

Eighty-Fifth Semi-Annual Conference

of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints



Held in the Tabernacle and Assembly
Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah, October
4th, 5th and 6th, 1914, with a full
report of the discourses

PUBLISHED BY THE DESERET NEWS
TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

and peace come unto afflicted humanity. When we think of Europe two months ago—of the busy factories in Belgium and Germany and France, and the busy husbandmen in Russia, and other countries that are now afflicted with war, and then today see millions of men engaged in the fiercest and bloodiest of battles related in history, we are shocked at the terrible carnage, and the misery of the widows and the orphans that are made daily. Our hearts go out to them in the deepest sympathy, and we feel to take part in a prayer like that which was offered by Brother Penrose, that the Lord will be merciful unto them.

May the day hasten when peace shall reign upon the earth, when Christ shall come and reign, and the thousand years of peace be introduced, and the announcement of the angels shall indeed be fulfilled, "Peace on earth and good will to men," I ask that we may be prepared for this, and that the Lord may bless the Latter-day Saints, and bless the leaders of this nation, that they may avoid all foreign entanglements, and that peace may continue to reign in this land, I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Smith stated that another overflow meeting will be held in the Assembly Hall, at 2 p. m., at which Elder Joseph F. Smith, Jr., will preside. He also announced that arrangements have been made, by the Presiding Bishopric, to furnish accommodations to Conference visitors who are not otherwise provided for.

The choir sang the anthem, "Oh come, let us sing, let us sing unto the Lord."

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Samuel O. Bennion.

Conference adjourned until 2 p. m.

OVERFLOW MEETING.

An overflow session of the Conference was held in the Assembly Hall, adjoining the Tabernacle, at 10 a. m. The services were presided over by Elder George F. Richards, and the Emerson Ward choir furnished the music.

The Choir sang the hymn:

Lo! the mighty God appearing,
From on high Jehovah speaks!
Eastern lands the summons hearing,
O'er the west His thunder breaks.

Prayer was offered by Elder Charles A. Callis.

The Choir sang the anthem, "Trust ye in Jehovah."

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Unity of the Saints in prayer for peace—Inspiring effect of knowledge that we are God's children—The mission of Jesus, our Elder Brother—Encouragement to subject ourselves to Gospel laws—Faith increased by studying Scriptures—Advantages of obedience to every principle of truth.

My beloved brethren and sisters, inasmuch as I have received the appointment, by the President of the Church, to preside at this overflow meeting, I desire to extend to you a cordial welcome to the conference, and express, in behalf of the Presidency, their and our appreciation of the presence of so many of you in this, the opening session, of our semi-annual conference. I realize that it is somewhat of a disappointment to our brethren and sisters not to be able to find places in the large Tabernacle this morning, but I

am sure that if we can compose our minds and feel, above all else, a desire to acceptably worship the Lord in our meeting here this morning, that His spirit will be poured out upon us, and we will have occasion to rejoice before Him, in the knowledge of the Gospel which He has given unto us, and the testimony which we have received of its truth. I appreciate, with you, the beautiful singing of the Emerson Ward Choir this morning, and feel thankful for their services.

I endorse, with all my heart, the sentiments of the opening prayer offered by President Charles A. Callis, president of the Southern States mission. I believe in the scripture which says that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and I believe that where many righteous men and women are met together to worship the Lord, and have brought their minds to a singleness and community of faith and interest, and lift their voices in prayer, that the Lord will hear the prayer. This is my faith, my trust and confidence, and I trust that that which is our will concerning the troubled nations of the earth today, that peace may obtain, that bloodshed may discontinue, and that those who have occasion to sorrow and mourn because of the wars which are in the earth today may be comforted of the Lord; I trust that this will be the mind and will of the Lord, and that He can, consistently with His will and purposes, answer our prayers this day. I remember that there will be thousands of earnest prayers, this day, offered to the Lord in behalf of the troubled nations and the people who are in mourning and sorrow.

I rejoice with you, my brethren and sisters, this morning, in the

Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I never had a stronger testimony of the truth than I have today. There is scarcely room for doubt in my mind—I think there is no doubt—in regard to the truth of all of the principles of the Gospel as they are taught today by the Latter-day Saints. It is the Gospel which was instituted, as the scriptures tell us very clearly, from the foundations of the world, a plan for the existence of man and of the earth, of their fall, their redemption and their glorification, a Gospel which is to be taught unto the world of mankind as the justice and mercy of God demands, to the living and the dead, a law by which all shall be judged, a savior of life unto life or of death unto death to those who receive it, who are faithful in the keeping of the commandments or to those who reject and fight against it.

