

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

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

### FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-first Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, on Friday, April 5, at 10 a. m., President Lorenzo Snow presiding.

Of the general authorities present there were, of the First Presidency, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith, (President George Q. Cannon was absent on account of severe illness.) of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, 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, George Reynolds, Brigham H. Roberts, 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 services opened by the choir and congregation singing the hymn which begins:

"Come let us anew, our journey pursue."

Opening prayer was offered by Elder John Nicholson.

"All hail the glorious day,  
By prophets long foretold."

Was sung by the choir.

#### PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Prosperity due to the blessings of God—Our lives immortal and progressive—Glorious future prospects—Purpose of our earthly existence—Reluctance of the world to receive the truth—Exhortation to faithfulness.

My brethren and sisters and friends, through the assistance of your prayers and the exercise of your faith, we expect that the Lord will bestow upon us His choice blessings during this conference. This work in which you and I are engaged can only prosper and be forwarded through the blessings of God upon our faithful and honest exertions and our determination to accomplish the labors for which we have come into this existence. When we look back upon the experiences through which we have passed, we easily understand that our prosperity has been dependent upon our honest endeavors to accomplish the work of God, to labor in the interest of the people, and to rid ourselves as far as possible of selfishness. This having been so in the past, we can well believe that our future progress will depend upon our determination to do the will of God under all circumstances and the aid which He shall give to us.

You will have the privilege of hearing quite a number of speeches during this conference from the brethren sitting upon the stand, and perhaps from others; and you having come here, no doubt, for the purpose of receiving

something that will reward you for the sacrifice which some of you may have made in coming, I hope that you will be well repaid for all the inconveniences which you may have suffered in coming to this conference.

There are many things worthy of our consideration as we move along in the pathway to exaltation and glory. There are some points we may think about that are of superior consequence. In considering ourselves and how we have been organized and what we are doing, we discover that there is immortality connected with us. We are immortal beings. That which dwells in this body of ours is immortal, and will always exist. Our individuality will always continue. Eternities may begin, eternities may end, and still we shall have our individuality. Our identity is insured. We will be ourselves, and nobody else. Whatever changes may arise, whatever worlds may be made or pass away, our identity will always remain the same; and we will continue on improving, advancing and increasing in wisdom, intelligence, power and dominion, worlds without end. Our present advancement is simply a starting out, as it were, on this path of immortality. Whatever may have been our past, how long we may have existed before this, or whether there ever was a time when we did not exist, there is one thing sure—our being in the future will never be annihilated, never destroyed. When we look upon the beauties of the world many things that we see and experience are of a grand and glorious nature; they fill us with reverence; we feel and realize their grandeur; and the idea that the time will ever come when we will cease to have these experiences would certainly produce a feeling of sadness in our hearts. But there is no such thing as our passing out of existence.

I feel thankful that the Lord has revealed unto us the glorious prospects which are before us. The Savior once compared the kingdom of God to a man who found a rich treasure in a field, and he went and sold all that he possessed to secure that treasure; and again, like a man seeking valuable pearls, and finding one of immense value he went and sold all that he had to secure that pearl.

Now, the Lord having manifested to the Latter-day Saints this principle of immortality and continuance of advancement, in the past they have shown most clearly and fully that they have been willing to sacrifice whatever they might possess and to go through the most undesirable experiences rather than turn aside from the path of exaltation and glory and give up the hopes God had inspired within them. Having had these grand and glorious prospects, which no language can express, unfolded to our view, we ought to be the best, the most virtuous and the most self-sacrificing people on the face of the globe. And we certainly are. If it were not for these hopes which the Lord Almighty has inspired us with, if it were not for the revelations of the Lord Jesus in regard to our future, we would be the most unhappy people in the world; all our past sacrifices, all that we have endured, would go as for nothing. The Savior might well compare the kingdom of God to a man that had discovered something for which he was willing to make great sacrifice.

We are in the world for a purpose. We are not here accidentally. We came here because we were willing to come, and because it was the wish of our Father in heaven that we should come.

We undoubtedly saw very clearly that there was no other way for us to secure what the Father had in store for us. We send missionaries among the children of men. When appointed they feel strangely. Their feelings are not always the most pleasurable, either. There are things about a mission which are not altogether agreeable to our young Elders. They realize that they have to sacrifice the pleasures of home, and they understand that they are going among people who will not always feel gratified at what they have to say to them; yet, on the other hand, they feel that they have the seeds of life in their possession, and that if they can find an honest man or woman, the Spirit of the Lord will operate upon their hearts and they will perchance receive this glorious message which they have to deliver. This affords them pleasure and satisfaction. Another thing, they see in this experience a

chance for them to secure that which will be of great value to them in their future duties. It is a strange thing that among the thousands of letters which I have received from those who have been called to go upon missions—mostly young men—I do not think of but one case where a refusal was given. Why is this? It is because the spirit of love and of immortality, the Spirit of the Almighty, is upon these young Elders, and they have received manifestations which inspire them to do that which otherwise no inducement could prompt them to do.

