

[CENTENNIAL NUMBER]

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Tabernacle
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*With a Full Report of All
the Discourses*



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liberty that have arisen in our own land—for George Washington, “the father of his country,” who led our forces in establishing this free republic, founded upon the principles of human liberty; for Abraham Lincoln, the great emancipator, who under the inspiration of the Almighty, carried on the fight to preserve unto us these sacred rights that they might not perish from the earth; for Woodrow Wilson, who led the American forces in the greatest struggle of history for human liberty, and that these principles that we love so dearly shall be extended to all mankind. The influence of these great champions of human liberty will be felt by the inhabitants of this world throughout the ages which are to come.

Let us, then, as Latter-day Saints, rejoice in the precious boon of liberty secured unto us by that great palladium of our inherent rights, the Constitution, and manifest our loyalty to it by obedience to it and the laws which have been enacted in carrying out its provisions. Let us also rejoice in the free agency of man which permeates the Gospel of Jesus Christ and manifest our appreciation of it by our obedience to that Gospel which is the “Truth that will make us free.” This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,” from the oratorio, “The Messiah,” was sung by the choir.

Elder George F. Whitehead, President of the St. George Temple, pronounced the benediction, and the Conference adjourned until 2:00 p. m.

AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened at 2:00 p. m.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The music for this meeting was furnished by the Provo Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Gerrit de Jong.

The choir and congregation sang “Come, come, ye Saints.”

Elder David K. Udall, President of the Arizona Temple, offered the opening prayer.

The choir sang the anthem, “As the hart pants after the water-brooks.”

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

MEANING OF IMMORTALITY

At a time when Moses was caught up into an exceeding high mountain and face to face talked with God, an account of which is given in the first chapter of the Book of Moses, in the Pearl of Great Price, the God of heaven and earth made use of this very significant and impressive expression:

“Behold, this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

Immortality and eternal life as here used by the Lord, I understand to mean exaltation in the celestial kingdom. That represents the aim and object—the end in view, with the Lord, in all his works. To obtain an exaltation was the end we had in view in the beginning. It should be so with us now and throughout our life.

The cobbler seemed to understand this principle who on being asked, "What is your vocation or business?" answered, "My business is to serve the Lord—I mend shoes for a living."

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The purpose of our existence in this life then is to prepare for eternal life in the world to come. The Lord in the beginning instituted the plan by which this might be accomplished. The plan provided is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, including the work of a Savior, and Jesus Christ is the Chosen One. No other plan has the Lord provided for man's salvation; and any other plan that might be presented from any source would be rejected of the Lord, and should be by us, also, just as was the plan proposed by Lucifer in the beginning.

Next to our own salvation, of importance and interest to us, is the salvation of those whom the Lord has given to us—our own flesh and blood; and then the salvation of others—the *living* and the *dead*.

The greatest service one can render to his fellowman is that of assisting him to obtain salvation. Such is the character, directly or indirectly, of all our church work, including the work of the home ministry and that of the ministry abroad. It is pure religion and undefiled. Its importance calls for our very best efforts, as individuals and as a church.

EARLY PERSECUTIONS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has lived through a century of varied experiences, and has passed through much tribulation. It has builded cities and temples from which its members have been driven by ruthless mobs—self-styled enemies of the Mormon people. Our Prophet Joseph and his Patriarch brother, Hyrum, were murdered in cold blood by a brutal mob, for their religion's sake. Many of the saints have suffered death at the hands of their enemies and through exposure to the inclement elements while being driven from their once peaceful and happy homes.

My father's brother, George Spencer Richards, at fifteen years of age was fairly butchered with about twenty other members of the Church, men, women and children, at Haun's Mill, Missouri, Oct. 30, 1838, and their bodies were thrown into a well for burial. No word or pen can adequately picture the physical and mental distress and suffering experienced by the Latter-day Saints during the early part of the century, while representing the Lord in the establishment of his Church, and the restoration of the Gospel. But Mormonism subsists and ever will, for God is at the helm.

The accomplishments of the Church and its people during the first

century of its existence are marvelous and wonderful. The pageant being presented in connection with this centennial conference is portraying in an impressive manner some of the leading features of our work and accomplishments. But, notwithstanding all that the Church and its members have accomplished during the first century of its existence, to which our minds are being directed during this conference, there is much that we have undertaken that we have been unable to accomplish. However, we are in no wise discouraged.

