

# Eighty Fourth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## FIRST DAY.

The Eighty-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., Saturday, October 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, Rudger Clawson, Reed Smoot, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and James E. Talmage; of the First Council of Seventy, Seymour B. Young, Joseph W. McMurrin, Charles H. Hart, and Levi Edgar Young, (Brigham H. Roberts was in attendance at later sessions); Presiding Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith; 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 quorums 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:

Our God, we raise to Thee  
Thanks for Thy blessings free  
We here enjoy;  
In this far western land,  
A true and chosen band,  
Led hither by Thy hand,  
We sing for joy.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Joseph Eckersley.

The congregation sang the hymn:  
O ye mountains high, where the clear  
blue sky  
Arches over the vales of the free,  
Where the pure breezes blow and the  
clear streamlets flow,  
How I've longed to your bosom to  
flee.

### PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

#### OPENING ADDRESS.

The Gospel unchanged from beginning of creation—Much time wasted on trivial things—Users of tobacco and intoxicants scathingly reprimanded—God's words, "not good for man," should suffice—Vigorous protest against infamous fashions in dress—Glorious magnitude of Christ's mission—Truths revealed in greater fullness to this generation.

I sincerely hope that the true Spirit of our Lord may dwell bounteously with us during this session

of our eighty-fourth semi-annual conference. I feel very grateful for the privilege I enjoy of being present with you this morning, in possession of a reasonable degree of health and vigor of body and mind. For every blessing bestowed upon me, for every privilege I enjoy, I feel deeply indebted to the Great Giver of every good and perfect gift. I hope that while I stand before you, the Spirit of the Lord may prompt me to give expression to such thoughts as shall be suited to the occasion. I feel this morning as I have felt almost all my life, but I feel it stronger this morning, perhaps, than ever before, that there is nothing under the heavens of so much importance to me or to the children of men as the great plan of life and salvation, which was devised in the heavens in the beginning, and which has been handed down from period to period through the inspiration of holy men called of God until the day of the coming of the Son of man, for this Gospel and this plan of salvation was revealed to our first parents. The angel of God carried to them the plan of redemption, and of salvation from death and sin that has been revealed from time to time by divine authority to the children of men, and it has undergone no change. There was nothing in it, in the beginning, that was superfluous or unnecessary; nothing in it that could be dispensed with; it was a complete plan devised in the beginning by the wisdom of the Father and the holy ones for the redemption of the human race and for their salvation and exaltation in the presence of God. It was taught more fully, and exemplified more perfectly in the being, life and mission, instruction and doctrine, given by the Son of

God, than ever before, unless there may be an exception in the days of Enoch; but through all the generations of time, the same Gospel, the same plan of life and salvation, the same ordinances, burial with Christ, remembrance of the great sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the world and for man's redemption, has been handed down from time to time from the time of the creation. This is not simply my opinion, I am but uttering the truths contained in the revelations of God to inspired men in the various ages in which he has spoken to the world. And in this dispensation, of the latter days, this same Gospel, this same plan of life and salvation has been renewed, or revealed anew, unto men, and fully restored with all its gifts, powers and graces, rights and privileges, necessary for the preparation of mankind to live as God requires them to live in this world, and to prepare themselves for an inheritance of glory, exaltation, dominion and power in the world to come.

My earnest desire is, and has been from my youth up, and it is growing stronger and stronger as the years accumulate to me, to bear my testimony, and to declare to men, as far as it lies in my power, that God has given to us the truth, His truth, for His word is truth; Jesus Himself so declared it. He said: "My word is truth," and wherever we can find the word of God, or reach out and comprehend His law which is His word, for His word is His law, and His law is the word of God to all men,—wherever we can find it, and can comprehend and embrace it, we comprehend and embrace the truth. The trouble seems to lie with mankind as to their ability to grasp the truth, and as to the

