

OCTOBER, 1907

Seventy-Eighth
Semi-Annual Conference

OF THE

Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints

Held in the Tabernacle, and adjoining Halls, Salt
Lake City, Utah, October 4, 5, 6, 1907

With a Full Report of the Discourses

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children who are in the world. I commend it to you, my brethren and sisters. You can contribute in a small way of your means, and you can have a missionary, yea, you can in this way have thousands of missionaries in the field by reason of your contributions, and they will be preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the honor and glory of our Father in heaven.

I rejoice this day to be with you. Let us be grateful for the children God has blessed us with, and let us be grateful for the children that He has blessed our brethren and sisters with, and help to make them great and honorable men and women in the earth, as we desire our own to be. Let us be ever on hand to contribute of our means for the comfort and blessing of the poor, take care of those who are in distress, and ever be ready to minister to those who are in want, for the Lord has said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of one of these, my children, ye do it unto me." God grant that when we go back to His home we may hear the welcome plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things, enter into the joy of your Lord," is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!
The latter-day glory begins to come forth;
The visions and blessings of old are returning,
And angels are coming to visit the earth.

Conference was adjourned till 2 p. m.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Joseph E. Robinson.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Conference was resumed at 2 p. m.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn commencing:

O say, what is truth? 'Tis the fairest gem
That the riches of worlds can produce;
And priceless the value of truth will be when
The proud monarch's costliest diadem
Is counted but dross and refuse.

Prayer was offered by Elder German E. Ellsworth.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

O ye mountains high, where the clear blue sky
Arches over the vales of the free,
Where the pure breezes blow, and the clear streamlets flow,
How I've longed to your bosom to flee.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Progress and glorious destiny of the Church.—Earnestness and zeal of the Saints and missionaries.—Divine assurance that the Church will continue.—The Saints should rejoice, and feel encouraged.

My soul has been filled with exceeding peace during the meetings of this conference. I was thinking, while the choir was singing, how the truths which have been spoken, accompanied by the Spirit of the Lord which has been with us, have fitted into the structure of my faith like beautiful hewn marble into a temple. I have had no occasion to trim off the corners or to reject any of the material. It seems to be a

part of my very being, and I have not been embarrassed by what has been said. I testify to the truth of the things which have been spoken, and stand prepared to defend these principles, knowing that they are eternal truth.

As a people, and as individual members of the Church, we have reason to be very thankful to our Father in heaven for what He has done for us through the Gospel. We have no occasion to be discouraged, but have much to encourage us as individuals and as the people of the Church of God upon the earth. The Lord has fulfilled His promises unto us and concerning His work. Though we may sometimes feel that we are making but slow progress, the end does seem to me to be in sight, and the glorious destiny of this work is assured. True Latter-day Saints have no doubt in their minds in regard to this matter. We have seen this Church grow from its infancy. Seventy-seven and one-half years ago tomorrow marks the date of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the state of New York, with but six members. She has steadily grown in strength and numbers, in the face of great obstacles, persecution of her members, falsehoods, misrepresentations and vituperations from the pulpit and from the press; all of which, by the way, instead of hindering the progress of this work, at whose helm is God, the Eternal Father, has but given it renewed impetus. I fear when persecutions cease,—when those who are not of us cease to raise their voices and to use their pens against this great work,—that we may become indifferent and forget our responsibilities. I have in remem-

brance the charge which the Savior gave to His Apostles in the primitive Church. We read in John, 15th chapter :

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

In the face of this injunction that the Savior gave His Apostles, that they be bound together in the bonds of love, which is stronger than the cords of death, warning them that the world would be arrayed against them, what may we expect but persecution from the hands of those who are not willing to receive the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ which we bear to the children of men. Persecution has followed this work all along the line, and this has helped to keep us in the path of our duty. The thing to be feared by this people is that, when such exceeding peace comes in the land and envelops us, we may forget the Lord and our religious duties. I realize that at the present time there is an era of peace, that this people have liberty, such as they have not always enjoyed, to worship the Lord and carry on the work in its various avenues; but I am pleased to note, where I have had experience and association with the Saints in the mission field, and in the Stakes of Zion, that they are not relaxing their efforts. They

are pressing forward with earnestness and zeal, as if to make the best possible use of the time while there is peace; and the spirit of inquiry is spreading abroad through the earth in relation to this people, and the doctrines which they teach. It is manifest in the mission fields, where presidents of missions have their forces better marshalled. New and improved policies have been adopted to get the Gospel before the people of the world. There are perhaps, more inquirers, more earnest investigators of the truth and doctrines of the Gospel than ever before in the history of this Church; and I may say, with equal force and truth, that there are more converts than ever before. This work is making headway in the world, and we are increasing from that source as well as from within. As you heard this morning, from the figures which were presented, there is no people upon the face of the earth so prolific, none who realize so fully the importance of the first great commandment of our Father, that we multiply and replenish the earth, none so faithful in carrying out that and all the other requirements which the Lord has laid upon us. By these means we are increasing in numbers, in strength, and in power and influence at home in the stakes of Zion. As stated, we are also increasing in the world, and having an influence with the people of the world such as we never had before. We begin to comprehend what is in the future for Zion. We begin to realize that what the Lord, through His Prophets, has said of Zion, what she shall attain to in numbers, power, influence, and glory, will indeed be fulfilled. I have in mind a dream which was given by the Lord to

