

April
1925

**NINETY-FIFTH
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

**Of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latterday Saints**

**Held in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**April 4, 5 and 6
1925**

*With a Full Report of All
the Discourses*



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have found response in the hearts of some of these our Father's children who do not understand the truth. Again let me express my gratitude for the blessings that I enjoy. My heart is full of thanksgiving for all that has been bestowed upon me and upon you. God grant that we may sustain his name and his Church, that we will uphold the hands of those who preside over us, and by so doing continue to be worthy of that assurance that passeth understanding, that we are indeed the children of God, heirs of salvation in his celestial kingdom, as a result of observing his laws and keeping his commandments, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A ladies' chorus sang, "Beneath the Lord's safe wing," accompanied by Mrs. Ellen Sheimer on the violin and Miss R. Matsen on the piano, John J. McClellan at the organ.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

A great orator standing before his audience made use of this appeal: "Friends, Romans, countrymen—lend me your ears." I have no thought of attempting an oration on this occasion, or on any occasion, but in a very humble way to speak to you. I am not asking for your attention, but I do crave your hearts, your faith and a silent prayer that the Lord, by his holy Spirit, will lead me to say the things he would have you, my brethren and sisters and friends, to hear. I feel very greatly honored in being called to address this large congregation on the afternoon of the Sunday of our general conference. I also feel a very great responsibility in undertaking to lead in thought those who are present, and others, perhaps hundreds of thousands, who are hearing my words this afternoon as they are broadcasted over the nation.

IN HARMONY WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE CONFERENCE

I want to say that I rejoice exceedingly in the proceedings of this conference thus far, in the spirit of the occasion, in the beautiful music which has been rendered, the testimonies which have been borne, and the instructions which have been imparted. I feel that I am in complete harmony with this spirit, and with all the proceedings of the conference; that I can endorse without reservation the instructions which have been given, and that I can join my brethren with sincere testimony that I do know that this is the work of the Lord, the plan and power of God for man's salvation.

I rejoice exceedingly that I was born of Latter-day Saint parentage, and that my heart has been inclined to love and obey the truth. I sincerely regret my imperfections and follies of life, and trust that my repentance may be genuine and enduring that my sins may be forgiven. I desire to yield obedience unto every requirement of the gospel

and to do the will of the Lord in all things and to use my influence with others persuading them to do likewise.

LOVE OF GOD THE FIRST GREAT COMMANDMENT

The ideals held up before us are greater perhaps than those possessed by any other people in the world. The gospel law which has come to us is that by which our Savior lived. It was the living of the gospel that made him what he was, and what he is, the glorified Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. It is our privilege to follow in his footsteps, observing the same high standard of life, yielding obedience unto law and authority, and to become joint heirs with him in all that our Father possesses. It is my constant desire and prayer that I may be able to obey fully that first great commandment—to love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind; and in order that I may do so, I need to count my blessings often, naming them o'er and o'er, that by so doing I may appreciate more and more the mercy and kindness of my heavenly Father to me. This increases my love for him, and I believe it gives me strength and power better to meet the requirements of the gospel, that are made upon me.

LOVE OF FELLOWMEN THE SECOND GREAT COMMANDMENT

I desire also to observe, as fully as possible, that second great commandment, to love my neighbor as myself, and this is perhaps more difficult. I know that I should so love my fellowmen, that I would be able and willing to suffer for them, and even to die for them if necessary, as Christ has died for me. I ought so to love mankind that I would be willing to go to the ends of the earth in the preaching of this gospel of the kingdom to them. I should so love them that I would be able to meet insult and injury, persecution and even death without having in my soul the spirit of retaliation. If I were observing this second great commandment as I ought to do, I would feel as did the Prophet Stephen when he was being stoned to death, who prayed: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" or as did the Savior, while upon the cross, who in his suffering and dying moments, prayed the Father to forgive those who were putting him to death, for, said he, "they know not what they do." Men of the world do not understand the things of the Spirit of God for they are known only by the Spirit of God, which gave them. Some men while thinking that they are doing God service, are working directly against his will and purposes, and some not only persecute but kill those who are trying to serve the Lord and to be messengers of righteousness for him.

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

There is the case of Saul of Tarsus. I think that his case should ever be before us—a man of intelligence, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, living among the Saints of his day, and yet he engaged with those who persecuted the Saints, even holding the clothes of those who stoned to death the Prophet Stephen, and yet when the Lord took him in hand and converted him, he became the great Paul the Apostle to the

Gentiles, and was ready to endure any kind of persecution or death for the gospel's sake. After this conversion he made the declaration that what he did while persecuting the Saints he did conscientiously, believing that he was doing God service. So, brethren and sisters, we ought to look upon the world of mankind with a great degree of leniency and of charity. We should realize that while they may be zealous in their opposition to the work in which we are engaged and to us as a people, they may be conscientious and, if so, the mercy of God will reach out to them.

