

## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened Friday afternoon, October 9, at 2:00 p.m.

President David O. McKay presided, and conducted the services.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Jordan Valley Region, with Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting, provided the choral music for this session. Elder Frank W. Asper was at the organ.

### **President David O. McKay:**

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the second session of the One Hundred Twenty-Ninth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church. This session of the Conference will be broadcast as a public service over the television and radio stations throughout the west. These services are also being broadcast in the Assembly and in Barratt Hall by television.

We are favored again this afternoon by the presence of the Relief Society Singing Mothers of the Jordan Valley Region, with Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting, and Elder Frank W. Asper at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the Relief Society Singing Mothers render-

ing, "Lord, Hear Our Prayer." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Zeph Y. Erekson, formerly president of the Australian Mission.

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The Singing Mothers sang "Lord, Hear Our Prayer."

Elder Zeph Y. Erekson, formerly president of the Australian Mission, offered the opening prayer.

### **President David O. McKay:**

The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now favor us with, "Come, Ye Blessed of My Father," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen, after which President Joseph Fielding Smith will speak to us.

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Singing by the Singing Mothers, "Come, Ye Blessed of My Father."

### **President David O. McKay:**

President Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve.

## PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

To stand before this great body, members of the Church, mostly priesthood, is something that creates in my soul a feeling of awe and of responsibility. I trust that I may have the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord in the words that I may utter. I am very grateful for what was said in our meeting this morning by our President and those who followed after him. I am sure that we have been edified in the remarks that have been made, and I feel my dependence upon the Spirit of the Lord to aid me in saying something that might be profitable on this occasion.

There may be some who wonder why we hold general conference twice a year, bring our people, particularly the

presiding officers, together from all parts of the Church. But, brethren, I do not know what we would do if this privilege should be withdrawn from us. I have wondered what, in the days of Peter, James, and John and following, the condition might have been if they could have met quarterly and semi-annually in conferences. Perhaps the apostasy would have been postponed, if not altogether avoided. But those privileges were not theirs.

I think I feel the importance of these gatherings, and the bringing together the men who hold the priesthood particularly, to receive counsel, to be encouraged, and to return to their stakes renewed in their spirits. We can reach

our people today better than they could anciently. We have many facilities that they did not have, and our people are naturally under present conditions, drawn closer together than they were in former days.

And now, my good brethren and sisters, what is our duty? To keep the commandments of God. And we are instructed to do that in our quarterly conferences, in our general conferences, and in all the meetings that are held in the various stakes and wards of Zion. Even as it is, there are conditions arising which should cause us to be alert, on our guard, diligent, persevering in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord, and in instructing the members of the Church. By all means, this is needed. Satan is not dead.

I think frequently of the words of the Lord to John when he said that Satan raged because "he knoweth, that he hath but a short time." (Rev. 12:12.) And he is more active today, perhaps, than ever before in the history of the world. His emissaries get among the Latter-day Saints. Some of them are very cunning and crafty. Some of them at one time had the light and understanding of the gospel but have lost it. They come among our Latter-day Saints, and if we are not prepared by our faith, by our obedience, and knowledge of the gospel, many of us stand in danger of being led astray.

The Prophet Joseph Smith made the statement that a man cannot be saved in ignorance. When he said man, he meant mankind. Ignorance of what? Of the saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now we are taught faith in God our Father and in his Son Jesus Christ. We are taught to study, make ourselves familiar with his life when he was upon the face of the earth, why he came, the nature of his work, how it concerns us, to prepare ourselves by our study and by our faith to stand worthy before him in the keeping of his commandments.

We read in the Doctrine and Covenants where the Lord says that all those who repent and are baptized are to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Now we baptize our children at the age of eight years—that is the age that the Lord has designated as the age of accountability. Little

children before that age are redeemed, should they die, without any act upon their part. One of the most wicked doctrines ever taught in this world was that little children were born in sin, contaminated, and have to be cleansed from that sin for which they themselves were not responsible. Little children were innocent in the beginning, the Lord says, and by his decree until they reach the age of accountability they are free from sin, but from that age on they are under the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, and entrance into the Church and kingdom of God.

Now, we are promised that when we are baptized, if we are true and faithful, we will have the guidance of the Holy Ghost. What is the purpose of it? To teach us, to direct us, to bear witness to us of the saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every child old enough to be baptized, and who is baptized, is entitled to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. I have heard people say that a little child eight years of age could not understand. I know better than that. I had a testimony of this truth when I was eight years old, coming through the Holy Ghost. I have had it ever since.

We are commanded also to bring up our children in light and truth, to teach them the fundamental principles of the gospel, so that when they grow older they will understand, and have a knowledge of the gospel, a testimony of its truth, and be prepared to resist the persuasions and doctrines and teachings of those who would destroy that belief.

I am grateful for our Primary organizations and our Sunday Schools, and the other organizations of the Church, but brethren and sisters, the Lord has not placed all the responsibility upon our auxiliary organizations, nor upon the bishops of wards to teach the children of Zion the gospel of Jesus Christ. That should be taught them in their homes.

