

One Hundred Tenth

SEMI-ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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With Report of Discourses



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Wherever I travel I hear complimentary comments regarding the Choir from the people whom I contact. It is remarkable the number of friends that this Choir has made for the Church since we commenced the broadcasts.

The Choir sang an anthem, "Onward Ye Peoples" (Sibelius).

Elder Henry W. Henderson, President of the Pocatello Stake, offered the opening prayer.

An anthem, "Faith of our Fathers" (Thompson), was sung by the Choir.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

When a man speaks by the power and authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, what he speaks will be scripture; it will be the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the word of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.

TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH OF THE LATTER-DAY WORK

I desire to speak to you this afternoon, my brethren and sisters and friends, as an oracle of God, and as a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ I bear my testimony to this vast congregation, to all my hearers, and to the world, so far as my word and testimony shall reach, that this work in which we as Latter-day Saints are engaged is the work of the Lord, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and has in it the power of God unto salvation.

I bear testimony that God the Eternal Father lives, a glorified and exalted personage, in whose image and likeness we his children are born and existing.

I bear testimony to you that the story told by Joseph Smith, whom God raised up to be a mighty prophet in the last days, pertaining to the visitation of the Father and the Son to him when he was a boy but fourteen years of age in the beginning of this Gospel dispensation, is true, that God has revealed himself anew to the world through Joseph Smith, so that the world may know him as he is.

I testify that the Son also is a personage having a body and parts, in whose image man is created and made, and that he is the Firstborn Son of God, the Eternal Father, in the spirit, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, our Brother, our Lord, our Savior and Redeemer.

I bear my testimony to you that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, and that through him the Lord has restored the Gospel as it was instituted in the Councils of Heaven before the world was, with all its gifts and blessings, power and authority and saving ordinances; authority to preach this Gospel of the kingdom in all the world and to administer its saving ordinances unto the children of men.

I testify that those who have succeeded the Prophet Joseph in the presidency of this Church have been men of God, his mouthpiece unto the Church and to the world: Presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and our present president, Heber J. Grant. God has been with these men and with his people and his work has become a marvelous work and a wonder in the earth. There never has been a time in this Church when there was not a majority of the Presidency and the Twelve steadfast and true to the Church, though we have seen dark days and apostasy, even among leading men of the Church.

SAFETY IN KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

My advice and counsel to the Latter-day Saints is that we keep near to the Authorities of this Church, and if we will follow their example and observe their teachings we will be on safe ground and cannot be undermined by the wiles and machinations of him who is the enemy of God and of man and who would destroy our faith and lead us from paths of virtue, truth, and honor, to degradation and to condemnation.

When we fail to keep the commandments of God we let down the bars and show our weakness unto the evil one, who is always on the alert to take advantage.

Brethren and sisters, the only safe course for us to take who are candidates for the blessings of salvation and eternal life is to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

When we attend to our religious duties, according to the light and knowledge which we have, we will receive from the Lord a manifestation of his good pleasure and approval, and without this approval we will not be able to take hold upon the blessings of eternal life and exaltation.

We have started in the straight way that leads to life everlasting, and are able to point the way to those who are in spiritual darkness, and this is a responsibility resting upon us concerning our fellowmen.

PURPOSE OF LIFE ON EARTH

We are not here on the earth for selfish purposes, nor for our own personal aggrandizement, we are not here to acquire the wealth of this world. We are here for the purpose of working out our salvation according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to make every preparation necessary for the life to come, and to assist the Lord in his work and purposes to save the souls of his children, whose souls are precious in his sight.

We are to follow the admonition of the Savior, and his example: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—and "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

The Lord expects us when he blesses us with the good things of this earth to remember those who are not so fortunate. We are to feed

the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort those who mourn, and minister unto those who are poor and needy, and thus become of that class to whom the Lord, when he shall come, shall say: "Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

THE SPIRIT OF GOD UNFOLDS MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES

The people of the earth are in need of teachers such as Philip who was sent by the Lord to the Ethiopian as he was on the way from Jerusalem. Our missionaries are of that type.

The things contained in the Bible are the things of God and are understood only by the Spirit of God. No prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. "For the prophecy came not in old time of the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost." That is how the scriptures, ancient and modern, have come to us. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

If people possess the Spirit of God in the same measure as did the prophets who wrote and spoke the things contained in the scriptures they would understand the scriptures the same as they were understood by the prophets who wrote and spoke the scriptures.

The Ethiopian had not taken the course to obtain the Holy Ghost, by which the things contained in the scriptures were given, by which they could be understood, and he needed a teacher who had obtained the Holy Ghost as had Philip.

