

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

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

### FIRST DAY.

The Seventy-fourth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., on Oct. 4th, 1903, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

#### THE PROCEEDINGS.

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 Twelve Apostles: John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, 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, Brigham H. Roberts, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimball, 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, presidents of missions and other leading men of the Priesthood.

The choir sang the hymn which begins:

"Sweetly may the blessed Spirit  
On each faithful bosom shine;  
May we every grace inherit;  
Lord, we seek a boon divine."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Charles W. Penrose.

The choir sang:

"May we, who know the joyful sound,  
Still practise what we know;  
Not hearers of the word alone,  
But doers of it, too."

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

#### OPENING ADDRESS.

Latter-day Saints should work in harmony—Obedience to the Gospel makes man free—Progress of the community—Instructions about colonization—Division of Stakes—Prosperous Condition of missions—Recent prosperity—Trades versus professions for the young—Educational Interests—Suggestions to parents in the training of children.

I am gratified to see the large attendance present at the opening of this semi-annual conference, and I sincerely hope that throughout the sessions our people may continue to attend and participate in whatever duties or labors may be necessary to be performed during this conference.

I would like all Latter-day Saints to feel in their hearts that the work in which they are engaged is not only the work that God has instituted in the latter days, but that it is a work in which each individual member of the Church is deeply and vitally interested. Every man and every woman should feel a deep and abiding interest in the work of the Lord, in the growth and development of the great latter-day cause, which cause is intended for the

redemption of all men from the powers of sin, from all its contaminating effects, for the redemption of man from his own weakness and ignorance, and from the grasp that Satan holds upon the world, that men may be made free; for no man is or can be made free without possessing a knowledge of the truth and obeying the same. It is only the possession and observance of the truth that can make men free, and all those who do not possess and obey it are slaves and not freemen.

It is only by obedience to the laws of God, that men can rise above the petty weaknesses of mortality and exercise that breadth of affection, that charity and love, that should actuate the hearts and the motives of the children of men. The Gospel as it has been restored is intended to make men free indeed, free to choose the good and to forsake the evil, free to exercise that boldness in their choice of that which is good, by which they will not shrink from doing that which they are convinced is right, notwithstanding the great majority of the people of the world may point at them the finger of scorn and ridicule. It requires no especial bravery on the part of men to swim with the currents of the world. When a man makes up his mind to forsake the world and its follies and sins, and identify himself with God's people, who are everywhere spoken evil of, it takes courage, manhood, independence of character, superior intelligence, and a determination that is not common among men; for men shrink from that which is unpopular, from that which will not bring them praise and adulation, from that which will in any degree tarnish that which they call honor or a good name.

The Latter-day Saints are a people who have been and are still familiar with the ways of the world. They have been gathered from nearly all the nations of the earth, and were formerly associated with the various religious denominations extant. Hence they are familiar with the various religious creeds existing in the world, and they have had the courage, in the face of all the opposition that they have had

to meet, and the contumely that has been heaped upon them, to forsake their former creeds, to sever their former ties and relationships, and to forsake their kindred, their homes, and everything that they have held dear, for the Gospel's sake; and they are not cowards; they are not slaves; they are not bondsmen, but they are freemen, because the Gospel has made them free. It is a knowledge of these things that will make a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints an entity in the Church to which he belongs—a living factor, an active participant in the cause in which he is engaged; one who feels, deep down in his soul, the truth of the Gospel; and the love of it moves him to works of righteousness and causes him to desire to become more and more united with those who are seeking to bring to pass the establishment of the kingdom of God and a reign of righteousness, that wickedness may be destroyed and truth prevail from sea to sea.

It was not and is not my intention to speak long this morning. I desired to make a few opening remarks at this conference, and the thought that seemed to be impressed upon my mind was that every Latter-day Saint here today should be here tomorrow, and should continue to attend this conference until it shall conclude on the 6th of this month, which is the semi-anniversary of the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the latter days. I would like all to feel that interest in this work and the duties and responsibilities that rest upon them during this conference, that they will be prompt in attending here, as they have been today. I felt that it would be useless for me to speak of this tomorrow, when it is possible that many might be absent, attending to business or pleasure. I take this occasion, therefore, while all are here to hear my voice and the voices of those who shall follow me, that you may know what we desire, and that you may feel prompted in your hearts to carry out this desire.

