

YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

G. Carlos Smith, Jr., General Superintendent
 Marvin J. Ashton, First Assistant Superintendent
 Carl W. Buehner, Second Assistant Superintendent
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted.

YOUNG WOMEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Florence Smith Jacobsen, President
 Margaret Romney Jackson, First Counselor
 Dorothy Porter Holt, Second Counselor
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted.

PRIMARY ASSOCIATION

LaVern Watts Parnley, President
 Leone Watson Doxey, First Counselor
 Lucile Cardon Reading, Second Counselor
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted.

TABERNACLE CHOIR

Richard P. Condie, Conductor
 Jay E. Welch, Assistant Conductor
 W. Jack Thomas, Tour Manager

ORGANISTS

Alexander Schreiner, Chief organist
 Robert N. Cundick
 Roy M. Darley
 Frank W. Asper, Organist Emeritus

President Hugh B. Brown:

All in favor of those whose names I have just read, please make it manifest. Are there any opposed?

We thank you sincerely for your sustaining vote and hope that it will not only be with the raise of the hand but with earnest, dedicated service.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, a counselor in the First Presidency and President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker this morning. He will be followed by Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, Assistant to the Twelve.

President Smith.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

*Counselor in the First Presidency and President
 Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brethren and sisters, I am very thankful to be here with you at this, the 136th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I pray that I shall say something that will be for the upbuilding of the kingdom of our Father and for the benefit of those who are listening. I would like to speak on

"The Signs of the Lord's Coming," and I pray that he will direct me in what I say.

His Coming is near

Many things have taken place during the past one hundred and thirty-six years to impress faithful members of the Church with the fact that the

coming of the Lord is near. The gospel has been restored. The Church has been fully organized. The priesthood has been conferred upon man. The various dispensations from the beginning have been revealed and their keys and authorities given to the Church. Israel has been and is being gathered to the land of Zion. The Jews are returning to Jerusalem. The gospel is being preached in all the world as a witness to every nation. Temples are being built, and ordinance work for the dead, as well as for the living, is performed in them. The hearts of the children have turned to their fathers, and the children are seeking after their dead. The covenants which the Lord promised to make with Israel in the latter days have been revealed, and thousands of gathered Israel have entered into them. Thus the work of the Lord is advancing, and all these things are signs of the near approach of our Lord.

Prophecies are being fulfilled

Jesus said the Jews would be scattered among all nations and Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. (Luke 21:24.) The prophecy in Section 45, verses 24-29, of the Doctrine and Covenants regarding the Jews was literally fulfilled. Jerusalem, which was trodden down by the Gentiles, is no longer trodden down but is made the home for the Jews. They are returning to Palestine, and by this we may know that the times of the Gentiles are near their close.

The words of the prophets are rapidly being fulfilled, but it is done on such natural principles that most of us fail to see it. Joel promised that the Lord would pour out his spirit upon all flesh: the sons and daughters should prophesy, old men should dream dreams, and young men should see visions. Wonders in heaven and in the earth would be seen, and there would be fire, blood, and pillars of smoke. Eventually the sun is to be turned into darkness and the moon as

blood, and then shall come the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Some of these signs have been given; some are yet to come. The sun has not yet been darkened. We are informed that this will be one of the last acts just preceding the coming of the Lord.

One wonders if we are not now seeing some of the signs in heaven—not all, for undoubtedly some of them will be among the heavenly bodies, such as the moon and the sun, the meteors and comets, but in speaking of the heavens, reference is made to that part which surrounds the earth and which belongs to it. It is in the atmosphere where many of the signs are to be given. Do we not see airships of various kinds traveling through the heavens daily? Have we not had signs in the earth and through the earth with the radio, railroad trains, automobiles, submarines, and satellites, and in many other ways? There are yet to be great signs: the heavens are to be shaken, the sign of the Son of Man is to be given, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn.

The signs appear

Among the signs of the last days was an increase of learning. Daniel was commanded to “. . . shut up the words, and seal the book [of his prophecy], even to the time of the end: [and in that day] many shall run to and fro,” said he “and knowledge shall be increased.” (Dan. 12:4.) Are not the people “running to and fro” today as they never did before in the history of the world? Go to the Bureau of Information and ask there how many tourists visit Temple Square each year. Make inquiry at the various national parks, at the bus, railroad, and steamship companies; learn how many are running to Europe, Asia, and all parts of the earth.

Are we not, most of us, running to and fro in our automobiles seeking pleasure? Is not knowledge increased? Was there ever a time in the history of the world when so much knowledge was poured out upon the people? But sad to say, the words of Paul are true

Wednesday, April 6

First Day

—the people are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. 3:7.)

Have you ever tried to associate the outpouring of knowledge, the great discoveries and inventions during the past 136 years, with the restoration of the gospel? Do you not think there is some connection? It is not because we are more intelligent than our fathers that we have received this knowledge, but because God has willed it so in our generation! Yet men take the honor unto themselves and fail to recognize the hand of the Almighty in these things.