I rejoice in the testimony which I bear this morning that God, the eternal Father, lives, an immortal and glorified being, whose power has no limitations. He is the Creator of the heavens and earth and the seas, and of all things that are therein, as the scriptures affirm, and they are His; the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. He is the very eternal Father of the spirits of men, for we all had a spiritual birth, a spiritual existence and experience and we were born of God. Think of it, brethren and sisters, sons and daughters of God inheriting from Him through our spiritual birth the very attributes and qualities of Deity, which in our Father in heaven are perfect and make Him what He is. We are placed here upon the earth for the purpose, in part, of improving, magnifying and perfecting those qualities and attributes; so that, while we are now but gods in

embryo, having been born of God, in His likeness, in His image, and having received from Him the attributes of Deity, through perfecting those attributes in time and in eternity we will be like Him in very deed, and be glorified with him in His kingdom.

I rejoice in the testimony that I have, and cheerfully bear to you to-day, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, the Messiah which was predicted should come in the meridian of time to redeem mankind from the effects of the transgression of our first parents, or the fall of man, and also to redeem us from the effects of our individual sins, on condition of our acceptance of His atonement and His laws, and the ordinances of the everlasting Gospel. Jesus lives. He has passed through the experiences of a life here upon the earth. He was true and faithful in the beginning, in contradistinction to that other great spirit who fell away, who was rejected of the Lord, who was driven forth from heaven, and with him many of the sons and daughters of God. Jesus stood for the principle, "Thy will be done," and "The glory be thine forever;" the righteous exercise of agency as our Father would have us all to be, wise and righteous in the exercise of our agency. When He came upon the earth He was still true to the covenant which He made with the Father, and uppermost in His mind and in all His life's work was that thought, "Father, Thy will be done and the glory be Thine forever." He was the great prototype and exemplar of mankind, our exemplar, brethren and sisters and friends, He leads the way, and every path defines, as we sing in one of our hymns that we, His followers, His brothers and sisters, are re-

quired to walk in in order that we may, when we have passed through this life, go to the glory beyond; and, as He took up His body, we may take up our bodies again and go on, as He has gone, to eternal exaltation; and as He sits at the right hand of God, the eternal Father, in His celestial kingdom, an heir to all that our heavenly Father possesses; that we, by following in His steps, may become joint heirs with Him in all things. This is my testimony to you in regard to Jesus Christ, our Savior, His life and ministry, in brief.

I rejoice in the knowledge which has come to me through the study of the scriptures, a knowledge and assurance of the immortality of the soul, life beyond the grave. Oh, what a joy! What a joy to those who have this hope, and are making preparation according to the best light they have to meet the conditions beyond this life. I am thankful for the knowledge which the Gospel gives me, that the conditions of life beyond the grave depend upon the lives we live while we are here in mortality. I thank the Lord for the influence of this knowledge, the influence of the Gospel restraining me from doing those things which would exempt me from the enjoyment of those blessings which are in store for the faithful. I am thankful, also, for the stimulating and encouraging influence of the Gospel upon my life, encouraging me to make the sacrifices that are necessary to be made to do the things which may be required of me in order that I may not fall short of those blessings.

However, I cannot boast. I acknowledge before the Lord and my brethren and sisters, my weakness and my imperfections, and my de-

pendence upon the Lord for strength and power day by day to live the law which He has revealed. But I have assurance of the necessity for living by that law, that salvation and eternal life can be obtained through obedience unto the laws and commandments of God.

I think that the lack of faith on the part of many people in the Church, and out of the Church, is due to the fact that they have not given due attention to these things. I understand that faith comes by hearing, for so the scriptures teach. Or, in other words, as I would interpret it, faith comes by investigation. We have the scriptures, ancient and modern, which are the revelations of the Lord unto His servants the prophets in different Gospel dispensations. They have been preserved and have been delivered unto us for our guidance, with a commandment from the Lord that we search the scriptures, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." They do testify of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, of the great plan of life and salvation, the life beyond the grave; and a study of these things causes the mind to reflect upon them, the reason to be brought to bear upon them, and the conclusion reached by the honest-hearted person is usually that those things are true, that they are just, that they are good for man. And still some have need for teachers, which was so with the eunuch, as you remember. He was reading the scriptures, but he did not understand them. It took a Phillip, inspired of the Lord, learned in the scriptures, to explain them to his understanding. But when he saw the truth, and being honest in his heart, he was willing to obey it.

