

the uprightness of our lives, may be led to investigate the fruits of the gospel of Christ, and that they, too, may receive the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is my prayer, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRESIDENT ANTHON H. LUND

It is a pleasant sight to look upon so many Latter-day Saints who have come to our conference to join in the worship of God and to hear our leaders speak to us, to encourage us, to strengthen us in our faith, and to help us in our resolves to serve God. I look upon this movement of coming to conferences as a great help in uniting the Latter-day Saints both in faith and in love.

#### VALUE OF CONFERENCE GATHERINGS AND SACRAMENT MEETINGS.

The people of God formerly were commanded to go to the temple once or twice a year. They felt it a duty to make up their companies and travel to Jerusalem to attend the services in the temple of God. As long as this custom continued, Israel was united, but when this was abandoned, idolatry took place of the true worship. The Ten Tribes rebelled against Rehoboam who was left as king of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only, Jeroboam saw that as long as his people should continue to go to Jerusalem to the temple, there would be a union with the people living there, and their faith would be kept up, therefore he built places of worship on the hills, tried to lead the people astray, and did this to a great extent. One way in which he accomplished this was to prevent the annual gathering of the people of God at Jerusalem.

We come here from many different places. I have already met this week people from Mexico on the south and Canada on the north, from California, from the East, and from up and down our State and Idaho, who have come here to attend conference. They meet with friends and old acquaintances and friendships are renewed. They attend the meetings of the conference and hear what the servants of the Lord have to give unto them.

We have this morning heard from our President. He has used the vehicle of hymns to bring to us some great truths, encouraging and inspiring us, and his teaching has been accepted by us all. We feel that he has been inspired by the Lord in speaking to us, and that he is inspired in the duties and labors that devolve upon him. I believe that we as a people ought to remember the words he has spoken, and carry them out in our daily lives.

Our meetings at conferences here, and our quarterly conferences, all tend to unite the Latter-day Saints. I could not ask the people to attend our general conferences in greater numbers than they do, as we are not able to give them all a chance to come into our tabernacle and other buildings where we gather at our general conferences.

I would like to ask the Latter-day Saints to be more punctual in attending their quarterly conferences both *Saturdays* and *Sundays*. Generally some of the Twelve, or of the Council of Seventy, or other leading men, are sent out to the stakes to attend the Stake Conferences. These ought to be attended well by the people. Those who attend will thus come in touch with the central government of the Church; they will learn what is wanted, and they will be built up in their faith and strengthened to perform their duties. We love to see the Saints come together, not only in their conferences, but also in their sacrament meetings, their quorum meetings and different meetings of the organizations that are helps in the government of the Church. We would like to see the people zealous in performing this duty.

#### DUTY OF THE SAINTS IN MEETING.

When we come together and someone is called to speak unto us, let us sustain him with our prayers, pray in our hearts that the Lord will lead him to speak unto us such things as shall be for our best good, and if we do this, our prayers will be answered. The speaker will be led to speak upon such things as are needed by those who have assembled. Our brethren very seldom write out their sermons before they go to meeting, except in cases where they are asked to speak on a certain subject. That does not mean that they do as the man to whom Bro. N. L. Nelson refers in his work on preaching, as quoted by our President. The Lord wants us to fill our minds with useful knowledge and then ask him to lead us in what we shall speak. By following this course the Lord will bring forth unto us that which he wants us to give unto the hearers. When the speaker sits down, show that you have been attentive to what has been said by saying "Amen" in your usual pitch of voice, as much as to say, "yes, those words will be treasured by me." We did that formerly more than we do now. We used to give our "Amen" so that all could hear it, but today we are too quiet in the matter. Let us show our sympathy with and our assent to what has been said, by giving a good audible "Amen" at the close of the discourse.

#### THE INSPIRATION OF JOSEPH THE PROPHET.

I will read a verse or two from one of the early revelations. I have always loved to read those revelations given to the Prophet in the early days, because they prove their intrinsic truth, as he could not have seen the future except by the power of God. In 1828, when the Prophet was a few months past twenty-two years old, he received a revelation, in which we find these words:

For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at nought the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fail and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

I call your attention to this revelation given almost two years before the organization of the Church, before the Prophet had had any experience in Church government, and in the various ways in which men's minds act.

When it says, "although he may have many revelations," most anyone would wonder how a person having had a revelation could ever fall away? We would so think to ourselves, and the young man Joseph, if it had been his own invention, would not have thought of putting this paragraph in the revelation. But this he received from on high, and it shows that the Giver understood mankind and understood how fickle their minds often are. Oliver Cowdery, the second elder in the Church, was writing for Joseph when they were translating the Book of Mormon. In doing so they came to a passage about baptism and they asked the Lord concerning that ordinance. John the Baptist, who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood in the days of the Savior, was sent to them, and he ordained them to the Aaronic Priesthood. He bestowed upon them the authority to administer baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and he taught them how they should be baptized. Oliver and Joseph baptized each other according to the instructions given by the angel. Now, Oliver Cowdery saw the angel, he felt his hands upon his head, he knew the ordination he received was from God. At Harmony he was helping the Prophet as his scribe; and once, as they were traveling close to the Susquehanna river, tired out and persecuted, Peter, James and John appeared to them and bestowed upon them the apostolic power of the Priesthood. This was a great comfort to them. They had now the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as the Aaronic, and they were authorized not only to baptize but to confirm members in the Church and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost. They themselves received this and they were authorized to so administer to others.

