

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Man's insignificant individuality compared with God's great work.—Nothing to lose, everything to gain by faithfulness.—True Saints can not be led by false shepherds.—Friends of righteousness are not enemies of Zion.—“Whatever the Lord requireth of me, that will I do.”—Christ's Church will stand, and its power increase henceforth.—Integrity of early members of the Church a worthy example to the Saints now.

It is with feelings of gratitude to the Lord that I stand before you this morning, at the opening of our 79th Annual General Conference. I thank the Lord for all His mercies and loving kindness toward all His people and, for that matter, for His continued mercy and kindness unto all men. I am very grateful that we have the privilege of meeting together this morning under so favorable circumstances, possessing as we seem to do, many if not all of the blessings of life, health and strength, peace, and the desire in our hearts to honor the Lord by our presence, manifesting our faith by gathering here on this occasion. This is a witness of our devotion to the cause of Zion. My heart is full of gratitude to the Lord, and of love for the Latter-day Saints, and for the Church of Jesus Christ throughout all the world.

To me there is nothing in life that can compare with the great work that the Lord is doing in the midst of the children of men, in these latter days. While it may be said, and it is in a measure true, that we are but a handful in comparison to our fellow men in the world, yet we may be compared with the leaven of which the Savior

spoke, that will eventually leaven the whole world. We have ample assurance of the fulfillment of this thought in the growth and development of the cause from its incipency until the present, for it has steadily and increasingly progressed and developed in the earth, from a mere half dozen of men 79 years ago, until today the members of the Church may be numbered by hundreds of thousands. We have passed through the stages of infancy and of irresponsible childhood, and are indeed approaching the condition of manhood and womanhood in our experience in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in all the conditions incident to, and that are connected with, the growth of the Church and the people of God, thus far in the cause of Zion, and also the necessity the people of God are under to uphold and sustain principles of righteousness and of truth against all prejudices of the world, as well as against their own prejudices, and individual likes, dislikes and preferences. We are learning the great truth that man is insignificant in his individuality in comparison with the mighty cause which involves the salvation of the children of men, living and dead, and those who will yet live in the earth. Men must set aside their own prejudices, their own personal desires, wishes and preferences, and pay deference to the great cause of truth that is spreading abroad in the world.

To my mind there is nothing in all the world so great and so glorious as the work that the Lord Almighty is doing in these latter days. I feel grateful that I have been permitted as an individual to take part, in a humble way, in helping to promote the interests of

Zion, and to spread its cause abroad in the world, from the days of my youth until now. I sincerely hope and pray that I may be able to endure faithful throughout the remaining portion of my life. I have lived too long to think of faltering in the least now. I have put my hand to the plow and it is too late to turn or to look back; and, for that matter, there has never appeared to me to be any reason at all why I should look back, or why I should slacken my efforts or my earnest desire to spread the cause of truth and help to build up Zion. Everything has pointed to the great good that has been and will be accomplished. Everything has pointed to the justness and righteousness of the cause and made my duty clear to me, assuring me of advancement and growth in knowledge and understanding by pursuing the cause that I have been pursuing; and that I still intend to pursue, by the help of God to the end. I see nothing to lose by following this course but I think I can see that everything is to be gained by it. I am determined, therefore, to go on and continue as faithful as I can be to my duty, to the trusts that are imposed in me. As far as it lies in my power, I want to be faithful to the work of the Lord, that at last I may be able to give an account of my life and stewardship that will at least be acceptable to the Great Judge of the quick and the dead.

As it has been said many times in the past, "I am for the kingdom of God, or nothing." Zion, first and foremost. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, that all other things may be added in the due time of the Lord, and in accordance with His pleasure. These are principles that should

