

OCTOBER, 1906

Seventy-Seventh
Semi-Annual
..Conference..

OF THE

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

Held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake
City, Utah, October fifth, sixth and
seventh, nineteen hundred and six,
with a full report of the discourses



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sert that, just as sure as we are here, the Lord will not be mocked. Evidences of His displeasure will come upon the people. Probably you have wished sometimes that there might come upon your own sons and daughters who were wayward, who though not entirely evil, would not listen to your counsel concerning what you know is best for them; something that would turn them from their waywardness, that would incline their hearts to the Lord, even though it brought suffering and sorrow upon them, for the time being. So also the great Father, in His kindness and mercy to His earthly children, will bring to pass those providences, whether it be by fire and cloud, and vapor of smoke, or by earthquakes, or by the sea heaving itself beyond its bounds, by tornados, or other calamities of various descriptions,—or what are seeming calamities, but which in reality may turn to be blessings. He will call attention to His Gospel, and will turn the hearts of the people, more and more, to this great work. I believe it will increase more rapidly from this time forward, in fact, I feel sure of that.

I rejoice in the testimony of the truth, and the knowledge that God lives. I know that Joseph Smith was raised up a Prophet of the Lord to lay the foundations of this work, and that it is being carried on by the power of God. Never in the history of this Church was there a more united feeling than there is today among the members, a feeling that they will sustain their leaders, the First Presidency, the Apostles, the Seventies, and all the presiding authorities. There is more stability today in the souls of

the Latter-day Saints the world over, than has been the case before in the history of the Church. I believe, from all the information I can get, that the people are as well satisfied, if not better satisfied—many of them, I will say, are better satisfied—with the administration of the affairs of the Church today than ever before in our history. We know these men whom the Lord has called to preside over the Church; we know their devotion, their self-sacrifice, and that their only aim, object and interest is to further the work of God. I sustain them, I believe you sustain them; and I propose, my brethren and sisters, that we continue to stand by them. God bless you, one and all, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

The Gospel a perfect plan of salvation, when its precepts are obeyed.—A perfect condition made possible in this life by obedience to Gospel laws.—Evil-doing denounced.

I rejoice with you, my beloved brethren and sisters, in the privileges and blessings of this conference. I rejoice in seeing the multitude of Latter-day Saints gathered together this beautiful Sabbath morning, in conference capacity, to worship the Lord. While it is somewhat embarrassing to stand here, the object of the gaze of ten or twelve thousand people, I am pleased to have this opportunity, as it affords a means of introduction to the Latter-day Saints.

During the past six months I have had the privilege of visiting eighteen stakes of Zion, and attending their quarterly confer-

ences; some of those stakes I have visited a second time. I have thus formed the acquaintance of many valiant Latter-day Saints, and have learned somewhat of their faithfulness. I love the people as I learn to know their true character. It is my desire and hope that I may, in the near future, have the privilege of visiting the other stakes of Zion. I want to increase my acquaintances among the faithful Latter-day Saints, for I love the men and the women who worship God, and love the religion we have mutually embraced. I desire to know the Latter-day Saints better and more extensively than hitherto, and I wish the Latter-day Saints to know me. I desire to have their confidence, their prayers, and their support, so that if, by the help of the Lord, I may be able to give them some good counsel occasionally they will not hesitate to accept it.

The Lord has very generously blessed us during the meetings of this conference; His Spirit has been poured out upon us in great abundance, in great richness and power; and those who have spoken have been led by Its influence. We have been edified, comforted and encouraged by what we have heard, and the Spirit of the Lord has impressed upon our minds and hearts the truths which have been spoken. We have also been edified by the thoughts which have arisen in our minds, as a result of what we have heard from those who have spoken under the promptings of the Spirit of the Lord. I firmly believe that one of the most fruitful sources of spiritual education lies in the thoughts which arise in our own hearts, perhaps apart and inde-

pendent of that which we are listening to. We are fed upon the bread of life by the Spirit of the Lord, and I feel that we have been so fed at this conference.

The Gospel presents to us a most beautiful picture, and it seems to me that the picture was never quite so beautiful before, as it has presented itself to my mind during the meetings of this conference. The moral and religious code embraced in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as taught by the Latter-day Saints, is of the highest character; it emanated from God Himself, from the heavens above, and Jesus Christ our Savior was the Great Exponent. The Gospel is without defect, it is a perfect plan; it is God's own guide to a perfect life; and there is infinite power within it, the power to save those who will yield obedience to its precepts, ordinances, laws and doctrines. It is the plan by which our Savior lived, by which He reached perfection, through which He ascended to the Father, and is now enjoying the glories of His kingdom. It is the plan that through obedience thereto, will bring us back into His presence, and crown us heirs to His glory. This is what it can do for everyone of our Heavenly Father's children. It is offered for our salvation, but it is left with us to accept or reject it. The law is given; the plan is offered, but it will profit us nothing unless we accept it. The great mission work of our Savior, His atonement, will not profit us anything if we do not live the law, except that we are brought forth from the grave, as are all our Father's children, for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ are all made alive." We cannot hope to be ben-

