

[CENTENNIAL NUMBER]

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Held in the Tabernacle
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

April 6, 7, 8, 9, 1930

*With a Full Report of All
the Discourses*



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

No man-made creed—no dogma vague, unsound—
 The Ancient Faith, pure, simple, sweet, sublime,
 The Gospel in its plentitude of power,
 The Gospel in its fulness—this I bring.

ELIAS :

Judah! 'tis Ephraim calls—he loves thee well,
 His hand extends, his heart, to welcome thee.
 Why stand aloof? Why doubt and hesitate?
 Jerusalem and Zion are as one.
 See Japheth launch his ships to people them!
 The Gentile, all unknowingly doth serve
 The cause of Him who summons Israel
 To Joseph's land, to Judah's hills and vales.
 Behold them in their flight from Babel's doom,
 Borne on the shoulders of the Philistine?

Be not outstript in such a glorious race.
 Judah, arise! Put on thine ancient might,
 Expand thy soul, enlarge thy sympathy;
 Join hands with Ephraim, and bring to pass
 All that the prophets and the seers foretold!

JUDAH :

Thy speech I can believe most kindly meant,
 Thy motive pure and generous and just.
 But who can change the course of destiny?
 Who void what Great Jehovah hath decreed?
 'Tis conscience guides me, and high Heaven alone
 Doth hold, of that mysterious lock, the key.

Yet something tells me we shall meet again.
 God grant it be as friends! And so, farewell.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn, "High on the mountain tops."

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Of the First Council of Seventy

My dear brethren and sisters: I am going to read my remarks on this occasion in the interest of brevity, but chiefly in order that I may know when I am through. I warn you, however, that I read very much worse even than I speak. If I do not present all I would like to say on this occasion I shall still be very happy, because I am going to ask leave "to print" the parts that must be omitted in my verbal remarks. In this, too, I shall be happy, because the printed parts of the speech are already set up by the printers, and those parts constitute six large

volumes, each from five hundred and sixty to six hundred pages per volume, making in all over 3,400 pages. That work, with the verbal remarks I am now making, will constitute my discourse at this first centennial conference of the Church, covering one hundred years of organized existence.

Of course you will surmise by now that I am making reference to the *Comprehensive History of the Church, Century I*, which the Presidency of the Church has directed to be published as one of the features of this centennial conference; and which they directed me about a year ago to prepare. I can now report that five of those volumes are printed and bound, and that the sixth will be printed and bound by the middle of April or at farthest by the first of May.

I would not have you think, however, this history of a hundred years has been wholly prepared in the time limit of a year. Its present publication is rather the culmination of many years—I might say of a life-time of work. Under circumstances quite remarkable—but too full of detail to speak of now—an opportunity came to me to write for a New York magazine what its publishers called a detailed “History of the Mormon Church.” To make space for it they changed the magazine from a bi-monthly to a monthly periodical; enlarged its size, and at the same time changed its name from “The American Historical Magazine” to “Americana.” “The History of the Mormon Church,” as the article prepared was then called, ran through six years of that publication, beginning in 1911, and ran at an average of forty-two pages per number. After its publication in that form, two years more were spent in verifying its numerous references and improving its arrangement; and now another rather strenuous year has been devoted to its final preparation for the press.

I will ask you to remember that this publication is not mine beyond the mere matter of construction. The publication of it both in the first instance and now was made possible by action of the Presidency of the Church, by President Joseph F. Smith, and now by President Heber J. Grant. From first to last the Presidency will have advanced for the publication as it now issues from the press at least \$100,000; and they propose to have it sold at such prices to the people—as I understand it—so nearly the cost of producing it, that I am doubtful if they will ever recover from the sale of it the money they have advanced for its production and reasonable interest upon it.

Permit me to say that financially this work means nothing to me. Its publication and sale will not bring me one dollar for its preparation; if it did I should shame to speak of it here as advertising my own wares. But this is not so, the work is not mine financially, I could not have financed it, neither shall I profit financially by it. My work in connection with it has been given in the ordinary service of my regular work in the Church, prompted and sustained through all the years by my deep love of the subject, and my desire to leave on record *one sermon* on the New Dispensation of the Gospel. And I am grateful to

those who have made possible the production of my discourse that requires six large full volumes to contain it. In my remarks, then, I am just reporting a work which the Church has undertaken and has brought to what I venture to think is a successful termination.

Some may question the need of so voluminous a work. Six volumes! Why could not the history of a hundred years of the New Dispensation have been written in one volume, or at most in two? For some purposes that might well be. But I desire to say a word of justification for the largeness of this work.