earnestness of their souls to desire the truth and to seek after it with all their hearts, that they may put the seeking of it before the seeking after those things which perish. Think of it, how many hours, how many days and months we spend, as the children of God, in the pursuit of the temporalities of life, in devoting our thoughts to those things which pertain to the present temporal life or existence, not the spiritual existence, or that portion or particular part of the temporal existence which pertains to, and is a part of, the spiritual existence of man. Men and women talk, they use their tongues and their lips very much in conversation and in the expressions of their views and thoughts which pertain only to worldly things, to trivial matters, of no value, to the groveling things, so to speak, of the world, and devote very few moments to useful and uplifting thought and very few words comparatively, are spoken by them which pertain to the eternal, everlasting growth, development and happiness of mankind. We think of the world, of the present, we think more about the farm, the bank, the merchandizing, about our flocks and our herds, more in regard to the temporalities of life, than we think about the principles of eternal truth that make for the salvation, happiness and well-being, temporally and spiritually, of our souls.

My feeling, my earnest desire for good, is stronger than ever. It grows with age. I see more clearly today than ever before, the end of my mission in the world, that my time is growing shorter. I reflect upon the past, and often wonder how much of the valuable time the Lord has allotted to me in this life, have I wasted in folly and use-

less things; and how much of it have I employed in that which was essential to my salvation, to my growth and development in the knowledge of God and in the understanding of His truth? I assure you that while it is true that, for the most part of my life, I have been engaged in this ministry, in the work of the Lord, to the best of my understanding, and the ability that the Lord has given me, when I look back upon my life I can see much wasted time, many unimproved moments, numerous things that I have engaged in that were comparatively, at least, unnecessary and hurtful rather than beneficial, and yet nothing that was seriously wrong.

There are many things today indulged in by mankind, and by too many of those who have professed belief in the divine mission of The Christ and of His servant Joseph Smith, that are not only contrary to the word of the Lord, and in opposition to the Spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but are both in opposition to the Spirit of the Lord and in opposition to the life and health and purity of the souls of men. Some of these evils seem to be growing amongst us. Go where I will or where I do—and I am going from week to week and from month, to month, here and there, in the discharge of my duty—I see evidences of great disrespect to the requirements of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I not only see it among the adult citizens of the kingdom, and members of the Church, but I see the bad effects of the example that these adult members of the Church are having upon the youth of Zion.

It is neither my wish nor purpose to advertise the weaknesses

and imperfections of those who should be Latter-day Saints, and whose lives should be absolutely above reproach; it is not my wish nor desire to magnify the weaknesses and the imperfections of men; but I see things, day after day, which I think should be corrected, as far as it is possible for them to be corrected. Let me, without doing it in the spirit of accusation, without charging evil upon the people, speak of some of the things I see, to some extent. I thank the Lord that the evil is no more extensive than it is; I am very grateful that it is confined within the limits to which it is confined.

There is a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church, a simple statement of the will of the Lord; it is called the Word of Wisdom. We haven't preached about it very much of late, it has been left to itself, so far as I have heard. We have been preaching faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins; we have been preaching the necessity of looking up the genealogy of the people called Latter-day Saints, looking after their ancestors, gathering the names of their progenitors and of their kindred, and the associates and friends of their kindred, in order that they might administer in the ordinances of the house of God in their behalf, according to the scriptures of divine truth, that they may have the privilege of living according to God in the spirit and be judged according to men in the flesh. We have been preaching honor, uprightness, virtue and devotion to right, but we have not specifically named this simple law of God given to us for the purity of our own lives, that we might be free from the contaminations that the partaking of those

