

## FIRST DAY

### MORNING MEETING

The opening session of the conference began at 10 o'clock, Friday, April 6th, 1928.

The great auditorium and galleries were comfortably filled with people from all parts of the Church.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The congregation sang the hymn, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Richard C. May, President of the Minidoka Stake.

Brother J. H. Wood sang a solo, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

### PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

It is certainly an inspiring sight to see this magnificent audience in attendance here this morning at the ninety-eighth anniversary of the birth of the Church. When I contemplate the fact that just a handful of people were in the Church ninety-eight years ago (the organization was effected with six members) and that now there are over a half million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I am reminded of the very wonderful revelation given to the father of the prophet over a year before the organization of the Church:

"Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.

"Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

"Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;

"For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;

"And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.

"Ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

This audience testifies to the fact that a marvelous work and a wonder has been established. It testifies to the diligence of those who have gone forth by the thousands and tens of thousands during the last ninety-eight years, proclaiming the gospel in all parts of the world.

I had not the slightest idea of reading this revelation when I first stood up.

It has always been customary at our annual conferences to give a little account of the activities of the Church during the past year.

CHANGES IN STAKE AND MISSION OFFICERS SINCE LAST OCTOBER  
CONFERENCE

(Those who have been released have been released with the love, blessings and good will of the authorities of the Church and of the people where they reside.)

*Stake Presidents Appointed:* Uriah G. Miller has been honorably released as president of the Cottonwood stake, and Henry D. Moyle appointed to succeed him.

Samuel W. Parkinson has been honorably released as president of the Franklin stake, and Walter K. Barton appointed to succeed him.

Joseph R. Murdock has been honorably released as president of the Wasatch stake, and David A. Broadbent appointed to succeed him.

John E. Magleby has been honorably released as president of the South Sevier stake, and appointed president of the New Zealand mission. A new stake president has not yet been sustained.

*Mission Presidents Appointed:* Apostle James E. Talmage has been released as president of the European mission, and Apostle John A. Widtsoe appointed to succeed him.

Andrew Johnson has been released as president of the Swedish mission, and Gideon N. Hulterstrom appointed to succeed him.

J. Howard Jenkins has been released as president of the New Zealand mission, and John E. Magleby appointed to succeed him.

John M. Knight has been released as president of the Western States mission, and Elias S. Woodruff appointed to succeed him.

John H. Taylor has been released as president of the Northern States mission, and Noah S. Pond appointed to succeed him.

Hugh J. Cannon has been released as president of the Swiss and German mission, and Fred Tadge appointed to succeed him.

*New Wards Organized:* Manchester ward, Los Angeles stake; Temple ward, Maricopa stake; Idaho Falls First and Second wards, Idaho Falls stake, divided into four wards to be known as Idaho Falls First, Second, Third and Fourth wards; Phoenix ward, Maricopa stake, divided into two wards to be known as the Phoenix First and Second wards; Solomonville ward, St. Joseph stake, formerly an independent branch; Ocean Park ward, Hollywood stake, divided into two wards. The name of Ocean Park ward changed to Santa Monica, and the new ward known as Mar Vista ward.

*Bishops Who Have Died:* Hyrum M. Lau of Soda Springs ward, Idaho stake; Henry J. Bodily, of the Iona ward, Idaho Falls stake; Alfred R. Wilson of Payson first ward, Nebo stake.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The following is a list of expenditures from the tithes of the Church for the year 1927:

*Stake and Ward Purposes*

There has been returned from the tithes to the stakes and wards for building construction, maintenance and operation, .....\$2,041,920.46  
 (Of this amount there has been expended for meeting houses alone \$1,062,163.84.)

*Education*

Expended for the construction and operation of Church Schools ..... 805,117.84

*Temples*

Expended for the construction, maintenance and operation of temples ..... 230,110.77

*Charities*

For care of the worthy poor and other charitable purposes, including hospital treatment ..... 196,119.48

*Missions*

For maintenance and operation of all the missions, and for the erection of places of worship and other buildings in the missions ..... 767,647.80

Total .....\$4,040,916.35

This amount has been taken from the tithes and returned by the Trustee-in-Trust to the Saints for the maintenance and operation of the stakes, and wards, for the maintenance and operation of Church schools and temples, for charities, and for mission activities.

