

One Hundred Tenth

ANNUAL

CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Tabernacle
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 5, 6, 7, 1940

With Report of Discourses



Published by the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Printed in the United States of America

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.*First Counselor in the First Presidency*

My brethren and sisters, I would like to urge all of you to drive carefully. Let us see if it be not possible to go through one General Conference without an automobile accident.

Elder Albert Choules, President of the Teton Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 p. m.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened at 2 o'clock p. m., Friday, April 5.

The music for this session of the Conference was furnished by the Brigham Young University Chorus, Dr. Franklin W. Madsen and Dr. Florence Jepperson Madsen, directors, Dr. Frank W. Asper at the organ.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who presided, announced that the Congregation and Chorus would sing, as the opening number, "High on the Mountain Top" (Beesley).

After the singing of the opening song, the invocation was offered by Elder J. Berkeley Larsen, President of the Shelley Stake.

An anthem, "Fierce Raged the Tempest" (T. F. H. Candlyn), was sung by the Brigham Young University Chorus.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I believe, my brethren and sisters, you who were present at this morning's session of Conference felt as I felt, that it was a wonderful session. The Spirit of the Lord was with us. It seems to me there never was so much reported in evidence of faithfulness on the part of the Latter-day Saints, at any one session of a General Conference as at this particular session referred to, and so much instruction of a definite, wide-spread character. I cheerfully bear testimony to the things which we heard this morning. I was led to feel grateful for my membership in this Church, to be identified with the Latter-day Saints who are so faithful in living their religion, and in carrying on the work of the Lord.

AN APPEAL TO THE INDIFFERENT

I cannot help however but realize that while there is evidence of faithfulness in the Church, on the part of the membership there-

of, that there is a great deal of lukewarmness. A great many members of our Church do not seem to appreciate the Gospel as fully as we would like that they should. In our preaching and teaching, naturally, while we commend the faithful Saints for their faithfulness and accomplishments, we try to appeal to those who are not doing their share in carrying on this great latter-day work, with the hope that they may be made to realize their opportunities, and to take advantage of them, realizing that we are here upon the earth to work out our salvation according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which has been restored to earth anew in these last days.

As a people I believe we are pretty well taught, so well taught, and our knowledge is so thorough, that if we would live up to the Gospel teachings and live as we know we ought to live, there would be little question as to our receiving a salvation. We have need of being impressed, therefore, with the necessity of doing the things that we know we ought to do, and also in refraining from doing the things which we know we ought not to do.

THE SAVIOR'S MISSION

We read in the scriptures how in the councils of heaven there was a rebellion, and Christ our Lord and Savior, the first-born of the Father in the spirit, came forth with a declaration of principles, brief but comprehensive: "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." On the other hand, Lucifer sought to take away from our Father in heaven His honor and His glory, and from man the agency that he there exercised. That the matters under consideration pertained to this earth life is apparent. When the Savior came upon the earth He made the declaration repeatedly that He came because the Father sent Him; that He came to do the will of the Father.

After His death, His resurrection and ascension to heaven, He visited the remnants of the Nephites on this American continent. In preaching to them, as recorded in the twenty-seventh chapter of Third Nephi, He made the declaration that He came here to the earth to do the will of the Father, and then asked those present: "What manner of men ought ye to be?" He answered it for Himself: "Verily I say unto you, even as I am." My interpretation is that as the Savior came to earth to do the will of His Father, so we came to earth to do His will, and all of the commandments that the Lord has given are but an expression of His will concerning us.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

We are told in the scriptures that we should live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. We are spending a lot of time and effort in trying to persuade the members of the Church, particularly our young people, to refrain from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks. The Lord says expressly that it is

His will that we do refrain from the use of those things. Are we quite consistent, brethren and sisters of the Church, when we use those things which the Lord has expressed, by revelation as His will that we do not use?

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

The Lord has given to us a plan, a financial plan, by which, if the Latter-day Saints were all to observe it, I am sure there would be an abundance of means in the hands of those in authority, by which, if there were any needy among us, their needs would be amply supplied—the law of the tithe and of the offerings. They are not a new doctrine and responsibility. We read in the Old Testament, in the Book of Malachi, how that the Lord charged ancient Israel with robbing Him in their tithes and their offerings. We have the responsibility here to give our Fast offerings, an equivalent of what we would save by abstaining from food two meals on the Fast Day, one day each month. That I regard as the minimum that we can give and be justified before the Lord. Anything less than that, would certainly not be justified, but there is an opportunity to give all that we feel able to give, and according to the generosity of our hearts. Brethren and sisters, there are some that I know who give many times more than what they save by Fasting, but a great many others give no Fast offerings, and the results are there is not enough in the hands of the Bishops to take care of those who are in need.

