

Eighty-Third Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

FIRST DAY

The Eighty-third Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., Friday, April 4, 1913, President Joseph F. Smith presiding.

AUTHORITIES PRESENT.

There were present of the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose; of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and James E. Talmage, (Anthony W. Ivins was in attendance at later sessions); of the First Council of Seventy, Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin, and Charles H. Hart, (Levi Edgar Young was in attendance at later sessions); of the presiding Bishopric, Charles W. Nibley, Orrin P. Miller, and David A. Smith. There were also a large number of Presidents of Stakes with their Counselors, Presidents of missions, Bishops of Wards, Patriarchs, and numerous other prominent men and women representing various quo-

rums and organizations of the Church.

President Joseph F. Smith called the assembly to order, and the conference services were commenced by the 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.
'Tis better far for us to strive,
Our useless cares from us to drive,
Do this and joy your hearts will swell—
All is well! all is well!

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Edward J. Wood.

The congregation sang the hymn:

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 Deliv'rer, our all!

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Presence, and vigor, of so many faithful Church workers a cause for thankfulness.—Responsibilities and duties of Church officers and members defined and enumerated.—Church rule is that transgressors be tried by local authorities.—Brotherly kindness to be manifest in dealing with wrong-doers.—Church organization perfect, because divinely

established. — Auxiliary organizations subject to the Priesthood.—Discountenance watching for evil, encourage the good.

It is with a degree of weakness, of timidity and a sense of dependence upon the Lord that I stand before you this morning at the opening of the Eighty-third anniversary of the April Conference of the Church. I feel entirely dependent, and without forethought, upon the promptings of the Spirit of the Lord for what I may be led to say to you. I cannot pass without expressing my gratitude to the Lord for the preservation of our lives and for the many temporal as well as spiritual blessings that we all enjoy this morning on assembling here, in this tabernacle, on this very interesting and important occasion. I feel very grateful, myself, for the blessings that I enjoy personally, for the measure of health and strength I possess, and for the spiritual life that I feel in the work in which we are engaged. I feel grateful, too, that our beloved brother Anthon H. Lund, who has been unwell for a season, is so far recovered as to be able to attend with us here this morning enjoying an increased measure of health. It is also a source of great pleasure and gratitude to me that we have with us, in the vigor of youth, our beloved brother Charles W. Penrose, now past his eighty-first year, and yet looking very much younger than many of us younger men, that is, younger in years, not younger mentally nor physically, but merely in years. It is also a source of congratulation and of thankfulness that we have with us the brethren of the twelve, with the exception of Elder Smoot, (who is engaged in a good cause and is doing much in the way

of the moral uplift of mankind as well as in the service of the people of his state, for his influence, his personal habits, his manner of life, his spirit are sermons for good among all his associates, and his example is always praiseworthy; and Rudger Clawson, who is presiding over the European Mission, and is in the discharge of his duty as faithfully as it is possible for any man to be, and is doing a good work in his mission field. The brethren of the Seventies are with us, all of them I believe, in possession of vigor and health and the spirit of their calling, and mission; and we have also with us the Presiding Bishopric, enjoying the same blessings, together with the Presiding Patriarch a youth who is developing commendably in the performance of his duties, and bids fair of being a light that shall shine in his pathway, to those who are seeking after the truth. Then it is a source of gratitude to me that I can look upon so many of the presidents of the stakes of Zion as are assembled here this morning at this opening session of our Conference. We have now, organized, sixty-four stakes of Zion, and a very large proportion of the presidencies of those stakes are present with us this morning, many of whom are becoming, like some of the rest of us, aged in the service in which they have been engaged for many years, and it is gratifying to me to have the privilege of meeting with them and of offering a greeting of welcome into this house of the Lord this morning; and I sincerely invoke the blessings of our heavenly Father upon these men, upon whom rests so great responsibility in exercising the rights of presidency over the stakes over which they preside. Then I look

out over this great congregation and see a large number of the bishops of the Church, assembled here to represent the people of their wards, many of whom, of course, have not the privilege of attending this conference on account of the distance from their homes. I congratulate you presidents of stakes and your counselors, members of the high councils of the various stakes of Zion, on your presence here, and I trust that in your participations in the conference you may be filled with joy and satisfaction, and that it may be a time of refreshing to you as well as to all the saints. In connection with these also we have with us the various organizations in the priesthood from the high priests down to the elders in the Church representing the high priests and the seventies and the elders and the patriarchs, many of whom I suppose are here today to add to the number of those who have come to attend the conference and to take part in the duties thereof, together with the bishoprics and the lesser priesthood, many of whom are here. The strength of Israel I apprehend is here today, representing the whole Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, not only in the organized stakes of Zion, but in many of the missions in the world.

