

NINETY-EIGHTH
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

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*With a Full Report of All
the Discourses*



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munity is a great factor in the teaching of our children. Our officers, public servants, are teachers of the youth and they carry the responsibility of teachers. It is our duty, therefore, as citizens of this great republic, to exercise our right at the ballot box. It is our duty to see that men in both our great parties are chosen who will teach not only by precept, but by example, obedience to law; that these men so elected will appoint men under them who will not scoff at the law against liquor, who will not themselves indulge in bootlegging, or who will not in any way protect those men or women who violate moral laws.

I said that the greatest obligation upon society is the proper training of youth. The home, our quorums, our officers in the community are three great educational factors, and all three subject to our sentiment, our approval.

"It matters not what I shall gain
By fleeting gold or fame,
My hope of joy depends alone
On what my boy shall claim.
My glory must be told through him,
For him I work and plan—
Man's greatest duty is to be
The father of a man."

And each one of us may be the father of a man, as Paul spiritually was of Timothy, and Peter of Mark, who as a young man undoubtedly was a witness to Christ's betrayal, and who, if he did not see him resurrected, wrote in after years:

"Ye seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here, he is resurrected."

God help us to get our young boys to feel and to know not only that Christ has risen, but that he has appeared again to men, and restored the gospel of Christ, the power of God through which youth and all mankind may receive salvation and peace. Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Senior President of the First Council of Seventy

My brethren and sisters, in all the conferences of the Church that I have attended, I cannot recall a time when I have felt that we have had a greater spiritual feast than we have had at this conference, because of the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord upon his servants. The spirit of testimony has been very strong, and it appears to me that it has been colored by the spirit of testimony as exemplified in the declaration of the Christ upon one occasion—that occasion when he taught the mysteries of the new birth to Nicodemus. After his explanation about the second birth, and having expressed some surprise that Nicodemus, a teacher in Israel, was not acquainted with these truths, the Savior said:

"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

And then he appears to have been under the necessity of saying this rather sorrowful thing:

"And ye receive not our witness."

I trust that that reflection will find no place in our experience in this conference.

At another time the Savior struck a more hopeful note connected with the fact that he himself was a witness to the truth. That occurred in his conversation with Pontius Pilate just before he was condemned to crucifixion by that officer. Pilate was seeking justification for letting the Savior go, and when that seemed to be hopeless, he sought for justification for signing the death warrant enacted by the Jewish Sanhedrin against the Christ. Among the charges made against Jesus was that he claimed to be a king; and of course I suppose it occurred to Pilate that if he could attach that claim directly to the Christ he would feel some justification in condemning him to death, as such a claim would be a challenge to the sovereignty of Rome. Hence he brought up that question and said unto Jesus:

"Art thou a king?"

The Savior replied: "My kingdom is not of this world."

"O, then, thou art a king?" exclaimed Pilate.

"Thou sayest I am a king."

As if he saw the hopelessness of continuing the discussion, "Thou sayest I am a king," so we will let it go at that. Then he turned to a more serious matter and said:

"To this end was I born, for this purpose came I into the world, to testify of the truth."

Something more than a kingship; something of higher importance than being a king: I am a witness of the truth. "And they who are of the truth, hear my voice." (St. John 18:33-37.)

From which we gather that there is a force and power in truth itself apart from any bolstering up by arguments or reasons a direct power in truth itself that carries conviction of the effect of it to those who are "of the truth." I think that is the spirit that has characterized so splendidly this conference—The Spirit of Truth.

Among the many important subjects that have been brought to our attention I think there is no item of more importance than the subject that was discussed by President Ivins in tracing the records of the Nephites from the centers of their civilization northward, and the long pilgrimage of the people as they moved northward until they came to the land of Ripliancum, the land of many waters, and the Hill Cumorah. I was deeply interested in what he said, and I believe that his remarks make a very important contribution, not only to this conference, but to the literature of the Church. It will at least be preserved in the minutes of this conference, and will be of permanent record.

As he closed his remarks the thought that flashed through my mind was this: O, what the world would have lost, if the Book of Mormon had not been brought forth!

