

**PREST. CHARLES W. PENROSE.**

Privilege of attending Conference—How to draw near to God—The new birth—Need of being born of the Spirit as well as of water—Duty of teaching this to the Children—Experience of the Prophet Joseph Smith—Christ's dual character—God's power to hear prayer—Organization of the spiritual Kingdom—Personal experience—The new work about Christ—The Holy Trinity.

I feel it is a great privilege to be permitted to meet with my brethren and sisters at this conference. I never felt the value of it more in my life than I do today. I have attended a great many general conferences of the Church, as well as conferences abroad in the different missions, but I never felt any more grateful to God for the privilege of attending a conference than I do today. I fully enjoyed the services this morning, and I presume that most of the congregation this afternoon were here at the morning session and heard the addresses that were delivered by President Smith and President Lund, and heard the music, the singing of the choir and the song that was sung by Elder Ballard, which I enjoyed with the rest of the services.

President Lund, in the course of his remarks, asked the question: Why we became Latter-day Saints, why we joined the Church in spite of the obloquy upon it, in spite of the opposition of the world and in spite of the fact that the "Mormons" were and are now a people despised by the great majority of mankind. Well, I felt in my heart that the answer was in that song that Brother Ballard sang this morning. I believe the refrain was: "If ye with your whole heart seek unto God, ye shall ever surely find Him." That may not be the exact words, but I think that was the sen-

timent and we can bear testimony that this is true and this is the great reason why most of the older members of this Church have become Latter-day Saints, receiving the truth in the various nations of the world and among the various denominations of Christendom. When the Elders of this Church were sent forth in the early days of its organization, they went out "without purse or scrip" in the way in which the ancient apostles traveled. They did not take money with them to pay their way; they had no wages, no salary, no stipend, no means of support but that which God raised by friends to administer to them. They had to seek to the Lord. They found Him and those who administered to them also received that blessing. I can bear testimony myself that when I heard the Gospel preached, away back early in 1850, I went to the Lord. I had been trained to believe in God. I did not know very much about Him, although I was brought up among "Christians," so called.

I learned that when Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the nineteenth century, desired to obtain a knowledge of the true Church, to find out which was the true religion among all the various existing sects, he followed the advice of James who said: "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith." That is the great key to it. So Joseph in his boyhood retired to a grove near his father's residence and called upon God that he might learn which was the right religion, for a great number of the religions of the time were engaged in their revival gatherings. Many of you know what that is, some of you perhaps do not. Revivalism is

a sort of religious enthusiasm, often religious and spiritual inebriety; people are "drunk but not with wine, and stagger but not with strong drink," using the words of Isaiah the Prophet, and they become sometimes delirious and go into all kinds of excesses; and he was puzzled to know which was the true religion, and he followed the advice of the Apostle James. He sought the Lord and he believed that God would hear his prayer and answer him and in response to his petition the Father and the Son, God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ, for He was God and was in the beginning with God, we read in the scripture ancient and modern, and God the Father and the Son appeared to him and spake to him and he was told by the Father to hear the Son: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." And the Son spoke to Joseph and told him to go after none of them. There is a side to the character of Jesus of Nazareth a little different to that in which He is generally pictured.

I used to sing when I was a little boy and went to Sunday School: "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look on me, a little child," and I suppose He was meek and mild in His character, and we are told that we ought to entertain a Christian spirit when we feel a little disturbed by the falsehoods of our enemies. But Jesus had two sides to His character and one of them was shown on this occasion, but not so forcefully as it was shown at some periods of His ministry on the earth. He said to Joseph: "Go after none of them." "The professors of religion draw near to me with their mouth and with their lips do honor me while their hearts are far from me and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men. Go after none