I need not say to my brethren engaged in the ministry that it is expected of them that one and all will attend to the labors and be true to the responsibilities that rest upon them in the discharge of their duties as officers in the Church. We expect that the presidencies of the stakes of Zion will be exemplars to the people. We expect them of a truth to be fathers unto those over whom they preside, men of wisdom, of sound judgment, impar-

tial and just, men who will indeed qualify themselves, or who are indeed qualified by their natural endowments and by the inspiration from God which it is their privilege to enjoy, to preside in righteousness and to sit in righteous judgment over all matters brought to their attention or that may legitimately belong to their office and calling. We anticipate the same fidelity, the same faithfulness, the same intelligent administration of their duties from the bishops and their counselors, and indeed upon these rests perhaps the greatest possible responsibility, for the reason that they are expected by their presidencies to attend to the various interests and needs of their people. It is expected of a bishop to know all the people that reside in his ward, not only those that are faithful members of the Church, diligent in the performance of their duties and prominent by their good acts, but to know those who are cold and indifferent, those who are lukewarm, those who are inclined to err and to make mistakes, and not only these, but it is expected that the bishops through their aides in their wards, will become acquainted, not only with their members, male and female, but that they will know also the stranger that is within their gates and be prepared to minister solace, comfort, good counsel, wisdom and every other aid possible to be rendered to those that are in need, whether they are of the household of faith or are strangers to the truth. So that there is a great deal expected of the bishops and their counselors and the elders and lesser priesthood in their wards whom they call to their aid in administering to the people both spiritually and temporally, and I want to remark in this

connection that it is the duty of these bishops and of the presidencies of the stakes of Zion, together with their high councils, to administer justice and right judgment to every member of their wards and of their stakes. Included in this are the high priests and the seventies and the elders and the apostles and the patriarchs and the presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. No man who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or who has a standing in the Church as a member, is exempt from his responsibilities as a member and his allegiance to the bishop of the ward in which he dwells. I am as much bound to acknowledge my bishop as a member of the ward in which I dwell, as the humblest and latest member of the Church. No man who claims to be a member of the Church in good standing, can ride above or become independent of the authority that the Lord Almighty has established in His Church. This watch-care of the people, of their right living, of their fidelity to their covenants and to the gospel of Jesus Christ, belongs to the presidents of stakes and their counselors and the high councils, or members of the high council, to the bishop and his counselors and the teachers of his ward. Then we have the organizations of the holy priesthood. We have the council of the first presidency consisting of three presiding high priests who are called of God and appointed to preside over the Church and over the priesthood of God, and I want to say here that it does not follow and never has followed that the members of the first presidency of the Church are necessarily to be ordained apostles. They hold by virtue of their rights

as presidents of the Church all the keys and all the authority that pertains to the Melchisedek priesthood, which comprehends and comprises all of the appendages to that priesthood, the lesser priesthood and all the offices in the priesthood from first to last and from least to greatest; and I would to the Lord that some of our would-be wise men would learn this truth and establish the same in their minds that they might not everlastingly be at sea in regard to it and always asking questions of the most nonsensical kind with reference to the rights of the priesthood. All you have to do is to read the revelations through the Prophet Joseph Smith, giving to the Church the authorities of the priesthood that God has restored in the latter day. It is as perfect, as plain as the A. B. C's of our language and only needs to be read with the spirit of understanding to be perfectly comprehended.

The duty of the twelve apostles of the Church is to preach the gospel to the world, to send it to the inhabitants of the earth and to bear testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as living witnesses of His divine mission. That is their special calling and they are always under the direction of the presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when that presidency is intact, and there is never at the same time two equal heads in the Church—never. The Lord never ordained any such thing, nor designed it. There is always a head in the Church, and if the presidency of the Church are removed by death or other cause, then the next head of the Church is the twelve apostles until a presidency is again organized of three presiding high priests who have the right to hold the office