The Church was not yet organized; a few were baptized; but on the sixth of April, 1830, the Church was organized, we generally say, with six members. There were more, but it took six members to incorporate. Then the Lord told Joseph and Oliver that they were to be ordained elders. They held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but there were no offices then established in the Priesthood. When the offices were instituted Joseph and Oliver were sustained by the people in the office of elders, and the Church was directed by elders for about fourteen months, and then the first high priests were ordained. It is remarkable, when you read the revelation concerning the government of the Church, given at the same time the Church was organized, to see that it contains really the law of the Church, and this has not been changed, because it was given by Him who understood the conditions and needs of his children and of his Church. In the revelation, instructions were given both about the organization, about the duties of the different officers in the Church, and of the members.

## THE APOSTASY, TESTIMONY, AND RETURN OF OLIVER COWDERY.

When we think of Oliver Cowdery, having received revelations—not one but several—he had been with Joseph, he had been under that holy influence when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon and, as he himself describes afterward, felt a heavenly feeling pervade his soul, as he sat under the voice of the Prophet and wrote down what the Prophet translated. And yet, with all this, a time came when the mind of Oliver became dark. He fell into transgression and was cut off from the Church. It shows the justice of the Prophet and those in the council, since, although he held such a high place in the Church he was not treated in a different manner from the lay members of the Church. But during the time that he was in a state of excommunication he did not deny the testimony to which his name is attached in the Book of Mormon. Those things he had seen.

It has been told of his being in a court (he was a lawyer and was conducting a case) and that his opponent thought he would gain influence over the jury and the people there by letting them know that Oliver Cowdery had signed the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. That did not keep Oliver from speaking the truth. He arose and bore his testimony in that courtroom to all present, stating that what he had signed there was the truth, because he had seen with his eyes an angel, that he had seen the plates, and that he knew what he had signed was true.

After a while, when the Church had reached its lowest point, almost, the Saints had been driven out of their possessions, had gone into the wilderness, the world thought there could be no more power in the "Mormon" Church, it had sung its last verse. But not so. The Saints were under the Lord's overruling providence. They were directed to a place where they could worship him according to his dictates and desires. At that time Oliver Cowdery came to the Church at Council Bluffs. Elder Orson Hyde, a man whom he had been the means of converting, was presiding there. The Council was called together, and Oliver had to be accepted like every other person who has been cut off from the Church. The people accepted his humble plea to come back into the Church. He said, "I do not ask for office, I just want to get within the pale of the Church." He also bore a strong testimony of its truth. It was not the hope of promotion or wealth, because the Church did not look like it would ever have any means, or that the Church would ever have any honor to bestow on people in the Church, but he knew that it was the Church of Christ. His conscience smote him; he felt that he did not want to die outside the Church, and he was received back again. He went down to the home of his brother-in-law, David Whitmer, in Missouri, and died there some five or six months afterward.

## ALL THE WITNESSES PROVED TRUE TO THEIR TESTIMONY.

The same can be said of all the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, that though they had received many revelations still they did leave the Church, but they never denied their testimonies of the truth of the Book of Mormon. David Whitmer never returned to the Church, but always bore a faithful testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Martin Harris came back to the Church and on his death-bed he bore a strong testimony of what he had seen.

## IN REGARD TO CONVERSIONS BY MIRACLES, AND BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

And in regard to miracles, persons having come into the Church by seeing extraordinary healings, or by seeing signs, knowing that they belonged to the Church of Christ, yet after witnessing such things some have left the Church. One of the first apostates came into the Church by seeing a wonderful healing, but if that was the only reason for his joining, it would have taken miracles every day, nearly, to have kept him there; he apostatized and left the Church. Those of us, brethren and sisters, who have joined the Church, and have had the Spirit of God conferred upon us by the laying on of hands, and have received the assurance that we have the truth, and that in going down into the waters of baptism we fulfilled the Lord's command to us, without having seen miracles, are just as strong in our testimony as those who have had ocular manifestations, because what you see with your eyes and hear with your ears is brought to the spirit through the different channels of your bodily senses, while those who receive a testimony through the Spirit of the Lord acting upon their spirits receive as strong a conviction of the truth as those who get it through their bodily senses.