I wish I had the time to consider the things that would have been lost to the world but for the bringing forth of the Nephite scriptures, the American volume of scriptures. I remember in my early days coming in contact with opponents of the Book of Mormon who charged, for instance, that it had no aphorisms of any importance, and that it

was in this respect in strong contrast with the Jewish scriptures. I want to call your attention, however, to a few aphorisms that are of great worth, and that enrich the sacred literature of the world.

For instance, there is that sharp-cut sentence:

"Wickedness never was happiness."

I think it would be difficult to find an epigram more important than that, and a truth that the world ought to know.

Again: "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things."

A beautiful utterance; and a declaration of confidence in the perfect knowledge of God; and builded upon that perfect knowledge—and it can only be builded upon perfect knowledge—perfect wisdom. And that beautiful declaration is followed by this announcement of the great truth, giving us clear vision of the purpose of God with reference to the earth-life of man, the like of which is not found elsewhere, neither in Jewish nor Christian scriptures; nor in the philosophies of men:

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy."

That is the thing that God is working out, and what a lesson of cheer and good will and of hope it is!

Here is another:

"The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he prepares a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

You who are starting to bring to pass the high purposes of God, with reference to this creation of his, what comfort that assurance brings! "God will require nothing at the hands of the children of men save he prepares the way for them to accomplish that thing."

Again, Moroni, near the close of his record, seems to tremble for the success of his work, and as he reviewed it and became conscious of the weaknesses in it, he was very deeply sorrowful and he wrote in substance—and all these quotations are but in substance:

"Lord, the Gentiles will mock at our weakness in writing."

And the answer of the Lord was:

"Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for all who humble themselves before me, saith the Lord."

I remember having a very rich bit of experience with that passage in the younger days of my ministry when I was on my first mission. It fell to my lot to engage in a three-day debate with a seasoned man in that line of work. I was but twenty-three and had had no experience. He was fifty-four and had the reputation of having driven all his opponents from the platform. He mocked considerably at the Book of Mormon, and brought up this very question of its lack of incisiveness and clear-cut aphorisms, and challenged me to produce anything that could be comparable with the sharp, clear-cut aphorisms of the Bible scriptures.

I told him I could think just at the moment of but one, and that was, "Fools mock, but they shall mourn."

I am not very much acquainted with his history after that debate, but after three days' discussion he utterly refused to go on with the debate, when it was really but half through, and notwithstanding he had previously driven every opponent from the platform. I had his promise also that I should have the opportunity of examining his doctrine after closing our debate on the Book of Mormon, but he refused to go on with it, and left the platform with an unfinished job on his hands. By the way, let me say, not by way of boasting, but because of the blessing of the Lord on our labors, immediately following the discussion, we began baptizing, and within two months had raised up a branch in the neighborhood of more than sixty members. The Lord so blessed us on that occasion.

After calling this gentleman's attention to that passage, "Fools mock, but they shall mourn," he did not ask for any more aphorisms.

"Fools mock, but they shall mourn!" And then this richer statement follows it:

"I, the Lord, give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me."

Have you in your moments of trial or deep sorrow felt the hand of a friend steal quietly into your hand, and by pressure express sympathy and brotherhood to you? I have fortunately had a few friends with whom I have had such experience as that, both men and women, a recollection that is among the precious treasures of my experience. But this passage, "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all those who humble themselves before me,"—in this, it seems to me, that I feel the hand of God slipping gently into my hand, and giving me the pressure of assurance that there will be mercy, that there will be helpfulness, that there will be encouragement from God. He will remember that we are but men and women in the making; and while not yet perfect, yet perhaps perfectable—which is the important thing. In that utterance in the Book of Mormon, I feel the richness of the grace of God, and assurances of success in hungering and thirsting after righteousness, for it shall be given unto us.

The Book of Mormon is important because of its correction of some errors that have crept into the philosophies and religions of men. You see perhaps the most perfect expression of God's law unto men in the sermon on the mount. That sermon as it stands in Matthew is vulnerable, at least at one point; and that is where the Savior admonishes men without any limitation, apparently, as expressed by Matthew, to take no thought for tomorrow, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; and calls attention to the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed as one of these. He refers to the very birds of the air, that they are under the care of the Father, and will have his attention, and not one falleth to the ground without his notice. "Are ye not of more worth than many sparrows?"