I invite the Latter-day Saints to read the scriptures more than they do, for while the Latter-day Saints have a measure of faith, which is a gift of God, until we shall reach the perfect life, the high standard which was set for us by our Savior, we still have need of faith; and if investigation is going to give us faith, we need to investigate, we need to study we need to pray, and it is just as true that if we would receive the witness of the Spirit of God, we must obey and act, we must receive those things which are offered unto us. We must, when we receive faith to believe in these principles that they are true, we must have the fortitude, the courage to accept those truths, and putting our trust in the Lord, acknowledge Him, and make our lives conform therewith. Happiness in the life of the Latter-day Saint consists in the consciousness of having lived closely to the law of the Lord. He who has embraced the Gospel, who has had a witness of its truth, and then only half lived the law is constantly under self-condemnation. It robs him of the joy, of the peace, yes, and of the hope of eternal life, that it is intended true Latter-day Saints should enjoy.

I admonish the Saints, if they would be happy, and if they would have an assurance that it would be well with them beyond the grave, that we be more faithful in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord. Who is there that can say in truth that "Mormonism," so-called, is not true, is not good for man? I will make the declaration to you, my brethren and sisters and friends, that that which is good for man is true, and the Gospel is good. Are we not taught, in fact it is an article of our faith, the thirteenth article:

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous and in doing good to all men. We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and we hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." The Gospel teaches us that as children of our Father in heaven, we have the same attributes which He possesses, such as justice, judgment, mercy, truth, love and other qualities, and the requirement is that we labor with ourselves constantly to perfect these attributes. Would not that be good for any man, for all men? I believe firmly that that is what Jesus meant when He said, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Matthew: "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Now, is not that good for us? Is it not good for every man to be just in judgment, to be virtuous, to be pure? Yes, and we are to add to our faith, as Peter said: "virtue, to virtue knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity." Are not these things good? They are included in the Gospel. But I fancy I hear some individual say, "Well, that is all right. We believe in these things outside of the Church. They are good for man; we will admit that; but these ordinances and the necessity for faith in God we do not understand." Now, there is a class who do not believe that there is a God, a Creator of all things, and who do not believe that there is a life beyond the grave. It is an unfortunate condition. If there is a God and a life beyond the grave there will come a time when that fact will be known. Now, if it shall prove that there is a God, and a life

beyond the grave, and that faith in Him is necessary to salvation, as the scriptures teach, how much better off will those be who have had that faith than those who have rejected it. And if it were possible that we were mistaken, we would still be as well off as the atheist and better off than we would have been without this faith, for it is helpful to make us better men and women than we otherwise would have been.

But faith is not all that is necessary, and yet there are some who hold that faith is all that is necessary. But the Latter-day Saints believe the scriptures which teach that there are certain ordinances which must be complied with in order to obtain salvation. Now, then, if it shall prove that these things are true, as they are scriptural, how disappointed then will be those who, not having believed in these things, have not yielded obedience to them, and therefore have not made the necessary preparation for the life beyond the grave? While those of us who have believed, and believing the scriptures, have yielded obedience, find ourselves in the favor of God, in the way of salvation. You see that that which we have accepted is on the positive side of these religious questions, and not the negative; and if they prove true, we are on the safe side, but if it were possible that they should be otherwise, we would still be as well off as those who reject these things.

So we may take each of the principles of the Gospel. You may take also that very important principle eternity of the marriage covenant. We believe in the scriptures which teach that "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord," and in that scripture which teaches that

power and authority was given to men upon the earth—Jesus conferred it Himself upon Peter and his associates, power to bind on earth and it should be bound or sealed in heaven, to loose on earth, and it should be loosed in heaven. In this day He has revealed anew the Gospel, and this power and authority, and a knowledge of the ordinance of marriage, with instructions to build temples that we may enter therein and solemnize marriages in the way that He has ordained, and as will be effective beyond this life. The Latter-day Saints have accepted these principles, amply sustained by the New Testament and modern revelation also. If it shall prove that we are correct, Latter-day Saints, then those who have rejected this principle will be at a serious loss and will suffer a great disappointment. How much better, then, to accept the safe way, to be on the safe side? That is where the Latter-day Saints stand. There can be no disappointment on their part, if they are true to that which they have accepted.

