

NINETY-NINTH
SEMI-ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Held in the Tabernacle
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

October 5, 6 and 7, 1928

*With a Full Report of All
the Discourses*



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AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened promptly at 2 o'clock p. m., President Grant opening the meeting by announcing that the congregation would sing the hymn, "How firm a foundation."

The invocation was offered by Elder William T. Jack, President of the Cassia stake.

Jessie and Charlie Williams sang a duet, "Proud? Yes, of our home in the mountains."

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

This, my brethren and sisters, I regard as a tremendous responsibility as well as a wonderful opportunity. As I have anticipated this call and have meditated on what I might say that would be proper, my mind at times has been illumined by the Spirit, to see and feel the truth of this work in a way that if presented in the same light to others might be profitable; and then the vision of these things would in a measure fade away. By this I have been made to realize my dependence upon the Lord on such occasions.

I realize that it is quite possible for those of superior minds to profit more by the thoughts which may arise in their minds as a result of what is said by the speaker than from just what is said. The mind goes out farther and brings in material relative to the same subject and is edified thereby. I hope that all my hearers may, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, enlarge upon that which I may say and that to their profit. I also realize that it is impossible for me to make you feel what I do not feel myself. It is my desire at this time by my remarks to cause you to see and feel the beauty and the truth of this great latter-day work.

THE NEED OF REVELATION

The world had no greater need than that of the revelation given through a fourteen-year-old boy in the Spring of 1820, a revelation of God the Eternal Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. At that time spiritual darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people; and that deplorable condition continues, except where people have accepted what was revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We have but to refer to the creeds of the different denominations to be convinced of this fact. I would refer you to the "Confession of Faith" of the Presbyterian Church, which church has a following, I presume, of millions of people; and these members of the church have by their membership subscribed to the things which are written in the "Confession of Faith" as follows:

"In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost."

Quoting from "Shorter Catechism," I read this:

"There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

The question is asked in the Catechism: "Are there more Gods than one?" And the answer is: "There is but one only, the living and true God.

"We must not conceive of him as being like, in form, any thing in either heaven or earth."

Those who wrote this part of the creed of the Presbyterian Church did not know God the Eternal Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, as they are. The world at that time was in need of new revelation of God the Eternal Father and of his Son Jesus Christ.

We have also in the first Article of Religion of the great Anglican Church, the headquarters of which are found in Great Britain, which church also has a following of many millions of people subscribing to a creed, a professed belief, very similar to that which I have read. It is as follows:

"There is one living and true God everlasting, without body, parts or passions, of infinite wisdom, power and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things visible and invisible, and in the unity of this Godhead there are three personages of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

Coming down to a later date, let me read you what the Bishop of Liverpool of that Anglican Church had to say about conditions. This was on March 21st, 1912, as reported in the *Lancashire Daily Post*, and is as follows:

"The Bishop of Liverpool performed the consecration ceremony at Holy Trinity Church, Southport, yesterday. In his sermon he said, one of the great needs of the Christian Church was power. They were living in an age of great material power; they had covered the land with new and restored churches; they had spent great sums of money on colleges and ecclesiastical buildings; they had improved and enriched their services; they had planted new missions in foreign lands, and their settlements in all the great towns. Religion today was wearing silver slippers, and moving in high places, and yet he ventured to think, there was a strange want of power about the Church of God, not only in their branch, but about every other branch.

"The Church at present seemed almost overmatched by the power of darkness. Sometimes it seemed as if the darkness was gaining on the light. What was the cause of the strange paralysis that had befallen the Church?"

An admission that a paralysis had befallen the Church:

"He believed that the Church needed today a re-discovery of God; he believed the Church was weak today because God was so distant, so unreal, so dimly seen. Today they saw the results of that dim vision of the distant God. They saw on all sides unsettlement in the faith, slackness in the spiritual life, men losing their grip on those great and vital truths which had made Christendom what it was, refusing to face the spectre of the mind, content to drift and to leave things in suspense, and this weak unworthy spirit was beginning to affect our whole national life."

