

APRIL, 1907

# Seventy-Seventh Annual Conference

OF THE

## Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Held in the Tabernacle  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
April 5, 6, 7,

1907



With a Full Report  
of the Discourses, also  
"An Address to the World"  
by the Church.

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be your soul development. It is no credit for us to resist drink, who do not love it. The man who grows most by resisting, is the man who resists what he loves, who will say, in the strength of the Gospel, "I will stop it, I will resist it."

"It's easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows by like a song,  
But the man worth while  
Is the man who will smile,  
When everything goes wrong.

"It's easy enough to be prudent,  
When nothing tempts you to stray;  
When without or within,  
No voice of sin  
Is luring your soul away.

"But it's only a negative virtue  
Until it is tried by fire,  
And the soul that is worth  
The honor of earth,  
*Is the soul that resists desire.*"

May God grant that as we are seeking the further establishment of the Kingdom of God, that we may instruct our young people, and the members of the Church everywhere, to resist the temptations that weaken the body, that destroy the soul, that we may stand truly repentant as we were when we entered the waters of baptism, that we may be renewed in the true sense of the word, that we may be born again, that our souls might bask in the light of the Holy Spirit, and go on as true members of the Church of Christ, until our mission on earth is completed, and God receives us and rewards us according to our merits. May this be our lot, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sister Edith Grant sang the soprano solo, "Fear not, O Israel."

#### ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Great extent of information concerning purposes of God.—Testimony obtained by obedience.—The Church encourages acquisition of intelligence.—Intelligent obedience only is desired.—Integrity of the Saints.

I rejoice with you, my beloved brethren and sisters, in the privileges and blessings of this another conference of the Church, and in the possession of the Good Spirit which has been with us thus far in these conference meetings. I rejoice in the condescension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in that He came upon the earth in the meridian of time and Himself taught the children of men the great plan of life and salvation, which plan was instituted from before the foundations of this earth. He, so far as it was possible, made an object lesson of every principle of the Gospel, by living and yielding obedience unto the same Himself. He lived a perfect life, filled His mission completely, and has asked of us to do only what He has done, perform our duty as it is made known unto us. It is the design of the Father that the Gospel shall be taught to all the children of men, that they may learn the will of the Father, and know what requirements are made of them in order to obtain eternal life. Through the mercy of our Father in Heaven, all His children will have that privilege. I rejoice that we have such a complete record of the Savior's mission, and His teachings, as that contained in the New Testament. I appreciate the additional knowledge that has come to us concerning the great plan of salvation by the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, by

the revelations contained in the Book of Covenants, and by the words of inspiration that have come to us from time to time through the mouths of His servants, whom He has honored with the Holy Priesthood and authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

I rejoice that there have been so many of our Father's children who have heard the truth, who have been willing to accept it, and make the sacrifices that were required at their hands, for assuredly it has required great sacrifice. Our fathers and mothers, many of them who heard the Gospel in the world, have forsaken their homes, their occupations, the love and friendship of their parents and brothers and sisters, and all that was dear to them in this life, and have cast their lot with a despised people, and made these sacrifices because of the love which they had for the Gospel and the testimony which the Lord gave them of the truthfulness of this work. The Lord has borne record to every faithful son and daughter who has yielded obedience to the principles of the Gospel, that this work is true, that there is no other plan devised, no other way under heaven, by which mankind can obtain salvation and eternal life. There is no way to exaltation except by yielding obedience to the principles which are taught by the Latter-day Saints, revealed in this last dispensation through the prophet Joseph Smith, the same principles, in the same order, as they were taught by Jesus Himself, having the same saving power. Those who have yielded implicit obedience to these principles know of a surety that the work is true; and they have not only obtained this knowledge and strength and courage from the

Lord, which enabled them to make the sacrifices that have been required at their hands, but many have laid down their lives for the truth of the Gospel and the testimony which the Lord has given them. I rejoice that today we have a multitude of men and women of like integrity. I have no doubt that all those whom President Smith has mentioned in his opening address in this conference, all those officers, with very few exceptions, if any, would be willing to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the salvation of the children of men, and that they themselves may obtain eternal life.