As we travel from stake to stake, we discover in many places that children who are eight years of age, nine years of age, even older sometimes, have not been baptized. Why? Who has neglected this? We cannot blame the child, but somebody is at fault. When a child gets to be nine or ten or eleven or more years of age and has not been baptized a member of this Church, then

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someone's at fault. Primarily, I would say that fault is in the home. But the fault is not altogether in the home. The fault rests with those who have charge in the wards of looking after the interests of the young, and the bishops who are to look after all the members of the Church. No child should be permitted to go unbaptized after he or she reaches the eighth year, and when there is that kind of neglect someone is responsible.

Bring up your children, my brethren and sisters, in light and truth. Teach them by example. Fathers and mothers have to set the example. They cannot say to their children, "You follow the teachings of the Church, but in our lives we are going to make exceptions." It cannot be done, not properly. You parents, set the example. There should be unity in the home, and if there is unity in the home, then there is likely to be unity in the Church. But we begin in the home.

Now, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the means of our salvation and exaltation. I have often wondered why some members of the Church were members of the Church, because they do not live in accordance with the principles of eternal truth. There is only one reason for membership in this Church, as I understand it, and that is as a means of receiving salvation and exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God. If that is not our aim then why are we in the Church?

I know a man who went to school when I went to school, we played together, went to school together. When he grew to be a man he went East and became a scientist. He came back, and then he began to create a great deal of disturbance in the Sunday School classes, questioning the revelations that had been given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This came to my attention when one of the members of that class came to me and said, "This brother comes to our class, and he is just a disturbance." As I was well acquainted with him, I made it my duty to get hold of him, and I asked him why he did those things; and was disturbing the members of the class.

"Well," he said, "I cannot accept all of the revelations that were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith."

"Are there any of them that you can accept?"

"Yes," he said, "I can accept some of them," but he could not accept all of the doctrines that had come through the revelations of our Father in heaven and his Son Jesus Christ to the Church.

After we got through with the conversation, and I had a long conversation with him, he said, "Now, I am going to ask you one favor. Please do not take any step to have me excommunicated."

I said, "Why do you want to stay in the Church when you are opposing its doctrines?"

He said, "I will tell you why. I was raised in the Church, and my friends are members of the Church. I have few associations outside of the Church. If I should be excommunicated that means that I should be cut off from all communication, all fellowship with the people with whom I am now associating, and I do not want that to happen. So please do not take any steps to have me excommunicated."

I thought there was some hope for him so I did not take any such step, but I did talk to him kindly and try to get him to see the folly of his ways, to repent, and when he went to the classes, and he could go to the classes, he should not go with that spirit of defiance or opposition to the doctrines which the others believed. I said, "If you don't believe them, then keep still and see if you cannot get the Spirit of the Lord so that you can accept them."

Well, he is dead now. I do not know whether he repented or not, but brethren, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most vital thing in all the world to us. We should so live that we can accept every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, and that is a commandment from him.

Now if we have the right spirit, that is what we are going to do. If there is any doctrine or principle connected with the teachings of the Church that we do not understand, then let us get on our knees. Let us go before the Lord in the spirit of prayer, of humility, and ask that our minds might be enlightened that we may understand. This Church is not teaching false doctrine. All the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith are absolutely true. They are given for our salvation, for our knowledge, for our understanding, that we may draw nearer and nearer to our

Father in heaven, and be found worthy before him and eventually have the privilege of coming into his presence, there to be crowned as sons and daughters of God, receiving the fulness of his kingdom.

The Lord bless you, my good brethren and sisters, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER ALVIN R. DYER

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

My dear brothers and sisters, I feel it is a great privilege to be in your presence here today, in the presence of my Brethren, and to be under the inspiration and leadership of our Prophet and those who are associated with him in the Presidency of the Church, and I have felt here this day the power and the inspiration of the Spirit as it has been manifested in what has been said.

A number of years ago there was a noted historian sent to Salt Lake City, to study the customs and the way of living of the Latter-day Saints. He remained here many years among our people and published a book in the year of 1922 telling of his findings. I should like to read a paragraph or two from what he said about our people. He never knew the Prophet Joseph Smith. He could only tell of his work by the results as it was manifest among the people who were guided by the revelations from God which their prophet had received. I quote:

"Who can explain Joseph Smith? What are the '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 was 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' that internally harmonize one with another, at the same time formulate a system of doctrine for a Church, introduce many new principles, resuscitate extinct priesthoods, and formulate a system of Church

President David O. McKay:

President Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. He will be followed by Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve. Brother Dyer will be followed by Elder Hanks.

government which has no superior upon earth . . . 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." (George Wharton James.)

One of the great distinguishing characteristics of the Latter-day Saint people is that they are governed by revelations from God, and whether people come into our midst, or whether we go out into the world, this characteristic remains a distinguishing factor.

I recall that some few years ago in one of the communities of Oklahoma a minister, in an effort to discredit the effects of our missionary work, in that area had an article placed in a daily newspaper, from which I quote a part. He said: "The first thing that you should know is that these missionaries are a part of a church that claims to have a revelation and a prophet."

How well he placed the facts. Yet it seems rather strange that a Christian minister would make such a statement in derision, for revelation and the prophets have ever been a part of God's plan to convey commandments and teachings of righteousness unto his children. There are others, like this minister, who feel that we have no right to receive revelation, but if we do not receive revelation for the guidance and direction of the true Church of Jesus Christ, then we do not have the oracles of God, and if we do not have the oracles of God, then we are not the people of God.

But this is not the fact, for over and over again God has revealed his will unto this, his people, through his serv-