*Other Charities*—In addition to charities paid from the tithes, as before named, there has also been disbursed the fast offerings, other charities and assistance rendered by the Relief Society, in the sum of \$441,575.89, which amount, added to the \$196,119.48, paid from the tithes, makes the total charity assistance rendered by the Church, \$637,695.37.

There has been collected by the various wards of the Church and paid to missionaries to assist in their maintenance, \$98,143.56.

STATISTICAL AND OTHER REPORTS COMPILED FROM CHURCH RECORDS  
 FOR THE YEAR 1927

We have at the present time: Stakes of Zion, 99; Wards, 938; Independent branches, 72. Total wards and branches in the stakes of Zion, from Canada to Mexico, 1010; Missions, 27; Mission branches 757.

*Church Growth*—Children blessed and entered on the records of the Church in the stakes and missions, 19,209.

Children baptized in the stakes and missions,	14,604.
Converts baptized and entered on the records of the stakes and missions,	6367.
Number of long-term missionaries from Zion, December 31,	
1927 .....	1,943
Number of short-term missionaries from Zion, December 31,	
1927 .....	122
Number of local missionaries .....	108
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Total number of missionaries on foreign missions.....	2,173
Number engaged in missionary work in stakes.....	1,032
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Total missionaries .....	3,205
Number of missionaries who received training at the Missionary Home .....	985
Persons recommended to the temples,	61,567.
<i>Social Statistics</i> —Birth rate, 30 per thousand:	
Marriage rate,	14.5 per thousand.
Death rate,	7.5 per thousand.
Families owning their own homes,	70 per cent.

*Church Edifices*—The number of sites purchased for Church buildings, and the number of edifices purchased, or under construction during 1927: Stakes and wards, 119; Missions, 32. Total 151.

*Church Education*—Number of persons enrolled in Church schools, 3,851; Number of persons enrolled in seminaries, 10,835; Number of persons enrolled in religion classes, 61,131. Total number receiving week-day religious education, 75,817.

During the year the very efficient man who stood at the head of our educational system for a number of years, Dr. Adam S. Bennion, has been honorably released, with appreciation for his most splendid work, and Dr. Joseph F. Merrill has been made the commissioner of education for the Church. Dr. Merrill has been associated with the University of Utah for many years as one of the deans of that great institution.

Teacher training (average attendance, 1927) 10,670.

During the last six months the clerk of our general conferences, and the editor of the *Improvement Era*, Elder Edward H. Anderson, has passed away, than whom no more capable, faithful, diligent, God-fearing man has ever been engaged in the service of the Lord in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brother Hugh J. Cannon, now presiding over the Swiss and German mission, has been selected to succeed Brother Anderson as the editor of the *Improvement Era*—a most splendid successor to a most splendid man.

I feel that we have great cause to be grateful for the blessings of the Lord to us as a people.

#### IMPRESSED WITH HYMN

I was profoundly impressed this morning in listening to the congre-

gation sing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." I am sure that whenever we as Latter-day Saints sing this hymn our minds go back to the time when it was written, and we think of the marvelous and wonderful work accomplished by the Prophet Joseph Smith. I am going to take the time, although you all know it by heart, perhaps, to read this hymn. I do not think I have ever done so before in public in my life:

We thank thee, O God, for a prophet  
 To guide us in these latter days;  
 We thank thee for sending the gospel  
 To lighten our minds with its rays:  
 We thank thee for every blessing  
 Bestowed by thy bounteous hand;  
 We feel it a pleasure to serve thee,  
 And love to obey thy command.

When dark clouds of trouble hang o'er us  
 And threaten our peace to destroy,  
 There is hope smiling brightly before us,  
 And we know that deliverance is nigh;  
 We doubt not the Lord nor his goodness,  
 We've proved him in days that are past:  
 The wicked who fight against Zion  
 Will surely be smitten at last.

We'll sing of his goodness and mercy,  
 We'll praise him by day and by night.  
 Rejoice in his glorious gospel,  
 And bask in its life-giving light:  
 Thus on to eternal perfection  
 The honest and faithful will go,  
 While they who reject this glad message  
 Shall never such happiness know.

#### THE PROPHET JOSEPH

Speaking of the Prophet Joseph, an eminent writer refers to him in the following language:

"Yet he being dead yet speaketh. The work he began has never ceased. \* \*  
 "Who can explain Joseph Smith? What are 'revelations from God'? What is their test? Is it not beyond all reason that a lad, born of poor parents, devoid of any save the commonest education, too poor to buy books, should have accomplished what he did in less than forty years, unless there were some great reason for it?"

