

## GENERAL CONFERENCE

the earth. It rests upon this people to do that work before the coming of the Son of Man, and I take it that whenever the call comes and to whomsoever it comes, he will have sufficient of the testimony of Jesus in his heart to respond to the call and fulfill the mission as God gives him strength and judgment. I know that our prayers have been with Brother Grant ever since it has been known that he was called. I know that the Father has been supplicated in his behalf, that he may have success in opening that mission. There is not a question but that he goes clothed with all the power, all the keys and all the authority necessary to introduce the Gospel to that people. I feel that he will have success, even as much as God shall grant he should have.

The hearts of the people have been drawn out also for Brother George Q. Cannon, who is seriously ill at the present time in California. We hope, we pray, we ask our Heavenly Father to restore him to us; but if he lives he lives unto the Lord, and if he dies he dies unto the Lord. Whether he lives or whether he dies, he is the Lord's.

It seems to me that there can be no people upon the face of the earth who have reason to be more thankful to their Heavenly Father for the blessings which they receive than the Latter-day Saints; for I do not believe there is a people living who have more blessings showered upon them. I want to bear testimony also to what President Snow said, that there is not a people living, in my opinion, who are more virtuous, self-sacrificing and more the lovers of God than the people who have accepted the name of Latter-day Saints. It rests with us, my brethren and sisters, whether or not we shall have increased blessings. The Prophet of the Lord has promised us here today that if we are faithful unto God glorious blessings shall be given unto us and it rests with us whether or not we shall obtain them.

My testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, is that God lives that Jesus is the Christ, that this is the Church and Kingdom of God, and that this people will not falter, but whenever the call is made upon them they will answer that call to the best of the ability God

has given them and with all the strength and means they are endowed with. May God bless us to this end; may His peace be upon us as a people; may the Spirit of the Lord be with us during this Conference; may the instructions given during this Conference be carried from here to every nook and corner of the Church; may He bless us with a testimony that this is His work, and increase that testimony within us every day, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER RUGGER CLAWSON.

Souls precious in the sight of God—That which is of greatest worth to a servant of the Lord—To save others a man must put himself in the way of salvation—The Gospel to go to the nations—Necessity for repentance.

Brethren and sisters, it is certainly a very inspiring sight to see so many Latter-day Saints assembled this morning from all parts of Zion to worship the Lord and to receive His word as it may be given by His Spirit through the Elders of Israel. I greatly rejoice in being present, and I appreciate the opportunity of expressing to you briefly some of my views and feelings in regard to this great latter-day work. I rejoice in the testimony of President Snow, in the strength of voice which he exhibited, and in the glorious views he presented before us. I have had pleasure also in the testimony of my brother who preceded me.

A few words were spoken in relation to missionary work, first by President Snow, and then by Brother Smoot, and their remarks will harmonize with what I would like to read to you this morning from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In a short revelation given to John Whitmer, in June, 1829, the Lord said unto him:

"Hearken, my servant John, and listen to the words of Jesus Christ, your Lord and your Redeemer,

"For, behold, I speak unto you with sharpness and with power, for mine arm is over all the earth,

"And I will tell you that which no man knoweth save me and thee alone;

"For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you.

"Behold, blessed are you for this thing, and for speaking my words which I have given you according to my commandments.

"And now, behold, I say unto you,

that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you, will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of My Father."—Section 15.

In another revelation given shortly after, these words occur:

"And now, Oliver Cowdery, I speak unto you, and also unto David Whitmer, by the way of commandment; for, behold, I command all men everywhere to repent, and I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine Apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called.

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer, suffered death in the flesh; wherefore He suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto Him.

"And He hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on condition of repentance;

"And how great is His joy in the soul that repenteth.

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people;

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto Me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of My Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"—Sec. xviii, 9-16.

Again:

"And you must preach unto the world, saying, you must repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ;

"For all men must repent and be baptized, and not only men, but women and children who have arrived to the years of accountability."—Sec. xviii; 41-42.

Brethren and sisters, the matters that are brought to our attention in these words of revelation are most glorious for contemplation. Cast your minds back to the early days of this Church, and there stood this man John Whitmer, recently come into the Church of Christ. Various occupations in which he might engage were before him. He had the opportunity to labor upon the farm, to engage in merchandising, to follow mining, to study the profession of medicine or law, or to adopt one of the many other occupations in which men employ themselves. The question he asked himself at that time was, What would be of the most worth to

him? By his industry and thrift he might acquire the wealth of a Gould or a Vanderbilt; he might obtain a beautiful home, well furnished in every detail, and most desirable for the comfort and convenience of himself and family; he might obtain worldly renown in one of the professions, and by study and reflection become a skillful practitioner in medicine or a wise and able lawyer. I say, these opportunities were before him, because the country was before him, and this country is full of opportunities, which are within the reach of all. We live in a free country, and the way is open to you and to me, as it was to this man. He stood there in this situation, not having been trained long in the Gospel of Christ, and I say to you—for it is on record here—that a voice came to that man from the eternal worlds, and that voice set at rest in him every doubt, every dubiety, every fearful anticipation. At a critical time in his life, when he must choose which way to go, that voice said unto him that that which would be of most worth unto him was to declare repentance unto the people and bring souls unto Christ. The message was of such importance that it came to him with "sharpness and with power." It was the voice of Jesus Christ. It was a revelation, given in this day and generation, when it is supposed by the people of the world that revelation is done away with, that there is no longer communication between the heavens and the earth, that the heavens are sealed as brass. The voice of revelation comes from heaven and enters into the soul of this man and declares unto him the right way. Glorious thought!

