

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Eighty-First Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m. on Thursday, April 6, 1911, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

AUTHORITIES PRESENT.

There were present of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith and Anthon H. Lund; of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, Charles W. Penrose, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Anthony W. Ivins and Joseph F. Smith, Jr.; Presiding Patriarch John Smith; of the First Council of Seventies, Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin and Charles H. Hart; of the Presiding Bishopric, Charles W. Nibley, Orrin P. Miller and David A. Smith. There were also a large number of Presidents of Stakes and Missions, with their Counselors, Bishops of Wards, Patriarchs, and numerous other prominent men and women repre-

senting various quorums and organizations of the Church.

President Joseph F. Smith called the assembly to order, and the conference services were commenced by the choir and congregation singing the hymn:

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor
fear,
But with joy wend your way;
Though hard to you this journey may
appear,
Grace shall be as your day.

Prayer was offered by Elder Lewis Anderson.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

Guide us, O Thou great Jehovah,
Lead us to the promised land,
We are weak, but Thou art able—
Hold us with Thy powerful hand.
Holy Spirit,
Feed us till the Savior comes.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Active interest in God's work enjoined. —Zion enjoying the favor of the Almighty.—Leading men and women in the Church commended.—Remarkable facts shown by Church statistics of births, deaths, etc.—Demoralizing amusements and vulgar exhibitions

condemned.—Erroneous doctrines cannot deceive enlightened Saints.—Strong re-affirmation that plural marriages have ceased in the Church.—Legislation by Congress in regard to marriage and divorce approved.

I do not feel at this moment that I shall occupy very much time. I am suffering, to some extent with a cold. Of course it is always a bad cold, however light it may be; we never have good ones.

I am extremely thankful to my Father in heaven, on my own behalf, for the many blessings that have come to me personally since our meeting at the last conference, in October. Then I was suffering extremely with sciatic troubles, and felt that I had my portion of suffering at that time. I am thankful to say that I feel almost new again, so far as that affliction is concerned. But we never can tell how long we may be free from the ailments incident to human life; and while we mention the favors of the Lord and His blessings upon us, and rejoice exceedingly in the health, vigor and strength that we possess, we do not do so boastingly but always in remembrance of the fact that we are subject to the favor and mercy of God, every hour and every moment of our lives. For I feel that it is the duty of all Latter-day Saints, especially, and of course of all mankind, to acknowledge the hand of God in all things. Sometimes afflictions are permitted to come upon us for the purpose of a trial, perhaps, or for some other reason, in the wisdom of Providence, for our good. I believe that everything with which we have to do in the natural and proper affairs of life, will be overruled, by the providence of God, to the good of those who love Him, who strive to keep His com-

mandments, and who exercise wisdom and judgment according to the intelligence that they possess, in the care and protection of their own lives, the preservation of their health, and strength, and the maintenance of pure, moral character and manner of life.

I feel grateful* for the beautiful morning which has dawned upon us at the opening of this eighty-first anniversary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I feel grateful, too, for the presence of so many of the Latter-day Saints as are assembled, which is an indication to me, at least, and should be I think to all, that we do take that interest which we *should* feel in these assemblies, or conferences of the Church. There is not one of us but what should feel a lively personal interest in the upbuilding of Zion, and in the welfare of all her people. No man or woman holding a membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should feel indifferent to the cause of Zion, but they should, one and all, feel a lively interest in the welfare of the work of the Lord, in which they are engaged. They should contribute whatever influence they can and whatever effort it is possible for them to contribute for the upbuilding of Zion and for the joy, peace, comfort, happiness, and well-being of all her inhabitants.