of them; they are all gone astray." You remember, if you are acquainted with the history of Jesus, what little we have of it in the New Testament, that He had a great aversion to those self-righteous Pharisees and others of their ilk and the other sects who were hypocrites. "Woe unto you, scribes, pharisees, hypocrites! Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte and make him ten-fold more the child of hell than he was before." He was not very meek and mild upon those occasions nor was He when He went into the temple and made a thong of cords and kicked over the tables of the money changers and drove out them that sold doves. "My Father's house is a house of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves. Get out of here." That was the other side of His character but He was meek and mild and gentle to all when they were sincere, when He felt that they meant what they professed. When sinners were repentant, He was kind and gentle to them and welcomed them to Him. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give thee rest." That is where His mildness shone out. You must remember that Jesus was not only the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, but He was also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the time is coming when He will shine forth in that character. When the work is being brought to a consummation and the kingdoms of this world are arrayed against Him He will come forth in His strength and the might and majesty of His power, and the kingdoms of this world will be broken in pieces before the kingdom of our God and His Christ.

Now, I speak thus concerning Jesus of Nazareth because He is at the head of this work in which we

are engaged. This is no sect of religion. This is no mere man-made organization. It is divine and was from the beginning and the Father and His Son appeared and opened up the latter-day dispensation. The greatest of all dispensations of God's mercy to man is opened and launched forth upon the earth and it will be brought to a grand and glorious consummation, for all things shall be subdued unto Him and He shall reign whose right it is to reign over all the earth. The promise is made to us as it was made of old by the Lord to the people: "Draw near unto me," saith the Lord, and I will draw near unto you." That is the process. We are to draw near unto Deity and Deity will stoop down and condescend to us and reveal to us that which shall be for our good, but we have to draw near to Him, as the song says, with our whole heart and to serve God and be determined to serve Him as He has commanded us in these latter days, with all our heart and might and mind and strength.

That is what the Lord commanded anciently and has renewed again in these latter days. For through the Prophet Joseph Smith to whom the Father and the Son spake in that heavenly vision, God has revealed the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, and has restored all the ordinances and rites and powers and privileges and gifts and blessings pertaining thereunto as they were enjoyed in times of old. God is the same "yesterday, today and forever," and those who draw near unto Him with their whole heart shall find Him and shall learn of Him and understand Him. Of course we do not expect to comprehend Deity in the fulness thereof while we are in mortality, but the day is to come, according to both

ancient and modern scripture, when we will come "face to face" with Him and "see Him as He is and be made like Him, but every man that hath this hope," the apostle John says, "purifieth himself even as He is pure." Here is something for us to consider, my brethren and sisters, and friends, if there be any here who are not of our faith: that is, that there is something more to religion than believing in Deity, something more than receiving ordinances and ceremonies and rites, and organizations. What is it? It is the Spirit and the power of God. Jesus Christ, when explaining to Nicodemus that peculiar saying that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," and Nicodemus could not understand it, expounded it this way: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he can not enter into the Kingdom of God." This is something we should all understand. It is necessary that we should be born of water. A great many of our modern religionists say that does not matter, that the water does not amount to anything and so it does not matter whether we are born of water or not. But Jesus Christ laid down as a fundamental that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

To be born of water is very easy to understand, if we will look into the life and character and example of Jesus Christ. He started out on His ministry before entering into the preaching of the Gospel and accomplishing the work that the Father sent Him to do by going to John the Baptist and being immersed in the River Jordan. When He was baptized of John, we read, he came up straightway out of the

water and lo! the heavens were opened unto Him and the Spirit of God rested down upon Him in the form or sign of a dove and the Father from the heavens said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He was born of water when He came up from the Jordan, and born of the Spirit when the Holy Ghost rested down upon Him in visible form. The voice of the Father proclaimed that He was well pleased with Him and He has "left us an example that we should follow in His steps." I do not want to take up time in regard to that particular point. If we will read the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament we will notice the fact that whenever they went forth to preach the Gospel they proclaimed these principles, that if anybody wanted to enter into the Church or Kingdom of God they had to be baptized for the remission of sins; and that baptism was an immersion, it was a death to the old life and a new birth to the new life. It is being "buried with Christ in baptism," being raised up in the likeness of the resurrection of Christ.