Now those who enter into arguments against the doctrines of Christianity, and who try to condemn even this sermon on the mount, say that this doctrine of taking no thought of tomorrow is utterly impracticable in life. That if men generally tried to live as the birds do, and to receive their clothing as the flowers are clothed with beauty, the result would be not civilization but savage life as we know it among the undeveloped races of the children of men.

In the Book of Mormon account of Christ delivering that sermon on this continent among his people, when coming to that part of his sermon which he repeated here in this land, he turned directly to the Twelve Disciples unto whom he had given authority to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments thereof, and it was to them, and to them alone, that he addressed that part of his sermon. They were to take no thought of the things of tomorrow, nor the things of the world; for the Father knew beforehand what their needs were. And then he admonishes them to take encouragement from his reference to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, how they were fed and clothed; and gives them encouragement that the Father would so care for them. From the fact that this part of the sermon was limited to the Twelve Special Disciples on this western hemisphere, it is a reasonable conclusion that the same limitation was fixed in his sermon on the mount when he delivered it in Palestine, as it was recorded by Matthew.

Civilized man must of necessity take thought of tomorrow, and plan for it, and practice self-denial, that in the future greater things may be accomplished, through the thinking and the sacrificing of today. These things are the very keynote of building up civilization. But out of a community you could call twelve ministers, dedicated to a certain purpose in life, that requires all of their energies and all of their thought, and enjoin upon them self-consecration to a given special task, without injury to the development of civilization; they could take no thought of tomorrow, and trust in the providences of God for their maintenance, without affecting industrial, or economic conditions.

There is no apparent effort to make a correction of Matthew's account of the Sermon as it appears in the Book of Mormon. It relates simply the incident, and from it you see how this point in the sermon on the mount may be clarified.

So with several of the beatitudes in that sermon. Changes here and there made which give them point, and make them more definite and beautiful. For example, in this one, Matthew says:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The Book of Mormon version of that beatitude is:

"Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, *who come unto me*: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To be poor in spirit is no doubt a very excellent quality, but it requires more than that to enter the kingdom of heaven: They must come unto God in order to enter the kingdom of God. And so throughout. I can only give you just a brief example of these things.

Since this is Easter day, let me call your attention to one other thing in the testimony of the scriptures of the western continents—the Book of Mormon—in relation to the resurrection of Christ. What a wonderful testimony that book contains for the thing that is celebrated this day throughout Christendom, namely, the resurrection from the dead of our Lord the Christ! In all the accounts that are given of the reality of that resurrection—and it has been beautifully expressed to our thought during this conference, the absolute reality of it—how well the testimonies of the Christian scriptures and the prophetic parts of the old Bible, too, are sustained by that wonderful appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to the inhabitants of this western world! After the awful destruction by storm and tempest and earthquake, which very much changed the character of the face of the land, even mountains arising from plains, and mountains shaken to their foundations, covering wicked cities upon whom God had decreed destruction; after the awful three days darkness which seems to have been even more terrible than the storms and earthquakes, and which has become enshrined in the legends of the native people of this American continent; after that dreadful experience of storm and tempest and destruction—then a voice was universally heard in the land proclaiming the mercy and willingness of the Savior to forgive; proclaiming the truth that he was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and had made his sacrifices for the redemption of men. Following that, some time after the close of the storms, tempests, whirlwinds and earthquakes, came to pass the wonderful appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, when a few people in the Land Bountiful stood by a temple that happened to have escaped destruction—then, as they wondered upon the changes that had been wrought in the lands about them, and were recovering somewhat from their own errors, they heard a voice, but knew not whence it came nor what was said. They looked about at each other wondering whence it came. The second time they heard it, but there was no definite communication in the sound. The third time they heard it they recognized that something was said, and that something was this, and it thrilled them:

“Behold my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.”

Looking in the direction whence that voice came they saw a man, all glorious, descending in white raiment, and down he came until he stood upon the earth in their presence. Stretching forth his arms—it seems to me it must have been with wonderful majesty—he said unto them:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

“And behold, I am the light and the life of the world: and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”

What a message of the Deity to the world; a message and testimony

of the Christ; of the fact that he had suffered for the sins of the world, of the fact that he had risen from the dead, and now stood before them clothed with all authority in heaven and in earth, come to establish faith in the hearts of these people who had been tried by their severe experiences, and had survived because they were the worthiest to survive! To them also he granted the privilege of St. Thomas, to behold his wounds in hands and feet and side. And when they had thus confirmed their faith, on their faces they fell and shouted aloud: "Hosanna, Hosanna to the Most High God!" And so they worshipped the risen Lord.