I think I can truthfully say that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in a prosperous condition in the world. I believe I can justly say that Zion is enjoying the favor and the blessing of Almighty God. I feel confident that those who are entrusted with the watchcare of the people in various organizations of the Church are faithful to their trusts and are

diligently exercising their influence and power for the good of the people over whom they are placed to preside. I can say this, so far as I have any personal knowledge, of every presidency of the stakes of Zion. I think I may, consistently and properly, say the same with reference to the bishops of the wards in Zion. These important officers of the Church, holding the keys of the priesthood, of authority and of presidency over the people in their various organizations are men of truth, men of soberness, men who are honest, faithful, prayerful, upright, and men who enjoy the Spirit of the Lord God, in their hearts and who are disposed to do right, and shun even the appearance of sin. I think I may say this in all sincerity and honesty before the Lord and before all the Latter-day Saints. If there are any who are negligent or unfaithful in the performance of their duties,—I mean of those who are occupying these prominent positions in the household of faith, it has not been brought to our attention, and we do not know of any, of whom it may not be said, they are good, faithful men, who are faithfully discharging their duty for the welfare of the people over whom they preside. This I believe may be said consistently with reference to all the regularly organized stakes and wards of Zion; and the same may be said truthfully, too, so far as we have any knowledge—and we think we are pretty well posted with reference to these things—in regard to our various missions. The men who have been appointed to preside over them are men of integrity, men of honor, men who are faithful in the discharge of their duties, men who have the love of God in their hearts and the love of the

people in their souls, men who are willing to sacrifice their time, their associations, dear to them, and many precious ties, that they may devote their time and energy and the gifts of the Lord, which are bestowed upon them, for the salvation of the children of men who are sitting in darkness and know not the truth.

I need not give out any expression with reference to the presidency of the Church. They are before the people. Their lives are an open book to all the Church, and their integrity and labors are known to those who are associated with them in the business and in the spiritual affairs of the Church. They are accessible to all who call upon them, with business pertaining to the building up of the Church or who desire aid with reference to spiritual matters, or the discharge of other duties that devolve upon them, they all know us, and we leave it to them to say, or to judge whether the presidency are in good standing before God, and in the Church, or not. We haven't anything more to say about it. I will bear my testimony, however, with reference to the Twelve Apostles. They are faithful men, willing to do whatever is required at their hands to the utmost of their strength and ability. This may also be said of all the general authorities of the Church. In their hearts we believe them all to be true and faithful to their covenants, true and faithful to the people and to the Lord who has commissioned them to labor for the salvation of the souls of men and for the building up of Zion.

I have had prepared just a few little statements which will indicate to you, I think, better perhaps than

I could tell you from memory, although they are familiar to me, the condition of the Church and of the labors and accomplishments thereof during the year that has only recently closed. I have an item here that there have been two new stakes organized in 1910, namely the Duchesne and the Carbon stakes of Zion. There have been organized fifteen new wards during the same period. There are now 62 organized stakes of Zion, and 696 wards, and 21 missions. All of these require the constant supervision and attention not only of the bishops and the presidents of stakes, and the high councils of these various organizations, but of the presidency of the Church, by whom communications are constantly received from all these presidents, or the most of them, and frequently many of them, and frequently from almost all these wards. The number of persons that have been baptized in the stakes of Zion and in the missions, during the year 1910, was 15,902.

The birth-rate of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the year 1910, was 38 per thousand, the highest birth-rate in the world, as far as available statistics show.

The death-rate of the Church, for the year 1910, was 9 per thousand, the lowest death-rate in the world, as far as we have been able to ascertain from published statistics.

There were 1,360 couples married in the temples in 1910, and there were 1,100 couples married, of Church members, by civil ceremony during the same year.

There was one divorce to each 5,000 Church members. The average divorce rate in the United States is one to each 1,100 souls. This shows that our divorce rate is

only about one-fifth of the average rate in our nation.

There were 2,028 missionaries laboring in the various missions on December 31st, 1910.

There was expended by the Church, in maintaining missions and for fares of returning missionaries, during the year 1910, the sum of \$215,000.00. This amount does not include the very large sum, in the aggregate, furnished by the people to assist their sons and daughters, or husbands and fathers, while in the mission field.

