

people who were privileged to see and hear the proceedings in the Tabernacle by means of television.

**President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.:**

This is the fourth session of the One Hundred Twentieth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are convened in the Tabernacle at Temple Square, Salt Lake City. The house is crowded to capacity.

President George Albert Smith is presiding at this meeting. The speaker, President Clark, is conducting the service at his direction.

The proceedings of this session will be broadcast over KSL in Salt Lake City, and by arrangement through KSL, over the following stations:

In Utah: KSUB at Cedar City, KSVC at Richfield, KJAM at Vernal, KVNU at Logan.

In Idaho: KGEM at Boise, KID at Idaho Falls, KEYY at Pocatello, KBIO at Burley.

In Oregon: KBKR at Baker, KSRV at Ontario.

And by transcription, over KTYL at Mesa, Arizona, and KEXO at Grand Junction, Colorado.

The services will also be televised over the KSL television station, channel 5.

The choir singing for this session will be furnished by the Swiss-German Choir, Elder Heinz Rimmasch, conducting, and Elder Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

We will begin the services by the choir singing "The Heavens Resound."

The opening prayer will be offered by President William A. Strong of the Teton Stake, Idaho.

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The choir sang, "The Heavens Resound."

President William A. Strong of the Teton Stake offered the opening prayer.

The choir sang, "Great Is The Lord."

## ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

"It is only a question of time, unless people repent of their sins, until war will come, not only war but pestilence will come, until the human family disappears from the world. There is only one way to enjoy peace and happiness in this world,—repent and turn to the Lord. That is the only way."

In these words President Smith introduced the theme of this conference at the opening session last Thursday. This statement went down into my heart like fire, because I did not accept it as the

statement of a man but as the word of God through his living prophet to this living generation. I desire to say a few words about this theme. It reminds me of the eloquent statement of Alma.

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. (Alma 29:1-2.)

Here indeed is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

### FIRST PRINCIPLES

In the Prophet's journal under date of March 1, 1842, he made the following entry:

At the request of Mr. John Wentworth, Editor and Proprietor of the Chicago Democrat, I have written the following sketch of the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints. (*History of the Church*, Vol. IV, p. 535.)

The sketch thus introduced, he concluded with the Articles of Faith, the fourth one of which reads:

We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: (First) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (Second) Repentance; (Third) Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; (Fourth) Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

You will note that in the sequence here followed by the Prophet, repentance as a principle of the gospel is preceded by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear from the three articles preceding the one I have quoted that to have this faith requires first, belief in God as our Eternal Father, in Jesus Christ as his beloved Son, and in the Holy Ghost; and second, acceptance of the doctrines that men will be held accountable for their own sins, and that through the atonement of Christ they may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

### REPENTANCE LEADING TO SALVATION

To one believing these truths and, in the light of them, having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance means not only "a turning with sorrow from a past sinful course of action"—as it has been defined—but, in addition thereto, that through repentance he may bring himself within the reach of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, so that thereby he may be cleansed from the effects of his transgressions and obtain forgiveness of them. His repentance is a preparation for baptism by immersion for the remission of his sins and reception of the Holy Ghost.

While turning from a sinful course at any time and for any cause is commendable and desirable, the repentance which "work-

eth . . . to salvation," as Paul puts it, is inseparably connected with the other first principles of the gospel.

### TRUE REPENTANCE

Many sober and earnest people are recognizing the need for men to repent of their sinful ways and are advocating that they turn to God. This is good as far as it goes, but the only people who can call the inhabitants of the earth to true repentance are the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The reason this rather sweeping statement is true is because such a call to repentance cannot be made without a divine commission.

For such repentance to be declared under divine commission, as President Smith declared it at the opening of this conference, is by no means a new thing. It was not new in the days of the Prophet. It is as old as this world. In the morning of earth's temporal existence, an angel commissioned by the Lord himself declared repentance unto the first mortal man, saying,

. . . thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son  
forevermore . . .

And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere  
and commanded them that they should repent;

And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should  
be saved; and as many as believed not and repented not, should be damned;  
and the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree. (Moses  
5:8, 14-15.)

### NEED OF THE HOUR

From then until now, men have lived upon the earth, and particularly in the land of America, under this firm decree. As it has been in the past, so must it continue to be, for the Lord Almighty has spoken it. It seems to me, therefore, that the most desperate need of this hour is repentance, and that quickly, for it is later than we think. As long ago as 1829 the Lord said:

Behold, the world is ripening in iniquity; and it must needs be that  
the children of men are stirred up unto repentance. (D. & C. 18:6.)

Time and time again in the past, as men and nations have faced destruction, the Lord has sent his commissioned servants to declare unto them repentance as the way of escape. "Noah called upon the children of men that they should repent," and although "they hearkened not unto his words," he "continued his preaching unto" them, saying,

Believe and repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of  
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . . and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost,  
. . . and if ye do not this, the floods will come in upon you; nevertheless  
they hearkened not. (Moses 8:24.)

Melchizedek, king of Salem, was commissioned by the Lord and declared repentance unto his people. He,

. . . having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace. (Alma 13:18.)