We are but a few people compared with the multitudes that dwell upon the face of the earth; and our system of thought is not believed in by many. When we go out into the world and testify of the kingdom of God, and that the fulness of the Gospel has been introduced for the purpose of saving mankind, there are but few who will receive the testimony. It has always been so, strange to say. In the days of Noah very few indeed received the truth which God revealed. In the days of the Son of God very few would receive His testimony. In these days very few receive the testimony that God has revealed His Gospel and has required His servants to declare it to the world. It is strange indeed—and yet perhaps not so strange, when we consider the circumstances. When Jesus lay in the manger, a helpless infant. He knew not that He was the Son of God, and that formerly He created the earth. When the edict of Herod was issued, He knew nothing of it; He had not power to save Himself; and His father and mother had to take Him and fly into Egypt to preserve Him from the effects of that edict. Well, He grew up to manhood, and during His progress it was revealed unto Him who He was, and for what purpose He was in the world. The glory and power He possessed before He came into the world was made known unto Him. It was not a very pleasurable thing to be placed upon the cross and to suffer the excruciating torture that He bore for hours, in order to accomplish the work for which He had come upon the earth. It has not been with the Latter-day Saints the most delightful thing that could be

imagined to suffer as they have suffered—and what for? For the same as Jesus suffered, to a certain extent—for the salvation of the world. And although in this life very many of them may not receive that which we offer to them, the day will come, through the progress of things in eternity, when they will receive it, and they will be thankful that we came into the world and suffered in their interests as we have.

What shall we say about these matters, brethren and sisters? This: Do not falter; continue to do your duty, whatever it may be, whether pleasing or displeasing; be the servants and handmaidens of God to the very utmost. In the past his blessings have been upon us just so far as we have served Him in faithfulness; they will be so in the future. There is no occasion for any man who has the manifestation of the Lord in this line to be discouraged. When our surroundings are not so agreeable as might be wished, think how much worse they might be. Be contented with our conditions. Improve them when opportunity arises, but do not worry about them. If we are poor, and have not as much as our neighbor possesses, do not envy him, and do not worry about it. As I said in the beginning of my remarks, there is an eternity before us, and we shall always be ourselves, and nobody else, and what we do not gain today we will gain tomorrow, or some other time. The antediluvians rejected the word of God; but they were the sons and daughters of God, and He did not reject them, only for a time. After twenty-five hundred years had passed away the Lord revealed himself to them again and gave them another opportunity. Then they no doubt accepted, generally if not altogether, that which they refused in the days of Noah. The people of this generation may not receive our testimony here, but they will receive it at some future time, from us or from some other servants of God.

Brethren and sisters, God bless you; and I say to you, in the name of the Lord, if you will be faithful in your prayers and in the exercise of your

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faith, this will be as other conferences have been, the very best—better than that which has preceded it; and we will all be abundantly blessed and filled with the Spirit of God, our faith will be increased, and we will be better prepared to endure what the Lord shall require at our hands. God bless you. Amen.

### ELDER REED SMOOT.

The course to pursue in cases of sickness—Organization and ordinances of the Church being imitated—The Gospel to be carried to all lands.

I can hardly realize, my brethren and sisters, that it is nearly one year since I was called to this stand and my name presented to the congregation to be sustained as one of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. I desire to say to you this day that I have enjoyed my labors among the people of this Church for the last twelve months as I never expected to do. I have at all times asked my Heavenly Father to give me His Spirit, to give me humility, and to favor me with the love, confidence, respect and fellowship of the Latter-day Saints; and I thank you my brethren and sisters, for your faith and prayers in my behalf, and I thank the Lord for all He has vouchsafed unto me. I begin to realize, at least in a small degree, what it is to be a teacher among the Latter-day Saints, and the great responsibilities attached thereto; and I feel my weakness, aye, more than any of you realize, and I trust and pray that the Lord will give me wisdom and judgment, that the instruction which I give to the people as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ will be approved of Him, and that the people will receive them in the same spirit in which they are given.

I know, my brethren and sisters, that this is the Church and Kingdom of God. I know that He can fit and qualify men for the offices to which He calls them. If they are humble, prayerful and diligent in seeking His Spirit, I know that God will magnify them in their office and calling.

There is a tendency exhibited by some of the brethren and sisters in some of the Stakes of Zion to add to the form of our simple

ordinances, and cast about them a degree of mystery and to depart from the method laid down by revelation from God through the Prophet Joseph Smith; and I think it proper to call the attention of the members of this Church to one of these deviations.

The Apostle James, upon one occasion, asked the question, "Is any sick among you?" and his advice to the Saints then was: "Let him call for the Elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

This doctrine is believed in by the Latter-day Saints. It is one of the beautiful ordinances in the Church of Jesus Christ in this dispensation. It is one whose benefits and blessings all the people enjoy who have the Spirit of God. And there is no need to deviate from the simple form of administering to the sick as laid down by the Apostle James and by the Prophets of this dispensation. There is, however, a tendency among some of the members of the Church in performing this ordinance to add to the form and mode as revealed, thinking that by so doing greater power accompanies the administration. But I want to call your attention to the fact that in the healing of the sick in this Church the power comes from the Lord, and not from man. It is by the prayer of faith that the sick are healed; and, as I look at it, there is no need of having this simple ordinance of administering to the sick enshrouded in mystery, or any addition whatever to the simple form given by the Apostle James or revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Let me say also that every Latter-day Saint has a perfect right to ask the Bishop of their ward to present the name of any who are sick to the fast meeting which is held each month in every ward in the Church, where the people meet together in fasting and prayer. I believe that the faith and power which can be made manifest in those meetings in behalf of the sick will be acknowledged by God; and the people have a right to ask the Bishop of their ward to have a sick one prayed for in any fast meeting.