In the first place you have to deal with an immense subject. You have to consider the first century of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. That is the dispensation of *all* dispensations; the one which will gather into itself all the dispensations of God's revealed will through all the ages, from the days of Adam until the present time; the dispensation when God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in him" (Eph. i). The history of this dispensation then is some contract. In it the ends of the earth meet. It comprises in a way, the history of the world and of the human race. It will have to deal with all true philosophy and all true religion, and the contact of these with false philosophies and false religions and the struggle for existence between the two—the false and the true. Of course, I have not attempted in my puny six volumes to go into the treatment of all this vast field. My work covers merely the first century of this New Dispensation; but even so the work, as you see, is necessarily a large one, and needs scope for its treatment; room for the consideration of its mighty themes and the correlation of them with past, present and future. So that the very largeness of the theme alone would justify and demand a large work. I have found the scope of six volumes inconveniently narrow in places for an adequate treatment of some phases of the great subject in hand. There are other considerations also which justify the employment of so large a treatment of the subject besides mere largeness of it.

A few years ago a critic of some standing in the Christian world—he was secretary of a large group of so-called Christian churches—conceded that "the Mormon church is possessed of elements of great power. These elements are founded in its principles of centralized power, and in its social program." He said, "there is no real menace in the Mormon Church to our (i. e. United States) political institutions;" dangers along that line were past. And then:

"Mormonism has reached the zenith of its supernatural visions, is receding, gradually fading in the Mormon consciousness itself. The time spirit will cure it of its abnormalities. It will die amid its own worshippers."

"The way to oppose Mormonism is not to throw mud upon it. A campaign of detraction only helps it to grow. The thing to do is to treat it with candor and fairness. * * * It must fall of its own weight, if it is so to fall at all."

Then he treats us to this reflection with its implication:

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day, and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

This critic is Wm. Oeschger, Secretary of the Nebraska Christian churches (*State Journal, Nebraska*, Nov. 24, 1918).

At a public meeting in Reading, Penn., a lady submitted the following question to me:

"In view of the fact that the drift of the world's thought is away from acceptance of the miraculous, what is to be the future of Mormonism?"

The question is a thoughtful one. It is a fact that the trend of the world's thought is away from acceptance of the miraculous. It is also true that Mormonism had its birth in what men call miracles; in such miracles as are said to tax the credulity of the mind of man to accept, and of modern man in particular. In view of these premises, then, what is to be the future of your faith, Latter-day Saints? The future of Mormonism? Is it the case of an inflowing tide that has carried a ship far up a gently sloping shore, and that now the tide ebbing, leaves the ship beached on the shore, to become a helpless derelict that in time must perish?

Another suggestion: A recent writer, as late as January, 1930, discusses what to him are the necessary limitations of Mormonism. Permit me to say that this writer knows his subject, and our protagonists will not find it the easiest task in the world to meet all his criticism. This writer concedes that of the whole group of religious movements in America that arose about the same time that Mormonism had its origin, Mormonism alone has survived; that is, in any way worth while, and is today a really "going concern." Then he asks, this being so, "Why then has not God's kingdom overspread the Republic?" His answer is: "*Simply because it is self-limited.*" And he argues that matter of self-limitation of "Mormonism" in this way:

"The quest for the perfect American religion could be successful only on the lowest level of intelligence. Piety and business could only be completely fused by means of a creed too ridiculous for any widespread acceptance. * * * The doctrines of Mormonism are indispensable to its system."

The critic is right on that point. "The doctrines of Mormonism are indispensable to its system." Mormonism must be wholly accepted or wholly rejected. Its doctrines, and the whole-hearted acceptance of them is indispensable to membership in its system. The miraculous visions of Joseph Smith, the miraculous visitation of Moroni, and the miraculous translation of the Book of Mormon, the fact of direct and continuous revelation from God, all must be accepted or Mormonism can have no standing; nor can anyone have a standing in Mormonism without acceptance of these doctrines. Then our author proceeds:

"If they [meaning the doctrines] are altered or rejected in any particular, the system must collapse!"

Nothing more true was ever said of Mormonism than that; and I hope Latter-day Saints appreciate the fact of it. Then our writer launches his thunderbolt:

"And they (the doctrines of Mormonism) compose a body of belief almost incredibly absurd. Mormonism made a formidable effort to include all the imbecile dreams that were contemporary with its rise. It was and it remains, at once, millennial restorationist and perfectionist. Fossilized in its canons is nearly every metaphysical, theological and liturgical insanity of the American pentecost. It epitomizes the religious nonsense of a full half century. It was too fundamentally a reaction, as creeds of restoration must necessarily be, so that it retains notions long since discarded by its competitors. A body of beliefs as absurd and grotesque may exist on a small scale here and there, in Los Angeles or Zion City, but none so grotesque is accepted by any number comparable to the Mormons."

