

April 1920 Andrew Johnson

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NINETIETH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

Of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints



Held in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall,
Salt Lake City, Utah, April 4, 5, 6, 1920
With a full report of the Discourses.

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church in all the world sets such a high standard for its adherents, for there is no double standard of morality taught in the revelations of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The man indeed is more the criminal than the woman. That is what is taught, that is what we try to practice. Now is that bad or is it good? If it is bad, then the Prophet Joseph Smith may have been a deceiver. If it is all good, and we know it is good, all of it good and righteous; then it must follow as the night the day that the Prophet Joseph Smith did see the visions one hundred years ago. These are the fruits of "Mormonism." The young man, Joseph Smith, was not a falsifier. This tree which was planted one hundred years ago has borne good fruit and not evil. Then there can be no mistake; his testimony must be true, it cannot be gainsaid. As I said, the logic of the case is irrefutable. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang: "Now let us rejoice," and the conference adjourned until Tuesday morning at 10 a. m.

Prayer was offered by Elder John W. Hart of the Rigby stake of Zion.

THIRD DAY

Conference continued in the tabernacle, Tuesday morning, April 6. President Heber J. Grant called the meeting to order at 10 o'clock.

The choir and congregation sang, "O ye mountains high," by President Charles W. Penrose, the hymn being read by President Grant before being sung. (See L. D. S. Hymn Book, p. 376.)

Elder Mark Austin, President of the Fremont stake of Zion, offered the opening prayer.

Choir and congregation sang, "Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear."

ELDER GEO. F. RICHARDS

Ninety years ago today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in Fayette, Seneca county, New York, with six members, and today we celebrate in conference the anniversary of that glorious event.

OUR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IMPRESSIVE AND GLORIOUS.

One hundred years ago, possibly today, that other great event transpired when God the Eternal Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, condescended to appear unto the boy Joseph Smith, not yet fifteen years of age, whom the Lord had raised up to represent him in the ushering in of the gospel dispensation of the fulness of times. In our conference we have been celebrating also this glorious event, and taking, in connection with our conference sessions, the presentation last even-

ing, by Brother Evan Stephens and the choir, of that beautiful cantata, "The Vision," with the words so appropriate, the story so beautifully told and set to music and sung with such inspiration, I feel that the celebration has been most fitting, impressive, and glorious.

I was pleased to hear expressions from some distinguished visitors we had with us yesterday that they were profoundly impressed by our services. I feel sure, that all those who have attended this conference, being honest in their hearts, and desiring the uplift of humanity, have been similarly impressed, and I have felt, during this conference, as no doubt you have also, that it only requires time for this, our religion, to make its way. "Mormonism" is in the ascendency. I rejoice with all my heart to be identified with this work which I know is true. I know that there is in it the power of God unto salvation in this life and in the life to come. And though we have been in a minority, and are still, so far as members are concerned, the time will come when the truths which we represent, which we are trying to live, and which we have preached to the world for nearly a hundred years, will triumph and prevail over error.

SIGNIFICANCE OF JOSEPH'S GREAT VISION.

The importance of the Great Vision referred to, justifies, I think, directing my remarks particularly thereto, notwithstanding nearly all of the speakers in the conference have spoken upon that subject. I would call attention by reading again a verse from the sayings of Joseph himself, telling his own story, so that we may be refreshed in our minds. In regard to what the Son told Joseph, he says: "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'"

I know not, my brethren and sisters, how offensive this statement is to the sectarian world, but we accept it as the words of God and not of men, and we think that they are defensible. For instance, the saying that Joseph was to join with none of them, for they were all wrong, that means to us that there had been a departure from the truth, and from the Church that was instituted in the days of the Savior. Now then, let us reason upon this for a moment. I might call your attention, in connection with this matter, to a saying of the Lord through his servant Isaiah, in regard to his knowledge of things which are to be, recorded in the 46th chapter of Isaiah: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times all things that are not yet done." The Prophet Amos says: "Surely the Lord God doeth nothing but he revealeth his secrets to his servants, the prophets." Whether or not we might call the apostasy a secret, it certainly was known to the Lord in advance and we might reason thus: If there was to be a universal

apostasy from the Church, then the Lord would reveal that important fact to his servants, the prophets.

Joseph Smith, a boy fourteen years of age, however, had not studied this proposition out in this way, to reach the deductions that we have reached, but by a study of the scriptures, we do find that the Lord, through his prophets, did predict the apostate conditions which were to be. And reasoning a little further we conclude that if there had been a universal apostasy such a thing would be of record. So we consult the histories by men who have written upon ecclesiastical subjects, and we find the apostasy given in minute detail, step by step, until it had become universal. "The earth had become defiled under the inhabitants thereof," for they had transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant. Men would wander from sea to sea, and from the north even unto the south, seeking the words of the Lord and could not find them. So far, therefore, as this declaration is concerned, there is sufficient evidence before us to prove that the statement is true that they were all wrong.

