

**NINETY-FOURTH
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

**of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints**

**Held in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah**

**April 4, 5 and 6
1924**

*With a Full Report of all
the Discourses*



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associates, and they find a place in the hearts of their mission presidents second only to our own children.

May God help us to be kindly, to magnify our own boys and girls in our own community, as we have prayed that they be magnified in the eyes of the world, is my prayer, and I ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

A tenor solo entitled, "The Plains of Peace" was sung by David Cook.

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

(Of the First Council of Seventy and President of the Eastern States Mission)

During the sessions of this conference you have heard from many lands, and from many parts of our own country. I am wondering what message I can bring to you from the East. Incidentally I may say to those of you who are, by the ties of kindred, interested in the young men and women who comprise the Eastern States mission, that it is a general time of health in our mission, and that there prevails a very fine spirit among them, but that, of course, is not the message I had in mind when I was wondering what message I might bring to this conference from the East. At present it seems to me to be a good starting point for a message to repeat a scripture with which you all are very familiar, namely:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Some of you, perhaps, will recognize that as the cornerstone of the history of this last and new dispensation of the gospel. It was the scripture which appealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in great power, conveying to his soul a most solemn message. For, at the time he came to contemplate it, in the spring of 1820, he was very much perplexed because of the confusion existing everywhere concerning religion.

In the city of Palmyra, near the center of it, there are four corners, facing one another. On each stands a church, and these churches existed there one hundred years ago. The ministers of those four churches united in what was called a "Union Service"; and for weeks a very earnest kind of Christian propaganda was carried on, a revival meeting, and great interest was aroused there and throughout the surrounding country in religion. All went well, many people were drawn to contemplate the religious life, and much good seemed to have been accomplished, until the time came when the new converts were to file off to the respective churches of their choice, and then strife,

division, and confusion confounded, seemed to prevail. This very greatly distracted the mind of our Prophet. The questions under consideration then were such as these—something about the decrees of God: Would people be saved by the free grace of God, and the free will of men combined, and would they thus be drawn to the feet of the Christ? Or had God pre-determined before the foundation of the earth the exact number of those who should be saved, and had so definitely fixed upon the number that it could not be increased nor diminished by any human effort, by any personal desire, or searching or seeking after righteousness? Those who were to be saved were to be saved by the pre-determined will of God, without any act of their own. On the other hand it was just as explicitly known who would be reprobate, and they could not escape by any means of repentance or other device whatsoever. The question was discussed as to whether this pre-destination of men, to salvation or destruction, affected infants as well as adults. A division existed, some claiming that all infants dying in infancy would be saved, and others claimed that only those whom the decree of God had fixed for salvation would be saved. Would the heathen be saved? That was a question debated. Was baptism essential unto salvation? Would unbaptized infants be saved, or were they among the number that it would be impossible to save, baptized or not? And so the controversy went on. Time will not permit to go into all the details of it, but this perhaps will indicate the nature of some of the discussions. None of those questions were settled by the debates which occurred, but you have been hearing very little about them for a long time. People have not been discussing them. But the point I desire to bring to your attention is this, that notwithstanding the debate on those particular questions have ceased, Christendom is not yet united. The confusion and divisions have broken out in new places.

There is a remarkable prophecy in St. Peter's writings to this effect:

"Prophecy came not in olden time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost."

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

From the early days of Christianity till now there have been those who have denied the Deity of Christ; but it seems to me that these days of ours have been especially reserved for this particular heresy to reach its full development; namely, the "denial of the Lord who bought them," "bought them" by the price of his own suffering, and by his own precious blood; for never in the history of Christianity has there been such a denial of the Lord as there is at the present time,

This recent controversy first arose about two years ago, in Eng-

land, when the Reverend Hastings Rashdall, the distinguished dean of Carlyle, at the Modern Churchman's Congress, held in Cambridge, declared that "Jesus Christ never claimed divinity for himself, and was in the fullest sense a man, with not merely a human body, but with human soul, intellect and will." "Again," said he, "Jesus may have allowed himself to be called the Messiah, but never in any of his"—mark the language—"critically, well-attested sayings was there anything which suggests that his conscious relation to God was other than that of any man toward God." Then in respect of the fourth gospel, as being outside of the Christ's "critically, well-attested sayings," the dean remarked: "That the speeches attributed to Christ in the Fourth Gospel," St. John's Gospel, "where they go beyond the character of Jesus as portrayed in the synoptic gospels, namely, Matthew, Mark and Luke, cannot be regarded as authentic history." That was the report of his speech at the time, when this agitation first began. Then about a year later, namely, in January, 1923, in our own country, the United States, the Reverend Percy S. Grant, rector of the Church of the Ascension, in New York City, preaching in defense of the declaration he had made the Sunday before, namely, "when Christ was on earth he did not possess the power of God," remarked: "This is certainly the teaching of the first three gospels." So that Dr. Grant, like the Dean of Carlyle, sets aside the testimony of St. John. As a matter of fact, it would not be difficult to sustain the Deity of the Christ from the first three Gospels, usually spoken of as the synoptic Gospels; and you may leave out St. John's Gospel, and in those three gospels this great truth concerning the Christ is emphasized, namely that he is the Son of God, and it follows that being the Son of God, then God—God of God; Light of Light, of the same substance or essence with the Father; of the same attributes. It is only thought necessary to establish the truth of Jesus Christ being the Son of God to make him Deity; of the same essence with the Father, as well as being the "brightness of his glory" and the express image of his person. And that is all clearly set forth in the synoptic gospels.