And these "absurd" and "grotesque" miraculous doctrines, it is argued, will constitute the limitations of Mormonism, and confine its acceptance to a few. That is to say, according to this view Mormonism may become a tolerated, minor sect, but never will be a world movement—God's kingdom, overspreading the republic and the world. To recur to my Reading, Penn., lady's question—for involved in that, by implication, is the same argument and conclusion as in this American Mercury writer's discussion—"In view of the trend of modern thought away from acceptance of the miraculous, what is to be the future of Mormonism?"

Which is it to be, Latter-day Saints, a limited but tolerated sect, or a world movement? A beached ship on the shore—derelict of the receding world-thought-tides, or the kingdom of God overspreading the nations? What is to be your answer, Oh Church of Latter-day Saints, to these criticisms and this prediction based upon your alleged self-limitations, which are relied upon as marking your defeat as a world movement?

Again what is to be your answer? My answer is—Your history of one hundred years will be your vindication; will effectively prove your claims to the world movement character of your religion and your church. Not a sect, but the universal religion founded upon Jesus Christ—his Gospel and the New Dispensation of it, the complement and fulfilment of all that has gone before, and prophecy of what shall be hereafter. To make this appear, however, your historic statement, your history must not be merely a recital of events. The events must be coordinated and so linked together that the *rationale* of successive events shall be made apparent; and how they link in with the world movements which but spell out God's purposes struggling to get expressed. All this requires ample space—every word of six volumes!

Above all, your history must be honest and fearless. Not mere eulogy of what may be your own side, and a convenient silence, or a half concealment of the facts and consequences that make against you. If it be the duty of the drama and acting to so hold the mirror up to nature as "to show virtue her own features, scorn her own image,

and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure," still more is it the duty of history to so mirror truth and only truth. All this that your History may command the respect of mankind. In our case the History must be so full and frank and fair that truth and the spirit of truth shall be what sunlight is to the atmosphere, so permeating it as to be in and through it an everywhere present spirit of truth, as the Spirit of God is everywhere present through his creations. Such a presence that can no more be separated from your History than sunlight can be plucked from the atmosphere. Such a statement of, and such a treatment of the great truths brought forth in Century One of the organized existence of the Church of the New Dispensation; and so related to what must be the grand purposes of an All-wise and All-loving and Just and Merciful and Righteous Heavenly Father, that the truth will stand vindicated and self-evident to the minds of the men of good will by the mere statement of it, largely enough accepted to make it the dominant kingdom of truth. Here a doctrine of our first prophet, Joseph Smith, helps us:

"Every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God has such an influence over the mind that it is convincing without other testimony. Faith cometh by hearing."

That is to say, Truth has a native power of its own, and if stated clearly and fully it will be its own witness.

"No," said Joseph Smith, so sure was he of this principle—"No, I don't want anyone to tell I am a prophet, or attempt to prove my word." He was confident of the self-evident truth of the spoken word. This being true, our cause shall suffer little from the threat of self-limitations, and the menace of unbelief because of our doctrines being "absurd" or "grotesque," since the truth of them may be established by a clear and effective statement of them; the truth being its own witness. Tell your story, preach your sermon. Write your History in the very spirit of truth; and the spirit of truth will rise up to confirm it: "its own convincing power will be its witness."

I have so tried to write your history.

As to whether Mormonism will be merely a tolerated sect, or a world movement, the veritable kingdom of God to spread over all nations, it but remains for those who are the members of this Church which God has founded, who constitute its priesthood and its membership; it only remains for them to keep the vision splendid before them with which this work began; and I predict a world movement, not a sect will be its character.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners made known his plans and purposes with reference to man's earth life, such revelations being known as dispensations of his Gospel, has in these last days made known that these successive dispensations have come through the ages as an intermittent stream flows through a valley, fed at times from side streams coming in from right and left. Sometimes the river

may become wholly dry; then the river springs up again to flow for a time copiously, with life-giving force, only to sink again from view. But finally God, fulfilling his purposes designed from the first, opens the heavens and gives such floods of rain that so start the stream from all its sources, that it shall never again run dry or spread out and be lost in desert sands. It will constantly widen and deepen until ultimately it will merge with the ocean, which is its home. So God's dispensations shall be gathered and flow into one, the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Your dispensation and mine, meaning the one in which we work; God's dispensation, really, in the which he will gather together in one "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him."

This, then, is the message of our Church voiced from Century One of our organized existence to the world—*the incoming of the final dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

"Hear, O Heavens and give ear, O Earth, for God hath spoken!" The veil between heaven and earth has been rent from top to bottom. Heaven's pavilion is taken up, and God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son are revealed anew.

