

APRIL, 1908

Seventy-Eighth Annual Conference

of the

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

Held in the Tabernacle
and the Assembly Hall,
Salt Lake City, Utah
April 4, 5 *and* 6, 1908

WITH A FULL REPORT
OF THE DISCOURSES



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administer it—he shall kneel, with the church” [It does not say that the church must kneel, but he shall kneel with the Church] “and call upon the Father in solemn prayer, saying—”

Note the beautiful prayer that follows. It is the same as that contained in the Book of Mormon, with the exception of one single word:

“O God, the eternal Father, we ask Thee, in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto Thee, O God, the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of Thy Son, and always remember Him and keep His commandments which He has given them, that they may always have His Spirit to be with them. Amen.”

The prayer and blessing upon the water is somewhat similar. How sacred, how profoundly sacred, are the thoughts expressed in the sacrament prayer. I admonish you, my brethren, that when we officiate in administering the sacrament, we repeat, if possible, the exact words given by revelation, and that we do so with the Spirit of the Lord. When we repeat these prayers, we should feel the sentiments expressed by the words that we speak. Then I say also to those who partake of the sacrament, we should consider seriously the covenants we make with our Father. Let us pay strict attention to those covenants, and let us see to it that we eat and drink worthily, for the blessings of our souls and for the increase of our spiritual strength. These blessings are for you, my brethren and sisters, who are of the household of faith. Let us appreciate them, and live worthy of them, that by our lives we may exemplify our belief. Let none of us be under con-

demnation by partaking of the sacrament unworthily, thereby being deprived of the companionship of the Spirit of our Father.

May the Lord bless us; may His Spirit continue to be poured out upon us. May we love each other, as our Father commanded that we should do. If we can partake of the sacrament worthily, we can love each other, even as our Father has ordained; remembering that He has said unto us: “If ye are not one, ye are not mine.” May we be one. May we be His in very deed—exemplars of His cause and His truth, ever ready to teach and expound it in kindness and love, to the convincing of His children who know not of it. Let us teach them the truth by precept and example, so that, by reason of our faithfulness in so doing, our skirts may be rid of the blood of the generation in which we live; and when we go to our eternal home, may we be welcome there because of our labor in the interest of our Father’s children.

May the Lord add His blessings, and His peace be upon us, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

No perfect building can be erected from a variety of plans.—One perfect plan of salvation devised by the Great Architect. — “Mormonism” includes God’s plan of salvation, the greatest thing in the world.—“Mormonism” is built upon the immovable rock of revelation.

My brethren and sisters: For several days I have been contracting a cold which this morning has reached that stage which renders my voice hoarse and unnatural, and

I have some fears that I will not be able to make this vast congregation hear all that I say. I have, too, some anxiety with reference to what I shall say upon this occasion; for I realize that the time is very valuable, where so very many Latter-day Saints are assembled together for the purpose of receiving instruction.

During the meetings of this Conference, however, there has been a thought in my mind which I would like to develop in a measure before you, if I can enjoy the Spirit of the Lord. I wish to say, in beginning that I am heartily in accord with all the sentiments which have been expressed by my brethren at the meetings of this Conference. They have spoken words of praise for the faithfulness of the Latter-day Saints, as well as words of inspiration to the people.

I will read the 28th and 29th verses of the 14th chapter of Luke:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"

"Lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him."

The use which the Savior makes of this figure is different from that which I design to use it for. The Savior here implies that it would be very unwise indeed for a person to undertake the building of a tower, or a structure of any kind, without first having planned and made an estimate of the cost, and determined in advance whether he would be able to meet the expense to build the structure. I say, the words of the Savior imply the folly of one undertaking such a structure without having first made the plans. No reference is made here

to plans, but I conclude that in order to arrive at the actual cost, or even the approximate cost of the structure, especially if it be complicated, that the plans must first be made.