And now, for a peculiar reason, I want to call your attention to this thought. This controversy goes beyond the testimonies of the witnesses of the New Testament, and brings out a peculiar feature in our own special message to the world. If you will recall the very careful words of these two critics Messrs. Rashdall and Grant, the Deity of the Christ, you will have noted perhaps that they hold that: "No critical, well-attested saying of the Christ tends to establish his Deity." Well, that simply means that the so-called "modern criticism," eliminates and throws to the winds the testimony of Christ's apostles in Judea,—the testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, born of a virgin, and God's Only Begotten Son in the flesh.

The note now and then occurs in the comments that are made on this great controversy, that: "You have got yet to consider the

authenticity and the credibility of the New Testament documents. That is the thing to which I wish to call your attention. Unto Nephi, the first Nephi, were given some very great visions concerning the life and the mission of the Christ, before he came in the flesh; and among other things he saw that the Gentile races upon this North American continent would have the testimony of the Hebrew prophets among them (the Old Testament); and also the testimony of the "Twelve Apostles of the Lamb" (the New Testament). He saw that these books would be mutilated and corrupted; that the Gentiles would go into great darkness and unbelief because of this mutilation of the word of God. Then he saw, in vision, circulating among the people other records, one of which was to be the word of the Lord to the seed of this man Nephi. That other sacred books were to be circulated in the land, and these second books, meaning the Book of Mormon, the record of the Nephite people, and the revelations of God in this new dispensation, clearly recognized in the Doctrine and Covenants, and also in the Pearl of Great Price,—these records would establish the truth of the record of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb of God, Hence the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints holds in its hands, and is commissioned to use these other holy scriptures brought forth in this chosen land, speaking from the dust of "Cumorah's lonely hill," for the sleeping nations of the American Continent: and the living word of God in this age, as contained in the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants and in the Pearl of Great Price, brought forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith, are here to correct the errors of those who would throw out of the reckoning the word of God as found in the record of the "Twelve Apostles of the Lamb," the New Testament; they are here to affirm, with all the strength that comes from these volumes of witnesses,—this cloud of witnesses—that Jesus is indeed the Christ; that he is the Creator, not only of our own world, but of many worlds. (Heb. 1:1, 2; St. John 1:1-4). Also that He is the upholding and the sustaining power of all things; that, as pointed out so beautifully in Elder Rulon S. Wells' remarks, He is the Vital Force, that "quickeneth all things"; also that he is the Intelligence-inspiring Power of God's universe; also that He is the Love-manifested Power of God's universe; for the one great thing above all others in the mission of the Christ was to give assurance and demonstration of the Love of God for the inhabitants of the earth. As Jesus himself contemplated this his mission among men, he voiced the assurance that—

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Brethren and sisters, it is our mission to stem the tide of unbelief that is in the world, to answer the Christ's question on one occasion—when he the Son of man comes, shall He find faith in the earth?" In the name of God, yes! For he has provided the means of maintaining faith in Him as Creator, as Sustaining Power of the universe; as Vital Force, as Intelligence-inspiring Power, as Love-manifested

Power, and he has organized his Church in the earth, no more to be destroyed, to maintain this faith in the earth. And when the Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, attended by the host of Saints from heaven, the host of Saints here on earth, possessed of true faith that Jesus is the Christ, Sovereign, Lord and King, Creator of heaven and earth, and all things that in them are; the Savior of men, the Redeemer of the world, the very Son of God, "*the Eternal God*," to use the Book of Mormon phrase, "manifesting himself unto all nations"—these, the Saints possessed of this faith in the earth, shall welcome the Christ and the hosts of Saints from heaven, with shouts of great joy and faith.

The thought I wish to leave with you, and my purpose in quoting the text,—“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him”—was to emphasize the fact that there is still great need, in the light of the present controversy about the Deity of Christ, to make use of this prayer; for the controversies of today, and the confusion resulting from them, are just as perplexing as the confusion of a hundred years ago. God bless the Saints, and all who would know the truth, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, “Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation.”

Elder Oliver H. Budge, president of the Logan stake of Zion, pronounced the benediction.

Conference was adjourned until 10 o'clock Sunday morning.