Upwards of \$300,000.00 was paid by the Church during 1910 for maintaining our Church schools; and over \$200,000.00 was paid out in the Church to assist the poor, during the year 1910.

All expenses incurred on account of the general authorities of the Church, of operating expenses of the president's office, the historian's office, and the presiding bishop's office, were paid out of revenues derived from investments made by the trustee-in-trust, within past few years. This leaves the tithes of the Church to be used for the building of ward meeting houses and stake tabernacles, for maintenance of Church schools and temples, for missions abroad, and for the support of the poor.

On December 31st, 1910, it was reported that there were 444 high priests, 632 seventies, 2,200 elders who are not enrolled in any organized quorums of the priesthood.

We will not say anything about a long list of non-tithepayers, that we have recorded in the archives of the Church, of those holding membership in the Church. I do not care to make enumerations of this character, but I would like to say to the Latter-day Saints who are tithe-

payers, who honor this law, and who provide out of their means, voluntarily, the revenues necessary to carry on the work of the Church—in the maintenance of temples, in the missionary cause, in the conduct and maintenance of our schools, in assisting to build our meeting-houses and other adjuncts to our schools, such as gymnasiums, which have become, apparently, a very urgent necessity of late, and also places of amusement. For we must not only provide places of worship for the youth of Zion, as well as for their fathers and mothers, but we must also provide and find places for rational amusement for our children, in order that they may be kept under proper influences and away from the contaminating, degrading, and debasing practices too common in the world, with reference to and in connection with the amusements of the people. There is one thing that I desire to say—not that it will amount to anything, I suppose; but it will be a satisfaction to myself, at least, to speak what I feel to be the truth, and it is this: I regret most deeply the sentiments that are expressed by the people generally with reference to their choice of amusements. We have some interest in the old Salt Lake Theatre here, built by President Brigham Young, to afford a high class of amusement that would be intelligible and entertaining, interesting and instructive to those who desire such entertainment. It has been conducted along these lines for many years in as high class character of performances as it was possible, but when we get really high class performances in that theatre the benches are practically empty, while vaudeville theatres, where are exhibitions of nakedness, of ob-

scenity, of vulgarity, and everything else that does not tend to elevate the thought and mind of man, will be packed from the pit to the dome. When you have performances of a high class, that are intellectual, people do not largely patronize them; but when you bring in a class of performance that appeals to the vulgar, the sensual and evil propensities of men, the seats are full. I do not speak of this as existing merely here in Utah; I speak of it as a common thing throughout all the length and breadth of the land. It shows a degradation of sentiment, a lowering of the standards of intellectuality, of purity of thought, of nobility of desire for proper association, of the people generally. I regret this; I am sorry for it; and I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints that I hope they will distinguish themselves by avoiding the necessity of being classed with people who prefer the vulgar to the chaste, the obscene to the pure, the evil to the good, and the sensual to the intellectual. I hope that we will stand by our principles, abide by that which is good, elevating and ennobling in character, rather than fall in with the habits of the world, and patronize that which is beneath the dignity of pure-minded and intelligent people.

Again I wish to refer to those who voluntarily provide revenues for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for its legitimate purposes, as we have enumerated—for the maintenance of the poor, and of the temples, and of the schools, and missions, and of all other things necessary to the building up of Zion in the latter day. God bless you for your faithfulness to this law of the Lord, for it is a law of the Lord, and yet, like all the other

laws of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is obeyed voluntarily by those who obey it, and those who do not obey it voluntarily choose to disobey it, and the consequences will rest with us all in accordance with our works and our faithfulness.