things "which are not good for man" will entail upon us. I see those in our midst, I don't know that they are Latter-day Saints, I don't know that they are the children of Latter-day Saints, but I see in our midst those who indulge in the foolish, injurious, uncleanly practice, of smoking tobacco, smoking cigarettes, or cigars, or the old pipe, so strong and unsavory, that they become noxious to the nostrils of men not addicted to the use of it. I see it apparently increasing amongst us. I see a young man with a cigar in his mouth—a habit that has become so common that today you can't go into a hotel dining room, and sit down to partake of a meal, even in a first-class hotel, or in any hotel, dining room or restaurant among the people of our times, without being nauseated while eating your meal with the vile perfume of tobacco. Many men have adopted the habit of using these things at their meals until it has become common. The fact seems to be that the man who does not do it is the exception. Now this does not apply to Latter-day Saints at all, and to those called "Mormons," only to a very limited extent, for I hold that Latter-day Saints have more regard for themselves and have more respect for the wishes of others, and especially more respect for womankind than to go into a dining room and there befoul the air to be breathed by the gentler sex by the nauseous use of tobacco, and by the fetid breath of those who are in the habit of using it. I would rather smell iodiform than the breath of a man that smokes tobacco, and I think iodiform is one of the worst things that I ever did smell.

President George Q. Cannon

often said to me and to others that he would rather be shut up with a skunk than be shut up in a smoking car with smokers. What right has a man to befoul with his nauseous breath the air that I breathe? What right have I to make noxious the air that you breathe? I have no right to do it, and you have a right to protest against my doing it, and to show those who are in the habit of doing these things your contempt for their practices, if you have any respect for them. You should show at least your contempt for that which they do foolishly, for their practice is wrong, pernicious and they are unmindful of the rights of others. I have thought seriously that a boy or man who has become addicted to the use of tobacco in any form, to the extent that he is unable to resist his appetite for it, or who has practiced it until he is unable to resist or overcome it, is a man who is so mentally weakened, so morally degraded that he is not competent to perform, and would not be worthy to be entrusted with any responsible duty. Why? because a man who has become so weak-minded and irresolute that he cannot overcome the temptation to do wrong or resist the power of an acquired, vicious appetite for poison, how can he be trusted? It is a weakness, a degradation that sinks far below the ordinary weaknesses of mankind, and therefore, the person who is so enslaved to vitiated appetites for poisonous, hurtful things that he cannot overcome them, being a slave to a pernicious habit, a degrading practice—that he cannot rise above it, how dare you trust him? How can you entrust to one whose mind has become so weakened, so vitiated and so degraded, that he is not his

own master, but an irresolute slave to unholy passion, any trust that requires honor, strength of manhood, determination, and will-power to resist evil and temptation to do wrong? You can't do it. You can't trust a man who has not the power of will to say "no" to temptation, to do evil or to that which entices to evil; he is only worthy of condemnation, and you cannot safely trust him, and you ought not to trust him.

The same can truly be said of the man who is in the habit of using intoxicating liquors; the same principle and argument apply perhaps more thoroughly to one who is given to drunkenness than to one who is only given to the use of tobacco, and yet, in perhaps ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the man who is in the habit of using tobacco will also be found using intoxicating drinks, thus adding to his weakness, his instability, proof upon proof of his unworthiness to be entrusted with anything of importance. Oh, my brethren and sisters, will you, if possible prevent to it, permit your sons to indulge in these infamous practices which the Lord says are not good for them? Which He says are injurious to them. Tobacco was not intended for such use; it is intended for bruises and sick cattle, but not for the stomach, not for the appetite of man, and we ought not to use it.

Then you may go from these practices to lesser evils, perhaps, and yet not always very much less because some people have become so addicted to the use of coffee that they do not have the power to resist its temptation. If it were set before them they could not say, "No thank you, I don't want it." But if they were asked, "Will you

take coffee, or will you have tea?" they will say: "Well, yes, please." Why? Because they are in the habit of it, and they can't say "No." I have noticed this in the society of so-called "good Latter-day Saints."

Not long ago, in the line of duty, we visited more than one good family, and when we sat down to their generous tables they said: "Now, what will you have to drink?"

"Why, I take water to drink."

"Well, won't you have anything else to drink?"