How many of you who have received the testimony through the Spirit could become convinced that you are mistaken? You feel that the Lord has given you a knowledge for yourself; you know that this is the work of the Lord; you know that the Savior lives; you know that Joseph Smith was an inspired prophet of God, and as long as you perform your duty, and hold yourselves near to the Lord in prayer, that testimony cannot be taken from you. But if we neglect our duties, if we do things contrary to the will of the Lord, we can become dark. We can see in this hall at night when it is lighted up, but going out where it is dark we may remember what we have seen in the lighted hall, remember the light that lightened it; but outside, when we go into the land of the enemy, we cannot see our way, and we may even kick against the pricks; we may do that which we once knew to be wrong. Hence, let none of us forget how precious is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, to know that God lives, that his Son lives, and that his Son is coming again and will restore his kingdom upon the earth.

## THE DUTY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD.

The time is hastening, the end of the sixth millennium is near. The seventh millennium, it has been predicted, will be a reign of a thousand years of peace, then Christ will reign, then the work for the salvation of the human family, from the time of Adam down to the present, will be remembered, and all things both in heaven and on the earth will be gathered together in one and delivered over to Christ. What a happy time it will be, when peace shall reign on earth, when men will accept the word of the Lord! Satan will be bound, and will not be able to stir up men to war against one another, nor against God. What a beautiful picture is spread before us when we contemplate this happy time! Let us, brethren and sisters, remember the covenants we have made with the Lord, let us work faithfully to perform our duties and remember the great duty that rests upon us to spread the light to the world.

## CONDITIONS IN MISSION FIELDS.

Just now we are prevented from sending elders, like we used to do, into different European countries and to the islands of the sea that are under the English government. They have been kind enough, however, to allow a few of our elders to go there. But we cannot send them as we formerly did when we have the elders ready to go. But our adversary will not be able to stop this work; it is not in his power. If our elders cannot go from Zion, we will have elders over there who will be inspired of the Lord to guide those who join the Church, and to bear testimony to the outsiders and bring many into the Church. I was pleased to hear Brother Richards, upon his return from England, tell us that when they did not have elders enough from Zion to place in charge of the conferences, they would take local elders, and they found even young men who really showed that they had ability to become splendid presidents of conferences. The people listened to them and accepted them as the servants of the Lord, and the work was not stopped. The same was true in Scandinavia. We have had to use local elders over there to a great extent, yet the work is going on. The Saints feel more united. They long, of course, for the elders from here to come as they used to, but as they cannot have them, they are able to take hold of the work themselves and to carry it on.

We had a letter from Liege, Belgium, the other day, which informs us that when the Germans moved into that city they took all the halls belonging to the city and installed their soldiers. Our elders were counseled to go over to England, and the Saints were left to themselves and could not hold meetings. But it was not long before some of the Saints opened their doors, and they could meet to hold Sunday School and meetings in private homes, until at last they got their hall back, and then the branch at Seraing joined the branch at Liege, and together they met both in Sunday School and sacrament meetings.

But they did not have elders or priests to administer the sacrament, so an elder visited them once a month, and he blessed their children and confirmed those who had joined the Church. For in that branch there were fourteen who joined the Church; and this elder performed this work until at last someone could be sent to labor there. So you see that the Lord can overrule for good whatever happens, and bless the Saints, and instil in their hearts a love for the truth that cannot be taken from them. During the time that they were alone they remembered their tithing, and sent it every month to Rotterdam, to the President of the Netherlands Mission, and they also gathered nearly four thousand francs for their poor. They were all poor, too, but they remembered some who were worse off than they were, thus showing their love both for the Church and for their brethren and sisters.

I understand that although our elders were withdrawn from Germany, branches have continued to prosper. The President of the Swiss and German Mission has not been able to get into the German part of the Mission until the present time. I believe he is traveling there now, the Trustee-in-Trust having authorized him to ascertain how much means is needed to help our poor Saints who are in distress. I think he got permission to visit the different branches; but during the time that the Saints have been isolated, they have continued to pay their tithes and offerings, and to meet together to edify one another.

#### THE VITALITY OF "MORMONISM."

So you see and realize the "Vitality of 'Mormonism'" in this, as Brother Talmage has written about so clearly. It does exist, and our enemies can not stop this work. It is of God, it will gain the victory; and it will grow, as the President said, until it shall fill the whole earth. That is the destiny of the work in which we are engaged. God bless us all. Amen.

Louisa Watson sang a solo: "Fear not ye, O Israel."

#### PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

It is a source of regret to all of us, I believe, to learn from the despatches, received this morning, that the President of the United States is in a very critical condition of health. I wish to say that I was profoundly impressed with all that he said from this stand, during his recent visit, and that it met with my hearty approval. I had the pleasure of meeting him at the hotel, and I was impressed with the honesty and sincerity of his motives. I believe that he desires, with all the power of his being, to accomplish that which, in his estimation, is for the good of mankind the world over.

After the singing of the Doxology, by the congregation, we will ask that you all join Elder Orson F. Whitney in the benediction, and pray for the recovery of the health of our President of these United States.