edified in any other way; neither can we hope to be benefited by what we hear from the servants of the Lord, if we do not practice the precepts in our lives, that is the only way we can be profited by what we hear. We are not now so much in need of being taught the Gospel, and our duties as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as we are in need of being impressed with the necessity of living the law, according to the light and knowledge we have already received. Some of us may be disposed to be hearers of the word alone, and not doers of it; and in this we are deceiving ourselves. When the Savior preached that famous sermon upon the mount, the greatest ever preached upon the earth, He thought it necessary to warn the people, that those who hear those sayings and do them not, are like unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and when the rains descended, and the winds blew, and the floods came, and beat upon the house, it fell because it was built upon sand; but all those who hear those sayings and do them, are like unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock, and when the storms came, and the winds blew, and the floods beat upon the house it fell not, for it was built upon a firm foundation. The Savior could see the weakness of the people, that they were disposed to imagine it proper for their neighbors to live according to the doctrine that was taught, but considered that it was not applicable to themselves.

It is a fact today, that many are not living according to the light which God has imparted. If all were living up to the light which the Gospel gives there would be

a great change; a great reformation would be wrought. Those who would do this would become stronger and more vigorous in body and mind; their intelligence would be quickened, their minds enlightened to comprehend the truth; and they would transmit to their children qualities and virtues that would tend to regenerate the race, restoring former conditions, when the life of a man was as the life of a tree. If all were living up to that standard today, there would be no grog-shops and saloons in our cities. They would be forced to close their doors for want of patronage. There would be no sale for tobacco, for tea, or coffee, and all the evil effects that result from using these obnoxious things would be eliminated. The summer resorts would have to close on the Sabbath day, for the people would be found in houses of worship, and the meeting houses would be too small to accommodate them.

If all who profess to be Latter-day Saints would live in conformity to the Gospel, in all respects, we would have to build larger stake tabernacles, to accommodate the people who would come to attend the stake conferences to hear the word of the Lord, to worship Him in His appointed way, to partake of the sacrament, the emblems of the body and blood of Christ who died for us. The temples, also, would be too small to accommodate the people who would gather there to work vicariously for the redemption of their kindred dead. If all were living up to the high standard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we would have to build more temples; and our people would be going to the ends of the earth, spending their means liberally to gather

the genealogies of their kindred. There would be less difficulty in getting Elders to go abroad and preach the gospel, under these conditions, for the love that men would have in their hearts for their fellow men would lead them, in greater numbers, to volunteer their services. We love the God we worship, and give evidence of that love by assembling in our meeting houses and worshipping Him with full purpose of heart. We evidence our love by keeping His commandments, and by loving one another, indulging in no back-biting, nor evil speaking of each other, no bearing of false witness against our neighbors.

If all of us were living up to the high standard of the Gospel, even our enemies—those who fight against us—would have our love and prayers, for the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us to love our enemies, to pray for those who hate us and who despitefully use us. Though they were to persecute, rob and plunder, mob and drive, bind us in chains and cast us into dungeons, we would not feel to curse them, but under the Gospel law, we would pity them, realizing that, when the judgment of God is poured out, they will indeed need our pity. Even if they should put us to death for the Gospel's sake, if we were living up to this high standard our last words would be, as with the Savior: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

God has been most gracious and generous to us; He has borne testimony to us, through His Spirit, that this Gospel is true. We have learned, and know for a surety, that the promises which the Lord has made us will never fail. If

we were to call upon this congregation and ask those who have received this testimony to rise to their feet and say so, there would be a host who could rise and respond. There are some, however, I am sorry to say, who profess to know these things, who do not live up to them as they ought. In their lives there is a degree of inconsistency, and when the enemies of this work declare that among us there is hypocrisy and deceit, lying and wrong-doing, that we are not true to what we profess, there is perhaps a grain of truth in the charge. The lives of everyone enrolled on the records of the Church should be such that every act would give the lie to all such calumnies; but reproach rests upon the Church today because of infirmities, inconsistency, lack of faith and integrity to the truth, manifest by some; this to their shame. May the Lord be merciful unto those whom He has so abundantly blessed, and who are yet so ungrateful for His mercies and blessings.

It is a source of much regret that among the stakes of Zion we occasionally find a man of experience, who has lived years in the Church, and seen the trials through which this people has passed, how the arm of Jehovah has been made bare in their behalf, yet who will stoop to the use of tobacco, and indulge in habits that are unclean, that render him impure before the Lord, and his tabernacle, consequently, an unfit receptacle for the Spirit of God. Our heavenly Father has designed that His Spirit should dwell in us to comfort and cheer us in our onward march through life, in times of adversity, to give us strength and courage to bear up faithfully under all trials

that may be brought upon us, that we may maintain our integrity to the end. This is the purpose of the Lord, who desires our salvation. He would lead us unto eternal life, but there are some rebellious, and will not be led, who break His commandments, disregard His wishes; and render themselves unfit receptacles for the Spirit of God. They plod along through life in darkness, subject to the powers of evil which are about us, subject to the influences of those who would lead us astray.

