his mind devoted to saving what he could for himself and in enhancing his own individual interests and that of his wife and children and neglecting the interest of the people of his ward? How is it? We inquire around. We get the history of the man, his past experiences. He has had several calls here and there. Did he answer those calls? Was he called as a missionary to leave his wife and his children and go to the nations to be gone two years or three years or four years, as the case may be? And did he go, or did he say: "Oh, no; I would like to go very well, but my circumstances are not quite so pleasing or advantageous as they ought to be under such circumstances in order that

I might go; I cannot go and leave my family very well."

Did he make these excuses, and how has he been all along the path of his life for the past few years or for many years as the case might be? We judge the man not always by his looks or appearance; not always by hearing him preach a sermon; but we judge him by what he has done or failed to do in the past. That is just the way the Lord intends to do with you or me exactly. We will be judged according to what we have done or what we have failed to have done all along the line of our experiences. When Jesus was placed in a condition where acting in propriety or otherwise confronted him; when he saw before Him the cross and the immediate prospects of being placed upon it and of his undergoing those excruciating tortures that he had seen others experiencing, then his nature failed as it were and he said: Father if it be possible that this experience or this cup pass from me, let it pass.

That is the way he told the Lord. But notwithstanding, he said: If this cannot be done, Thy will be done, and not mine. So he was placed upon the cross and suffered that excruciating torture. Supposing that he had failed, the nations of the earth and the people of the Lord, his sons and daughters, would have failed to be put into the position of having the opportunity that you and I have today. They would have failed for a long time, to say the least. Of course the provisions would have been made and the work of the Almighty would have been proceeded with, but there would have been a halt there. But the Lord knew just what he could depend upon, and therefore, he selected that son of His, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and he has wrought out that great work of redemption for the human family, the living and the dead.

Now brethren and sisters, what have these principles we have espoused done for us? Are you satisfied? I am, perfectly and fully satisfied. I have gone through a great many things that were very unpleasant, far from being agreeable, all along the line, and I do not know how much further or what else will be required of me of this character; but I am satisfied with what the

Lord has done for me and what I expect He will do in regard to my temporal affairs, temporal salvation, and also in regard to the future.

My hopes in reference to the future life are supremely grand and glorious, and I try to keep these prospects bright continually; and that is the privilege and the duty of every Latter-day Saint. I suppose I am talking now to some Latter-day Saints that have been sorely tried and they have thought sometimes, perhaps like the Savior felt, that he had no friends, that his friends had all gone; and everything was going wrong, and everything was disagreeable, and his circumstances were continuing to get worse and worse, and those that he depended upon for assistance failed perhaps to render the assistance expected, and all that sort of thing. Likewise everything sometimes becomes dark to us and we almost forget the relationship that we stand in to the Lord and begin to feel as though it was not what we expected.

I wonder if there are a few here within the sound of my voice that have feelings of this kind, like old Job had, for instance. A poor man who wondered why his children were taken from him; why his herds were destroyed and why his houses, his dwelling, went up in flames, and why he was left without anything. He formerly was a very wealthy man, then was left without anything. Well, his friends came about him. They were supposed to be friends. They were friends formerly. They came about him and wanted to show him that these evils came upon him because he had failed to do his duty in the past; because he had committed some sin. That was the kind of ideas that they communicated to him. But there was nothing of the kind. It was not so. They were vastly mistaken. The Lord had a certain position in which He sought to place Job in the future at some future time when years and years had rolled away perhaps, and he wanted to try him. He wanted to educate him so that he would not complain, no matter how illy he thought himself treated by the Lord. That was a glorious trial of Job's. It has come down in history; his experiences and his trials, and

it has been a wonderful consolation to the people of the Lord to read the history of his experiences and his trials and how well he passed through them.