And how are we to determine the value of souls? This matter has been determined for us also by revelation. The souls of men are so precious in the sight of God that He gave to the world His Only Begotten Son, that by the shedding of His blood He might draw all men unto Him. That is why the great Prophet of this dispensation, Joseph Smith, and these others, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and the rest, were called to bring souls unto Christ. And if one of these men should labor all his

days, and bring save it be but one soul unto Christ, and that one should be his wife, what great joy he would have with his wife in heaven. Then if he should labor all his days and bring unto Christ the souls of his wife and his children, and none else perchance, how great would be his joy in heaven with his wife and children.

So the matter is clear in my mind that in this kingdom a man must first begin at home. He must start with himself. He must place himself in the way of salvation, and obtain the Priesthood. Then he must set in order his own household, and labor for the salvation of his family. He must not ignore his own home, and forget those who are near and dear to him. A man who cannot save himself through the power of God; a man who cannot save his wife and children, cannot bring to Christ the souls of men in the world. I rejoice in this power and authority which has been conferred upon man. A man must have it before he can go out into the world and bring souls unto Christ. It is with the Church. The Prophet, Seer and Revelator holds the keys of this authority, and from him it comes to the Elders of Israel. This great missionary work that is to be accomplished must first begin at home. It must be found in the families of the Saints, and in the quorums of the Priesthood. Then it must be carried by the Priesthood, as it will be and is being carried, to the nations of the earth. It is now being carried to most of the countries of Europe, and will be to all of them, and it is about to be taken to the great nation of Japan; for I want to say to you that Japan is getting to be a great nation. Its people are progressive, and no doubt the Gospel will find a foothold in that land. But I am impressed with the thought, when new missions are to be opened up, that then is a time when we must feel humble before God. We know not what is in store for this Church in the Empire of Japan. If the Gospel is to find a place in their hearts, and they shall give heed to his voice of revelation from eternity, then the angel of God must go before our brother, who

is charged with this responsibility, and the Lord must prepare a people to receive the word, else his preaching and ministry in that land will be unfruitful. Therefore, as we look upon this question, we see how utterly helpless is the man who relies upon his own strength, his own experience and learning. This is the work of God. He goes before His servants, and is their rearward. He speaks through them to the world; and woe unto that people, woe unto that nation, and woe unto that family that rejects the testimony of Jesus!

Brethren and sisters, in speaking upon this subject we have taken but one view of it. There is another view, and that is, that no soul can come unto the Father and be accepted of Him, except upon the principle of repentance. I fancy I hear some of the Saints saying, Yea, the principle of repentance is very good, but it is mostly intended for the nations of the earth that sit in darkness and are without a knowledge of the Gospel. Yes, take this principle of repentance to them. Let the Elders of the Church declare unto them that they must repent, that they must forsake their sins, and turn unto the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and He will bless and exalt them. But let me tell you brethren and sisters, that we must not stop here. The principle of repentance is not only intended for the world, but it belongs to the Latter-day Saints. It is a principle that should come into our lives and be before us continually. Have we not need of repentance? Cast your eye over this Church; go into the wards and Stakes of the Church; visit among this people. They are without doubt the best people upon the earth, but go among them, and then ask yourselves if this people have not need of repentance. We have need of it. You must admit it when you learn that 50 per cent of those who bear the Priesthood of God fail to attend their quorum meetings. One-half of the bearers of the Priesthood attend to this duty, and when called upon will arise and bear testimony; but the other half, fail. Oh! you will say, perhaps, that is not so bad; it is only a quorum meeting

you know; they meet once or twice a month, and the time between meetings is so long that the brethren forget about it. But I wish to remind you, brethren and sisters, (for the sisters should take an interest in this matter with their husbands) that the quorums of the Priesthood have been established by the authority of God, and their times and seasons and bounds have been set. The duties pertaining to the Priesthood are set forth in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants with great force and clearness. And I say, if the meetings of these quorums are of no consequence in the church, let them be done away with. If they are not worth the sacrifice needed in coming together for an hour or so once or twice a month, let us dispense with them. God will not be mocked. If He says such organizations in the Church are necessary, if He inspires the organization of a quorum, then we must give heed to His word. When we make sacred covenants before the Lord, as many of our young men do, in order to obtain the Priesthood, and secure blessings through the Priesthood, and we ignore those covenants, I fear the disfavor of the Lord will be upon us, and He will hold us to a strict accountability. I believe that there is need for the application of this great principle of repentance to the men of the Priesthood. Yet we have many faithful ones among us. There are various associations in the Church, all instituted by the authority of God for the benefit and blessing of the Latter-day Saints, and this same condition prevails more or less throughout all of them—about fifty per cent, respond, and about fifty per cent do not respond.