I desire to say to this congregation that the work of the Lord, to the best

of my knowledge, has continued to grow and spread since our conference last April. I can see no evidence of weakness, or of weakening among the Latter-day Saints. Everywhere that I have had the pleasure and opportunity of traveling to visit the people we have found them earnest in their work, earnest in their faith, earnest in their devotion to the cause of God in the earth, and living according to the knowledge that they possess, agreeable to the will of the Father, as it has been made known to them.

There have been great improvements. We have built, completed and dedicated many houses of worship throughout the various stakes of Zion during the six months that have passed. There are many more in course of erection, and many will no doubt be completed and dedicated and ready for the service of the people before we shall assemble again six months hence.

The stakes of Zion continue to increase in numbers and in strength, save, perhaps in the larger cities. We find that there is a disposition on the part of some of our people to desert the cities and those parts of the state that are more densely settled, and they are spreading out into newer countries and building up other settlements and other stakes of Zion. While we feel that this is a necessity, to a great extent, we also feel that it is unwise for our people to scatter abroad or leave their present homes, except when it becomes absolutely necessary for them to do so for their own good and for the good of their increasing families. And yet, we would advise such as have no homes, say in Salt Lake, or in Ogden, or in the larger towns and cities of our state, and who have no prospects of ever being able to obtain homes for themselves in these more crowded centers—to turn their eyes and their course toward the newer settlements, where they may have the privilege of obtaining homesteads and building up homes for themselves and their children. When you do this we would advise you to move under the direction and counsel of those who have these matters in

charge, that instead of scattering abroad you may gather abroad and establish yourselves in communities where you can have the advantages of schools, of meetings, of Mutual Improvement associations, and of all the other auxiliary organizations of the Church, and where you will be able to associate together in a community for self-protection and for self-culture and advancement in all that is good. We find that it is not those who desire the welfare of Zion who are disposed to scatter abroad; those who love the truth and who are interested in the work of the Lord are always desirous of being associated with the Saints, wherever they may choose to locate.

We have been under the necessity of dividing the Alberta stake of Zion, because it had grown to such dimensions that it was a very great burden upon the presidency of the stake, in its undivided condition, to attend to all the duties that devolved upon them and to visit all the people. They had grown until they had spread for a hundred miles or more from one point to the other. We divided it recently, making two stakes out of the one. There are other stakes that are growing, and we have already had appeals from the people and those who are in charge to establish other stakes out of the present existing ones, because of the increase of the people and the extent of those stakes; and in the near future it will be necessary, no doubt, to make other divisions of stakes in order that the people may be visited by their presiding officers and all may be kept in touch with the spirit of the Gospel and the work of the Lord.

Our missions are almost universally in a prosperous condition. The work is progressing in Europe and upon the islands of the sea. There has been some little difficulty in the German mission, of late, but matters there have quieted down and our Elders continue to prosecute their labors there as they are doing in other missionary fields. We have succeeded in completing and dedicating a very commodious and appropriate building in the city of Copen-



hagen, and also in Christiania, Norway, since the last conference, thus giving to these missions a permanency that they have not enjoyed to the same extent in the years that have gone by. Other meetinghouses for our people in other missions are in contemplation, and, perhaps, in the near future we may have headquarters for our Elders, and a meetinghouse, or church, if you please to call it that, in other mission fields, where we can advertise our name and our principles, and where we can have a permanent foothold and exhibit our works to those who are inquiring after the truth, and not leave the people, as in years gone by, under the impression that we are constantly on the "wing" in these distant lands, having no permanent abiding places there. Our mission in Great Britain, for instance, has continued for the last 60 years or more, and yet we have never attempted to build houses of worship there, and many of the people have supposed that our work there was only temporary. But we desire it distinctly understood that "Mormonism," as it is called, has come to the world to stay. We expect to proclaim this Gospel to the nations of the earth until every nation, kindred, tongue and people shall have the privilege of hearing the sound thereof and the voices of the servants of God, lifted up in warning and in testimony to them that judgments will come upon the world and that righteousness has been made known and proclaimed from the heavens in the latter day.