The religion that we have received, the principles of exaltation and glory that you and I have received, bring upon us persecution, or else they are not those principles which we thought they were. They bring upon us trouble upon the right hand and upon the left, but we should seek to be calm and cool as Job learned to be calm and cool under circumstances of the most unhappy character. We should learn to do this and there are things that are provided for us by which we can learn this. Think now of how much worse you and I might be, and then think of what superior blessings we actually possess. We know that in the future after we have passed through this life, we will then have our wives and our children with us. We will have our bodies glorified, made free from every sickness and distress, and rendered most beautiful. There is nothing more beautiful to look upon than a resurrected man or woman. There is nothing grander that I can imagine that a man can possess than a resurrected body. There is no Latter-day Saint within the sound of my voice but that certainly has this prospect of coming forth in the morning of the first resurrection and being glorified, exalted in the presence of God, having the privilege of talking with our Father as we talk with our earthly father.

What a glorious thing! You will know no prison walls, your friends turning away from you, your being dispossessed of your property, being driven from your home, being cast into prison, being defamed. These things do not hurt you one particle. They do not destroy your prospects, which are still glorious before you. And then we should understand that the Lord has provided, when the days of trouble come upon the nations, a place for you and me, and we will be preserved as Noah was preserved, not in an ark, but we will be preserved by going into these principles of union by which we can accomplish the work of the Lord and

surround ourselves with those things that will preserve us from the difficulties that are now coming upon the world, the judgments of the Lord. We can see, as we read in the newspapers, that they are coming upon the nations of the ungodly; and they would have been upon us if we had stayed among the nations, if the Lord had not inclined our ears and brought salvation to us, we would have been as they are.

Brethren and sisters, I feel to say God bless you. Here are my counselors. We are one. We are united. We do not quarrel with each other. We speak well of one another because we ought to do it, and we think we are worthy of being well spoken of by each other. And here we have twelve men sitting in front with us—Twelve Apostles. There are many of these that you know. You know them from hearing what they have accomplished. You have a personal acquaintance with some of us. Now they are with us heart and soul. We are united together. We do not quarrel with each other. We do not slander one another, but we go where counsel requires and we are heart and soul together. What for? Not to make ourselves rich, not to make ourselves wealthy, but to see what we can accomplish in the interests of the people, and we are laboring continually to see what we can do. We come together every week and we talk about what we can do for the people. What can we do for these forty-two or forty-three Stakes of Zion? Are some of the presiding Elders, some of the presidents of these Stakes, getting too old to administer to the people? Are some of them neglecting their interests? We talk these things over. We study and consider them. We try to ascertain what they are doing and what their feelings are and how they manifest them in the presence of the people. Are they working for themselves? Are they trying to see how much money they can get into this bank or the other, or are they engaged heart and soul in doing what should be done in their respective responsibilities? Well, we are not idle in these things.

You will have a number of speakers here during this conference, you

will probably have in the neighborhood of Twenty speeches here. When the brethren arise to speak you should ask the Lord to let them say something that you want to know, that they may suggest something to you that will be of some advantage. If you have any desire to know certain matters that you do not understand, pray that these brethren in their talks may say something that shall enlighten your mind in reference to that which troubles you, and we will have a grand and glorious Conference, a better one than we have ever had before. Strange as it may appear, our last Conference always seems the best, and may this be the case; and you brethren and sisters, let your hearts rise up to the Lord and exercise faith while our brethren are talking to you. We will not be disappointed, and you will not go home, you will not retire from this Conference, without feeling you have been greatly and abundantly blessed. Amen.

#### ELDER REED SMOOT.

Spirit of Union among the Presidency and Twelve  
—Indebtedness is bondage—Labor should be created for the young—Beneficent results of tithe-paying—Avoid Procrastination.

I am truly grateful to our Heavenly Father for this privilege of speaking at our Semi-annual conference to the Saints of the Most High, and I shall claim an interest in the opening prayer made by Brother Young, that the Spirit of the Lord will attend those who address this congregation. I shall also ask you, my dear brethren and sisters, to give me your faith and prayers, as requested by the Prophet of the Lord; for I have had experience enough in speaking to the Saints to know that without their faith and prayers and the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, I can say nothing that will be of interest to the people. I have no desire in my heart to say aught this morning but that will be for the benefit of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I am of the opinion that there is not a soul present in this vast audience but can say that the Lord has truly blessed them in more ways than one since our last conference. I am thankful that the principles of the Church to which we belong are so broad that they not