Now in regard to that other statement: All their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that seems a serious arraignment of churches, and their creeds. Let us consider that a moment. What constitutes or may constitute an abomination in the sight of God? It does seem to me that the belief in and advocacy of that which is not true and the making of it a part of religious creeds must be abominable in the sight of him who is the God of truth. If the Savior had not told Joseph this great fact, the evidence of it was before him, and he would no doubt have discovered it in later years as his judgment developed, for he knew that in the creeds everywhere it was taught that God is a personage having no body, no parts, nor passions. Joseph now saw before him the Father, not such as was represented by the creeds, but an immortal, glorified being, and with him his Son. Of this there could be no mistake, for the one, introducing the other to Joseph, said: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." There Joseph saw the Father and the Son, the Son indeed in the very likeness and image of his father.

An examination of the creeds will reveal other principles there set forth which are man-made and are in conflict with the truth of heaven as it has been revealed and is recorded in the scriptures of the Holy Bible, as well as in the other standard works of this Church. It was a necessary thing that Joseph, whom the Lord had raised up to be his mouthpiece for the ushering in of this great gospel dispensation, preparing the way for the great and glorious coming of our Lord, should have a perfect knowledge of the Father and of the Son, that he might be able to stand and to be secure in his position and to accomplish his work which the Lord had for him to do, and a wonderful work it has been.

When our first parents were shut out from the Garden of Eden, they were told to worship the Lord their God all the days of their lives, and as they prayed, we are told that the voice of the Lord came

from toward the Garden of Eden, for they were shut out from his presence, and the Apostle Paul declares to the Corinthians that we are required to live by faith and not by sight, but, notwithstanding this fact, the Lord has left abundant evidences of his existence, of his power, and of his love. We have the argument of the Apostle Paul upon this point, which I consider is very forceful. He says: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JOSEPH AN EVIDENCE OF THE DIVINITY
OF HIS CALLING.

As the things which God has done are evidences of his existence, power, and love, so the things that were accomplished by Joseph Smith are an evidence of the divinity of his calling and that he was supported and sustained by his Father in heaven. Not only did he have a visitation from the Father and the Son, but the Father also spoke to him by the mouth of the angel Moroni, who delivered to Joseph the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, which book contains a fulness of the gospel as delivered by Christ, our Savior himself to the ancient inhabitants of this American continent, and this in fulfilment of the predictions that there should be a restoration of the gospel by an angel, which thing could not have been, had there not first been a falling away.

The organizing of the Church, ninety years ago today, was the beginning of the establishment of the Church and Kingdom of God that was to be set up, according to the predictions of the prophets, never to be thrown down nor given to another people. It is to fill the whole world. The perfection and efficiency of the Church organization prove that Joseph was divinely inspired. By the mouth of John the Baptist the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood were conferred upon Joseph and Oliver which enabled them to baptize, a power and authority that was not known and that did not exist in the sectarian churches.

The keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood also were conferred by Peter, James and John, enabling the Prophet, with those who should assist him, to accomplish all the work pertaining to this great latter-day dispensation.

Moses committed unto him the keys of the gathering of scattered Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. Zion is being gathered in fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets under this spirit of gathering that came through Moses.

Elias conferred the keys of the Abrahamic dispensation in which he lived, and Elijah the keys of the turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse. That spirit, too, is abroad in the world. Temples are built, and the work is being accomplished for the dead as well as for the living, and all these things, with the thou-

sands of other great accomplishments under the direction and organization of the Prophet Joseph, prove him to be a true prophet of God.

In view of the importance of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, it is only reasonable to believe that our Father would reserve one of the greatest of those noble spirits who were faithful in their previous state of existencce, to come forth and lead the people of this dispensation as his mouthpiece and prophet. This we believe was done, and that Joseph Smith was one of the greatest prophets that ever lived, and that his life's work was one of the greatest that ever a prophet accomplished.

There is another evidence which is more convincing to me, even than all these, and that is the witness of the Spirit of God that comes through the Holy Ghost, bearing testimony to my soul. I am convinced in every fiber of my being that Joseph Smith was indeed a divinely inspired prophet of God, and that his story of the vision is true, and I bear this testimony to you today in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A duet, "Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning," was sung by J. R. Boshard and Florence Meldrum.

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

The opening remarks of the President at this conference were very inspiring and gave promise of a rich outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord upon the people. It has been so—a time of peace, a time of instruction, of thanksgiving and praise and of pure joy.

ETERNAL AND TEMPORAL VALUES.

I would like to say a few words this morning, my brethren and sisters, upon the subject of investments, and I will take for my text the saying of a noted writer to this effect: "Always distinguish between what is of eternal value, and of what is a mere temporal ease." This is a significant remark. It is worthy of the profoundest consideration. There are many things with which we come in contact, many things of importance, but there are some things that are more important than others.

This is the land of Zion in which we dwell. It is a blessed land, it is a fruitful land. The soil readily responds to the industry of the farmer, and by his toil means come into his possession. The wages of the laboring man today are very good. He gets a splendid reward for his efforts and thereby means come into his hands. It is true, that we are confronted with high cost of living, but notwithstanding this, with many of our people, perhaps hundreds and hundreds of them, there is a surplus, and, I believe, as remarked by Brother Stephen L. Richards, that with this surplus there comes the responsibility of trusteeship. The means that come into our hands are a