#### REPENTANCE IN AMERICA

Upon our own beloved land of America, God has repeatedly commissioned his servants to call the people to repentance that they might escape destruction. The Prophet Ether ". . . came forth in the days of Coriantumr," king of the Jaredite nation, and at the Lord's direction sought out Coriantumr personally and prophesied unto him

. . . that, if he would repent, and all his household, the Lord would give unto him his kingdom and spare the people—

Otherwise they should be destroyed, and all his household save it were himself.

. . . And it came to pass that Coriantumr repented not, neither his household, neither the people; and the wars ceased not. (Ether 13:20-22.)

Fifteen and a half centuries ago, because of their unrighteousness, the remnants of the Nephite race were in a death grapple upon this land with their brethren, the Lamanites. Among them stood the mighty prophet-leader Mormon, to whom the Lord said,

. . . Cry unto this people—Repent ye, and come unto me, and be ye baptized, and build up again my church, and ye shall be spared.

And I did cry unto this people, but it was in vain; and they did not realize that it was the Lord that had spared them, and granted unto them a chance for repentance. And behold they did harden their hearts against the Lord their God. (Mormon 3:2-3.)

Therefore, they, as well as the Jaredites, were wiped off this land. This was true notwithstanding the glorious promises made in the Book of Mormon, some of which were quoted this morning by President Young. All those promises were conditioned upon repentance.

#### UNRIGHTEOUSNESS TODAY

The world in which we live today is sick nigh unto death. The disease of which it suffers is not a new one. It is as old as history. Its name is unrighteousness. The cure for it is repentance. The Lord foresaw our present extremity long ago and prescribed the remedy. On November 1, 1831, he said:

. . . I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world. (D. & C. 1:17-18.)

Two things which the Lord had done in preparing a way of escape are here referred to. First, he had given commandments, and second, he had commissioned men to proclaim them.

One of the commandments was this:

Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the Lord your God, . . .  
Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth. Listen, ye elders  
of my church together, and hear the voice of the Lord; for he calleth upon  
all men, and he commandeth all men everywhere to repent. (D. & C.  
133:1, 16.)

And surely every man must repent or suffer. (D. & C. 19:4.)

And here is the commission:

Hearken, O ye elders of my church, . . . hearken and hear and obey:  
Behold, verily I say unto you, I give unto you this first command-  
ment that ye shall go forth in my name, . . .

And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, . . . in my name,  
lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump, declaring my word  
like unto angels of God. (D. & C. 42:1-2, 4, 6.)

And what shall we declare?

And ye shall go forth baptizing with water, saying: Repent ye,  
repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (D. & C. 42:7.)

#### OUR RESPONSIBILITY

We who today bear the priesthood of God are the legal heirs to this great commission. Ours is the responsibility of officially declaring repentance unto all the inhabitants of the earth. None are exempt. We must discharge this responsibility, regardless of the manner in which our message is received. With respect thereto, we are under the same obligation to this generation as was Ezekiel to the house of Israel in his day. You will recall that the Lord said to him,

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. (Ez. 3:17-19.)

I regard this commission to declare the saving principle of repentance as a great blessing. I am grateful to my Father in heaven for it, for there are few things more tormenting to me than to be faced with a distressing situation about which I can do nothing. The commission we bear gives us a positive course to follow in meeting the problems we face. It is a sustaining and comforting feeling to know that the course we are trying to get people to take is the course the Redeemer would have them take if he were here in person.

#### NO OTHER WAY

To those who contend that the way of repentance is too slow, I can but reply there is no other way. Our prophet has so de-

clared in this conference. If we do not come to ourselves soon and repent, individually and as nations, of our light regard for human life, our unchastity, our lying and deception, our pride and boastfulness, our covetousness, envying, greed, and thirst for power, our drunkenness, our lack of humility, reverence, and prayer, our desecration of the Sabbath day, our lack of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, in short, of all our unrighteousness, we shall find it is too late, for other proposed remedies to the world's present predicament will prove futile. There are no armaments, no governmental schemes, no international organizations, and no mechanisms for the control of weapons which can preserve an unrighteous people. "Wickedness never was happiness," declared Alma to his wayward son Corianton; and Samuel, the Lamanite prophet, said to an unrighteous generation of his day,

... ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head. (Helaman 13:38.)

Alma has given us compelling evidence of his conviction that repentance is more effectual than arms in maintaining peace. You will recall that he was the elected chief judge of the Nephite nation. As such he was the governor of the people of Nephi and commander-in-chief of their armies. Seeing many of them dissenting and conniving with the enemy, he, notwithstanding his power to strengthen and command his armies, placed the affairs of state in other hands that he himself might cry repentance unto the dissenters. The reasons for his unusual actions are given in the following quotation:

And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God. (Alma 31:5.)

#### MESSAGE OF HOPE

Now, my brothers and sisters, there is nothing vindictive in the message of repentance which we bear. It is a message of salvation and hope, and not of condemnation. It is our purpose to declare it to our fellow men in charity and love, but we are in no sense apologetic for it. We know it is of God. We bear it at his command and, we trust, in the power of his spirit.

May the Lord help us to keep in mind the place of repentance in the plan of redemption, the need for it in the lives of men and nations, and our commission to proclaim it. May he help us to make it a daily practice in our own living that, when we do proclaim it, we may effectively hasten the great day envisioned by Alma when there shall be "no more sorrow upon all the face of the earth," I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.