Now, tell me in what church or cathedral in the world, in what sacred grove, in what place among the habitations of men, will be found a more glorious Easter vision of the Christ than this? And the world would have lost this if it had not been for the Book of Mormon coming forth, and there is a hundred more such glorious things that have come to the world in that book to enlighten the children of men, all of which would have been lost had not this American volume of scripture been brought forth.

My brethren and sisters, we have had a most glorious conference. Will you not permit me to close my remarks according to the desire that is in my heart, and what I would like to say to express my own feelings of gratitude for the things that have been reviewed before us in this conference? Do not think me presumptuous, but if I might follow the promptings of my own heart on this occasion, I should do so in this manner:

O God, the Eternal Father, in the name of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, we worship thee! We worship thee as the Creator of heaven and of earth, and of the seas, and of the fountains of waters. We worship thee not only as Creator, but also as the World-sustaining Power of the universe. We revere and honor thee as the Intelligence-inspiring Power in the world, also as the Vital Force of the world, and the Sustaining Power of Life. We honor Thee also as the Love-manifesting Power, as expressed through Jesus Christ our Lord. To us he is God manifested in the flesh—God incarnate.

We thank thee for that glorious line of patriarchs from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Melchizedek, to Abraham and Moses and all the prophets in Israel. We thank thee for the service and labors of that majestic man who stood at the head of the Aaronic priesthood in his day and time, John called the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ, in the meridian dispensation. We thank thee from full hearts for the Christ himself, and for the sacrifice that he made for us. Also we thank thee, our Father, for the Apostles of that dispensation, and for the honor and integrity in which they discharged their high duties in bearing special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank thee for the great prophet of the New Dispensation, the servant in thy house, Joseph Smith, the Seer of the last days. And also, Father, we thank thee for that flood of knowledge that has come into the world, the testimonies from the Nephite scriptures, as well as those which have come from the Jewish scriptures. And, O Lord,

far and above all, the most excellent of all, and to whom we are directly indebted for hope of eternal life and redemption from sin and union with Thee through thy Spirit and our baptism into it, that Spirit by which we "may know the truth of all things," even the Holy Ghost. We thank Thee for this.

And now, O Lord Jesus, if thou couldst but come into the consciousness of our souls this day, as thou didst come into the vision of the ancient Nephites in the Land of Bountiful, we would join their great song of praise and worship, saying—"Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!" And we, like them, would fall down at the feet of Jesus and worship him this Easter day! Amen.

A duet, "The morning land," was sung by Mrs. Dolores Fernstrom and Miss Jessie Evans.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

"Zion's welfare is my portion,
And I feel my bosom swell
With a warm, divine emotion,
When she prospers, all is well."

My soul has rejoiced in the spirit of this conference and in the hope that we have in the completion of the Lord's work according to his plan and purpose. I am in full sympathy and accord with all that has been said concerning the marvelous work and a wonder which the Lord has established. My great anxiety is that it shall continue to be a marvelous work and a wonder. I feel constrained to make an appeal to the Latter-day Saints, particularly my brethren who bear rule in stakes, wards and quorums, to see to it that we do preserve all our sacred privileges by complying with those requirements which the Lord has made for the future welfare of Zion.

A BOOK OF MORMON MESSAGE

Reference has been made frequently to the Book of Mormon, during this conference, and to the messages it contains. I should like to read from it, to call to your attention a message that comes to us from Nephi (II Nephi, Chapter 28). He saw this day as clearly as his own, and he gives us this warning:

"And now, behold, my brethren, I have spoken unto you, according as the Spirit hath constrained me; wherefore, I know that they must surely come to pass.

"The things which shall be written out of the book shall be of great worth, * * * and especially unto our seed, which is a remnant of the house of Israel.

"For it shall come to pass in that day, [in the day when this book should come forth], that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other, Behold I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—

"And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy