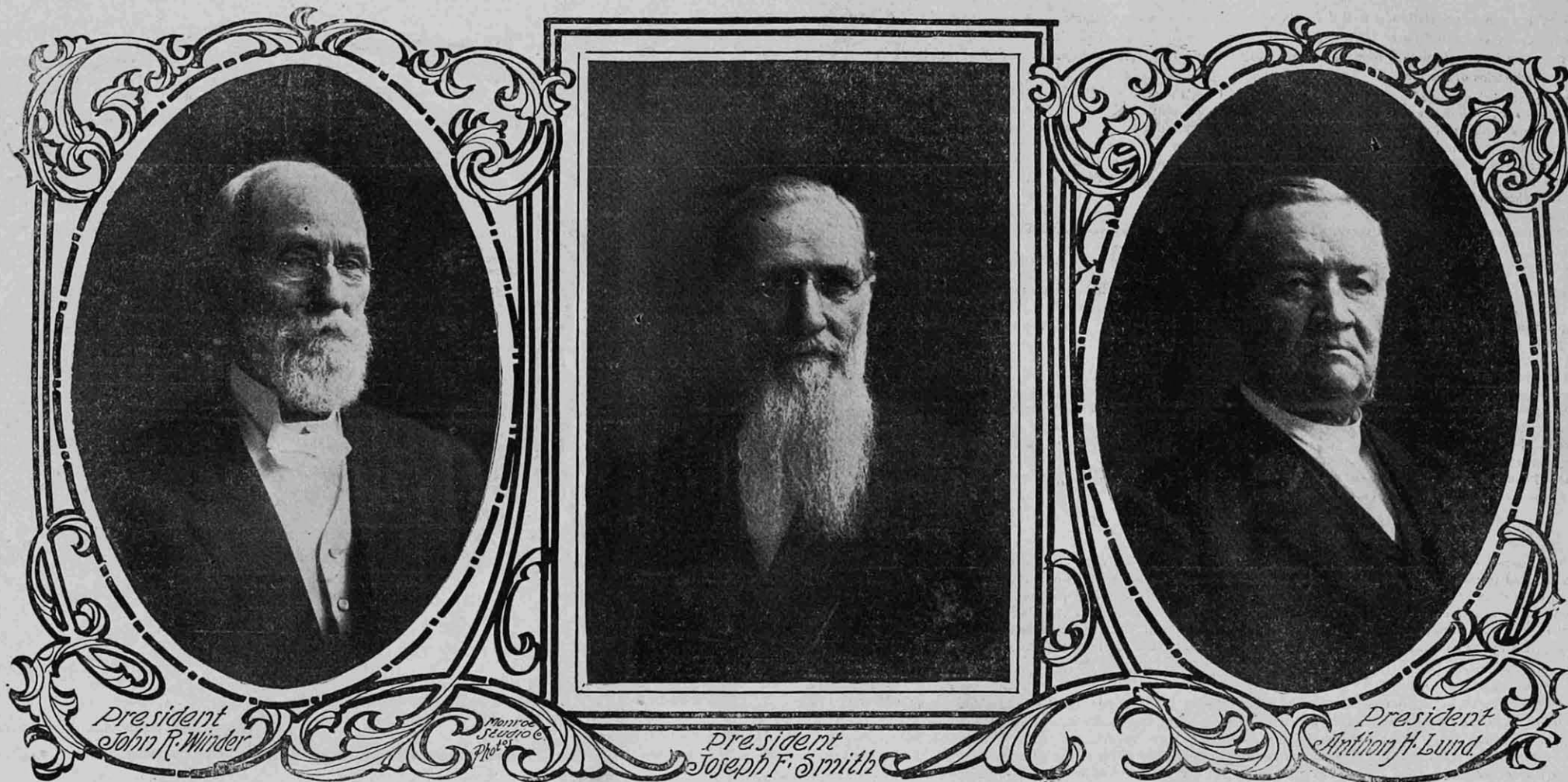




# Greetings From the First Presidency

Review of Year's History of the Church

Dec. 18  
1909



**A**GAIN we desire to greet the Latter-day Saints through the columns of the Christmas Deseret News. We do so with grateful hearts for the mercies of the Lord and His protecting watchcare extended to the members of the Church.

