

One Hundred Sixteenth

ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 5, 6 and 7, 1946

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

A month ago, going down towards the Mexican line, down where the lizards, as the boy puts it, lay on their backs and fan themselves, we stopped in a little food shop. We didn't get much bodily food, but we did come away with some food for the mind that was hanging on the walls. First:

What a wonderful world this would be if I loved others like I love me.

The one that went right with it read:

Some people think when they cast their bread upon the water it should return toasted and buttered.

Now wait a minute. You may think that is rather ridiculous. That man who sent his corn, his select corn to his neighbors, was casting bread upon the waters, but he got it back toasted and buttered.

May the Lord help us to be kind. Let us remember what is ahead of us. Let's not look gloomy these days. Let's face our problems. Our grandparents did it. Let's keep our chins to the sun and face whatever is ahead of us. We play our greatest tunes in time of trouble, and the challenge is there. You do your duty; let me do mine; and let's smile—smile if it kills you, and if some people smiled it would kill them.

May the Lord bless us. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE F. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Last Sunday was fast day. I attended fast meeting in one of the wards in this city and heard some faithful testimonies borne. One young woman in her testimony intimated that she did not know so very much about the gospel but this one thing she did know, that the gospel brings peace to the soul. I thought that was a wonderful testimony, and I concluded that that woman is living her religion, for those Latter-day Saints who are living their religion do have peace to their souls, and those who are not living their religion I am afraid that their souls are frequently very much disturbed. This is one of the great blessings that the Lord has for the faithful of his children, peace to the soul.

As this congregation stood up to sing, I thought what an awe-inspiring sight this is. It is inspiring as we sit, but when we stood it seemed that there were more of us, and then I thought, "Why, we are only a sprinkling of the faithful members of the Church," and I thank the Lord for them, and I certainly do pray that he will bless them and reward them for their faithfulness. And there are some who are not faithful for which we are sorry. God bless them that they may see their mistakes; that they may take advantage of their opportunities of receiving the saving ordinances of the gospel they have not yet received; and that they may learn to know that the Lord

needs them in his service; and that an opportunity is afforded them if they will live so that they can be used, to pay in part the debt of gratitude they owe to him, which they will never be able fully to do.

Then if I am informed correctly, there are some members of the Church who are not only indifferent to their religion but who have committed sin, and violated the rules of chastity. I pity them. God bless them that they may understand their true situation and repent of their sins and make peace with the Lord while they have opportunity. The Spirit of God will not always strive with man.

ANNIVERSARY OF ORGANIZATION OF CHURCH

* This is a wonderful work in which we are engaged. The annual general conference of the Church is of particular significance and deep interest to Latter-day Saints. The members of the Church, far and near, in great numbers are assembled in this general conference of the Church on the anniversary of its birth, a most suitable way in which to commemorate that exceedingly important event, affecting as it does the lives of many thousands of pure-minded, clean-living men and women for their good and their salvation. The organization of the Church and the restoration of the gospel spell "Mormonism," for which many faithful souls have suffered persecution and death, but the reward to all such, exceeds in glory any conception had by mortal man.

One hundred sixteen years ago today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, by direct command of God, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, under the laws of that state. Since its organization, the Church has been the object of bitter opposition and persecutions. This has come at different periods, from different sources, and in various forms, but always instigated by Lucifer, the devil, through willing emissaries, with the object and intent to destroy the Church, and defeat the purpose of God in his planning for the salvation of the children of men.

PERSECUTION, A HERITAGE OF THE SAINTS

For the comfort of the Saints, let me quote to you from the sayings of our Savior:

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:10-12)

Persecution is, and always has been, a heritage of the Saints of God. Men and women have gone about the country, in this and in other lands, lecturing against the Church and its leaders. Magazine articles and books by the score, of a venomous and libelous character, have been written, published, and circulated against us. Apos-

tates from the Church have opposed it in various ways, while the work of the Lord against which their fiery darts have been directed, goes steadily forward.

Mormonism has for more than a century, been thus pelted with vituperation, deceit, and falsehood, but by every attack it has become more widely known. The work of the Lord thrives under opposition and persecution. "Truth is mighty and will prevail."

We do not court opposition and persecution, but when it comes, we are not so greatly disturbed, for we know our ground, that this is the work of the Lord, and that God is at the helm, guiding the good ship into a safe harbor.