It is an admission of the importance of having a correct understanding or conception of God the Eternal Father and of his Son Jesus Christ. The world I say was in need of the revelation that came from heaven through a fourteen-year-old boy in 1820, as well as all the other revelations that were given subsequently to that same individual, the Prophet Joseph Smith. This was a wonderful revelation, the vision of the Prophet Joseph, wherein the Father and the Son appeared to him, and the Father, speaking to him, introduced his Son, who answered his questions satisfactorily. He saw that God the Eternal Father is a personage, having body and parts like unto man, or in other words that man is really and actually in his image and likeness, but that God is an immortal being, a glorified and exalted being, and that his Son Jesus Christ is like him. There was no removing this testimony from the mind of Joseph Smith, although it came to him as a mere boy.

"A MARVELOUS WORK AND A WONDER"

We read in Isaiah, 29th chapter, a prediction of the coming forth of this great work. The Lord speaks to his servant Isaiah, saying: (If you read the context you must be convinced that it refers to this particular time when the gospel is restored.)

"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

This one revelation—the vision of the boy Joseph—marked a fulfilment of this prediction. As we see the Church as a whole today, the wonderful effective work of this organization with the gospel and its principles and ordinances, scriptural appealing and true, we are led to the conclusion without a doubt that it is "a marvelous work and a wonder."

Men and women outside of this Church have been able to see this and they have wondered at it. The thing that is a wonderment to me is that when they have given this consideration to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the gospel which we have received and which we are teaching to the world and have done for more than a century, and which we are trying to live, that they should consider it the product of the mind of man and not give God the glory. It is a wonderment to me that the Bishop of Liverpool, after nearly a century had elapsed after God had given this great vision and revelation to the world, should not be able to see the truth, to understand the light that has come unto us, as many, many others are not able to see and understand.

APPRECIATIVE OF LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE

And this makes me individually appreciative that I have been able

to see the light and that I have received the light, that I do not only believe in God the Eternal Father as a personal, an exalted and glorified being, but that I do know that he lives and that he is the God of this world, the very eternal Father of the spirits of all men, and that Jesus Christ, who was with him in the appearance to Joseph Smith, is the firstborn of the Father in the spirit, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

We as a people, my brethren and sisters, should rejoice in this light and knowledge that has come unto us and the testimony our Heavenly Father has given us concerning these things.

CHOSEN BEFORE BIRTH FOR SPECIAL MISSION

Joseph Smith was chosen, as we believe, from before he was born for a special mission, the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times. We read in the third chapter of the Book of Abraham that the Lord showed to his servant Abraham intelligences, the spirits of men. He told Abraham that they were among his noble ones whom he had chosen to be his rulers; and said he, "Thou, Abraham, art one of them." They were to be rulers in the sense that Abraham was a ruler in his day, a servant of God and of the people. It is just as easy to believe that Joseph Smith was one of those noble spirits, that he was reserved of the Lord to come forth in this last day, to be used as a mouthpiece of the Lord, his prophet, in the establishment of his Church and Kingdom anew upon the earth, and the restoration of the everlasting gospel. So we Latter-day Saints believe and so we testify.

I bear my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, that I do know of the truth of this work. It is God's work. It is his plan instituted in heaven from before the foundation of the world, the only plan that God has instituted, the only plan that has in it the power of God unto salvation unto those who obey. I pray God that he may help us, for we need his help on every hand, that we who have embraced the gospel may remain true and faithful.

SERVE THE LORD

We heard yesterday a message, an impressive message, in three words: "Hold the faith," and that reminded me of what I heard just a few days ago in attending a conference at Ogden. A little story of a cobbler who was asked what his business was. He answered, "My business is to serve God. I mend shoes for a living."

Serve the Lord! A three word message worthy of our remembering; and if I were to add another three word message, my brethren and sisters, it would be this: Live your religion. And I will make this promise, that if we do live our religion it will mean for us joy and happiness in this life and eternal life and exaltation in the world to come. I bear you my testimony to this end in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.