The Saints have much to be thankful for at the close of the year 1909. It has been marked with progress in the work of the Lord, and has been eventful in many ways in the advancement of the interests of the Church. In the discoveries and inventions of scientific men in various parts of the world, the Spirit of the Lord has also been made manifest in a marked degree in accordance with ancient prophecies concerning the purposes of the Almighty in these latter days.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today stands firmer, stronger and better equipped to cope with error and to scatter seeds of truth, than ever before, notwithstanding the opposition brought to bear against it and the falsehoods circulated by unprincipled men in their vain effort to destroy the work of the Lord. Friends have been raised up among the honorable men of the nation to defend the truth and there is today a better comprehension of the work called "Mormonism" than has been manifest throughout the world in years that are past.

Prejudice and ignorance are gradually giving way before the light of truth. We have had the privilege of correcting many errors that have in the past crept into encyclopedias and histories, and in line with this we are pleased to see the commencement of the publication of the history of the Church in the Americana, one of the leading historical journals published in the United States. This magazine circulates among an intelligent class of people. The publication of these articles grew out of an attack made by a designing person on the origin of the Book of Mormon that appeared in the same magazine. The privilege was granted Elder B. H. Roberts to make a reply which was later followed by his being invited to write a short history of the Church to run through several numbers of the magazine. We feel to recommend this magazine to the Latter-day Saints, and trust they will support it with their subscriptions.

The world is gradually learning that the Church has been misunderstood and should have a respectful hearing. In fact this recognition has taken the form, among some of the Christian sects, of adopting certain principles of the Gospel taught by the Church: The principle of revelation, the doctrine of the personality and individuality of the Godhead, the law of tithing, the Word of Wisdom, requiring temperance on the part of the members in the strictest sense, the abstaining from all harmful and unnecessary drugs and stimulants; the anointing of the sick with oil, and prayer in their behalf, and other principles revealed by the Lord to the Church. The dogmas of infant damnation and that there is no salvation beyond the grave have generally found disfavor and by many have been abandoned since the advent of the Gospel into the world.

While there are exceptions, the Saints in general have been faithful and diligent in the discharge of their obligations, in keeping the commandments required of them as members, and in listening to the counsel and instruction given them by the priesthood, and the officers of the Church, both general and local, have been actively engaged in performing the various duties devolving upon them.

The responsibilities resting upon the priesthood in caring for the flock is of the greatest importance and requires faithfulness and perseverance. These duties and responsibilities are increasing, due to the progress being made, and the peculiar conditions surrounding us. At the beginning of the year the various quorums of priesthood were each provided with a course of study embodying the doctrines of the Church and items of Church discipline and government. Monday night each week was set apart for the members of the quorums to gather in their several wards to receive instruction and inform their minds, that they might qualify themselves for their duties in the Church. The plan adopted has resulted in great good, and through this cause the priesthood meetings and the regular gatherings of the people have been better attended. We feel gratified with the results growing out of the activity engendered in these meetings.

The population in the stakes is steadily increasing. During the past year the Yellowstone stake has been organized. It has also become necessary to create new wards where the communities have grown so large that the officers are overburdened in their labors. This has necessitated the calling into active service a great number of brethren and sisters, thus increasing the interest in and vigor of the work and the efficiency of the ministry.

Considerable building has been done in the erection and repairing of houses of worship and other buildings, so that better facilities for worship could be afforded the members. These buildings have been substantially built with modern improvements and conveniences. One of the most substantial and imposing buildings erected is the building east of the Salt Lake Temple on North Main street, containing the offices of the Presiding Bishopric, some of the quorums of the priesthood, and the auxiliary organizations. The building is fireproof and contains strong, well protected vaults where records may be safely preserved. Another imposing structure in course of erection is the Deseret Gymnasium, just east of the Presiding Bishop's building, now so far advanced that it is enclosed. It is built for the physical development and training of the youth.