If all the Bishops had carried out the instructions, and the people had complied with those instructions, I repeat what I have said before, there would have been funds in the hands of the Authorities of this Church that would have taken good care of the people who were in need. Not only that, they would have had a surplus that would have taken care of those in need in times of financial distress such as the people have been going through for the last few years.

The finance plan, the tithe—if the tithing had been paid by all the members of this Church since that law was given, we would have had means in the Church, by which we could build the tabernacles and meeting houses and gymnasiums and play centers of the Wards and Stakes in Zion without calling upon the people. The willing horse has to carry the load in this case, because so many of us have not done our duty.

This morning we heard of wonderful accomplishments from the use of the tithing in the Church. I felt and feel now, brethren and sisters, that where I have paid a full tithing, I have assisted in all these splendid works for which tithing is used in the Church. I don't see how those who are not paying any tithing can claim any credit for what has been done and accomplished in the Church by the use of the tithing.

CHOSEN ONES

We read in the Book of Abraham, in the Pearl of Great Price, how that Abraham was shown the intelligences that were before the world was. He was told that among them were many of the Lord's noble and great ones, whom He had chosen to be His rulers, and that he, Abraham, was one of them. Joseph Smith was one of them, and those who succeeded him in presiding over this Church and directing its affairs no doubt were among the noble ones.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and He said unto those who were with Him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.

In other words, to see whether they would keep all His commandments.

A HIGHER LAW INTRODUCED

Brethren and sisters, we are being weighed in the balance, and some of us, I fear, will be found wanting in respect to the tithes and the offerings.

In ancient Israel, because of a lack of faith, Moses and the Higher Priesthood were taken from them, and they were given the law of the carnal commandments, but they were given the law of the tithe. This law of carnal commandments was as a schoolmaster, to bring them up to a standard where they could receive the higher law of the Gospel. When the Savior came He said He did not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law, and He introduced the higher law of the Gospel, the spirit of which was to return good for evil. If a man smite you on one cheek, turn the other. Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you.

This is the spirit of the Christ, the higher law of the Gospel, and if this spirit were enjoyed by the Latter-day Saints, there would be no difficulty about their keeping the commandments of the Lord with respect to the tithes and the offerings, and the Word of Wisdom, and every other requirement.

THE MEANING OF A HYMN

We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and our neighbor as ourself. If we were loving the Lord with all our hearts, there is no requirement He could make of us that we would not gladly and willingly comply with. We sing that beautiful song:

We thank Thee O God for a Prophet,
To guide us in these latter days;

We thank Thee for sending the Gospel,
 To lighten our minds with its rays.
 We thank Thee for every blessing
 Bestowed by Thy bounteous hand.
 We feel it a pleasure to serve Thee,
 And love to obey Thy commands.

I wonder how many of us think of that sentiment when we are singing it, and we sing it frequently. Are we thankful for a prophet to guide us in these latter days? If so, we will follow his lead, will we not? If we were following the lead of the President of this Church as a prophet of God to us, and to the world, there would be no trouble about our keeping the Word of Wisdom, about our paying our tithing, and meeting the other obligations that rest upon us as members of the Church.

Do we really feel it a pleasure to serve the Lord in His appointed way, which means, of course, sacrifice and self-denial? Do we love to obey His commands, to keep His commandments? Brethren and sisters, are we wholly consistent? Do we think of these things seriously? They are the weightier matters, things that pertain to eternity. If we obtain an exaltation, for which we are candidates, it will be not for believing in these principles: It will be for living them, as the Lord designed that we should.

JOY IN DOING RIGHT

We are told in the Book of Mormon that "Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy". It is my testimony to you, brethren and sisters, so far as my experience goes, that when I have met my religious obligations, the payment of my tithes honestly, and my offerings generously, keeping the Word of Wisdom, answering the calls that come upon me in the Church, my conscience is clear, and I have real joy. I want to tell you, brethren and sisters, that we rob ourselves of much of the joy we might have in this life, through a guilty conscience, a consciousness that our course of life is not approved of the Lord.

May the Lord bless you, brethren and sisters, and reward those abundantly who are making such sacrifices for the accomplishment of the Lord's purposes, looking to the saving of the souls of His children, the living and the dead. And may He help those of us who are indifferent to our own interests and the interests and welfare of the work of the Lord, that our faith may be renewed and revived, and that we may prove our faith by devotion to the work of the Lord, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.