

October
1910

Eighty-first
Semi-Annual
Conference

of the

CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-
DAY SAINTS



HELD IN THE
Tabernacle and Assembly Hall,
Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 6, 7, 9, 1910
with a full report of the discourses

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what if they do? If the Gentiles come to us, it will save us the trouble of going to them. Our mission is *to* the Gentiles—not *from* them; and if they come, we will not skulk and run away, but face about and extend the olive branch, preach the gospel to them, and save their souls, if we can; for that is our mission. I want to see the Gentiles capture Mormonism. The Romans conquered Greece, and were conquered, in the doing of it, by Grecian culture, learning, and civilization; and the Romans were conquered by the Barbarians who, in turn, were subjected to the Pope of Rome and became Christians. If the Gentiles capture Mormonism, it will make Mormons of them—and that is just what we want. We want all the good Gentiles we can get, and we do not care how many of them come and embrace the gospel. Talk about the Gentiles overwhelming the Mormons and destroying the work of God! Yes, just as the Romans destroyed the Jews and the Christians. I can go out upon the street today and find a Jew: I can go out and meet a Christian; but has any one seen a Roman of late? The Romans became Christians, and the Gentiles, tens of thousands of them, perhaps millions, will become Latter-day Saints and will help build up the kingdom of God. That is my faith in this work, and my confidence in the Gentiles, and in the word of the Lord concerning them upon this land.

We receive all our blessings upon the principle of obedience. There is a celestial law, a terrestrial law, and a telestial law; and we can attain to any degree of glory that we desire, but it will be upon the principle of obedience. If we obey ce-

estial law, we will obtain celestial glory. If we obtain terrestrial glory, it will be by obedience to terrestrial law; and the same with telestial law and telestial glory. And what is celestial law? It does not mean any *one* thing; it means *all* things. It is the fullness of obedience; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. If today, you are keeping those commandments that are now in force, you are living a celestial law, and your chances are good for celestial glory. Amen.

Sister Esther Davis sang a soprano solo, entitled "A Prayer."

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

The immense attendance at Conference evinces devotion to religion.—President Smith's example of faithfulness. Failure to live by law not evidence against its divinity.—To acquire true knowledge there must be no prejudice.

I sense very keenly, my brethren and sisters and friends, the great responsibility resting upon me in undertaking to lead in thought this vast congregation. My only hope of being able to do it, with any degree of profit, is through the help and blessing of the Lord; and as we never know in advance just how much we are in favor with the Lord, and how much assistance He is going to give us, we have great concern. Barring this great responsibility and anxiety, these conferences are a source of great joy and satisfaction, the present conference being no exception to the rule. The general authorities and the people have been offering earnest prayers to the Lord, for some weeks, that we might have with us, in the meet-

ings of this conference, our beloved president, the mouthpiece and representative of the Lord unto His people. Had our petitions not been answered, we would have been greatly disappointed; but the Lord has again been kind to us, and has so far healed and strengthened President Smith that he has been able to be with us. His very presence in the congregation of the saints is an inspiration, his testimony is soul-stirring, and his benediction upon us, as a people, makes our hearts to rejoice indeed.

The effect of all the good talk, and the inspiration which accompanies it, in the meetings of the conference is to make us feel that the gospel is indeed true. We sometimes suffer lapses. Our time, to such a great extent, is devoted to the things of this world, the temporalities, that we become wedded to them and, naturally, that takes away our attention from the spiritual things, those things which are of most importance unto us, and we become more or less weaned in our minds and feelings. It is refreshing to come to a conference where the Spirit of the Lord is manifest in such great power, where such powerful testimonies are borne, where the truths of the everlasting gospel are made so plain to our understanding, and where we are made to feel the truth of the work in which we are engaged; and so we rejoice together. I rejoice, too, in meeting so many of the saints from various parts of this great country where our people are settled, from Canada to Mexico, up and down the country. We find a good attendance of representative men and women, and a great gathering of the saints, which makes this a largely attended conference.

I rejoice to meet them whether it be upon the street, in their homes, or wherever I have the opportunity. It reminds me of their faithfulness, of the great labor they are accomplishing in Israel. So with these returned missionaries, and the presidents of our missions; I am glad to meet them, to shake their hands and be reminded of the many men and women who are in the world representing the truth today, the great sacrifices which are being made by the people, sacrifices of time, of money, and of effort for the furtherance of this work. I love the people for their devotion and faithfulness. I love to look them in the face. I love to shake their hands and to know that they fellowship me, that I have fellowship and standing with them.

At the close of the first session of this conference, in conversation with one of our brethren he made this remark: "There are but few persons who could bear such a testimony as has been borne to us, this morning, by our president," referring particularly to the remarks made by President Smith respecting himself. I said, in answer, "Perhaps there are but few who have made their lives to conform as closely to the gospel law as has our dear President," to which he assented. I am reminded of the word of the Lord, in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, wherein He said: "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven, before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated; and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." So, my brethren and sisters, if you will yield the same obedience, the same devotion and zeal to the gospel, to

its laws and requirements, and the building up of the kingdom, manifesting the same faithfulness as our venerated president has, we will, perhaps, enjoy the same testimony, in the same strength and power, and be able to refer to our lives with the same satisfaction. We can then, with pleasure and pride, point to our life's history as being above reproach. The gospel is intended to make us like our Savior, for He was the great prototype and exemplar, to bring us back into His presence, heirs with Him in the blessings and glories of our Father's kingdom. We have the history of His life before us, and we are requested and required, by the gospel, to follow in his foot steps. We have His representative before us in our midst, and we would do well to look to him, and emulate the good example which he sets before this Church. So with all these general authorities, for as they have taken upon them the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be witnesses for Him, I believe that every one of them ought to be exemplars before the people, their lives, their example should be worthy the emulation of the people in the Church, or out of the Church. Then, indeed, would our light so shine that others seeing our good works would glorify our Father which is in heaven.