What a responsibility rests upon parents in Israel, whose duty it is to train and teach their children the principles of eternal life, and set before them examples worthy of imitation, to be as watchmen over their homes—as shepherds watch their flocks—to see that the evil one does not enter and poison the minds of those whom God has given them. These responsibilities weigh heavily upon us, and if we disregard them it will prove to our sorrow. If we lose these children whom the Lord has given us, we lose one by one the jewels from the crown the Lord has prepared for us if we are faithful and true. If we neglect our duties we deprive ourselves of blessings in this life and in the life to come.

We should be on guard against the influences that come among us, from Babylon. The Lord has said: "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues." Notwithstanding this requirement and the knowledge that in coming out of Babylon we acquire her enmity, that those who are not of us are constantly fighting against us, yet there is danger if too closely affiliated with them, some may be

induced to accept their theories, and adopt their fashions. There are foolish ones eagerly looking forward to ascertain what Babylon—"the mother of harlots, the whore of all the earth"—is going to introduce next among us, and they want to be the first to adopt it. The Latter-day Saints should remember they are to be the salt of the earth, the leaven with which the whole lump is to be leavened—the whole lump of humanity; that is the design and purpose of the Lord concerning us. We should adopt proper fashions for ourselves, and not follow the fashions that are brought among us from Babylon.

Some of the Babylonish fashions of today are of a most deadly nature, and are aiding Lucifer in his purpose to thwart the purposes of the Almighty. When you go into the homes of some fashionable people of the world today, instead of finding children there, as you find in the homes of Latter-day Saints you see poodle dogs, pussy cats, canary birds, things which can be tethered to a string and left in a corner. Not having children to care for, the ladies are at liberty to attend clubs and society meetings, and go to the resorts and public places of pleasure as often as they wish. Such people ignore the great commandment that we should unite in honorable wedlock for time and for eternity, that we should multiply and increase in the land, and replenish the earth. There is no greater commandment—a disregard of it would thwart the whole plan and purpose of Jehovah. I regard with horror the thought of falling into this fashion, or adopting any of the customs which are set before us by Babylon, and which would result in our over-

throw and destruction. Oh surely we cannot be so unwise, so indifferent to the counsels of the Holy Priesthood.

I testify to you today, my brethren and sisters, that this Gospel is true, that it is the saving power and that those who will yield obedience to its principles will be saved and exalted in the presence of God. There is nothing truer, there can be nothing truer. This Gospel is as true as the stars of heaven, as true as the sun which shines in midday, as enduring as the everlasting hills, and is without defect; it is suited to the conditions of all men in all ages, in all circumstances and conditions of life, and it needs not to be modified, amended or changed. I testify that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God; I know that, although I never saw him. I know it as Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ—because God revealed it unto him. Who can see the mighty results of the proclamation of Gospel truths, the fruits that have come forth from the tree and then condemn the tree? He is a disbeliever in the word of God who can do so.

I pray the blessings of the Lord to be with you, my brethren and sisters. May His peace abide with you in your homes. May God's blessings attend us in the continuance of this conference, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem,
"Rouse, O ye Mortals."

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

Liberty's perfect law.—Charges against Joseph Smith and "Mormonism" refuted.—Eternal origin of the Gospel.—

Review of the dispensations.—Freedom and her champions.—Joseph Smith an American patriot.—His views on unrighteous dominion.—"Mormonism" versus tyranny.—No king till Christ comes.—How the world will be compelled.—God watches over His own.

The spirit of poesy seems to have pervaded this conference to some extent, and perhaps that will account for a little stanza that is now floating through my mind:

"Break! Break! Break!
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my heart could utter
The thoughts that arise in me."

Many good things have been said by the various speakers who have addressed the congregations, and it would be difficult indeed to decide which are the most important or the most edifying. The main difficulty with a speaker at conference time is not to find a subject, but rather to select one from the many that are presented to the mind, and to so condense his thoughts and his words as to come within the allotted time. I hope that I may have the good Spirit to inspire me, that I may speak the things most needful to be spoken. I have no other desire than to declare the truth, as God shall give me utterance.

I was very much impressed, upon the opening day, with the address of President Joseph F. Smith, and particularly with what he said in relation to the kingdom whose king is Jesus Christ. I have also been impressed with what Brother Nibley has said regarding the purpose, spirit, and mission of what the world terms "Mormonism;" and I marvel, in the light of such utterances, and in the light of what I know to be true concerning this people and this religion, that the