of first presidency over the Church; and, according to the doctrine laid down by President Wilford Woodruff, who saw the necessity for it, and that of President Lorenzo Snow, if the president should die, his counselors are then released from that presidency, and it is the duty of the twelve apostles to proceed at once, in the manner that has been pointed out, to see that the First presidency is reorganized, so that there may be no deficiency in the working and order of the priesthood in the Church. Now again, the bishoprics, and the presidents of stakes, have exclusive jurisdiction over the membership or the standing of men and women in their wards and in their stakes. I want to state that pretty plain—that is to say, it is not my duty, it is not the duty of the seven presidents of seventies, nor of the council of the twelve apostles, to go into a stake of Zion and try for membership or for standing in the Church, any member of a stake or ward. We have no business to do it; it belongs to the local authorities and they have ample authority to deal with the membership in their wards and in their stakes. The bishops may try an elder for misconduct, for un-Christianlike conduct, for apostasy, or for wickedness of any kind that would disqualify him for membership in the Church, and they may pass upon him their judgment that he is unworthy of fellowship in the Church, and they may withdraw from him their fellowship. Then they may refer his case to the Presidency and High Council, and it will be the duty of the Presidency and High Council of the stake to deal with him, even to the extent of excommunication from the Church; and there is no remedy for this,

only the right of appeal to the Presidency of the Church. If there may be perchance any injustice, and partiality, lack of information or understanding on the part of the bishopric, which may not be corrected and therefore might be perpetuated by the decision of the High Council, and the party aggrieved does not feel that he has had justice dealt out to him, he then has a right, under the laws of the Church, to appeal to the Presidency of the Church, but not otherwise. We want it distinctly understood that we cannot hear the complaints of members of the Church against their bishops, nor against their presidents, nor against their fellow members in the Church. If we were to yield to a thing of this kind we would usurp and do away with the authority of the Bishops and with the Presidencies of the stakes, and we would have the responsibility of trying any or all the members of the Church, who might have troubles to adjust, and that would be a practical impossibility; we could not do it; and then, it would not be right to do it, because God has designed it the other way. The Lord has given us a more perfect organization than that. Therefore, we want the cranks and the crazy folks, the insane, if there are any, who wish to step over their Bishops and their Presidents to the Presidency of the Church, or to the Twelve, to distinctly understand that if they do so, we will refer their case to their local authorities to be dealt with on the ground, where the evidence can be had pro and con and where justice can be meted out to them. We have enough to do, goodness knows, without listening to the complaints and cries, mournings and bickerings of indi-

viduals everywhere, however few, comparatively. The limits of the Church are now spread out and extended to the islands of the sea and to distant continents and countries, for the gospel is being preached to the nations of the world, and we cannot hear all the complaints of individuals. The Lord has organized these councils in the Church, such as the bishops' councils and the high councils, with the presidencies in the Church, to take care of the people to see that no injustice is done by one to another in the Church, to see that no unrighteousness exists that can be averted or that can be corrected and to see that justice and judgment and righteousness shall reign in the organizations of the Church and no wickedness or vileness be permitted to linger and corrode the body of the Church by neglect of being dealt with in the proper way. Not that we should injure, or hurt, or oppress—the furtherest thought in the world from my heart is oppression. No man should be oppressed. No authority of the Priesthood can be administered or exerted in any degree of unrighteousness, without offending God. Therefore, when we deal with men we should not deal with them in anger. We should not deal with them with prejudice in our minds against them. We should dismiss prejudice, dispel anger from our hearts, and when we try our brethren for membership or fellowship in the Church we should do it dispassionately, charitably, lovingly, kindly, with a view to save and not to destroy. That is our business; our business is to save the world, to save mankind, to bring them into harmony with the laws of God and with principles of righteousness and of justice and truth, that they may

be saved in the kingdom of our God and become, eventually, through obedience to the ordinances of the gospel, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. That is our mission. Now then we have our high-priests' quorums or councils, and we have our Seventies' Councils and our elders, and then we have the councils of the priests, teachers and deacons in the Lesser Priesthood. These councils each and all in their organized capacity have jurisdiction over the fellowship of the members of these councils—if the member is an elder, or if a man has a standing in the Seventies' quorum, or is a member of the High Council, or the High Priests' quorum, and he is misbehaving himself, shows a lack of faith, a lack of reverence for the position he holds in his Council, or quorum, his fellowship in that quorum to which he belongs, or his standing should be looked after or enquired into, for he is amenable to his quorum for his good standing and fellowship in it. So that we have the check that the Lord has placed upon members of the Church, and when I say members of the Church I mean me, I mean the apostles, I mean the high priests, and the seventies, and elders. I mean everybody that is a member of the Church; and I say that when these members of the Church are in error or doing wrong we have the check on them in the first place in the wards, bishops look after them, then their quorums to which they belong have jurisdiction and they are required to look after them too, and then after the quorums look after them the Presidencies of the stakes look after them and see that they are helped, that they are strengthened, that they are admonished, that they are warned and that

they are applauded when they do their duties and keep the commandments of the Lord. So the Lord has placed a great many checks upon the members of the Church with a view to teaching them right principles, to help them to do right, to live right and to be pure, and clean from the sins of the world, that the body of the Church may be perfected, that it may be free from disease, from all contagious evils, just as the body of the man Christ Jesus is free from all taint, evil, and sin. So God has placed these safeguards in the Church from the deacons to the apostles, and to the Presidency of the Church, with a view of persuading men and women to keep themselves pure and unspotted from the world and to help them to be faithful to their covenants entered into with one another and with their God.