SACRIFICES REQUIRED IN THE GOSPEL

We could scarcely hope to be more successful in an effort to convert the world than were the Lord's people of former gospel dispensations. Mormonism is just about as popular today as was Christianity in the primitive Church. The Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, is accepted about as generally today as were Jesus and his disciples in their day, or as were the prophets who preceded them. The Gospel truth never has been generally accepted. It is a standard of life that is too high for most folks to live. Jesus Christ is the only person who through life lived up to the Gospel standards in all respects and at all times. The best of saints are but striving to walk in the footsteps of the Master. Many have not the courage to undertake it and therefore do not embrace the Gospel.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of sacrifice and self-abnegation, such that too many are willing to hazard their chances of salvation rather than to receive the Gospel and make the necessary sacrifices. Salvation is a gift of God freely given to his children who are willing to pay the price—the price to be paid is acceptance of the Gospel and obedience to its precepts. Certain principles are to be accepted, ordinances to be received, commandments to be kept, laws to be obeyed, service to be rendered, evils to be avoided and sacrifices to be made.

It is no small matter for one to give to his church year after year one-tenth of his interests and income and meet other financial obligations of church membership. It is no small sacrifice made by many thousands of our people in leaving home and loved ones and going abroad to engage in the ministry and missionary work from two to four years at a time, and in many instances filling two or more such missions. The home ministry of the Church also makes important demands upon the time and efforts of its members. Our faith in the words of the Savior is absolute and he has declared most emphatically that unless we are willing to lay down our lives for his cause, we are unworthy to be his disciples. We desire to be worthy disciples of the Master, and if we are, we will be willing to lay down our lives for his cause; and if we are thus willing followers of our Lord, there is no demand that can be made upon us, looking to the advancement of his work, to which we will not cheerfully respond.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL FOR A CENTURY

Our present corps of missionaries consists of about two thousand

men and women scattered throughout the various nations of the earth and the islands of the seas. In money and time it is costing the Church and the membership thereof about three million dollars annually. For and during a hundred years we have been carrying on this missionary work in the discharge of a sacred religious duty and obligation to preach this Gospel of the Kingdom in all the world as a witness unto all nations before the end comes; and with a view to rendering to mankind a service the greatest one person can render another. To make such sacrifices requires faith, conversion, and courage such as but few possess.

For a hundred years we have tried to convince the world of the truth that there is a God in heaven; that he is the Creator of all things, the Giver of all good; that he is the Father of the spirits of all men; that Jesus Christ is the first born of the Father in the spirit and the only begotten of the Father in the flesh; that under the direction of the Father, the Son is Creator of all things, and that he is the Savior and Redeemer of the world, the very Messiah.

For a century we have been telling the world that God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, are separate, immortal and glorified beings, each having a body of flesh and bones and spirit as tangible as the body of man, and that we are all created and made in his image and likeness; that all his attributes are manifest in us, his children, they having been inherited by us through our spiritual birth; that by perfecting these God-like attributes we become like him in character as well as being like him in form.

For a century we have been trying to convince the world of the fact that God our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ, have revealed themselves anew in this Dispensation of the Fulness of Times to and through the instrumentality of a boy less than fifteen years of age; that in answer to earnest, anxious prayer, both the Father and the Son visited him and talked with him, and made known to him the fact that there had been a universal departure from the faith and that the Gospel was about to be restored and that he, Joseph Smith, if faithful, would become their representative in accomplishing the restoration.

For a century we have been trying to show to the world that the scriptures teach the truth pertaining to God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ as revealed to Joseph Smith by their heavenly presence.

While addressing a class of college students who were in training for the ministry, upon the subject of Deity, Henry Ward Beecher said:

"I am compelled to say that I must form an ideal of God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ is indispensable to me. My nature needs to fashion the thought of God, though I know him to be a spirit, into something that shall nearly or remotely represent that which I know. I hold before my mind a glorified form, therefore; but, after all the glory, whatever may be the nimbus and the effluence around about it, it is to me the form of a glorified man. And I therefore fashion to myself out of the spirit, that which has to me, as it were,

a divine presence and a divine being—namely, a divine man." (Lectures on Preaching, page 129.)

If Henry Ward Beecher and the Latter-day Saints find in the scriptures evidence that God is a divine and glorified man, why cannot and why do not other religionists do likewise? The facts remain that despite our efforts the bulk of the Christian-Sectarian world prefer to believe God to be something different from what he really is.