"No, I thank you, water is my beverage, I drink water."

"Well, but the water is not very good, there has been rain and it is riley, will you have a little something else to drink?"

"No, water will do."

"Well, we haven't got so far along that we can do on water, we still have to have our coffee."

And so they drank their coffee, while we took water and enjoyed it; and while the water did not altogether agree with my taste, I believe I stood it as well as some who drank their coffee.

I hope my good brethren are here to hear me, for I would like them to know just how I feel and think about it. I would like to say it broadly enough so that everybody can hear it: the Lord says these things are not good, the law of God says they are not necessary, that they are harmful. The law of nature tells you they are not good because they are poisonous—mild poison perhaps, but poisonous. I remember very distinctly, on one occasion, a good brother who took too much morphine as medicine. The doctor was sent for, he said, "have you some coffee?" "Yes." "Go and make some coffee, as

strong as you can." And they began to administer strong coffee to the man under the influence of morphine. What for? Why they say that "like cures like" and it took another kind of poison to counteract the poison that was in his system.

I deplore the evidence that I see, wherever I see it, of disrespect or indifference to the things that the Lord has said are not good for man. I would that all Latter-day Saints especially, and that all mankind in general, would be willing to learn what God has said is good for man, and then, having learned it, would be obedient to the word of the Lord and keep His law—I wish we could. It is my duty to teach this principle, to advocate this doctrine, to implore the brethren and sisters to obey the law of God, and thereby receive His blessing, and the fulfilment of the promise that He has made to the children of men, namely:

"That all Saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel, and marrow in their bones, and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint; and I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them." (Doc. and Cov. 89:18-21.)

Another thing, how could an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ go where there are afflicted ones to anoint them with holy oil, to lay hands upon them and pray for them that "the prayer of faith might save the sick and the Lord raise them up," when he knows that he is contaminated with the use of things that God has said are not good for him? When he knows that he is

not in harmony with the will of the Lord, nor with His law? It is the fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth and is effectual, not the prayer of the impure and unrighteous; he could not do it, as Christ did it, for He was without sin, and in harmony with God's purposes always. When He spoke it was as one pure as God Himself. Why should He not have power to give hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind? Why should He not have power to cleanse the leper and to raise the dead? since there was no sin in Him and He was in perfect harmony and unison with God, with the laws of life and health and godliness? Why should He not have power? But you say, "He was the Son of God." So are you the sons of God, and the daughters of God. Why should we not emulate the example and life of Him who was sinless, and in perfect accord with His Father? He declared throughout His mission: "I came, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Why should we not feel that way? We did not come here to do our own will, but, as He did, to do the will of Him that sent us here, that we might learn of His ways and walk in His paths and be indeed His children. We have been buried with Him in the waters of baptism and we have been born of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we should be able to see the truth, to discern between right and wrong, between good and evil, and between light and darkness; it is our privilege to know and love that which is good as against that which is evil, by the gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon us. Then why should we not keep the commandments of the Lord. If we do not, is it not because we think only once in

a while of God and of godliness, and all the rest of the time we think of the world and of worldliness? We give our hopes, our time, our talent, our thoughts, our words, our actions, to the temporalities of life, and, once in a while, we think of God. We come before Him in that pitiful form of unworthiness to crave His blessings and His favors. Do you wonder that we are often denied that which we ask for, and fail to receive that which we desire? It is because we do not ask aright. When we approach God in this way, we are not in a condition to ask aright, nor are we in a condition to receive that which we ask for, for God is not likely to bestow upon his children gifts and blessings of which they are not worthy.