Now, suppose that one of us is going to erect a beautiful and modern home that would be expensive, that would be complex in its architecture and construction. We would find it necessary to have an architect provide plans and specifications. When those plans were provided, what would you think if other and different plans were submitted, and the individual should start the building, and employ some workmen on one side and some on another, distributing these plans, varied though they must necessarily be,—all these men engaged on the same structure with the thought that there would be eventually a most perfect modern building constructed? Why, you would think, of course, that there was folly in it.

I speak of this to impress upon the minds of the people the necessity of there being harmony of design in any great movement, just as there must be but one design and plan for a building; unless, perchance, those which are added are duplicates.

Then, another point in connection with that. When the plans are all made, the individual who has the plans in hand and understands them, comprehends the work from beginning to end. He may not submit the whole of the plans to any one of his workmen, but, if it were a large building, requiring much time and many laborers, he might give certain details to some of them, and on another part of the structure he would give other details of the general plan to other workmen; but

all would be working together systematically upon the one great plan. In this way, the architect sees all his work, even the end from the beginning. That is the point.

Now, things earthly, we are told, are typical of things Heavenly, and that which comes nearest to perfection here on earth reaches nearer to Heaven, or is more like the things which are Heavenly, which are perfect. So the great plan, the greatest of all plans, which involves the salvation of the human race, and covers a period of at least seventy centuries; with many thousand millions of people, living under different conditions, having different temperaments, different dispositions, and different faiths and desires. This great plan must, of necessity, have had an Architect, and His plan must have been well designed. So we read in the Acts of the Apostles, the 15th chapter, 18th verse:

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

To me, this means that all along down the line all things were known by the Lord, the Great Architect, even the end from the beginning. By reason of this knowledge, the result of a definite and well-defined plan, He could point out the details of this great work to be accomplished many centuries in the future. Whis is the very thing He has done, for He revealed these things to His apostles and prophets, who have lived from the earliest days of this world's history down to the present time. He is, indeed, the Great Architect, the Sole Builder,—He Himself being, as the Scriptures tell us, "The chief corner stone." He knows whereof He speaks, and it is small

matter for Him to indicate to His workmen, His prophets who have lived upon this earth, any matter of detail pertaining to this great plan.

Now, the other point: if one would consider it folly for a man, having undertaken to erect a large building, to have different plans, perhaps made by different architects, and none of them alike, submitting one plan to one workman, and another plan to another workman engaged in the building of this great structure, and expect to reach symmetry, beauty and perfection when it was completed—if man would consider such a course one of folly, how can he consistently believe that God, the Eternal Father, the Author of the plan of salvation, would give to His children different plans to follow, with the hope that, in the end, they would successfully complete the desired structure? If it would be folly to take such a course with respect to a building, how much more necessary it is to have a definite purpose respecting plans which affect the salvation of the human family. I wish to quote the saying of the Prophet Joseph, which is recorded in his "Gems," found on page 288 of the Compendium. He says: "At the first organization in Heaven we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it."

While the term "Mormonism" is a misnomer, it is nevertheless a comprehensive term, because it embraces both the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, and also the Church which was instituted as the machinery for the carrying out of His great plans and purposes.

"Mormonism" comprises the great plan of the Creator, and there was no other plan instituted in Heaven for the accomplishment of this great work.—If there were more than one plan we would find confusion in the work of the Lord, but there is not, consequently there is symmetry and beauty, and progress, as our brethern have testified during the meetings of this conference. The confusion in the world concerning the principles of salvation is due to the fact that men, of their own volition, have made plans and doctrines according to their own ideas. Everywhere in the great structure they have attempted to erect they have introduced conflicting ideas, hence the confusion that we see throughout the world today. I want to say to this people, and I say it to the world, for these words will go forth to the world in print, that "Mormonism" is the biggest thing in this wide world. It is of more importance to the children of men today, this wide world over, than anything and everything else combined; because in it is included the law by which the children of men shall be judged.