It is a rare thing to find a man in this Church, in full standing, who refuses to do anything that he is asked to do. Why? Because he has an intelligent understanding of the plan of life and salvation. He knows that it is God's work, and that man does not elect himself to office, or assign to himself the part he is to perform in this kingdom, but every man who has heard the word and had the privileges of the Gospel is expected to give his time his talents, his means—all that he has, if need be—for the building up of the kingdom, the salvation of the human family, but he does not yield a blind obedience.

It is a mistaken idea, prevalent in the world, that the perpetuity of this work depends upon the authorities keeping the masses of the people in ignorance. The truth is the direct reverse, else why have we all these auxiliary organizations and quorums of priesthood in the church, for the education of the rising generation. Their being established in the faith depends upon their knowledge of the Gospel. Our greatest fear concerning our children in Zion is the possibility of their growing up in ignorance

of the everlasting Gospel, for it is only that class—with few exceptions—who give up the faith. Possibly some who have had a little faith in the Gospel have been overcome by temptation and fallen from grace; they have not had enough faith to bring about repentance in their hearts, to humble themselves and regain their standing. It may be we have lost a few of our sons and daughters on this account, but we never see them uniting with other churches and denominations. They are sure we have the true Gospel and Church of Christ, with all its saving power. Respecting those who have received the testimony of the Gospel, our fear is that they may become indifferent, that they will not join the auxiliary organizations, and that they do not always receive at their firesides in their homes the instructions concerning this work that they should receive, and because they have not retained a knowledge of the Gospel their eyes may be blinded. But we do know that where our sons and daughters are virtuous and upright, and have a knowledge of the Gospel, that they love it; it appeals to their judgment and intelligence, and they will hardly lay down the truth for a falsehood. We believe in our young people being educated in the district schools and in the colleges, for we believe that intelligence gained from those sources is necessary to enable them, as they grow up, to assume the responsibilities that now rest upon the shoulders of their parents. This education is necessary to make them more proficient in preaching the Gospel abroad, and in ministering among the people at home. Above all, we believe in the religious training of our children, and we give evidence

to the world that we are sincere in this expression.

I do not see how the people of the world can consistently charge the Latter-day Saints with being insincere, or that our union and strength are caused by the alleged fact that we are ignorant as to the methods, designs, and purposes of the authorities of the Church. Before coming into the Church, men and women are taught the principles of the Everlasting Gospel, the principles of righteousness, and are informed concerning the course of life they will be expected to pursue as members of the Church; and, without a covenant on their part to observe and keep the commandments of the Lord, to live righteous and pure lives, and make complete reformation, they are not received into the Church. There is no way to become members of this Church except through faith in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and repentance from sin. We must confess our sins; we must come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and give evidence that our repentance is genuine, that we are sincere in what we are undertaking; when we have done this, and have yielded obedience to the principle of baptism, we receive as a result the forgiveness of sins. Then follows the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and we receive light and intelligence, and the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord that we shall know of the doctrine; thus we are made better for having received the Gospel, if we have been true to our covenants.

The fact that we are not all of us true under all circumstances is evidence of the necessity for officers in the Church whose duty it

is to encourage the people to works of righteousness, not to force or oblige them to do something regarding which they have not become converted. No man nor woman is asked to do anything that they are not first thoroughly convinced is the right and proper thing for them to do for their soul's salvation. We labor with men and women in all kindness and gentleness, and with love unfeigned. We do all we can, pray for them, counsel with them, and help them along; that is the method of the officers in the Church, not to force men and women into a line of duty. Men come into this Church of their own free will and choice, and they can just as easily leave it, if they think they have made a mistake. I thank the Lord that there are very few who have in all sincerity embraced the Gospel that ever had any desire whatever to retrace their steps; those who have fallen away have done so because of their own disobedience to the laws of righteousness, not because they have discovered in the principles of the Gospel, as taught by the Latter-day Saints, any error, or anything that tends to degrade mankind. They must acknowledge that those principles are ennobling.