I do not want to be burdensome to this vast congregation by talking too long but I have another thought that weighs upon my mind, and this is not in relation to the men, but it is with respect to the women, and more particularly with regard to the manner in which they dress. Never, perhaps, at least within the period of my life—and I have lived in the world nearly seventy-five years—never, I say, within the period of my life and experience have I seen such obscene, uncleanly, impure, and suggestive fashions of women's dress as I see today. Some of them are abominable. I lift my voice against these audacious practices and these infamous fashions, and I pray that you who have daughters in Zion will save them, if you can, from following these obscene fashions, that if followed, will destroy the last vestige of true womanly modesty, and reduce them to the level of the courtesans on the streets of Paris, from whence these debasing fashions come. They are the

lowest and most degraded specimens of womankind, who have yielded their bodies to crime and their souls to death, if not to perdition, and are devoid of modesty and the sense of shame. We cannot afford to let our women follow such as these or to adopt the cursed fashions they set.

I need not dwell on this matter, but will say that while crossing the street the other day, I saw a woman dressed to the height of this ridiculous fashion, and she was trotting along with little, short steps, she couldn't go any other way, hurrying across the street to catch the car. She got hold of the rail of the car and tried to lift herself up, but her foot would not go up to the step. By this time there was a crowd of men looking on. All of a sudden she stooped down, caught the bottom of her dress and raised it high enough to climb up. What an exhibition that was to the public eye! Would you like your daughters to expose themselves in such a manner? To do so they must of necessity part with their sense of womanly modesty, if not with all other womanly virtues. God have mercy on our girls, and help them to dress decently!

I suppose I shall incur the censure and displeasure of many in saying these things, but I do not care what the world has to say, what men say, nor what women say, in relation to these things. In my sight the present day fashions are abominable, suggestive of evil, calculated to arouse base passion and lust, and to engender lasciviousness, in the hearts of those who follow the fashions, and of those who tolerate them. Why? Because women are imitating the very customs of a class of women who have resorted

to that means to aid them to sell their souls. It is infamous, and I hope the daughters of Zion will not descend to these pernicious ways, customs and fashions, for they are demoralizing and damnable in their effect.

Now, the Lord bless you. I could say a good deal more, perhaps, if it were prudent or wise. I do not know but what I have said too much already, but I believe what I say. I am converted to the Gospel of Christ; I believe in Jesus with all my soul. I cannot doubt the evidences of more than sixty years of my experience in the Church in preaching the Gospel. Everything has contributed to the confirmation of my faith in the divine mission of the prophet Joseph Smith, and in the glorious plan of life and salvation taught by the Son of God, both for the living and for the dead. I cannot disbelieve such things as these, they appeal to my judgment; they take my poor, helpless soul, my helpless mortal being, destined to pass through the grave, out of this mortal life, and above and beyond it, and there is no other hope or assurance on earth, that I have ever found, for a future reward or happiness or the enjoyment of the fulness of the hopes and aspirations of my soul, except those which are held out to me in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who came into the world with power to lay down His life and take it up again, the only Being sent from God to earth who possessed the power to lay down His life and take it up again. To no other soul under heaven has this power been given, and He demonstrated the resurrection from death to life by His own example, and has freely offered the same deliverance to all the sons and daughters of God



that ever lived on earth or that will ever live from henceforth.

Christ has opened up to the world, through faith and obedience, this hope of everlasting life and exaltation in His glorious kingdom. Who else has taught such doctrines as this? Who else has exemplified this power and has done the deed? or given this object lesson before the world? Not one! Shall we deny it? Then look at the testimony of His disciples; they say they heard with their ears, they witnessed what they have declared to the world, and their testimony stands unimpeached to this day, and, in addition to this, we have the testimony of Joseph the Prophet. I say in addition to the testimony of Jesus Himself that He came from the Father, that He was his Father's Son, begotten of His Father, born of His mother Mary, thus partaking of the elements of eternal life and power over death, inheriting this power from His Father; and possessing the power to lay down His life through the mortality inherited from His mother. He says, "No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again." Joseph the Prophet comes to us in this dispensation and declares that the heavens were opened to him and to his associates, and he saw and heard, and he declares as the last witness, who has seen and heard and knows, that Jesus is the Christ and the Redeemer of the world, even He who was born of Mary, crucified and rose again from the dead, and visited the inhabitants of this continent, as well as the inhabitants of the old continent as we call it, who also bear witness of Him.