IMPRESSED WITH THE GREAT NUMBERS OF THE SAINTS

I have been impressed, in this conference, with the numbers of the Latter-day Saints, and with their faithfulness. This vast congregation, filling the tabernacle to overflowing, represents possibly two percent of the present population of the Church. I estimate that it would take about fifty such tabernacles to hold all of the present membership of the Church. Then, remember that tomorrow will be the ninety-fifth anniversary of the birth of this Church organization. And think of all the faithful men and women who during these ninety-five years have been members of this Church, have lived their lives of faithfulness and have gone beyond, and we will then begin to realize the magnitude of this work and what has been accomplished.

TEMPLE WORK THE PAST YEAR—ITS IMPORTANCE

In the temples of the Church there have been 477,000 baptisms for the dead performed during the past year, and more than half that number of endowments have been administered. When we think of this and realize that with each succeeding year there will be an increasing number of such baptisms, we will begin to realize the growth of the Church, especially if we may properly call those dead persons as members of the Church for whom baptism has been performed.

President Wilford Woodruff, speaking from this stand, upon the importance of this work devolving upon the Latter-day Saints, the redeeming of their dead, said:

"Ninety-nine out of every hundred," yea, said he, "nine hundred ninety-nine out of every thousand of those for whom this work is done vicariously will gladly receive the work." I feel sure the Lord is pleased with what the Saints have done in the way of preaching the gospel in all the world as a witness before the end shall come. If it is possible for us to increase our efforts and our numbers, and do a greater work, of course we are anxious to do it. We should neglect no part of this great responsibility resting upon us, toward the living and the dead, looking to their salvation; for it is the work and purpose of the Eternal Father to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

AN EVIDENCE OF THE FAITH AND DEVOTION OF THE SAINTS

I feel very happy, brethren and sisters, in the gospel of Jesus Christ, in your fellowship, and the association which I have with you and in observing your faithfulness. Just one week ago today, while I

was visiting in the Uintah stake of Zion, a count was made of those present, which revealed the fact that twenty-seven percent of the entire population of that stake, were in attendance. We have had higher percentages and lower. Circumstances are not alike in all the stakes, but to me this is an evidence of faithfulness and devotion on the part of the people. We have hundreds and thousands of men in the various stakes of Zion who scrupulously observe to keep the Word of Wisdom, and who are paying their tithes and who are devoting days, months and years of their time, and giving of their ability to carry on this work. Men and women could not be expected to do such things if they did not know of the truth of this work, that it is God's work and not man's. I rejoice in the testimony which my brethren and sisters have of its divinity.

AS TO MATTERS FINANCIAL

I am happy today, brethren and sisters, because the day before the opening of this conference I issued my check in favor of the bishop of my ward for the amount of my tithing in full. Oh, some may say: What does that amount to? It amounts only to a tenth of my interest, but that is more than some do. I would to the Lord that all the members of this Church could say that they have paid their tithing in full, a tenth of their interest and of their earnings. It is only a little thing but it makes me very happy. The day before the opening of this conference I drew my check to redeem a note, the last note that stands against me, and today I am out of debt, a very happy man. I thank God for this. It is not much, is it? I wish all the Latter-day Saints could say as much in truth. In my associations among the people in the stakes I have observed their financial distress, and bondage, and my heart has been made sore and in a sense to bleed because of this. I believe that much of it, brethren and sisters, might have been averted had we given a little more careful thought and consideration, and exercised a little more wisdom before making our investments and speculations. Oh, brethren, if we would go to the Lord in that same earnestness before making these speculations that we do when we find ourselves in trouble, asking him to help us to extricate ourselves, I am sure we would be kept out of much of this difficulty. Brethren, we ought not to invest in anything, nor to engage in any enterprise that we cannot take to the Lord or to our brethren and ask advice and counsel upon, and conscientiously ask God's blessings upon it. Now I admonish my brethren and sisters—for the brethren should take counsel with their wives—that they heed the admonition of the authorities of this Church, keep out of debt. If you are in debt, practice economy, pay your just debts and obligations as soon as you can, and make peace with your fellowmen, with the Lord, and with your own conscience; then you will be happy; also be faithful in meeting your obligations with the Lord and you shall be saved.

May God help and bless all to this end, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.