What a wonderful organization it is! Whoever has thought of it except he whom the Lord revealed it to? When did it ever exist in its perfection before as it exists today? And to whom are we indebted for the intelligence, wisdom and knowledge that has perfected this organization and established it for the government and the upbuilding of Zion and for purification of mankind—to whom are we indebted? To the Lord, God Almighty, to the Son of God who spoke to Joseph, the prophet, by his own voice and by the voice of messengers sent to him, by whom Joseph was instructed and enlightened and empowered to effect an organization such as the world never knew before, unless it was in the days of Enoch. Even the principles that were taught to Enoch have been revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith; but the people are not prepared for them

and so they are postponed, delayed, or shelved for the time being, and we are trying to work ourselves up to the standard before God, or to the point in which we will be worthy to engage in the order of Enoch, in which we may become more perfect than we can possibly be under the present system that we are governed by.

Now, much more might be said. I have in mind our auxiliary organizations, what are they? Helps to the standard organizations of the Church. They are not independent. I want to say to the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations, and to the Relief Society, and to the Primaries, and to the Sunday Schools, and Religion Classes, and all the rest of the organizations in the Church, that not one of them is independent of the Priesthood of the Son of God, not one of them can exist a moment in the acceptance of the Lord when they withdraw from the voice and from the counsel of those who hold the Priesthood and preside over them. They are subject to the powers and authority of the Church, and they are not independent of them; nor can they exercise any rights in their organizations independently of the Priesthood and of the Church; and I want you to take it home to you now—every one of you. You may hear something stronger than that from me if you don't. I have had a good deal of patience about some things, but there is a point at which patience ceases to be a virtue, and then it will become necessary to act, or advise at least.

Now let every man do his duty; let every president of a stake, and every counselor to him, and every bishop and his counselors and every

member of the high council; let every presidency of the high priests and seventies, and elders and all the general authorities of the Church do their duty, be faithful, humble and diligent in the performance of the labor that is required of them, be watchmen indeed upon the towers of Zion, watching for virtues, watching for uprightness, watching for justice, watching for truth. Change the focus of your view, and of your eyes, from watching for evil to watching for that which is good, that which is pure, and leading and prompting those who err into that path which has no error in it, and that will not admit of mistakes. Look for good in men, and where they fail to possess it try to build it up in them; try to increase the good in them; look for the good; build up the good; sustain the good; and speak as little about the evil as you possibly can. It does not do any good to magnify evil, to publish evil or to promulgate it by tongue or pen. There is no good to be obtained by it. It is better to bury the evil and magnify the good, and prompt all men to forsake evil and learn to do good; and let our mission be to save mankind and to teach in and guide to the paths of righteousness, and not to sit as judges and pass judgment upon evil doers, but rather be saviors of men.

I did not expect to talk long to you this morning, when I got up. I only expected to say a few words and sit down; but I feel it in my heart; my soul is in it, and I know the truth, and I want to live it. If there are any of my friends who can show me where I fail, oh come to me like a brother, not fault-finding, but come to me as a savior upon Mount Zion and show me my error

and give me a chance by the aid of your counsel and advice to me to overcome the evil you see in me, whether you see it literally or whether you simply imagine it. Let me learn to do right by your help. Don't crush me down. Don't discard me. Don't throw me over into the scrap pile because you think I am not as perfect as I ought to be. Rather be patient with my imperfections, and try to help me to overcome them and to live nearer unto the Lord than ever before. That is the part of a savior upon Mount Zion. I am talking to the priesthood and to the Latter-day Saints, and to those that preside in the Church, and to those that exercise authority in the midst of the people. Go and do the will of the Father, that you may know the truth and that the truth may make you free, and also that you may walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that you may have fellowship with each other and that you may also have fellowship with God and Christ, and that the blood of the Son of God may cleanse you from all sin. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

"Consider, and hear me," a baritone solo, was rendered by Elder Charles Kent.

PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.

Details of Church organization and government, given in the beginning, still unchanged.—Officers established and appointments made as need for them developed.—Magnitude of latter-day work foreseen and provided for at inception. —Importance of keeping historical records.—need for implanting in the children, faith in the Gospel.

I have been much pleased and edified this morning in listening to