"Let anyone, even a literary genius, after forty years of life, try to write a companion volume to the Book of Mormon, and then almost daily for a number of years give out 'revelations' by the score that internally harmonize one with another, at the same time formulate a system of doctrine for a new church, introduce many new principles, resuscitate extinct priesthoods, and formulate a system of church government which has no superior on earth.

"Would he succeed in making the system coherent? Could he influence scores of intelligent, wise, thoughtful, educated, religiously trained men, like John Taylor, Dr. Richards, and scores of others, besides attracting thousands to the fold of his church, as did Joseph Smith? Even if one were assured that the prophet was an imposter, that does not lessen the marvel. The mystery, the riddle, the problem, is even greater, than before. \* \* \*

"I offer no explanation. \* \* \*

"To deny such a man a wonderful power over the human heart and intellect is absurd. Only fanatical prejudice can ignore it. However he may be accounted for by the reasoning mind, Joseph Smith, the 'Mormon' prophet, was one of the wonders of his time. That he is not an enigma to his followers (as he certainly is to his critics) is only another proof of his wonderfulness."

I will read a part of section 135, Doctrine and Covenants :

"To seal the testimony of this book and the Book of Mormon, we announce the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith, the patriarch. They were shot in Carthage jail, on the 27th of June, 1844. \* \* \*

#### CITES ACHIEVEMENTS

"Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and a name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!

"When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I shall die innocent, and it shall yet be said of me—he was murdered in cold blood!'"

#### THE ARIZONA TEMPLE

I rejoice in the testimony of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. During the last year it has fallen to my lot to have the privilege of visiting from here to New York, and in the northern section of the country, and to have the blessed privilege of going into Arizona and there dedicating one more temple to the Most High God. I rejoice in the rich outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord that was enjoyed by those of us who had the opportunity of attending the dedicatory services of that temple. I rejoice exceedingly in the remarkable publicity that was given to us by the newspapers of Arizona. Never in the history of the Church has there ever been manifest a more friendly feeling toward the Latter-day Saints by those not of us than was exhibited by the good people of Arizona. They devoted page after page of their papers to an account of the erection of the temple, in publishing a sermon upon the vicarious labor for the dead, by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, in giving illustrations and having interviews

of a favorable character. In addition the president of the Church and some of those who were at the dedication services were invited to meet with the legislature that was then in session, and the president of the senate made some very complimentary remarks regarding the splendid edifice—one of the finest buildings in Arizona. He also complimented the people themselves on their integrity and their remarkable accomplishments in that section of the country. I could not help but contemplate the difference in conditions as compared with the time when there was a feeling of animosity, almost of hatred, existing in the minds of the people of the state of Arizona, regarding the Latter-day Saints. I rejoiced in being able to pay tribute, in answer to the speech by the president of the senate, to the senators of the United States from Arizona and their defense of the "Mormon" people, and their uniform testimony of the integrity and devotion of our people.

#### PURCHASE OF HILL CUMORAH

Within a short time the Church has purchased the Hill Cumorah. The purchase embraces the farm where the hill stands, and the adjoining farm, which together with one that we had already purchased, including a part of the hill, gives us now the entire possession of the Hill Cumorah. I know that the hearts of the Latter-day Saints thrilled with pride when the announcement was made that we had secured this property. We now have the home where the prophet was born, and have erected a monument there. We now have the house and farm of Peter Whitmer, where the Church was born. We now have the Palmyra home. We have nearly all of the spots that are sacred in the history of the Church; and we rejoice in the financial condition of the Church whereby we have been able to accomplish these things.