It is not that the gospel law is weak, or defective, or changeable, that the lives of those who profess to be saints of God are not always in strict harmony therewith. It must be remembered that, while the law is divine and perfect, and while those who have yielded to it are trying to reach the goal of perfection, yet they are more or less weak. There are those among us and of us whose faith is weak, and those

who are not of us ought to take this into account. No matter what some of the people, or one in authority, may say or do, it cannot possibly render the truth a lie, or prove any ordinance of the gospel unnecessary to the salvation of the children of men. We admit that our lives should conform perfectly to the law of the gospel. Now, while those who are without look upon us in this way, and while the Lord evidently realized that this would be the case, the Savior having in mind that fact, when He said that we should let our light so shine that others seeing our good works would glorify our Father in heaven; realizing that men would judge the faith we represent, or the cause we represent by our conduct, we would warn those who are without that this may not always be a safe rule to go by, because of the weaknesses of men. But the law is perfect, and we invite all to an investigation thereof. The evidences are ample to prove that the law and doctrines taught by the Latter-day Saints today are the same as those which were taught by the Savior and His apostles and the saints in the primitive church. Concerning this we have an abundance of scriptural evidence. Reason also will teach us and appeal to us, and then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which we receive by yielding obedience to the law which comes to us, by our asking, knocking, and seeking, we shall receive the complete testimony, and we will not be in doubt.

My testimony to you is, as it has been before, to the members of the Church, and to those who are without, that this work is true, and that you may know it is true. But, you must rid yourselves of that prejudice which may have come to you

through false education, through misrepresentation of this people and of the authority which they hold, of the cause which they have espoused,—you must rid yourself of this prejudice in order that, for your souls' salvation sake, you may be able to consider and render a righteous decision on the things which you may investigate. It would be folly for a man to come into our midst and try to find out all that he could about us as a people, and about what we believe in, with a view to tearing down and belittling the work of the Lord, and the people of the Lord, and then hope that by that means he would know whether or not the work is true. There is no possibility of true knowledge being acquired by such investigation; in fact, the individual being biased disqualifies himself to render a righteous decision. If we were impaneling a jury to sit on a case, I fancy the first question asked of those who were summoned, would be, "Are you prejudiced in this case?" And, if the answer were in the affirmative, the individual would be excused, as being disqualified to render a just decision. Those who are not of us should remember that they are their own jury; they are to hear and to decide the case, judging from the evidence which shall be presented to them; by that evidence, and by their course of life, will they be judged in the last day. So, if possible, this prejudice must be broken down first, and in order that it may be broken down, I offer a suggestion to those who are thus prejudiced. We have an example, an illustration of this prejudice, and what it led to, in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who was afterwards known as Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. You know his history; you know

of his persecuting the saints, and how that on one occasion he held the clothes of those who stoned to death one of the servants of the Lord, Stephen. He was on his way to Damascus to bind men and women that he might take them and cast them into dungeons. When on the way he was confronted by an angel in a light from heaven, and he was stricken blind. You know the story and what followed, that when Paul became convinced of the error of his way, of his mistaken judgment and prejudices,—he being honest, as he declares that all he did was done conscientiously, thinking that he was doing God service—he became one of the most valiant in the cause. Now, in the case of those who fight against Zion, those who are maligning this people, must it needs be that the Lord shall send an angel to each one, that he may be convinced of his error? or does not the Lord expect that they will profit by the experience of Saul? I believe that is what the Lord expects. If it was possible for Paul, who was educated under Gamaliel, to be thus deceived and mistaken in persecuting the saints of God, may it not be possible, friends, that some of you who are using your influence against this people, and this work, are also mistaken? Now if you can rid yourselves of prejudice and consider these things, I am sure that the evidence will be ample to convince you of the truth of Mormonism, so-called.

I rejoice in the testimony of this work, which the Lord has given to me in common with you, my brethren and sisters; for I do know that the work is true. And, as I know that the work is true, and the power of God unto salvation, I know that the humble instruments in the hands

of the Lord, in revealing this work were divinely called; and theirs has been a divine mission, the Prophet Joseph and Brigham, and those who have been our leaders down to the present time. I know that the Lord is with this people today, that He does honor His authority, that He will magnify it in the earth; and this work will grow and spread abroad until truth shall cover the face of the whole earth, as the waters cover the mighty deep. I know that this Church and kingdom is the Church and kingdom of God. The prophecies shall be fulfilled, and Christ our Lord shall come

and possess the kingdom, He shall reign as Lord of Lords and King of Kings forever. This is my testimony, which I bear to you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;
 Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
 Let us each, Thy love possessing,
 Triumph in redeeming grace.

Benediction was pronounced by Patriarch John Smith.

Conference adjourned until 10 a. m., Sunday, Oct. 9th.