Today we are under the necessity of cutting down, within the limit to the various wards and stakes of Zion in building their meeting-houses. We cannot give them all the help they ask for because we haven't got it; but we have given and we are giving to the extent of the means within our control, to help build ward houses. As you have heard here of the many new wards that have been established, all of which have to build meeting-houses for the convenience of the people; and besides these there are hundreds of wards that have no suitable meetinghouses as yet. They are contemplating building them, and some of them are in the course of erection, and we are contributing what we can, as we have done heretofore, to help them complete their work. But the heft of the burden still rests upon the people of these wards and stakes, because we have not the means to help them as we would like. If these multitudes of non-payers of tithing would only honor the law of the Lord, and live up to their privileges, I believe we would soon have ample means to meet every necessity of the Church. If they would but do it! but will they or will they not? If they will not of course the consequences will rest with themselves. We are dealing with our faith and consciences, you are dealing, not with me, not with the presidency of the Church, but with the Lord. I am not dealing with men respecting my tithing,

my dealings are with the Lord; that is, with reference to my own conduct in the Church as a tithepayer, and with reference to my observance of the other laws and rules of the Church, if I fail to observe the laws of the Church, I am responsible to my God, and will have to answer to Him, by and by, for my neglect of duty, and I may have to answer to the Church for my fellowship. If I do my duty, according to my understanding of the requirements that the Lord has made of me, then I ought to have a conscience void of offense; I ought to have satisfaction in my soul, in the consciousness that I have simply done my duty as I understood it, and I will risk the consequences. With me it is a matter between me and the Lord; so it is with every one of us.

I am sorry I have to announce that Brother John Henry Smith was taken suddenly with an attack of lung trouble, which has laid him up, and which was, for a few moments, considered very serious; but he is improving and is better this morning. That accounts for his absence from the stand.

Now, the Lord bless you, my brethren and sisters. We have spoken of the general and of the local authorities of the Church, that are provided for in the revelations of the Lord to us, which have been organized in accordance with the pattern the Lord has given for the organization of His Church. It is my duty also to refer to the auxiliary organizations that have been devised for the benefit of the youth of Zion as well as for the benefit of all concerned. I believe that the officers of our Mutual Improvement associations, both the young men and the young women, are do-

ing their duty as faithfully as they know how. I believe that the officers and the board of directors of the Sunday School Union are doing their duty; and I can speak of them knowingly, for the reason that we meet with them, week by week, and they are punctual in attendance on their duties, always present, always willing to take upon them the parts or responsibilities that are assigned to them, to go and to come as they may be sent to minister to the youth of Zion, or assist with the Sunday School work throughout the stakes. I can say the same of our Primary Association. I believe that much good is resulting from the labors in that direction. I can say the same with reference to our Religion Class work; and I can say the same with reference to the first and most important auxiliary organization of the Church, that of the Relief Society. They have been doing the best they could; but now we have suggested a complete organization of that society, that is, the general authorities of that organization; and we trust that from this time forth, they will be able to begin with renewed energy, judgment and wisdom, the performance of the duties that devolve upon them, even those who are called to take the oversight of this great work in Zion, the Relief Society organization.

Now, if I have omitted to mention any organization that I should have mentioned, you may take it for granted that I believe, as far as I have any knowledge of them, that they are all doing their duty, according to the best understanding, and wisdom, and strength which they possess. So I will repeat, Zion is prospering. The Lord is blessing

His people. I believe that most of the Latter-day Saints are increasing in their faith. I believe, too, that the most of the Latter-day Saints are wise enough, that they have sufficient intelligence and a sufficient portion of the Spirit of the living God in their hearts, to decide between truth and error, between right and wrong, and between light and darkness; and I will say I believe they have sense enough to abide by the simple, pure, truthful principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in preference to all the vagaries of philosophers, or of scientists, or of anybody else. There is no science, nor philosophy that can supersede God Almighty's truth. The Lord has said, "My word is truth," and indeed it is; and I believe that the Latter-day Saints know enough about the word of God to know it is His word when they see it and shun whatever is not; and that they will abide by the word of God, for it is truth. As the Savior said, "If ye will abide in my word, then are ye my disciples, indeed; ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." I believe that the Latter-day Saints, and especially the leading men in Israel, have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the principles of the gospel that they know the truth, and they are made free by its possession—free from sin, free from error, free from darkness, from the traditions of men, from vain philosophy, and from the untried, unproven theories of scientists, that need demonstration beyond the possibility of a doubt. We have had science and philosophy through all the ages, and they have undergone change after change. Scarcely a century has passed but they have introduced new theories