prevade the minds and hearts of all the Latter-day Saints. We should have gained sufficient experience by this time to realize that no man, no individual, no clique, and no secret organization can combine with force and power sufficient to overturn the purposes of the Almighty, or to change the course of His work. Many and many an individual has arisen in times past, and these individuals have been falsely impressed with the idea that they were going to work a wonderful reformation in the Church; they anticipated that in a very short time the whole people would desert their standard, the standard of truth to which they had gathered and around which they had rallied from the beginning of the Church until then. These persons thought the people would follow the "new shepherds," but the people of God know the voice of the true shepherd, and the stranger's voice they will not heed, nor the counsels of him who assumes authority that does not belong to him. None such will they ever follow. The Latter-day Saints know the spirit of the Gospel; they understand the spirit of truth. They have learned their duty, and they will stand by the truth, no matter what may come. From the beginning until now, we have had to face the entire world; and the whole world, comparatively, is or has been arrayed against the work of the Lord, not all on account of hatred, not solely with the intent or desire in their hearts to do evil or to fight the truth, but because they were ignorant of the truth, and because they knew not what they were doing. Many are deceived by the voice of false shepherds, and are misled by false influences. They are deceived; they

know not the truth; they understand not what they do and, therefore, they are arrayed, as it were, against the truth, against the work of the Lord; so it has been from the beginning. From the day that the Prophet Joseph Smith first declared his vision until now, the enemy of all righteousness, the enemy of truth, of virtue, of honor, uprightness, and purity of life; the enemy to the only true God, the enemy to direct revelation from God and to the inspirations that come from the heavens to man, has been arrayed against this work. You have never found the friend to righteousness, the friend to revelation, the friend to God, the friend to truth, the friend to righteous living and purity of life, or he who is devoted to righteousness and is broad enough to comprehend truth from error and light from darkness—I say you have never found such as these arrayed against the cause of Zion. To be arrayed against the cause of Zion is to be arrayed against God, against revelation from God, against that spirit that leads men into all truth that cometh from the source of light and intelligence, against that principle that brings men together and causes them to forsake their sins, to seek righteousness, to love God with all their hearts, mind and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves.

The spirit of the Gospel leads men to righteousness: to love their fellow men and to labor for their salvation and exaltation; it inspires them to do good and not evil, to avoid even the appearance of sin, much more to avoid sin itself. This is indeed the spirit of the Gospel, which is the spirit of this latter-day work, and also the spirit that possesses those who have

embraced it; and the aim and purpose of this work is the salvation, the exaltation, and the eternal happiness of man both in this life and in the life to come. Will any man, or any set of men who really love righteousness, love God, love purity of life, and who are seeking for the truth, I ask, will such men array themselves against the work whose very object is that which they themselves seek? Those who fight against Zion, or against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are fighting against God, against His truth, against light and knowledge, and revelation from the heavens to man, which we know man has received of God in the day in which we live. What shall we do? Our plain duty—so plain that none should misunderstand it, none can misunderstand it unless they allow their prejudices and human weaknesses to prevail over their better judgment; our plain duty is to live in the spirit of forgiveness, in the spirit of humility before the Lord, in the love of the truth more than the love of ourselves and our personal interests.

The Lord told the young man who loved the world, that if he desired to be perfect, he should sell all that he had and give it to the poor, then said the Lord, "Come and follow me." This may be a very simple manner of expression, but there is a great deal of truth in it, there is an essential principle involved in it. It is the putting of that which is sacred and divine, that which is of God, that which makes for the peace and happiness of the souls of men, before our riches, before all our earthly honors and possessions. The Lord Almighty requires this of the Latter-day Saints; and every man and woman

who has embraced the Gospel ought to feel in his and in her heart today, and in their souls always, that "whatsoever the Lord requireth of me, that will I do," or that will I give, no matter what it is. To a certain extent we have reached that point, to the extent at least that we can forego the pleasures of home, the opportunity of making means, of devoting our time to labors and industries that will bring great profit to us. We are willing to leave these things, and for years consecrate our time and our efforts to the preaching of the Gospel to the nations of the earth, and remain proclaiming the Gospel in the world until it shall be said to us "it is enough," and we receive an honorable release to return to our homes. This is, of course, a step in the right direction. Many of us can do this, and many are doing it from time to time. Occasionally we come across an individual who thinks he could not do it. He thinks he could not sacrifice his home interests, and the profits of his business, which need his personal attention. He thinks he could not leave these interests to go out into the world to preach the Gospel, and he asks to be excused from being called to such labor as this. I fear that in such cases, if he were called upon to make a sacrifice of a portion of that which he possessed, of a worldly character, for the building up of Zion, or for the spread of truth, or for the defense of the people of God, that he would be found wanting in his willingness to comply with such requirements also. For my own part, I would like to so live that with open heart and mind, before God and all men, if I were required to go to the ends of the