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, more than six hundred years before the birth of our Savior, and how the Lord, through that dream, and the interpretation which was given by the Prophet Daniel, showed most clearly the destiny of the work which He should commence in the last days. The establishment of this Church, its organization on the 6th day of April, 1830, was the beginning of the fulfilment of that most important prophecy. I think that the Lord had a purpose, a noble and great purpose, in giving to Nebuchadnezzar that dream, and giving the interpretation of it, that we who should engage in that great work might receive comfort through it; and that it might be quoted by us in defense of the principles of righteousness, after the organization of this Church. The Lord tells us, through other prophets of old, that this great work should be established in the latter days. Through Daniel, the Lord made known that He would set up a kingdom that should never be destroyed, a kingdom that should not be given to other people, but it would endure forever, and it is likened unto a little stone cut out of the mountains without hands. This little stone was seen to roll forth and crush to atoms the great image representing the kingdoms of the earth; and it was said that it should roll until it filled the whole earth, there should be no power to stay it. Inasmuch as the Gospel has many times been upon the earth, and as many times taken away because of the wickedness of the children of men, it does seem important that the Lord should give this assurance to His people of the last days, that no more would His Church be taken from the earth, or

given to another people. In this we have great satisfaction and encouragement. Of course, the world does not believe that the organization of this Church is a fulfilment of that prophecy. Neither will they regard the restoration of the Gospel, through the angel Moroni, as a fulfilment of the prediction of John, on the Isle of Patmos, recorded in the 14th chapter of Revelations; when he looked down through the vista of time unto the last days, in reference to which he said:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

No, the world does not accept that; but what a joy and satisfaction it is to the Latter-day Saints to know that the restoration of the Gospel is a fulfilment of that prophecy, to know that the Gospel did come in the way that the Lord, by the mouth of His servants, predicted and said that it would come. What a joy and satisfaction! We cannot expect the people of the world who reject the simple doctrines of the Gospel, which were enunciated by the Son of God Himself, to accept these prophecies, and their fulfilment in the restoration of the Gospel, and the organization of the Church in these last days. No, but the Latter-day Saints have occasion to be thankful, and to be encouraged because of what the Lord has given us—seventy-seven and a half years of growth; and what a mighty people we have become!

I have in my pocket a clipping from the *Deseret News* of April 20th last, which I wish to read to you. It bears upon this subject, and represents the truth as it is seen abroad:

“MORMONS NOW EIGHTH.

“A Christian Cynosure estimate of the growth and expansion of Mormonism will prove decidedly interesting if not instructive reading at this time, to many people both within and without the Church. It is a well known fact that its membership is increasing in goodly number and that ‘the little stone that was cut out of the mountains without hands’ is rolling rapidly forward to fulfill the destiny that the Almighty has marked out for it. And the destiny will be reached as surely as the world moves or the sun shines.

“To those members of the Church, if any such there be, who have grown impatient at the thought, that it was not going forward at as high a rate of speed as they in their well-meaning zeal might desire, it is meet that they should remember that seventy-seven years have barely passed since its restoration to earth. To take eighth place among the churches of America, from the numerical standpoint, in an even three-quarters of a century, with the tremendous obstacles it has had to meet, is in our opinion, altogether a remarkable showing. If it shall but continue its present ratio of membership increase it will have moved up to a very commanding position by the time its first centenary shall be celebrated in 1930. Its virility, strength and cohesion are the wonder of thinking men and women through the world. Soon they will learn that it is an American Church in all that the term implies. And when that great truth shall be comprehended we may expect to see a growth that will startle the wise of the earth.

“Apropos of our opening reference to the Christian Cynosure, which is published in Chicago, we call attention to the fact that it bases its statement upon the written report of the chief authority on that subject in the country, and that his comparisons prove Latter-day Saint growth to be far in excess of that of any

other religious organization. Its words are:

"The Mormons, figures of the United States government offices show, are growing very rapidly. The report of Carroll D. Wright, United State Commissioner, shows that they have increased in number during the last sixteen years 138 per cent. That is to say, they have been doubling their number every twelve years. There were 166,125 in 1890. There were 396,354 in 1906. No one other religious body has increased as largely within the same period. They now rank eighth in numbers among the denominations in the United States."

I believe this to be a reliable report, and we may congratulate ourselves, as Latter-day Saints, that we are identified with the most Christianized Church in America, a Church which is destined to be acknowledged as the most Americanized Church in America. Why not? We have the principles of eternal truth, we have the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we teach it as He and His Apostles taught it. We have the organization with all the officers as they existed in the primitive Church. We have the authority to preach this Gospel, and minister in its ordinances, for the salvation of the human family. We are here upon the land of Zion—America. Why should not the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints be regarded as the most Americanized church in the land? Such is its destiny.

Are there any of us discouraged? Would any of us retrace our steps? Do we desire to go back to the unreliable faith that we had before the light of the Gospel came into our souls? No, verily. Of those who have undertaken to walk the narrow way, up a hilly and thorny path, beset with obstacles of various

kinds, only those have become discouraged who have not the power to deny themselves those things which are in conflict with the teachings of the Gospel, those people who will not accept that which makes men and women Christ-like and prepares them to go into the presence of our Father. Those who become discouraged and forsake this work are usually those who have gratified their passions and desires, until they have lost all the spirituality that was in their souls, and they have no ambition to press on to the goal of glory. Those who have been true and faithful will lay down their lives rather than forfeit these principles, or relinquish the hope they have of obtaining eternal life. The Lord has planted in our hearts a testimony; yea, many testimonies, of the divine origin of this work and of its saving powers, and we doubt not, but we speak of those things of which we know. It is my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, and friends everywhere, that God does live, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God, that the Gospel has been restored, and we have it to give to you—yea, those who have authority have it to give freely to all mankind who, with broken hearts and contrite spirits, with faith in God, prepare themselves to receive its ordinances and to live its laws.

God bless you, one and all; may we be kept from all evil, that the Spirit of God may dwell in us, that we may see the beauties of the Gospel, that we may appreciate these blessings, and through faithfulness and obedience obtain eternal life in the end, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.