of science and of philosophy that supersede the old traditions and the old faith and the old doctrines entertained by philosophers and scientists. These things may undergo continuous changes, but the word of God is always true, is always right. I want to say to you that the principles of the gospel are always true—the principle of faith in God, of repentance from sin, of baptism for the remission of sins by authority of God, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost; these principles are always true and are always absolutely necessary for the salvation of the children of men, no matter who they are or where they are. These principles are always true, and you cannot get away from them. No other name, under heaven, is given, but that of Jesus Christ, by which you can be saved or exalted in the Kingdom of God. No man can enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be born again of the water and of the Spirit. These principles are indispensable, for God has declared them. Not only has He declared them, not only has Christ declared them by His own voice, but His disciples from generation to generation, in the olden time, but in these latter days, they have taken up the same testimony and declared these things to the world. They are true today as they were true then, and we must obey these things.

Another thing, we must obey the rules of the Church with reference to marriage, at least we ought to do so. We do not all do it. You will see by what I have stated that during the last year eleven hundred marriages of our people have been contracted or solemnized in a manner not provided for in the law of the Church, I refer to civil mar-

riages, so that we do not all do our duty yet with reference to that. And another thing, as we have announced in previous conferences—as it was announced by President Woodruff, as it was announced by President Snow, and as it was re-announced by me and my brethren, and confirmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, plural marriages have ceased in the Church. There isn't a man today in this Church, or anywhere else, outside of it who has authority to solemnize a plural marriage—not one! There is no man or woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who is authorized to contract a plural marriage. It is not permitted, and we have been endeavoring to the utmost of our ability to prevent men from being led by some designing person into an unfortunate condition that is forbidden by the conferences, and by the voice of the Church, a condition that has to some extent at least, brought reproach upon the people. I want to say that we have been doing all in our power to prevent it, or to stop it; and in order that we might do this, we have been seeking, to our utmost, to find the men who have been the agents and the cause of leading people into it. We find it very difficult to trace them up, but when we do find them, and can prove it upon them, we will deal with them as we have dealt with others that we have been able to find.

Now with reference to the threat that is made about us, from time to time, that in order to estop plural marriages among the Latter-day Saints, it is recommended to amend the Constitution of the United States, giving to the parental government the exclusive right to deal

with polygamy and prevent it. So far as I am concerned, I am just as ready, this moment, as any other man in the world to consent to Congress taking the measures necessary to bring about the amendment to the Constitution, and pass laws to regulate plural marriage. We want them, while they are at it, to regulate marriage and divorce as well. We will turn it all over to them, and we are just as ready for it today as any people on God's earth, no matter where you go. Now, in reference to this, I want to make this distinction, for it is a distinction with a difference, and that is this; I don't mean to interfere with men who had their wives before the Manifesto was issued by President Woodruff, men who entered into this covenant when it was the law of the Church, or who took wives under the authority of the presiding officers of the Church. We do not mean to interfere with them. To them I would say: take care of your wives. If you do not, you are not genuine men at all. Take care of your families; take care of your children, educate them, feed them, clothe them, house them, and do everything in your power to make of them men and women who will be an honor to our nation, to our state and to our Church. I mean future plural marriages must stop; that is what I have reference to, the marrying of more than one wife in the future in plural marriage. That is what we have undertaken to stop in conformity with the laws of the land; and we are doing our best. Now let the United States, authorize Congress to pass an amendment to the Constitution regulating marriage and divorce, throughout all the nation. I think it will be a great blessing to our

country. When we read of the vast number of divorces, and of the heartaches, and the sorrows that are occasioned by them, and by vanity, profligacy, lust, and corruption, throughout the world, we feel as if it would be a Godsend to the people to have some strong hand take hold of the matter and regulate it, so that there will not be so much of this evil as exists today.