It is to bear testimony of the Father and of the Son and of the truth of all things pertaining to the Gospel, and to administer its ordinances that we send missionaries into the world. People are not able to find their way into the kingdom of God by merely having these holy scriptures. By preaching the Gospel to the people of the world we hope to wash our hands clean of the blood and sins of this generation and make our calling and election sure, so that when we go beyond there will be no disappointment.

THE WORK FOR THE DEAD IMPORTANT

We have our dead also to seek after, those of our immediate ancestors, our blood kindred, many of whom were noble men and women who lived their lives here in mortality, according to the best light and knowledge they had, but were deprived of the privileges which we enjoy of the Gospel and its saving ordinances. We have the responsibility of finding these out by genealogical research, obtaining information which is necessary to identify them upon the records of the Church and of the Temple, and then after receiving these saving ordinances ourselves, to act vicariously for the dead in receiving those ordinances.

I am afraid, my brethren and sisters, that when some of us go Beyond and meet our kindred dead we will not receive the generous and joyous welcome which we anticipate, and this because of our neglect.

The Lord has said through the Prophet Joseph that there is no greater responsibility that he has laid upon us than that of looking after our kindred dead.

This missionary work for the living and the dead is the highest service in which man can be employed, and, I think I might say, that can employ the attention of the Gods, for all that we know of their works that have been revealed unto us are looking to this worthy end—the saving of the souls of men.

REDEMPTION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

We are admonished of the Lord to search the scriptures, "For in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." He referred to the Bible. We did not have then the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, which also contain the word of God and the will of God and are scriptures from which we quote copiously in connection with the Bible quotations. The ancient and modern scriptures alike testify of the Lord Jesus Christ. By them we know that he was, under the Father, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all things therein. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. He ministered as the Lord of heaven and earth from the time of the creation down to the meridian of time, when he was born in Bethlehem of Judea. The very day before his birth, we are told by a Nephite prophet, he said: "Tomorrow come I into the world." He was chosen in the councils of the heavens to be the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, to redeem them from the effects of the Fall, which had not yet taken place, for the earth had not yet been made and peopled by sons and daughters of God. But the Lord who knows the end from the beginning had made provision for every condition that should arise from the beginning unto the end. And so through his life of suffering and his death upon the cross he redeemed us from the Fall, from death to resurrection, in which the body and the spirit are inseparably connected, which condition is necessary to enter the kingdom of God, for which we all are candidates, and also that we might be redeemed from the effects of our own transgressions through obedience unto the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

We thank the Lord frequently, and I wonder if it is fervently, for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What is there in the Gospel that we are so thankful for? I want to tell you that one of the things I am grateful for is that through the atonement of Jesus Christ my sins will be forgiven if I yield obedience unto the laws and ordinances of the Gospel and maintain my integrity to the end. Yea, the promise is: "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be washed white in the blood of the Lamb." Is not that a great privilege and blessing? There is no other way of

obtaining forgiveness of sin, and in our sins we can never enter the kingdom of God and receive salvation and exaltation.

LOVE SHOWN BY SERVICE

We value the lives of our children and the hope and the assurance that we have that we will have them for eternity. Such assurance is given us through the Gospel and the ordinances which we have received. We value the holy endowment administered in the temple of God to prepare us to enter the celestial kingdom. If we appreciate the Gospel as a gift of God, ought we not to do something that will in a measure pay the debt of gratitude we owe and prove our appreciation and our love? How is he to know how much we love him? There is a little poem, and I suppose all the school children have learned to recite it, that teaches the lesson beautifully. It runs like this:

"I love you, mother," said little John,
Then forgetting his work his cap went on,
And off he ran to the garden swing
And left her the wood and the water to bring.

"I love you, mother," said little Nell,
"I love you more than tongue can tell."
Then she teased and pouted full half the day,
Till her mother rejoiced when she went to play.

"I love you, mother," said little Nan.
"Today I'll help you all I can."
How glad I am that school doesn't keep."
Then she rocked the baby till he fell asleep.

Then stepping lightly she fetched the broom
And swept the floor and tidied the room.
Busy and happy all day was she,
Busy and happy as child could be.

"I love you, mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed.
But how do you think that mother guessed
Which of them really loved her best?

She knew of course by their actions. God has said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If a man love me he will keep my words." For the love we have for God and our Savior and for our own sake, brethren and sisters, and for the good example it will be to the children of men with whom we associate, in the Church and without, may we be true and faithful and keep the commandments of the Lord, obey every law, seek to know his will, and do it under all circumstances and conditions, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.