We have unfortunately lost some three or four of our Elders, by the hand of death, in the mission field. We regret this very much, and we are impressed with the thought that it is largely due, in some instances at least, to the lack of caution and proper care on the part of the Elders themselves. I shall be most thankful and happy myself if after I have done all that I have the power and wisdom to do for my own protection, the Lord will preserve me by His power. Still I will give to Him the honor and the glory for all. If a man receives wisdom to guard

himself against evil and dangers, it is because God has bestowed the gift of wisdom upon him. It is said that faith is a gift of God, and so it is; but faith does not come without works; faith does not come without obedience to the commandments of God. Men do not receive the gift of faith, nor the gift of wisdom, nor the gift of understanding, nor a testimony of the Spirit of the Living God in their hearts, without they seek for it. The principle is: Thou shalt knock and it shall be opened unto thee; thou shalt ask and receive; thou shalt seek if thou wilt find; and if you want wisdom, ask for it, as Solomon did; if you want knowledge and the testimony of the spirit in your hearts, seek for it earnestly. Put yourself in a position whereby you will be worthy to receive it, then it will come to you as a gift of God, and His name should be praised for the same.

I am grieved to say to this congregation—and yet perhaps I should not express myself so—that since our last conference we have been deprived of the presence, counsel and influence of one of our beloved brethren, one of the Twelve, President Brigham Young. Of course you are all aware of this, still I mention it here that you may know that we do not forget those with whom we have been associated in life from boyhood to old age, those, especially who have been faithful in all their callings and in the missions to which they have been appointed. We revere their memory and we regret their absence from us today.

I am delighted with the return and presence of Brother Heber J. Grant from Japan. He has been honorably released from that mission to return and to resume his labors here, or elsewhere, as he may be called and appointed. Brother Horace S. Ensign has been placed in charge of the Japan mission. Those who were laboring with him there are faithful, devoted, young men; but Brother Heber can speak of them more fully than it is possible perhaps for me to do.

There are many subjects, which should, perhaps, be dwelt upon and

thought of during this conference. I desire to renew, in brief, what I said to you six months ago. Notwithstanding we have had six months more of prosperity in the land—our crops have been unusually good this year, and the labor of the husbandman has been crowned with abundant harvests—yet, while prosperity has abounded throughout the length and breadth of the land of Zion, I want to tell you that there has not been so much prosperity abroad. We frequently hear of financial failures and difficulties. We hear of labor troubles in various parts of our land, and of wars and rumors of wars; but here in the midst of these mountain valleys, inhabited by Latter-day Saints, the Lord has given us peace and has made us secure. Our business relations are healthy; our business institutions are prosperous, and everything looks promising for the future; but, notwithstanding the promising outlook that we behold, I desire that my brethren and sisters will not become over-confident in this condition of affairs. I tell you that it is better for us to be out of debt, free from obligations and mortgages, than it is for us to have mortgages plastered upon our homes, or upon our farms, or upon our stocks, or anything that we possess in the shape of values. I again admonish the Latter-day Saints to aim and diligently endeavor to free themselves from debt. Get out of debt and keep out of debt, and then you will be financially as well as spiritually free.

I desire again to say that I would be pleased to see more of our young men learning trades instead of trying to learn professions, such as the profession of the law, or of medicine or other professions. I would rather a man would become a good mechanic, a good builder, a good machinist, a good surveyor, a good farmer, a good blacksmith, or a good artisan of any kind than to see him follow these other kinds of professions. We need, however, those who are capable of teaching in the school, and I would like to see a greater interest manifested by our young men and women in normal train-

ing, that they might become proficient teachers and look forward to following this profession, because it is a most important one, and great results will follow the faithful performance of the duties and labors of those who are engaged in it. The training of our young, the giving of proper instruction to those who are seeking education, and creating facilities in our midst for all who desire not only the common branches of education, but the higher branches; that they may obtain these privileges and benefits at home instead of being compelled to go abroad to complete their education.