earth and remain there proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, that I would be willing to do it; or if I were asked to give up what I possess in the world, for the building up of Zion, for some special necessary purpose, for advancing the cause of Zion in the world, that I would be prepared and ready to say, Father, here is all that I have; I place it upon the altar freely and give it for the benefit of Thy kingdom upon the earth and for the advancement of Thy cause. I would like to live so that this would indeed be my determination and that I would be able, if the requirement were made, to carry it out not only without regret but with pleasure. But this I earnestly desire—I want to live so that, no matter what any other man in the world may do or say, so far as I am concerned there is but this one thing for me to do, and that is to be true to the covenants I have made with God and my brethren, to stand firm and steadfast for the advancement of Zion and for the building up of the kingdom of God in the earth. I want to so live that I can have in me the spirit and determination to forgive my brother his trespasses, as I would desire him to forgive my trespasses against him. We should all live so that the spirit of reconciliation, the spirit of peace, the spirit of love and of union may rise above the passions and feelings of anger and resentment that may be aroused in the hearts of men, in consequence of circumstances which might arise from time to time. Our lives should be such that these worldly things may sink into insignificance, and that the love of God in the hearts of brethren might rise above all other things, no mat-

ter what condition or circumstance may be brought to bear upon us to provoke or wound our feelings.

There is no salvation but in the way God has pointed out. There is no hope of everlasting life but through obedience to the law that has been affixed by the Father of Life, "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and there is no other way by which we may obtain that light and exaltation. These matters are beyond peradventure, beyond all doubt in my mind; I know them to be true. Therefore, I bear my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, that He lives and that His Son lives, even He who died for the sins of the world, and that He rose from the dead; that He sits upon the right hand of the Father; that all power is given unto Him; that we are directed to call upon God in the name of Jesus Christ. We are told that we should remember Him in our homes, keep His holy name fresh in our minds, and revere Him in our hearts; we should call upon him from time to time, from day to day, and in fact, every moment of our lives we should live so that the desires of our hearts will be a prayer unto God for righteousness, for truth and for the salvation of the human family. Let us guard ourselves so that there may not come into our souls a single drop of bitterness, by which our whole being might be corroded and poisoned with anger, with hatred, envy or malice, or any sort of evil. We should be free from all these evil things, that we may be filled with the love of God, the love of truth the love of our fellow men, that we may seek to do good unto all men all the days of our lives, and

above all things be true to our covenants in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I know that this is Christ's Church. I know that the principles we have received are true, as far as I have been able to comprehend them. I need not enter into a lengthy talk or discourse in relation to these principles, for you are familiar with them; but I do know that every principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has been revealed through Joseph Smith, the prophet, in these last days is of God and is true, and will stand for ever—that is, on its merit, as to its truth; it can never be overthrown. I know this with all my being. God has made me doubly assured by the presence and influence of His Spirit, and by the inspiration awakened in my soul to love that which is good, and to desire to forsake that which is evil. I know, too, that the Lord Almighty will accomplish His purposes; no matter about me, no matter what individuals may do or scores of individuals, for that matter or hundreds of them, or perchance thousands of them that may turn away from the truth, or who may fall by the way, stumbling over their own weaknesses as a result of the little strifes and bitternesses that arise in their hearts, one against another. Hundreds or thousands may fall by the way, but the kingdom of God will never fall. The work of the Lord will never stop, nor cease, for God has decreed that it shall continue to progress in the earth until His purposes are accomplished. This being true, no power beneath the Celestial Kingdom can hinder its progress. It can't be done, for God has decreed it. I see in the progress of this latter-day work, from

its inception, that mighty, irresistible power, that wonderful Divine providence that makes for righteousness and for truth and for the advancement of the cause of Zion; working in and under and all around this Church, until it has brought it to where it is. That same power will become stronger and stronger and will work with greater rapidity and greater impetus in the future than it has done in the past, in proportion to the growth and development of the faith, knowledge and fidelity of the people of God in the earth. The kingdom of God and the work of the Lord will spread more and more; it will progress more rapidly in the world in the future than it has done in the past. The Lord has said it, and the Spirit beareth record; and I bear my testimony to this, for I do know that it is true.

