

October, 1908

Seventy-Ninth Semi-Annual Conference

of the

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

Held in the Tabernacle
and adjoining Halls,
Salt Lake City, Utah,
Oct. 4, 5 and 6, 1908.

*WITH A FULL REPORT OF
THE DISCOURSES.*

PUBLISHED BY THE DESERET NEWS

we go on sinning more and more, and we continue to forget it. But I want to say to you that when we are resurrected from the dead we will not come up mortal. Every faculty of our being will be immortal, and we will bring forth with us a remembrance of everything that we have not atoned for, and we cannot forget it. We will there suffer remorse of conscience until we have paid the uttermost farthing; and I don't know but that will be worse than coals of fire.

I bear testimony that Joseph F. Smith is a prophet of God. I want to bear testimony that no man can be untrue to that man and still receive blessings from God the Eternal Father. I say it is your duty to be loyal and true. His friends are your friends, his enemies are your enemies. You should teach it to your children and your children's children, from generation to generation, that the man who may be at the head of this Church, no matter what his name is, no matter who he may be, his friends are your friends, his enemies are your enemies, and what mankind would like to do to him they have it in their hearts to do to you.

I remember in the missionary field that I had a portrait of an individual who was not a religious man, not by any means. Probably he did not do at all times what he ought to have done, but I have written beneath his picture the words, "Porter Rockwell, the Prophet's Friend." He was indeed the friend of the Prophet; a devoted protector of the head of the Church. He would have laid down his life in defense of the man who stood at the head of the Church, and he is remembered today for his loyalty, and his love for those whom God had placed at the head and his de-

votion will be remembered in his favor on the books above. While he may have to pay the uttermost farthing for sins he committed, I want to tell you on the other page of that book he has received a credit for loyalty that will stand in his favor throughout the countless ages of eternity. I think we should let the world know that, to a man we are willing to surround our president and protect him. That we look upon his enemies as our enemies, and that we will defend him with our lives if necessary.

I rejoice in the testimony that God has given me concerning this work, and feel for myself, and know, it is true, and I want to remain true to it. I bear my testimony to you that the men at the head of this Church are prophets of God and I want my testimony recorded for or against me, because I give it as knowledge, and I bear it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Divine inspiration manifest in discovery of this land, and establishment of its government.—Saints should live up to the light and knowledge they have received.—Good works the only sure evidence of faith.—Church members blessed with wise, faithful, and diligent teachers.

I bear you my testimony, my brethren and sisters, that the words that have been spoken to you this afternoon are the truths of heaven, inspired of the Lord, and I admonish you to remember them, and put them into practice.

The Lord revealed, many centuries ago, to one of His Prophets, Nephi, that His people who inhabit this country, North and South

America, should be destroyed, leaving but a remnant of the seed of his wicked brethren, on whom rested the curse of blackness, that this country should be lost to the knowledge of the eastern world, and that He would inspire one who should journey upon the waters and discover this promised land. And so we believe, emphatically, that the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus is a direct fulfilment of the prediction of the Lord, and that it is a part of His great plan, as has been stated, in preparing for the restoration of the everlasting gospel in these last days. He not only inspired Columbus to discover America, but He also inspired men to establish this great government, whose principles are as liberal as the principles of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, yielding obedience to which will make men and women free indeed. We understand that not only did the Lord inspire the declaration of independence and the constitution of this great country of ours, but by His power He has enabled the people thus far to maintain independence, and liberty of faith, under the constitution of these United States. We Latter-day Saints are presumptuous enough to believe that we as a people, though but few in number compared with the population of these United States, are the "IT," if I may use that expression; though limited, our numbers help to make up this great commonwealth. By and by from the center of Zion, the word of the Lord is to go out, not only to this nation, but also into all the nations of the earth, until every nation, kindred, tongue and people shall have the opportunity to enjoy the same blessings that we enjoy today through the gospel of our Mas-

ter. This is the great land of promise in which we live. I thank the Lord for the liberty implanted in this great country of ours. I thank the Lord, too, for the liberty which our people find in other nations where they are located. There is a spirit of toleration and liberality with the heads of other nations where our people have colonized. I acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all these civil blessings for our people, as well as other spiritual and temporal blessings that are so bounteously poured out upon us.

I was thinking while the brethren were speaking, of that passage of scripture beginning with the 11th verse of the 4th chapter of Ephesians, which tells how the Lord gave to His primitive Church certain officers, "Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers," etc., for certain specific purposes, for the work of the ministry, the perfecting of the Saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, till they should all come into a unity of faith and a knowledge of the Son of God. So in these days He has organized His church in perfection, giving unto us all the officers that were had in the primitive church, and many auxiliaries as helps in government; and these people, the Latter-day Saints, are well taught. Indeed, if we were now living up to the light and knowledge that has come to us, our light would shine out in the nations, they would behold the power of God manifest among us, and see a people who would delight in works of righteousness, and who would eschew all evil. Had we lived fully up to this light the evils that have come to some of us through strong drink, and other evils, would have been averted. For instance, the sickness, weakened constitu-

tions, and premature deaths resulting from the use of tobacco would have been prevented. This work would have rolled on more rapidly, because the tithings of the people would have been paid as the Lord designed. As a result of complete compliance with that law, the blessing and favor of heaven would have been more abundantly poured out upon us, and the earth would have been blessed for our sakes to bring forth more than it has.