TWO MAJOR POWERS IN OPERATION

There are two major powers operating upon the minds and hearts of the children of men—the one for good, and the other for evil.

Quoting from the Book of Mormon:

Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually. (Moroni 7:12.)

Quoting from the Doctrine and Covenants:

... for we beheld Satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ—Wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God. (D. & C. 76:28-29.)

The Holy Ghost is a member of the trinity of the Godhead, a personage of spirit non-tabernacled. Lucifer also is a non-tabernacled spirit. The Holy Ghost is an inspirer of good. The devil is an instigator of evil. Each is striving for the souls of men; the one to save and the other to destroy.

... choose you this day whom ye will serve. (Joshua 24:15.)

Man has his free agency and is responsible to God who gave it for the way he exercises it. The whispering of the Holy Ghost removes all doubt and fear, and brings conviction to the soul, so that we can say, conscientiously, that we know the truth of that which we have received.

Said the Savior:

... My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:16-17.)

BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

Let us see how this works: Jesus taught the will of him who sent him, and did his will in all things. He said to Nicodemus:

... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.)

What happens when one is born of water and of the Spirit? Jesus has set us a worthy example in all things. Let us see what happened to him:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matt. 3:16, 17.)

That is, he was immersed in the waters of Jordan by John the Baptist, and went up straightway out of the water, and thus he was born of the water. Then the heavens opened and the spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, lighted upon him as a dove, and thus he was born of the Spirit.

Now note what followed his having been born of water and of the Spirit:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (*Ibid.*, 3:17.)

That is the approval which the Father gave to his Son. Similar approval is received through the power of the Holy Ghost, by every worthy person who is baptized as was Jesus, by the same authority of priesthood, and who receives the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by the elders of the Church. In this way members of the Church have received a testimony of the truth.

... no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 12:3.)

After the individual has received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, it is his right and privilege, through faithfulness, to have his constant companionship, the significance of which only the faithful know.

HOLY GHOST OPERATES FOR SALVATION OF MAN

The Holy Ghost operates in many ways for the blessing and salvation of man. For example: when Jesus asked his disciples—

... But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 16:15-17.)

How did the Father reveal it to Peter? By the power of the Holy Ghost, through whom the Lord has contact and communication with man on the earth.

Hear what Moroni, a prophet of God of Book of Mormon days, has to say about the operation of the Holy Ghost:

And when ye shall receive these things [the records], I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:4, 5.)

Many people have put this promise to the test and have received the witness of the spirit, that the things contained in the Book of Mormon are true.

This promise is true with respect to all the scriptures. As I read the account given by Joseph Smith of the visitation of the Father and the Son to him, while he was yet a boy fourteen years of age, the Holy Ghost bears record to my soul, that what he says is true, and I rejoice exceedingly in this testimony. I feel that I know by the revelations of God through the operations of the Holy Ghost, as well as did Peter, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and by the same power, which is the power of God, I do know that Joseph Smith was and is a true prophet of God, as were all his successors in the presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, down to the present, including the present President of the Church, George Albert Smith. I also know that this work in which we are engaged is the work of God, and that it will endure forever

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ATONEMENT

I here quote the words of the Savior:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt. 11:28-30.)

The burden of sin and remorse is something to be dreaded and to be avoided. The Savior has provided, however, a means by which the sins of deepest dye may be forgiven, and that, by repentance and obedience unto the laws and ordinances of the gospel, made effective through the atonement of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The third article of our faith reads:

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

In this way we rid ourselves of our sins and prepare ourselves for salvation.

Baptism is a natural sequence to faith and repentance. It is the door into the kingdom.

... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.)

... He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (*Ibid.*, 10:1.)

Baptism is also for the fulfillment of the law.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. (Matt. 3:13-15.)

which could not be fulfilled without baptism.

Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins which have been repented of.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38.)

"GO ON UNTO PERFECTION"

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.

And this will we do, if God permit. (Heb. 6:1-3.)

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-8.)

to know whom is life eternal.

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things. (Articles of Faith XIII.)

May the Lord help us to be orthodox in our thinking, in our teaching, and in our living, and be in the image and likeness of God in all things, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER RICHARD W. MADSEN, JR.

Former President of the Western States Mission

When any commandment or call comes to a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it at once becomes all-important, vital, and a great opportunity and blessing to him who is called. There is no service or call that may come to us that is mean or trivial or of little importance, because we realize that we serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of our activities are intended for the blessing and uplift of our fellowmen.