#### TEMPLE WORK

I rejoice in the temple work that is being done, and I wish to ask the Saints to try to shape their affairs so that they can occasionally go to the temple. For years I felt that I was too busy to find a day or an evening in which to go to the temple. A little over a year ago I made up my mind that by planning my affairs, by staying away from lectures or concerts or theatres or operas, that I could go to the temple at least once every week and have ordinances performed in behalf of some of my loved ones who had passed away. By making up my mind that I could do this I had no difficulty whatever in going through the temple once a week during the entire year. Starting this year I felt that by a little extra effort I could go twice a week, and I have had no difficulty in doing this. True, I have had to miss, perhaps, an opera or theatre or some other function at which I should have liked to be present, but I have had no difficulty whatever during the past three months, in going to the temple twice a week, and when I can do so I go more than twice a week, so as to make up for the time when I am absent from the city. Up to the first day of April I had endowments to my credit of more than two a week for this year. We

can generally do that which we wish to do. A young man can find an immense amount of time to spend with his sweetheart; he can arrange his affairs to do that. We can arrange our affairs to get exercise in the shape of golf and otherwise; we can arrange our affairs to have amusements; and if we make up our minds to do so we can arrange our affairs to do temple work, judging from my own experience of the last fifteen months.

I pray that the Lord will inspire each and all of us to greater diligence in performing to the full extent of our ability the duties and the labors that devolve upon us in doing vicarious work for our dead.

#### A WONDERFUL DECLARATION

A very wonderful declaration was made by Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith one hundred and five years ago this coming September:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

And the priesthood with all its powers, rights and privileges, has been restored to us. Elijah has come. I will not take your time to read from the 110th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which declares that the Savior appeared to Joseph Smith and to Oliver Cowdery, and that Moses, and Elias and Elijah also appeared and conferred upon them all the keys of all the dispensations of the gospel that have ever existed upon the earth.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

No more wonderful thing has ever been accomplished in the history of the world than the turning of the hearts of the children to their fathers. From the day this message was declared by Moroni to the Prophet Joseph, men and women all over the world have been organizing societies, hunting up their ancestors, and compiling genealogical records of their families. Millions of dollars have been expended for these purposes. I have spoken to and heard many times of men who have spent large sums of money to compile a record of their forefathers, and after it was compiled, when asked why they did it, they said: "I do not know; I was seized with an irresistible desire to compile that record and to spend money freely to do it. Now that it is compiled I have no special use for it." The Latter-day Saints value books of that kind beyond price or money, and when we seek earnestly, year after year, to gain knowledge regarding those of our family who have passed away without a knowledge of the gospel, I am sure the Lord blesses us in obtaining it. There is a little account of a remarkable and wonderful blessing bestowed in connection with the ancestors of my wife which is contained in the last issue of the *Genealogical Magazine*.

That the Lord may bless you and me and every soul that has an abiding testimony of the divinity of the gospel in which we are engaged,

to whom he has given a knowledge that he lives and that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, the Redeemer of the world, and that Joseph Smith was his prophet, to so order our lives that our light shining forth through the example of our lives may bring those who know not the truth to a knowledge of the gospel, is my humble prayer, and I ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

### PRESIDENT ANTHONY W. IVINS

I feel very grateful to the Lord, my brethren and sisters, that through his mercy all of us who are assembled here this morning enjoy the opportunity of meeting together in general conference, upon the ninety-eighth anniversary of the organization of the Church.

Reference has been made by the president to the acquisition by the Church of the spot of ground in the state of New York known as the Hill Cumorah. It appears to me to be an event of such importance that I desire to devote the short time which is at my disposal this morning to a discussion of that subject. There have been some differences of opinion in regard to it, and in order that I might be correct in the statements which I make I have this morning finished a short manuscript which I would like to read—the first time, I believe, in my experience, that I have ever addressed a congregation in this manner, and I do it for the purpose stated.

#### OF MORE THAN ORDINARY IMPORTANCE

The purchase of this hill which President Grant has announced, is an event of more than ordinary importance to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The memories of the remote past which cluster round this sacred spot, its close association with the opening of the present gospel dispensation, which has resulted in bringing together this congregation of people, for without it this tabernacle would not have been erected, nor would we have been gathered here in worship today, and the thought which we entertain of the possibilities which its bosom may unfold, make the acquisition of this hill almost an epochal accomplishment in the history of the Church.

If our Bible chronology is correct, and it is at least the best we have, it was in the year 599 before the birth of Christ, our Lord, that Zedekiah was chosen to be king of Judea. His reign was of short duration, extending over a period of only eleven years. He was in rebellion against the Babylonian kingdom, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, with his armies overran Judea, made Zedekiah prisoner, put out his eyes, killed his sons, and carried the king away captive to Babylon.

It was during the reign of this king that Lehi and his family, Ishmael and members of his household and Zoram, who had been a servant to Laban, left Jerusalem and began the journey which in time brought them to the American continent.