Some of our friends took very grievous offense at what I said in respect to some of these things last April, I believe. I was sorry to hear what they said in relation to this. Why, bless your soul, the counsel that I gave last April in relation to these matters was in the interest of all parties and of all professions. I did not speak a disrespectful word of any profession. I simply advised, and I still advise, the young men of Zion to become artisans rather than to become lawyers. I repeat it; and yet I would to God that every intelligent man among the Latter-day Saints was able to read law and to be his own lawyer. I wish that every man could and would study and become familiar with the laws of his state and with the laws of his nation, and with the laws of other nations. You cannot learn too much in these directions; but I think there are too many trying to be lawyers, for the good of that profession. They are eating one another up, to some extent. Not long ago a young man who had studied law and hung out his shingle here, after waiting for business, trying to stir up business, for some length of time, came so near starving himself and family that he came and wanted to know what to do. He could not make a living in the profession of law. I asked him if he knew how to do anything else. He said yes, he was a good printer. Well, then, I said, abandon the profession of law and take up the profession of printing; do something that you can do and that you can make a living at. If

he had any practise at all in law my counsel to him, if he had obeyed it—and he did—would have been a benefit to those who remained in the profession. There are some men, most honorable, most genuine and most intelligent who are following the profession of the law. I wish I could say that much of all.

Then, my brethren and sisters, get out of debt. My young friends, learn to become skilful in the arts and in mechanics and in something that will be material, useful in building up the commonwealth where we live and where all our interests are centered.

O, my brethren and sisters, I admonish you to look after your children, that they may grow up with proper habits, keeping the Word of Wisdom, keeping themselves morally clean and pure, avoiding the temptations and the allurements that beset them on every hand, that they may grow up to be men and women without spot and without blemish. This is the great desideratum of life, almost, at least to me. For me to see my children following in the ways of sin, departing from the ways of uprightness, would be the most grievous affliction that could befall me. Death itself would be more tolerable.

Now, I feel that it is not wise or proper for me to occupy more of the time this morning. There are many other things that might be said, and probably will be said by those who will address us during this conference. I trust that proper attention may be given to their counsels, and that we may be built up and strengthened in the faith and encouraged in our determinations to serve the Lord, to keep His commandments, work righteousness and try to do good to all men, whether they be Latter-day Saints or latter-day sinners. Let us do good to all men; that is our mission. It is our especial business to lift up those who are drooping, to strengthen the weak, to encourage those who are in doubt, and to lead on and up in the path of righteousness and of usefulness among men in the world, that we may be in deed and of a truth saviors upon Mount Zion. That God may grant

this to every one of us is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The hymn on the first page of the book, was sung with excellent effect, by Brothers Wood and Noall Pratt, both grandsons of Parley P. Pratt, the author. The first verse is as follows:

The morning breaks, the shadows flee;  
Lo! Zion's standard is unfurled!  
The dawning of a brighter day  
Majestic rises on the world.

#### ELDER HEBER J. GRANT.

Joy in preaching the Gospel—The Japanese mission—Productivity of land in that country—Advantages of thorough cultivation—The sugar industry—Necessity of obedience to legitimate authority—Good words for Elders in Japan.

It is needless for me to say to the Latter-day Saints that I rejoice in having the privilege of again standing before you in this Tabernacle. It is indeed a pleasure, to every man and woman who possess a testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged, to go forth and bear that testimony to his or her fellows. There is no joy that comes to the human heart, so far as my experience in life goes, that equals that which we feel when we are engaged in the work of the Lord, at home or abroad. I believe, as a rule, when we are away from home, and relieved of the cares generally associated with the ordinary affairs of life, which engross most of our attention, we then draw nearer to the Lord, and receive more abundantly of the manifestations of His Holy Spirit, than we do while at home. It is because of this fact that the young returned Elder, and the Elder who has been on a second or third mission, who has been faithful, can arise before congregations of the Saints and testify that he greatly enjoyed his missionary labors, notwithstanding he has been separated from his friends and not pursuing the usual avocations of life.

In case I may forget it, I want to say a word or two about the hymn we have just listened to—"The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee," etc. I will not take time to read it, but it is the first hymn in the book. It was written under the inspiration of the Lord, by one of the greatest of all