While I speak thus I am reminded of the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. A time came when the five foolish virgins needed some oil, and needed it badly. Oh, if they could only have gone to the store and got a little oil for their lamps. But there was not sufficient time. The bridegroom was coming suddenly, and they must respond at once to the call and meet him with oil in their lamps. The five wise were ready, the five foolish were not ready, and they could not go in to the marriage supper with the

bridegroom, their Lord and Master. If the Master were to come to this Church today, there would be five wise and five foolish. There would be great consternation among the people. Men of the Priesthood would no doubt be rushing about looking up their record, going to the quorum meetings and seeing if they did not have sufficient credit on the books to go and meet the Master; and the clerk would have to say to them that they had not been to a meeting for two years, or for one year, or for six months, as the case might be. They could not be given any credit; and if they met the Master at all, they would have to meet him without it. Oh, how sorrowful it would be! What a troubled expression would be seen on the countenances of such men! It would be the same with the sisters and others who have not been faithful to duty in the organizations of this Church. And it is the same in other directions.

I grant you, my brethren and sisters, there has been a marvelous improvement in the payment of tithes. A wonderful step in advance has been taken by the Latter-day Saints in this glorious principle, which has come to us from President Snow almost as a new revelation. A special word of warning it was to these Latter-day Saints—these ten virgins. The word came, Do you pay your tithing? Have you oil in your lamps? Do you observe this law which will sanctify the land of Zion? I say great progress has been made in this; and yet there are some foolish virgins among the people with respect to the law of tithing. There are many who come short of paying what Bishop Preston calls a tithing—ten per cent. The Lord has defined the percentage that should be paid. I am not preaching to you anything that men have devised. No man in this Church instituted the principle of tithing. It is as old as the Gospel. It was had in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was had in the days of Solomon. It was had in the days of Christ. It was had upon this continent in the days of the Nephites. Yet there are hundreds of Latter-day Saints who come short of observing it. Many will perhaps pay a tenth of a tenth, or an eighth of a

tenth, a fifth of a tenth, a sixth of a tenth, or a seventh of a tenth. They fall to meet the requirement fully. Where shall we place them? What shall we say of the man who is highly blessed of the Lord in temporal matters, who has been multiplied exceedingly in his substance, and whose barns are not large enough to hold that which the Lord has blessed him with? Is he a tithpayer? Well, he thinks he is. How much does he pay? Why, he pays one-half of one-tenth per cent. Shall we say that he is a fool'sh virgin? I think we might be justified in taking that view, because I do not understand that the Lord is going to be satisfied with anything short of the full observance of the law. If the Lord intended that it should only be one-half of ten per cent, or one-fourth of ten per cent, He would have said so. When we fail to meet the law exactly, then I apprehend that we are appropriating to ourselves something that belongs to the Lord, and I do not know what right I have to use property or means that belongs to Him. I have no way of borrowing from Him personally. If I am going to use any part of the ten per cent, I must go to His Prophet and see whether my application will be acceptable to the Lord; and if the Prophet says, No, it is the Lord's means and must come into His storehouse, then I have no choice left. But you see, brethren and sisters, how, because the Lord has blessed us with ability to gather means and we have it in our hands, we infringe upon His rights by taking some part of that which belongs to him and using it for our own purposes.

I speak of this because, while there are a number in this Church who do not pay any tithing, there are many who make an effort in this direction, and who perhaps imagine they are accomplishing the thing required because they do not entirely reject the law of tithing. They pay something, they get a credit on the books, and then they say to themselves, Soul, sit thou here in ease and be satisfied. Let it not be so with us, my brethren and sisters. Let no man who has the privilege of paying

tithing be satisfied with the payment of less than that which is required. If we are going to strive for a blessing, let us be sure that we shall obtain it. Let us not occupy a position of uncertainty, doing something, but not knowing whether or not we are doing sufficient to secure the blessing.

Brethren and sisters, there are many other things that need to be repented of by the people of God. One is that God will be sought after, and we do not seek after Him as we should. We neglect our family prayers; we neglect our secret prayers, and God is not pleased with it. We should come to him in mighty faith, ask for His Spirit and blessing, and acknowledge His hand in our behalf, that we may have His Spirit to be with us constantly. Now that I am about to sit down, I do not know of any theme in the Gospel that opens up such a wide field for contemplation and thought as this great and glorious principle of repentance. No man on the earth in the Church or out of it, and, I imagine, no man in heaven, can come unto the Lord or be received into His favor, except upon the principle of repentance—daily, hourly repentance, which should mean to us daily, hourly improvement, growth and progress. God bless you. Amen.

The choir sang the hymn,  
 "Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning,  
 Joy to the land which in darkness hath lain."

Benediction by Patriarch John Smith.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 p. m.

The choir and congregation sang:

Redeemer of Israel,  
 Our only delight,  
 On whom for a blessing we call,  
 Our shadow by day,  
 And our pillar by night,  
 Our King, our Deliverer, our all!

Prayer by Elder Brigham H. Roberts.  
 The choir sang the hymn which begins:

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell  
 By faith and love, in every breast.