If all of us would yield implicit obedience to the principles of the Gospel, we would indeed be a happy people. The evil results of the use of strong drink would be averted if we all yielded obedience to this word of wisdom, to which reference has been made this afternoon, and so with the other laws. One of the greatest arguments in favor of faithfulness on the part of the people, in observing the word of wisdom, is that it gives evidence to our Father in heaven, and to one another, our willingness

to obey His wishes. We do not care to argue as to the effects of drinking a little liquor, or smoking a pipe or cigar, or drinking tea and coffee. When the Lord commanded Adam to build an altar and offer sacrifices to His name, do we hear of Adam arguing with the Lord? Adam did not say: I see no necessity for offering a sacrifice, and I would like to know why this requirement is made of me." When the angel came to Adam and asked why he offered sacrifices, what was his reply? He said: "I know not, save God has commanded it;" and then the angel explained this matter to him. When the Lord commanded Abraham to offer up his son as a sacrifice, we do not hear of Abraham parleying with the Lord and wanting to know why. It was sufficient for him to know it was the will and word of the Lord unto him. He undertook to do what the Lord required; he made the sacrifice in spirit, and it was accepted of the Lord. And so, obedience to the will of the Lord is the principle we must learn. This simple word of wisdom, adapted to the weakest of those who may be called "Saints," is given that we may manifest to the Lord, in this little thing, whether or not we are obedient and willing to do what He requires at our hands. As a matter of intelligent obedience—not blind obedience—we should observe to keep the word of wisdom. For the same reason we should observe to keep holy the Sabbath day, and the name of our Father in Heaven, and His Son Jesus Christ, and intelligently yield obedience to every requirement that is made at our hands.

I love the Latter-day Saints. I pray God to bless them and keep

them in the faith. I have had the pleasure of associating with a great many of them during the past year, having traveled more than twenty thousand miles, visiting the Saints in the stakes of Zion and in the mission field. I have found them in the world, and in the stakes of Zion just as true to the Gospel as the most faithful of these men and women here near the headquarters of the Church. I know of their integrity; I have heard their testimonies; I have heard their presidents speak well of them. I have seen them in the auxiliary organizations working like bees in a hive. I do know something of the strength of the veterans of Zion, and the faith and integrity of the youth of Zion, and I doubt them not. There is a very small percentage of the boys and girls, sons and daughters of the Saints, who will be recreant to the faith of their parents. Our young people are, in a large measure, as I have said, true and faithful, and they will continue so, and the Lord will prosper Zion, and bless His people. Zion will triumph; the truth will prevail, and God's purposes will be consummated in the earth. May the Lord help us all to be faithful, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH.**

Faithfulness and zeal manifest in the missions.—Observance of the Word of Wisdom a means of exaltation.—Faith and intelligence increased by obedience to the laws of health.—Transmission of tendency to physical and mental weakness.—Evidence of faith is keeping the commandments.

It is very remarkable to me how rapidly the time passes. It does not seem six months since we were in our last general conference, and

I occupied this same position. Since then it has been my privilege to go into the mission field, and to visit some of the branches of the Church in different portions of the United States. The testimony of President Smith of the worth of our Mission Presidents coincides with my feelings. I met a number of Presidents of Missions in their fields of labor, and found them desirous of building up the Church of God, and they are laboring diligently to that end. I had the pleasure of meeting many of your sons and some of your daughters also, who are giving their time and ability to the promulgation of the work of our Father. I rejoiced in the testimonies they bore. I discovered that the sweet Spirit of the Lord was with them, and that they were happy, even though their names, in many cases, were cast out as evil because they were members of the Church of Christ. I listened to the testimonies of those who are members of the Church, in the Eastern and the Southern States, and they bore the same witness that is expressed in our meetings at home when opportunity for testimony is afforded. I find, wherever I go among the branches of the Church, that the spirit which should characterize the Elders of Israel and the members of the fold of Christ is strongly manifest in the lives of its devotees.

Speaking of the apparently rapid way that time passes, I am reminded that none of us are here in this life very long. We believe that we are harvesting the fruits of our pre-existent lives, and earning here the reward we expect to reap when we go hence. The Lord has indicated to us that by faith we can please Him, and that by keeping His commandments we