The Scriptures tell us that until the law came, sin was in the world. But sin is not imputed where there is no law. To me this means that where there is no law there is no judgment. To us, and to all the world to whom "Mormonism" has been proclaimed, has come the law by which the people of the world are to be judged. I want to say to the world to whom "Mormonism" has come, or may come in the future, that it is unto them the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, according as they receive it and live it, or as they reject it.

The foundation of this work is revelation—Divine revelation from God. On one occasion, Jesus told Peter, "Upon this rock," (the rock of revelation) "will I build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And so this Church has been built upon the rock of revelation; and it has met the storms; the rains have descended upon it; the floods have come and blown against it from every side; the blasts have not impaired it; it stands because it is founded upon a rock. Neither can these things disturb it,—all the falsehoods, the persecutions, the calumnies, anything or everything that the adversaries of righteousness may inaugurate or wage against this work, only have dashed against it; the winds have the effect of lifting it up and moving it forward. "Mormonism" thrives in adversity; the more we are hounded, the more we are opposed, the more life, energy and zeal is exhibited on the part of the Latter-day Saints. It has come to be a common expression that every time opponents kick "Mormonism" they kick it up hill; which is a veritable truth. "Mormonism" is growing and prospering in the earth, because it is the truth, and truth will not be downed; or, if downed, it will rise again. Truth, like murder, will out, and the world must know it. I thank the Lord that so many of us are engaged as champions of the truth, and we have an assurance of the great destiny of this work.

In the second chapter of Daniel, the prophet refers to the establishment of the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth in the last days; for the time there indicated in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream does refer to the last days. It is written that the God of

Heaven would set up a kingdom which shall never be left to another people, a kingdom which shall not be destroyed; but it shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and shall stand forever. We are told that it is likened unto a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands. This Church and Kingdom of God had a most humble beginning, but it shall progress, increasing in size and strength, and it shall roll upon that great image, representing the powers of the earth, until it shall be crushed to pieces, and become as the dust of the summer's threshing-floor, which shall be blown to the four winds of heaven. And this kingdom shall roll on and on until it fills the whole earth. The Lord has identified most clearly this Church and Kingdom as being that seen by Daniel. We find it in the 109th Section of the Book of Covenants, 72nd paragraph, where almost the identical words of Daniel are used. The restoring of the Gospel by the visitation of an angel, as predicted by John, upon the Isle of Patmos, has been fulfilled. The Lord established that fact most clearly in the 133rd Section of the Book of Covenants, beginning with the 36th verse. Of these things, the Latter-day Saints are well assured. To doubt the ultimate triumph of "Mormonism" and its glorious destiny, as depicted in the Second Chapter of Daniel, we would have to doubt the word of God as it is given to us in these modern revelations; and it would be necessary for us to repudiate Joseph Smith as a Prophet of this dispensation. But we are assured of the fulfillment of God's word, and we do know that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God. The Lord has revealed this to us

most clearly; and testimony upon testimony have the Latter-day Saints received from the Lord as they have continued in faithfulness to serve Him. They know whereof they speak when they say that this is the Church of Jesus Christ, established by the power of God, and destined to fill the whole earth, until it shall be known as the Kingdom of God, for Jesus, our Lord, is to come and take charge of His Kingdom and reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Through our faithfulness, we have great hope of obtaining eternal inheritance in that Kingdom.

May the Lord add His blessings to the Latter-day Saints, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "In our Redeemer's name."

Conference was adjourned until 2 p. m.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Lewis W. Shurtliff.

Overflow Meeting.

An overflow session of the Conference was held in the Assembly Hall at 10 a. m. Elder Heber J. Grant presided, and Prof. Charles J. Thomas conducted the singing.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel, our only delight."

Prayer was offered by Elder Stewart Eccles.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Come, come ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear."

ELDER GERMAN E. ELLSWORTH

(President of Northern States Mission.)

My brethren and sisters, it gives me pleasure to have the privilege of