I acknowledge the faithfulness of the people generally. The Lord has acknowledged their faithfulness, and He has manifested His appreciation of what we have done, and has favored us by pouring out many blessings upon us; certainly we have been greatly blessed of the Lord. But I do feel that as a people we have need of being impressed with the importance and necessity of doing as well as we know how, as well as we have been taught. That we are well taught there is no question. We know what we should do, and we know what we should not do. We are not only required to do and to labor, but we are commanded to abstain from doing certain things which are evil, demoralizing, degrading, and unbecomingly honest, honorable men and women. Indeed, the gospel of the Master is one of self-denial and self-sacrifice; it requires faith to enable men and women to make the sacrifices required, and to deny themselves the things which are forbidden by the gospel. Just as we were told by one of the speakers this afternoon, it may be an easy matter for people of some denominations to live up to the requirements of their churches and creeds, but with the Latter-day Saints there is a continued warfare

through life, denying one's self the things which his nature craves, and making sacrifice day after day; it requires faith to enable us to do these things and to continue to the end. We cannot hope to be able to succeed, and come off victorious in the end, only through faith in God and the help that He will give us through faith. If I do not pay my tithing, what reasons have I to assign for not doing so? I can think of no other reason than that I have not faith sufficient to do it. If I could make myself believe that God has spoken from the heavens, that it was He who gave that revelation which says that one-tenth of my interest annually should be given to the Church for the building up of the kingdom, if I could believe in my heart and soul, even as if God came and told me that it is His will I should do so, I think I would have no further trouble. The difficulty is, if I do not yield obedience to that law, I manifest that I do not believe the law. I try to make myself imagine that I believe it, but in this I deceive myself. What did the Apostle James say? "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls, but be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." So, I feel that some of us Latter-day Saints are actually deceiving ourselves, trying to make ourselves believe that our faith is perfect in the law of God, and at the same time it does not produce that result which the Lord desires.

We have need, my brethren and sisters, to increase our faith in the Lord; and so these officers are placed to teach us faith in God, and in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, and faith in the Holy

Ghost as one of the trinity of the Godhead, whose influence fills the immensity of space, the medium of communication between the Father and His children. Those who have spoken to you today are laboring for this end. You have heard two presidents of missions of the United States, and two local presidents, one presiding over an important stake of Zion, and another over a populous ward. You have heard their pleading, and their teachings. Such are the teachings of other servants of the Lord, who can be counted by the thousands. Thus we are teaching the Latter-day Saints, and teaching the world; and we propose to continue to teach and labor in loving kindness and persuasion, to bring men and women to that perfect faith in the Lord which will secure them eternal lives, by their yielding obedience to the laws and requirements of the gospel.

God bless you, my brethren and sisters. May His favor be upon us. May we be able to understand His will, and with all our souls, with all our might, mind and strength, serve Him, making the required sacrifices that we may obtain eternal life, is the humble prayer of your fellow servant, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the hymn, "Onward, Christian soldiers."

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Daniel G. Miller.

Third Overflow Meeting.

In Barratt Hall, at 2:30 p. m., Elder Joseph S. Wells presiding; Elder Heber Aldous conducting the singing.

The congregation sang the hymn, "Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation."

Prayer was offered by Elder Vernee L. Halliday.

The congregation sang the hymn, "How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord."

ELDER NEPHI PRATT.

(President of Northwestern States Mission.)

My brethren and sisters, I appreciate the privilege of being at home among the Saints of God, and listening to the inspired teachings of the Presidency and other Elders of the Church. The speakers are here this afternoon by appointment of the prophet of the Lord. We are few in number, but the Lord has said that He will be even with three or four, when they come together in His name. I hope that you will pray that I may be inspired by the Spirit, that we may be blessed together, and the hearts of those who are assembled here be comforted, their faith increased, and they be instructed.

I praise the Lord for the inspiration in the remarks of my brethren who have spoken in this conference. I love the sound of their voices. I am laboring away off, 800 miles from here, in a missionary field, and I rarely have, except upon special occasions, as great an audience as is here assembled; and you may imagine the great pleasure and happiness it gives me to mingle with the Saints in Zion. God has blessed this country. This is the land to which the Lord inspired His servants to gather the hosts who have from time to time met in our great conferences. The site for the tem-