Now, the Lord bless you, my brethren and sisters. I love this work, I know it is right. I love the gospel with all my heart; and I propose to continue, while I live, in the discharge of my duty to the best of my ability. Whatever that duty may be, I propose to do it as well as I can, and leave the result in the hands of the Lord.

God bless the presidents of the stakes of Zion, and their counselors, and the high-councils in the stakes of Zion; the Lord bless all our bishops, who are fathers to the people, and their counselors, the common judges in Israel. The Lord bless them and give them wisdom, fatherly spirit, and kindness, that they may deal mercifully with the erring, and that they may seek earnestly and diligently to reclaim the erring from the error of their ways, and to keep those that are in the paths of righteousness and truth steadfast and firm in those righteous paths, as fathers would do with their own children.

May the Lord continue to bless the presidents of our missions throughout the land. Oh, how we feel to appreciate them, and how satisfying is the feeling that comes to us when we realize that we have men presiding over missions who are as true, according to the light and knowledge that they possess, as the Son of God Himself—true to

their covenants, true to their people, true to their mission. They are faithful, bright, intelligent, and active in the performance of their duties. The Lord bless you, brethren, in the discharge of your duties. And those who labor in the temples, the Lord bless them. I do not intend to slight the officers and faculties of our Church schools, May the Lord bless them abundantly. I believe they are faithful and reliable men and are doing their duty to the very best of their ability. I do not think that there will be or can be any discount on the character of our Church schools, under the direction of those who are at present in charge of them.

The Lord bless all Israel, and especially,—I need not ask especially for blessing upon those who do their duty, for I know that they will be blessed; but I do pray that the Lord will bless those who are lukewarm, who are indifferent, and uninterested in the work of the Lord, that they may awaken to their duty and learn to earn the reward of the faithful, that they may not be ignored when God shall choose His own and set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on the left, and shall say to the latter "depart from me" (Matthew 25:31-41).

May the Lord bless us all, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The beautiful hymn, written by Apostle Parley P. Pratt, "The morning breaks, the shadows flee," was sung, as a duet, by two of his grandsons, Mathoni W. and Noel Pratt; music composed by Prof. Evan Stevens.

The following notice was read by President Joseph F. Smith:

For the convenience of conference visitors who have not proper ac-

commodations while in attendance at conference, a bureau of entertainment has been opened at the office of Elias Morris & Sons company, corner of Richards and South Temple streets.

Those desiring accommodations should apply at that place, and any who have accommodations to offer the visitors, will please leave their names and addresses at the same place.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

Health and happiness result from keeping Word of Wisdom.—The people urged to eliminate the saloon and tobacco evils.—Investigation of "Mormon" missionary work in England desired.—Marriage in Temple a safeguard against divorce.—Unselfish and successful work of auxiliary organization officers.

I have been very much interested in the remarks of our president, as I know you all have been. I know that what he has said to us is true, and his counsels are for our best good.

I was struck with the statistics that were read to us, and was pleased to learn that the death-rate among the Latter-day Saints is smaller than the death-rate in the world. Nine to a thousand is indeed a good showing. Now, I believe there is a cause for this. The Latter-day Saints, if they live their religion, have been promised long lives and health. The Lord has given us a revelation in regard to preserving our health. We have inquiries from several persons, asking us when the Word of Wisdom was made a commandment. I do not know that we can give such information, but the revelation speaks for itself; it tells us that the Word of Wisdom is the order and will of God—the will of God. Need we