But then they laid their hands upon the baptized, repentant believers and conferred upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost. So that the Holy Ghost is necessary as a baptism; that the individual must be baptized, immersed in that influence, quickened by it, enlightened by it, thus becoming one of the sons of God by adoption in the Gospel. Verily, said the ancient apostle, "they that are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." Now, here is a double birth—the birth of the water and the birth of the Spirit, and I want to impress upon the minds of my brethren and sisters that they should teach this to their children, not only to be baptized in water

when they are eight years old, but to be "born of the Spirit," as the Lord has commanded. He says: "Inasmuch as there are parents having children in Zion or in any of her Stakes that are organized, who teach them not to understand the doctrine of faith in Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, and baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents." Doc. and Cov. 68:25. It is a splendid thing that in every month just before the fast-day, which President Smith drew our attention to so strongly this morning, just before the fast-day there is a baptizing day and parents send their children, when they are of proper age, to be baptized. It is to be hoped and believed that before they send them they instruct them in these things. The Lord says if they do not teach them to understand that doctrine the sin shall be upon the heads of the parents. On the fast-day, generally, the children, after being baptized, are taken to the fast meeting and under the direction of the bishops, hands are laid upon them by the Elders and the Holy Ghost is confirmed and sealed upon them in form. But it is for the children to be instructed how to reach out, to reach up to God with all their heart, and if they do they will find Him and they will receive that baptism and inspiration of the Holy Ghost from on high without which we cannot see and comprehend the things of God.

For, as man by the spirit of man, which is in him understands the things of this world, so no one can comprehend the things of God but under the influence and power of the Spirit of God, the light of the Lord, that divine light which proceedeth from His presence through-

out the immensity of space, that which is in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the earth, and in all things, and by which He operated when He made the worlds and by which Jesus, the Son, who was with the Father in the beginning operated in the formation of this globe. It was He, Jesus the Christ, our elder brother in the spirit, that was spoken to by the Father in the beginning when He said: "Let us make man after our image and our likeness," and so on. But the Holy Ghost, the Comforter that Jesus Christ said He would send when He went away, is "a personage of spirit." When He left His disciples He said He would not leave them comfortless but He would send to them the Spirit of truth from the Father, who, when He came, would guide them into all truth and take of the things of the Father and of the Son and show them to His apostles and unto those that received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are three separate and distinct personalities; they each have their particular power and sphere of operations, but they are all one in mind and purpose, and in act; they three are one in that sense.

Now, we want our children to understand that they can learn of the Lord as Joseph the Prophet did. Not that every one of them is to receive visible manifestations as he did; for he was a special witness raised up by the Almighty to usher in the greatest and grandest of all dispensations, but to learn to be led by the Spirit of God, to understand its whisperings, its inspiration, and if they do learn that and walk in the light that they will not be led astray. When those foolish vagaries that President Lund alluded to this morning, come along from time to

time and lead some foolish people away from the straight and narrow path, we know by the Spirit what they are. They are not of God. They come to deceive, to darken the mind, to becloud the understanding, to lead people from that which God has shown to them to be the truth. True. Latter-day Saints have "his peculiarity about them that they are born of God, by the water and the Spirit. And that Spirit is a spirit of revelation. It is a spirit of inspiration; it enlightens the soul, as that which we call artificial light lightens the natural eyes. These lamps that shine here today give the same kind of light that comes from the sun and from the moon and is a property and a manifestation of the spirit of truth, the light of truth, the intelligence that always existed, that never was created or made, the Spirit by which God operates throughout all His creations and by which He can learn about us whenever He desires, and behold us, and can hear and answer our prayers.