God's plans and purposes in all the dispensations are made known, there has been a unifying of the truth of all the dispensations of God to menward.

The everlasting covenant, of which the blood of the Christ is both sign and seal, has been renewed.

A true priesthood, which is God's power and authority given to man, which becomes God working through men, has been conferred on man in regular order of succession.

The Church of Jesus Christ has again, and for the last time, been set up and made the depository of God's truth and the fulness of it; and has been given the mission of proclaiming that truth and the fulness of it to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Also to this Church has been given the high mission of perfecting the lives of those who receive its truth.

The gathering of all Israel has been proclaimed, and the restoration of Judah to Jerusalem with commandment to resume his national life.

Joseph, son of Jacob, his place as prince in Israel has been made known; and to him has been given the gathering of the tribes, to receive their blessings at the hands of Ephraim, preparatory to going to their own and final lands of inheritance.

The Record of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, the Book of Mormon, has been revealed and translated by the power of God, and supplies the world with a new witness for the Christ, and the truth and the fulness of the Gospel.

The Zion of God, the capital of the empire of the Christ in the new world, the place of it is revealed, and for many years proclaimed and will not be moved out of its place.

Elias who held the keys of God's Church in the days of Abraham and blessed him, has restored the patriarchal powers and graces of the priesthood, to link together the families of men in patriarchal order, from now to the time of the end.

Elijah, translated to heaven without tasting death, and therefore made the man of two worlds, heaven and earth, and by that token capable of working in each and both, has restored the keys of the long promised priesthood that turns the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children. In this first century of existence for the Church, and in consequence of this, Elijah's, mission, more than seven millions of baptisms for the dead have been performed, and more than fifteen millions of ordinances (including the baptisms) have been performed for the dead. Seven temples have been erected in various parts of the land of Zion, for a continuance of this holy work, and more will yet be builded. Think what that work may be when there are a hundred temples instead of seven!

Stakes of Zion are multiplied in the land of Zion, in Canada, in Mexico, in the midst of the Rocky Mountains, and also along the Pacific slope; and soon, as our first Prophet declared, and but three months before his death, on the Atlantic seaboard likewise would stakes of Zion be organized, naming specifically stakes of Zion to be established in Boston and New York, and other great cities. The Atlantic ocean but washes the shores of Zion land on the east, as the Pacific ocean washes the shores of Zion land on the west; and the great interior valleys of the Mississippi and his mighty tributaries, will also be places for stakes of Zion, and the Gulf slopes—the south-land—as well.

Zion is lengthening her cords and is strengthening her stakes, and multiplying her altars to the true God by the erection of temples, stake houses, and chapels throughout the land. It seems to me that the chief activity of our President, Heber J. Grant, in late years, has become the dedicating of places of worship throughout and in all parts of the land of Zion.

And these things will increase more and more. And while, as the prophets of the Book of Mormon foresaw, the possession of the saints upon the land of promise would be few, and scattered upon all the face of the promised land (I Nephi, chapter xiv:12), yet will they be multiplied until they shall become a mighty people; and from among them will arise those who shall be able to move in upon and redeem Zion, the centerplace thereof, and fulfill God's word and purposes as to the mission of the capital city of the Christ's spiritual, growing empire in America.

May men truthfully call this a work of narrow limitations? The business and work of a merely tolerated sect—one of the broken lights of God? Or is it the beginning of a world movement for the decreed fulfilment of all the purposes of God? A world movement, I say, for the completion of God's purposes with reference to the establishment

of Zion, the salvation of men, the redemption of the earth and the fulfilment of all the words of the holy prophets since the world began!

A PRAYER

And now, O God, the Eternal Father! Here as to an altar, I bring this work of mine, and dedicate it unto thee and to thy cause. If there is any way of excellence in it, I am sure it is of thee, and unto thee belongs all glory and all praise and honor. As thy dear Son, the Christ, in the council before the world began, when accepting the mission to redeem the world, said, "Father, the glory be thine;" so now, in this so infinitely smaller matter, but I trust in that same spirit, I say in the presence of all these people, Father, the glory be thine for this work accomplished.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

The bouquet of beautiful flowers to my left was sent to me by Mr. Gus L. Becker of Ogden. With the flowers came a letter in which he states that during his forty years of residence here he has discovered that we are a God-fearing, honorable, upright people.

The bouquet just behind me was sent by the various General Boards of the auxiliary associations. It is composed of one hundred roses.

A solo and chorus, "I have seen my Maker face to face," was sung by Rilla Wilson and the choir.

After the closing prayer was offered by Elder Henry H. Blood, President of the North Davis Stake of Zion, Conference adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, April 7th.