

SEVENTY-SECOND  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-second Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., April 4, 1902, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

There were present of the General Authorities: Of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund. Of the Council of Apostles there were: George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Mariner W. Merrill, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, Rudger Clawson, Reed Smoot and Hyrum M. Smith; Presiding Patriarch of the Church, John Smith; first seven presidents of Seventies, Seymour B. Young, Christian D. Fjeldsted, Brigham H. Roberts, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimbal, Rulon S. Wells and Joseph W. McMurrin; of the Presiding Bishopric, William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and Orrin P. Miller. There were likewise a large number of presidents of stakes, their counselors and other leading men of the Priesthood.

The choir sang:

Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell  
By faith and love, in every breast;  
Then shall we know and taste and feel  
The joys that cannot be expressed.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Edward H. Snow.

Singing by the choir and congregation:

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

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Righteousness increasing among the Saints—Purposes of God will be fully accomplished—His kindness and mercy to the Saints—Encouragement and blessings for the people.

It is certainly gratifying to see so many of our brethren and sisters assembled here at the opening session of this the Seventy-second annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Everything seems propitious for a time of rejoicing and profit in instruction and admonition and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the servants of the Lord who may speak and upon those who shall assemble to hear from day to day. The weather is delightful, and I believe that the spirit of the people is good, and that there is an earnest desire in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints to promote all the interests of the kingdom of God in the earth and

the welfare of the Saints of the Most High.

I believe that the desire in the hearts of the people to serve the Lord and to work righteousness in the earth is steadily—although it may be slowly, yet steadily and surely—increasing; and I do believe with all my heart that this desire will be more and more earnest and more and more pronounced in the hearts of the people of God from time to time and from year to year, as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, until the coming of the Son of Man.

The kingdom of God is here to grow, to spread abroad, to take root in the earth, and to abide where the Lord has planted it by His own power and by His own word, in the earth, never more to be destroyed or to cease, but to continue until the purposes of the Almighty shall be accomplished, every whit that has been spoken of by the mouths of the holy prophets since the world began.

I rejoice exceedingly in the truth. I thank God every day of my life for His mercy and kindness, and loving care and protection that has been extended to all His people, and for the many manifestations of His peculiar mercy and blessing that have been extended unto us throughout all the length and breadth of the land and through all the years since the organization of the Church, on the 6th of April, 1830.

The Lord, about that time or soon after, decreed a decree which He said His people should realize; That they should begin from that very hour to prevail over all their enemies, and, inasmuch as they continued to be faithful in keeping His laws which He had given unto them, it was decreed that they should prevail until all enemies were subdued—not subdued by violence or the spirit of contention or of warfare but subdued by the power of eternal truth, by the majesty and power of Almighty God—and by the increased power of the righteous and of the upright covenanted people of God should be magnified and increased, until the world shall bow and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, and

that there is a people preparing for His coming in power and glory to the earth again.

We carry to the world the olive branch of peace. We present to the world the law of God, the word of the Lord, the Truth, as it has been revealed in the latter day for the redemption of the dead and for the salvation of the living. We bear no malice or evil toward the children of men. The spirit of forgiveness pervades the hearts of the Saints of God, and they do not cherish a desire or feeling of revenge toward their enemies or those who hurt or molest them or seek to make them afraid; but, on the contrary, the Spirit of the Lord has possession of their spirits, of their souls and of their thoughts, and they forgive all men, and they carry no malice in their hearts toward any, no matter what they have done. They say, in their hearts, let God judge between us and our enemies, and as for us, we forgive them and we bear no malice toward any.

I sincerely hope that, during this conference, which will necessarily be brief, or at least will last but three days, with the exception, possibly, of some of our Priesthood meetings that may be held later—I trust that this conference will be one signally marked by the presence of God's influence and power, and that it will be one in which all that assemble will rejoice and be exceeding glad, in which their hopes will be encouraged and strengthened their faith increased and their power for good enlarged, that they may go hence from this conference rejoicing more than ever in the truth of the Gospel, and more and more determined to fight the good fight and keep the faith and establish righteousness in the earth; that it may be like a well of pure and living water, ever springing up unto eternal life.

God bless the people, the Saints of the Most High, wherever they may be, whether in the vales of these mountains and the regularly organized Stakes of Zion or in the missions in the earth, in our own land and abroad in foreign countries, and upon the islands of the sea. May God's blessing

be poured out upon those that yield obedience to the truth throughout all the world, and may the power of truth, the power of testimony, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, rest mightily upon His servants who are sent forth to preach the Gospel to the world.

I have to say this to my brethren and sisters: That I believe conscientiously, from all that I know, that the day never has been when Zion was more thoroughly equipped, more thoroughly furnished in good works, when there was a better spirit or a more united feeling existing among the people of God than exists today. I believe that the people of the Lord are more prosperous today than ever they have been. I believe they are more firmly established in the truth than they ever have been before. I believe, in other words, that we are continually growing and increasing in the knowledge of God and in good works, and in faith, power and determination to carry out and consummate the will and purpose of God in the earth.

I want to say to the people here that there never has been a time, within my knowledge at least, or within my knowledge of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when the Saints paid a better tithing than they did during the year 1901. I have this to say as a word of encouragement and congratulation to the people throughout all the Stakes of Zion. You have done better than you have ever done before, and we hope that you will continue to do better in this respect, and that you will continue to do better in all other respects throughout the year 1902, and so continue on and on, from year to year, until we shall be perfect in the sphere in which God calls us to act, as the Father and the Son are perfect in their more exalted and glorious sphere in which they act.

May the Lord bless Zion, and may the Spirit of the Lord rest mightily upon His servants that shall address you during this conference, in my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER JOSEPH W. M'MURRIN.

Necessity for experienced Elders in the mission-field—Responsibilities of the Seventy—None should shrink them.

It is rather unexpected to me, my brethren and sisters, to be called upon this morning to address this great congregation; nevertheless, I esteem it a very great privilege and honor to have the opportunity of standing up in this general conference to bear my testimony to the truth of the glorious work that God our Father has established upon the earth in this dispensation, and I sincerely hope that the few moments I occupy I may be directed by the Spirit of the Lord to say something that will be of some advantage to those who are assembled here. I believe that the Elders of the Church of Jesus<sup>us</sup> Christ of Latter-day Saints feel the need of the inspiration of the Lord when they stand up to address the people, and that without that inspiration their words are very weak, indeed like unto sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; yet, by the blessings of the Lord and the presence of His Holy Spirit, men who may be looked upon as weak are oftentimes led to say things that are of the utmost value. I hope that this Spirit may rest, not only upon your humble servant at this time, but upon all the servants of the Lord who shall stand up during this conference to teach the people the will of the Lord; and I believe that we have it in our own power, to a very great degree, to call down the blessings that we desire at the present time. We have assembled from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, that we may worship the Lord our God; and if we have come together with the desire in our hearts to be blessed of our Father in heaven, and our prayers ascend to Him that He will be mindful of us, we have a right to hope, from the promises He has made to His people, that He will hearken to our prayers, and that He will pour out His blessings upon us in rich abundance.

I have rejoiced exceedingly in the few words that have been spoken to us by Prest. Joseph F. Smith, and I believe that a feeling of joy has permeat-