It is a great puzzle to some people how it can possibly be that a person, an individual, of form and stature, occupying but one place at a time, can hear the prayers of His people or can comprehend them as David said He does: Said he: "There is not a thought of my heart but lo! O God, thou knowest it altogether. If I ascend up into heaven behold thou art there. If I descend down into hell behold thou art there; and if I take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, there will Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand guide me." Of course these expressions are somewhat figurative, but there is the great fact that God can be omnipresent by the power of His universally diffused spirit which proceeds from His presence

throughout the immensity of space, and He can see and discern all things by that power, as He told Enoch, and Moses also, as you can read in *The Pearl of Great Price*. Moses and Enoch were each lifted up so that they could see, measurably, as Deity sees and they beheld the multiplicity of the creations of God; and when Enoch declared that if a man could count the particles of the earth or of a million earths like this, that would not be a beginning to the number of God's creations, then God told him, "Yea, and mine eye can pierce them all." By the power of that Spirit he sees and comprehends and understands all things, and His watchful care and His mercies are over all His works.

There is another thing connected with that, which you can understand if you will read the 10th chapter of the book of Daniel. I will not take time to read it. I don't want to take up too much time. There are others to speak this afternoon. But do you read it. Daniel, the prophet, whose words are being fulfilled, many of them, in our own time, Daniel predicted and saw in vision the rising of the great kingdom of God in the latter days, to supersede and overcome all kingdoms upon the face of the earth. He prayed to God on a certain occasion and his words were not immediately answered, and he fasted and prayed and fasted and prayed but his words were not answered in the way that he expected, and after three weeks had passed by, a heavenly being appeared before him, an angel of God, and he fell down on the ground, and the angel said to him: 'Stand up like a man;' and when he stood up he told him, "Daniel, from the day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and seek unto the Lord thy words were heard, and I am

come for thy words; but the Prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days, and lo! Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me and now I have come for thy words." Three weeks had passed by since Daniel commenced to pray for the blessing that he desired, and at length the messenger came to answer him and give him the asked-for information.

Here is something disclosed that gives a little key to those who wish to understand the world behind the veil, the spiritual world, that it is organized. As the Church of Christ is organized here on the earth with quorums and organizations and institutions in all their beauty and harmony and order, so it is in the spiritual sphere, and there are personages appointed for different positions and districts of that sphere, and they can proceed and act according to their office and authority and according to the sphere of their labor. This angel that came from the presence of God was fought by the powers of evil, evidently, and was withstood on the way for three weeks—one and twenty days. Sometimes our prayers then, are not immediately answered. Daniel's was postponed until the time when the angel came. Reading that chapter and reflecting a little may open the eyes of some of us in regard to the operations of God in His great universe in the spiritual world as well as in the natural world.

And this is a certainty: If with our whole heart we seek God, God will draw near to us and we will find Him, not expecting, of course, that we will behold Him, visibly, that He will come down to everybody and appear in His personality, but by the power of His divine spirit. He will draw near to us and we will

draw near to Him, and every Latter-day Saint who has really been born of the Spirit as well as of the water, understands something of this. I don't know of any joy or pleasure, any sensation that is delightful, to be compared with beholding the visions of eternity by the power of the Holy Ghost, and to have the soul lifted up above sublunary things and all earthly and material matters, to draw near to God our Heavenly Father. He is our Father, the Father of our spirits. We came from Him. He has sent us here. We are here for a purpose and an object and He designs our progress, our development into the fulness of His own image and likeness and power and glory; but to understand Him and His ways and to enjoy His light and His presence and to find Him really, we must be quickened by the power of the Holy Ghost and those who seek the Lord and try to serve Him with all their heart and mind and strength, will be able to draw near unto Him.