America was discovered because the Lord willed it. The gospel was restored in America, rather than in some other land, because the Lord willed it. This is the land “shadowing with wings” spoken of by Isaiah that today is sending ambassadors by the sea to a nation scattered and peeled, which at one time was terrible in the beginning. (Isa. 18:1-2.) Now that nation is being gathered, and once again they shall be in favor with the Lord.

Have we not had numerous rumors of wars? Have we not had wars, such wars as the world never saw before? Is there not today commotion among the nations, and are not their rulers troubled? Have not kingdoms been overturned and great changes been made among nations? The whole earth is in commotion. Earthquakes in divers places are reported every day. I took the liberty to call Dr. Melvin Cook and have him get for me some facts about how many earthquakes we have now. He quotes from a recent book (*Earthquakes and Earth Structure*) by John H. Hodgson (who is chief, Division of Seismology, Dominion Observatory, Ottawa) the following: “The way the numbers [of earthquakes] go up as the magnitude goes down makes it easy for us to accept the estimate that, if all earthquakes down to zero magnitude could be detected, the number would be between one and ten million each year.” Then he goes on to say that there are about 2,000 earthquakes each year with the magnitude between 5 and 6

and about 20,000 between 4 and 5; therefore it looks as if there are around 20,000 earthquakes a year that could be damaging if they occurred in populated areas. The other signs given by the Lord have been seen or are at our doors. We know this to be the case both from observation and from the predictions of the prophets. Elijah, 130 years ago, told Joseph Smith that the great and dreadful day of the Lord was near, “. . . even at the doors.” (D&C 110:16.)

And are not seen

Yet the old world goes on about its business paying very little heed to all the Lord has said and to all the signs and indications that have been given. Men harden their hearts and say “. . . that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth.” (D&C 45:26.)

They are “. . . eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . .” according to the customs of the world, not of God, without one thought that the end of wickedness is near. Pleasure and the love of the world have captured the hearts of the people. There is no time for such people to worship the Lord or give heed to his warnings; so it will continue until the day of destruction is upon them.

At no time in the history of the world has it been more necessary for the children of men to repent. We boast of our advanced civilization, of the great knowledge and wisdom with which we are possessed; but in and through it all, the love of God is forgotten! The Lord, as well as Elijah, gave us warning, as did also Joseph Smith. The Lord said: “For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, the time is soon at hand that I shall come in a cloud with power and great glory.

“And it shall be a great day at the time of my coming, for all nations shall tremble.

“But before that great day shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood; and the stars shall refuse their shining, and some shall fall, and great destructions await the wicked.” (D&C 34:7-9.)

The great and dreadful day is at hand

If the great and dreadful day of the Lord were near at hand when Elijah came 130 years ago, we are just one century nearer it today. But some will say: "But no! Elijah, you are wrong! Surely 130 years have passed, and are we not better off today than ever before? Look at our discoveries, our inventions, our knowledge, and our wisdom! Surely you made a mistake!" So many seem to think and say, and judging by their actions they are sure, that the world is bound to go on in its present condition for millions of years before the end will come. Talk to them; hear what they have to say—these learned men of the world. "We have had worse times," they say. "You are wrong in thinking there are more calamities now than in earlier times. There are not more earthquakes, the earth has always been quaking, but now we have facilities for gathering the news which our fathers did not have. These are not signs of the times; things are not different from former times." And so the people refuse to heed the warnings the Lord so kindly gives to them, and thus they fulfill the scriptures. Peter said such sayings would be uttered, and he warned the people. (2 Pet. 3:3-7.) In this warning Peter calls attention to the destruction of the world in the flood and says that at the coming of Christ—which scoffers would postpone or deny—there shall come another cleansing of the earth, but the second time by fire. Is not the condition among the people today similar to that in the days of Noah? Did the people believe and repent then? Can you make men, save with few exceptions, believe today that there is any danger? Do you believe the Lord when he said almost 135 years ago: "For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day

speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion." (D&C 1:35.)

"And behold, and lo, I come quickly to judgment, to convince all of their ungodly deeds which they have committed against me, as it is written of me in the volume of the book." (D&C 99:5.)

"Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh;

"And the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth." (D&C 1:12-13.)

"Verily, I say unto you, this generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all I have told you shall be fulfilled." (Joseph Smith 1:34.)

Shall we slumber on in utter oblivion or indifference to all that the Lord has given us as warning? I say unto you, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Heed the divine warning

"But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." (Matt. 24:42-44.)

May we heed this warning given by the Lord and get our houses in order and be prepared for the coming of the Lord, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

We have just listened to President Joseph Fielding Smith. Elder Bernard P. Brockbank will now speak to us.