For a century we have been trying to convince the world of the fact that there had been a general falling away from the truth prior to 1820, when the Father and Son appeared to Joseph Smith, that the authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel had been withdrawn from the earth, in fulfilment of prophecy, and that the Gospel in its fulness, with all its ordinances, gifts and blessings has since been restored, with authority to administer its ordinances to the repentant believer.

For a century we have tried to show to the world from the scriptures that baptism is necessary to man's salvation; that baptism signifies immersion and that immersion was the only form of baptism known and practiced in the primitive Church until several centuries A. D., and that the changing of the mode of baptism from immersion to pouring or sprinkling is without authority and fulfils the prediction of Isaiah with respect to the last times, "The earth, also, is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." (Isaiah 24:5.)

For a century we have taught that children who die before arriving at the age of accountability, eight years, have eternal life, being redeemed from the foundation of the world through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ; and that for such, baptism is not necessary, nor approved of the Lord.

For a century we have denounced pedo—or infant—baptism as being unscriptural, unreasonable and in conflict with revealed truth; yet the practice of sprinkling infants continues. There are certain qualifications candidates for baptism must possess, as prescribed by the scriptures, which only those of understanding can possess. If their mode of baptism were right, and their subjects worthy and eligible, without the necessary authority which is found only in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, their administrations would be of no virtue as affecting the salvation of the candidates.

EXPERIENCE SAME AS IN FORMER DAYS

Our experience has not been unlike that of prophets and saints of other Gospel dispensations. We find Isaiah saying:

"Who hath believed our report?" (Isaiah 53:1.)

And the author of the epistle to the Romans:

"But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias says, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16.)

And the words of the Savior:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37.)

Then Jesus said unto them:

"Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus and departed, and hid himself from them,

"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:35-40.)

If they believed not in Jesus who wrought such mighty miracles among them, and taught them as no other person could do, we will not be discouraged though but few believe *our* report.

It is a satisfaction to have been right, and a disappointment to have been wrong upon any question that may have engaged our attention; and the more important the question, the greater the satisfaction or the disappointment, as the case may be.

MEANING OF SALVATION

The most important question that has ever engaged the attention of man is that of salvation, of what it consists and how it may be obtained. There is, perhaps, no other question upon which there has been such a diversity of opinion and understanding.

As sure as there is a life beyond the grave and that the soul of man is immortal, and there is nothing more sure, the time will come when it will be universally known who are right and who are wrong in their understanding of salvation. Then will the satisfaction and the joy of those who have been right be supreme; and the disappointment and sorrow of those who have been wrong will be terrible to endure.

We who have accepted the true gospel of the Redeemer, and by so doing, know of the doctrine, would have our fellowmen to accept it also and thus avert the terrible consequences of a mistaken conception of the all-important question of salvation.

We have the responsibility to preach this Gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end shall come; and we are trying as a Church and the membership thereof to discharge ourselves of this important and sacred obligation.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH'S INSPIRED WORDS

In the language of the Prophet Joseph:

"Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be ex-

ceeding glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoner shall go free.

"Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud, and all ye seas and dry land tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the fields praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!

"Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a Church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple * * * a book containing the record of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance." (Doc. and Cov. 128:22-24.)

That we may be able to do so and be prepared for his second and glorious coming which is nigh at hand, is my humble prayer.

ELDER DAVID O. McKAY

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, *What seek Ye?* They said unto him, Rabbi, *where abidest thou?* He saith unto them, *Come and see.*"

"What seek ye?" "Master, where abidest thou?" "Come and see."

These three significant expressions were probably uttered immediately following the Savior's return from the Mount of Temptation. "What seek ye?" is the first recorded utterance of the Savior of men as he entered upon his public ministry. The question, "Master, where abidest thou?" was asked by two disciples of John the Baptist, undoubtedly, Andrew and John.

In that second question, I read some such meaning as this: "Rabbi, where can we find Messiah? Where may we obtain deliverance from the oppression of Rome, or, possibly, deliverance from the evils of our age?" The Savior's answer is most significant and important. If I may put it in my own words I read in that "Come and see," such a fact as this: If you will follow me, you yourselves may discover the way."

"WHAT SEEK YE?"

My purpose in calling your attention to this text this afternoon is to apply those questions to the world today. Suppose that the Son of Man said to mankind in the present age, "What seek ye?" what would