We believe in righteousness. We believe in all truth, no matter to what subject it may refer. No sect or religious denomination in the world possesses a single principle of truth that we do not accept or that we will reject. We are willing to receive all truth, from whatever source it may come; for truth will stand, truth will endure. No man's faith, no man's religion, no religious organization in all the world can ever rise above the truth. The truth must be at the foundation of religion, or it is in vain and it will fail of its purpose. I say that the truth is at the foundation, at the bottom and top of—and it entirely permeates this great work of the Lord that was established through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, the prophet. God is with it; it is His work, not that of man; and it will succeed no matter what the opposition may be. We look now at the opposition ar-

rayed against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and smile, so to speak, with feelings of confidence doubly assured by the experience of the past, in comparison to the feelings that possessed the souls of our fathers and mothers in the early days of the Church, when they were but a handful, with all the world arrayed against them; just a few poor, homeless people, driven from their possessions, cast out from the communities in which they sought to establish themselves and build their homes. When I think of our people, thrust into the wilderness, wandering and seeking for a place where the soles of their feet might rest, and see, then, the world arrayed against them, and think of the little chance that appeared before them for success and the accomplishment of their purposes, I wonder that more of them did not tremble and falter than did; but some of them were true in the midst of it all, even unto death. If it had been necessary for them to have been martyred for the truth, willingly would they have given their lives, as they gave all else that they possessed in the world, for the knowledge they had of the divinity of the work in which they were engaged. Are we as faithful today? Are we as devout as our fathers were? Oh, my God, help me to be as true as they were. Help me to stand as they stood, upon the pedestal of eternal truth, that no power on earth, or in hell, may remove me from that foundation. This is my prayer to the Lord for my own sake, and it is my prayer to Him for every Latter-day Saint throughout the length and breadth of the world.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters. May He continue to prosper us, and help us to increase in

righteousness and faith, in union, and in love, one for another and for God our Father, and for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom we owe the hope and promise of redemption from death and from the power of endless banishment from the presence of God. This is my prayer for you, my brethren and sisters, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A bass solo, "Fear God, Oh Israel," was rendered by Alexander C. Crawford.

PRESIDENT JOHN R. WINDER.

Determination to be diligent in duties, notwithstanding advanced age.

I am delighted, my brethren and sisters, to have one more opportunity of meeting with you in general conference. President Smith asked the question, "What shall we do?" Answering that for myself, what shall I do? I propose to serve the Lord with all my might, mind and strength while I shall be permitted to remain here upon the earth; this is my determination. Every day that I live I feel that I am under renewed obligations to my Heavenly Father for His continued mercies and blessings to me. I often think there is no person, that I know of, who is under greater obligations to the Lord than I am for the many blessings He has bestowed upon me during my entire life; and for extending my days until the present time. He has been so kind and merciful to me that I could not, for one moment, be so ungrateful as to fail to acknowledge the hand of the Lord. I expect to occupy only a few moments,

but I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing to you my determination to continue in this work, and especially to keep sacred and holy the covenants I have made up to the present time, and seek to discharge and fulfill every duty that devolves upon me, with greater faithfulness in the future than I have done in the past. This morning, as I listened to the words of our President, my soul was filled with delight and with a renewed determination to perform my duties, just so far as I am able to do so.

It may not be necessary for me to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that this is the eighty-eighth year of my life. Do you not think that the Lord has been good to me? I certainly would be ungrateful did I not serve Him through the remainder of my days, with all my might, mind and strength. I expect to stand by my President, to be on hand to assist him, in my humble way, to the extent of my ability, and as the Lord will give me strength.

While the choir was singing the hymn this morning, this voice attracted my attention:

Lift up your hearts in praise to
God;

Let your rejoicings never cease;
Though tribulations rage abroad,
Christ says, "In me ye shall have
peace."

May the Lord bless the people of Israel in all their abidings. God bless you all, my brethren and sisters, and may He help me to carry out the determination which I have expressed this morning, to the fullest extent, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.