We may say the same in regard to our dead. We believe, for the scriptures teach it, that the gospel must be preached to the dead, and is being preached to the dead. "For this cause is the Gospel preached to the dead [says the Apostle Peter], that they might be judged according to men in the flesh and live according to God in the spirit." Not only that but the work which is necessary for the living, the identical ordinances which we have accepted as Latter-day Saints are necessary for our dead, and we are called to be saviors upon Mount Zion for them, that through the atonement of our Savior and the work that we do for them, a vi-

carious work, by their acceptance of it when the time comes that they shall be prepared to accept of it, that work becomes effective for them and for their salvation. How much better off we will be, having accomplished this great work for our dead, if it proves true, as it is scriptural, and necessary for the salvation of our dead, and for our own salvation and glory, for we are told in the scripture—Paul expressly states—that we cannot be perfect without our dead. How much better off are those who receive than those who reject these principles? Are we not on the safe side? Are not these things good, brethren and sisters? They have inspired us to be more helpful, to look to the happiness of others, to serve our God by serving our fellow men, the living and the dead. That is what the Gospel teaches, the Gospel which the Latter-day Saints have received.

You have occasion to rejoice. There is nothing offered in the world that can be a substitute, that will be satisfying to you; and because this is true, the Latter-day Saints are not being converted to other religious doctrines. Conversion of the Saints to other creeds is almost unknown, although we have preachers among us. Our elders who go into the world and preach the Gospel among the people, mingle with learned men who are representatives of other denominations, and yet they are not convinced or converted, either of the error of that which they have received or of the truth and superiority of that which the religions of the world have to offer. We are making converts here by thousands right here among us, in our cities and wards, and in the mission fields abroad; be-

cause these ordinances, as well as the truths that we have been speaking of, appeal to them as being reasonable, good for man, and they want to be on the safe side.

I bear you my testimony, my brethren and sisters, that I know the Gospel is true, and know that it is indeed the power of God unto happiness and joy in this life, and salvation and exaltation in the world to come. I admonish you with great earnestness, my brethren and sisters, that you try, for your own sakes and for the sake of your children, and your children's children, and those who come within our gates, to be diligent and faithful in living up to the perfect law of God, which has been given for our guidance here and our eternal salvation.

May the Lord bless all Israel to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "Heavenly Father."

ELDER WALTER P. MONSON.

(President of Eastern States Mission.)

I rejoice, my brethren and sisters, in the opportunity afforded me of meeting with the Latter-day Saints in our annual and semi-annual conferences. I recognize in the lives of the Latter-day Saints, who are looked upon as being a peculiar and choice people of the Lord, that there is not the ordinariness that is usually found in professing Christians in the world. I rejoice in knowing that my parents had the courage and fortitude of character to leave the old country and come unto this goodly land as Pioneers, where they could raise their family in the air

of freedom and religious liberty. I rejoice in being made partaker of the numerous blessings of the New and Everlasting Covenant, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as partly enumerated by Elder Richards this morning.

I have a firm and abiding testimony in the truth of the message which we bear to the world. My heart is made glad on this occasion by having the opportunity of bearing my humble testimony before my brethren and sisters, that I know God lives, and that Jesus is the Christ. I thank the Lord that this Church was not born out of the division and dissension which has been prevalent in the man-made religions, but that it has been born of God, and is sanctioned by Him.

When I spoke here six months ago, I referred to the passage of scripture found in the second chapter of I Peter, wherein it says that "Ye are a peculiar people, a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood," and said that I rejoiced in the truth of that passage of scripture as applying to the Latter-day Saints. When I returned to New York, I found published, in the *Christian Statesman*, a most scurrilous article with respect to the Latter-day Saints, making ridicule of this statement quoted from the writings of St. Peter, who stood close to the Master in his life's mission. If the Latter-day Saints are not that peculiar people, where will you find them? Where is that peculiar people, that chosen generation, that royal Priesthood?

It seems hardly necessary for the President of the United States to suggest to Latter-day Saints that this day be devoted to prayers for peace, because it has ever been the burden of our message to the world,