I believe in these things, I believe

in Joseph Smith the Prophet, I believe in the doctrine contained in the Book of Mormon, as I do that contained in the New Testament. I believe in the revelations that have come to the Prophet Joseph Smith; and I say to my brethren that the book of Doctrine and Covenants contains some of the most glorious principles ever revealed to the world, some that have been revealed in greater fulness than they were ever revealed before to the world; and this, in fulfilment of the promises of the ancient prophets that in the latter times, the Lord would reveal things to the world that had been kept hid from the foundation thereof; and the Lord has revealed them through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

This great work for the redemption of our dead, the uniting together of the living and the dead, the sealing power that takes the living children and unites them in the bond of the new and everlasting covenant with their fathers and mothers who have gone before them; the great principle that binds on earth and it is bound in heaven, that takes the woman, chosen by the man, and seals her to the husband of her choice with an everlasting, unbreakable covenant, or a covenant that can only be broken by sin or by the transgression of the laws of God; a covenant that can never be broken by death, by time, or distance, because God has confirmed it, it is sealed by His power for time and for all eternity; the work of baptism and other saving ordinances for the dead; the endowments, and all the ordinances that have been revealed to be performed in the sacred edifices called temples, which we are under commandment from God always to build unto His

holy name,—(Doc. and Cov. p. 434, verse 39) these things have been revealed to us in this dispensation in greater fulness and in greater plainness than ever before in the history of the world so far as we know.

Thank God, for the truth! May we abide in it. May the Lord help us to be humble, prayerful and honest with our own souls, as well as honest with our Father and God, and make us capable of resisting evil and of rejecting wickedness, capable of discerning the darkness and of turning away from it, that we may walk in the light as God is in the light, that we may have fellowship with Him, and that the blood of His son Jesus Christ may cleanse us from all sin, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### **PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND.**

Blessing attending Conference gatherings—Need for the restored Gospel to be preached to professing Christians—Our missionaries travel, and preach, as approved of the Lord—Successful missionary labors among "pagan" nations, and elsewhere—Temporal and spiritual advancement of Saints at home.

I hope that while I speak a few minutes I may be heard by this large congregation. I am indeed pleased to see the good attendance this rainy morning. It shows that the Latter-day Saints desire to come and hear the word of the Lord. We have heard it this morning from our president, and my advice to all is to try to remember the precious advice he has given unto us.

It is a blessing for the Saints to come together in these general conferences. We have the opportunity of renewing old acquaintances and of being renewed and

strengthened in the testimony of Jesus. The Lord, in commanding us to meet regularly in these general conferences and in our quarterly conferences, had the object in view of uniting us and making us one people; so that whether we live north or south, east or west, we may come together and partake of the same spirit. Israel of old were also commanded to go to a place chosen by the Lord, where His sanctuary should be built; and when Jerusalem became the temple city they went there annually to offer their sacrifices, and there they met people of every tribe of Israel. At home they lived in their own territories, each tribe by itself; but on the annual occasions when they went to Jerusalem, they mixed and mingled with one another; they became acquainted with one another's views, and thus kept the national feeling strong in their hearts. When Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, the unwise son of Solomon, he saw the force of this custom among the people, and he forbade them to go to Jerusalem, for he knew if they went there to worship at the sanctuary of the Lord and heard the truth spoken, and worshiped Him in the true manner that He had ordained, that their hearts would be turned from him who had rebelled against legitimate authority and was trying to lead the people astray. To keep the people from going to Jerusalem he built altars in Bethel and Dan, and raised golden calves there. He succeeded in making Israel sin, although there were mighty prophets raised up among that part of Israel, who tried to lead the people back to the worship of Jehovah; but the people gradually sank in wickedness and idolatry.