I know this is true. When I was a boy I learned of this Gospel and I went to the Lord and inquired of Him concerning it. Not one of the family to which I belong embraced this Gospel, not one of my friends or associates in the different sects have received it so far as I have learned; but I went to the Lord myself. I believed in Him, I prayed to Him, and He enlightened my mind, He lit up my soul, He gave me a conviction of the truth of this work and I went forth and received the ordinance of baptism and the ordinance of confirmation by the laying on of hands by men appointed of God to minister in these ordinances. I received the remission of my sins. I received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and from that time to the

present, I can testify that God has been with me on the land and on the sea, among the wicked and among the Saints. In all my labors and duties during the years that have intervened God has been "my refuge and strength;" in Him we shall prevail. Our enemies may continue their onslaughts; they may condemn the leaders of this Church as they are doing today; they may conspire against us, but we shall prevail, not because we are so wise or so mighty or so numerous, but because God is our refuge and our strength, and He hears our prayers, and He answers our requests when what we ask for is wise in Him to bestow.

We should remember that, my brethren and sisters. Sometimes in sickness, people call upon the Lord and they get angry because their prayers are not immediately answered. That is very foolish; we are all foolish, I suppose, to some extent, weak, for we are human; but we should understand that God is our Father, and fathers do not always give to their children everything they ask for. They know better than the children what they should have. So let us ask in faith and in trust, trust in God as well as faith in God, and keep His commandments, and all shall be well with us, and we will be guided of Him and inspired of Him and He will lead us in the path of life. Brethren and sisters, don't let us leave prayers to God to times of trouble and sorrow and distress, but call upon the Lord in the morning and the evening, every day; and when we are full of joy and gladness call upon Him and offer our prayers of praise unto Him. We should praise the Lord with hallelujahs in our souls. If we can't give them voice, like the choir has done so beautifully today; we can

praise God in the soul; we can draw near to Him in gratitude for His mercies unto us, for they have been wonderful and manifold to this Church to which we belong. God has manifested His power from the beginning, and it will continue and will prevail.

Now let us understand another point, and that is, that when we pray to God, the Eternal Father, we pray to Him in the name of Jesus Christ, and Christ has promised that if even a few of us are agreed and call upon the Father in His name, what we ask for shall be granted. There is power in the name of Jesus the Christ.

I am glad to say before I sit down, that a splendid volume called "Jesus the Christ" has been issued from the press. Brother James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve was requested by the Presidency to write a real history of Christ. It begins away back in the beginning when He, as He has told us, was with the Father and was the first-born. It recounts His works from that time down, showing that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, was the Jesus of Nazareth of the New Testament. All this is set forth in excellent style, with quotations from ancient and modern revelations which make it a very valuable work for the Latter-day Saints in all their societies and organizations and in their private homes. I allude to this subject again so that you may not go astray. Some people get peculiar notions about who Jesus was. Understand, once for all, that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are three separate and distinct individuals. We pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ the Son, under the influence and power and guidance of the Holy Ghost; and if we will walk

in the ways that the Lord has pointed out, we will not go astray.

Any man who is imbued with the spirit of this Gospel will understand that God has established an order in His Church, for its guidance and government, as we heard this morning, and when men start up here and there and over yonder and pretend to be some great one to set things in order, they should understand and we should understand that in the very beginning of the Church, right in the very beginning, the Lord revealed that if He had anything to reveal to His Church He would give it through the man that stands at the head, and that has been the rule ever since. The man who stands at the head holds the keys and power of revelation for the Church; but for individuals the blessing is free to all; the spirit shall be poured out upon all. I know that God inspires the soul of man. I know that God qualifies His servants, weak though they may be, for the works that they are required to perform; and I thank Him and praise Him this afternoon for His mercies to me in all my labors and travels and toils through my past life, and I praise Him for the privilege of being here with my brethren and sisters this afternoon.

I invoke His blessings upon all. May the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, be our constant guide and companion, that we may be able to subdue all that there is in us that is wrong and contrary to the divine will, and be led and guided and subject to the Father of our spirits, through Jesus Christ, the Son, and the influence and power of the Holy Ghost. May God bless you and help us all to be faithful and true and save us in His glorious kingdom, for Christ's sake. Amen.