In the missions the work is spreading and the results are gratifying; many of the missionaries are traveling without purse or scrip and are provided for by the people, thus depending on the promises of the Lord. There has been a renewal of missionary work throughout the New England states, from which so many of the early and influential families of the Church were gathered. The work of the Lord is being prosecuted with vigor in all the missions. We regret, however, that in some portions of the world the Elders are restricted in their freedom, but in this regard there is a gradual improvement.

During the year two of our Elders laid down their lives while laboring in the mission field. This is greatly regretted and the sympathy and blessings of the brethren are extended to the bereaved. Notwithstanding this, it is most remarkable, considering the great number of missionaries who are constantly laboring throughout the nations, that the deaths are so few, and this shows that the protecting hand of Providence is over them. The Elders who were taken were Griffith E. Williams, who labored in the British mission, and who died September 24th, and John H. Cartwright of the Western States mission, who died October 22.

The Book of Mormon, translated by Elder Alma O. Taylor, has been published in the Japanese language. This record which the angel said should go forth to all nations, tongues and peoples, has now been translated and published in fulfillment of that prediction in English, German, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Spanish, French, Italian, Welsh, Hawaiian, Maori, Samoan, Tahitian, Turkish and Japanese. It has also been translated into Greek, Armenian, Hebrew and Hindostanee. In many of these languages it has passed through numerous editions.

The work of the Bureau of Information on the Tabernacle grounds in Salt Lake City, is also of large proportions. Three hundred thousand tourists passed through the Tabernacle grounds during this year. For the benefit of these visitors the Church provided free organ recitals which were given every day each week from the April to the October conference. The impressions made upon the visitors have been for good. Prejudice has been removed from their minds and they have returned to their homes with clearer ideas respecting the Latter-day Saints and their mission in the world. The influence of this labor is felt in the mission field where the missionaries come in contact with the parties who have been so freely and pleasantly entertained while in our city.

The responsibility resting upon the parents in providing for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of their children is of the utmost importance. They should teach them the principles of the Gospel from their earliest childhood, impressing upon their minds the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They should be encouraged to do right, be virtuous, honest, truthful, and faithful to every obligation and covenant. This can best be impressed upon their minds by example on the part of the parents. They should themselves be what they would have their children to be; they should do what they would have them do, and avoid the evils that would grieve their own spirits should their children commit them. They should admonish them in kindness; encourage them in well-doing; instruct them in the home to keep the Word of Wisdom, to pray and give thanks to God for all His blessings, in the law of tithing, and in all virtuous deportment, and grant to them every opportunity to receive the benefits and instruction afforded them by the several organizations of the Church.

There is a growing tendency throughout the land to disregard the observance of the Sabbath day. The command: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is as much the law today as when it was given to Israel on Mount Sinai. Theaters and various public amusements are now held on the Sabbath day contrary to the revelations of the Lord, and they prove a potent factor in destroying the faith of those who participate in this practice. The parents of the youth of Zion should guard their children against this and all other evils, for they will be held responsible should their children go astray through their neglect.

For the purpose of assisting the Saints in the necessary instruction and protection of their children from the evils of the world, that are so rapidly finding their way into the communities of the Latter-day Saints, Religion classes, Primary associations—the auxiliary organizations which are helps in the government of the Church, have been established. We desire the parents to have their children enrolled in these organizations and receive the benefit of the training therein given. We also call to their attention the advantages in having their children attend the Church schools. There are twenty-nine of these located in different sections of the territory occupied by the Latter-day Saints, in which the various branches of education are taught, including spiritual and moral training, so necessary to a complete education. These schools are efficient and should be liberally patronized.

Another matter of greatest importance to the Latter-day Saints, which was mentioned in our greeting of 1908, is the work in behalf of the dead. The year past has been one of marked progress in this direction, many of the Saints have been diligently securing the records of their dead and have performed ordinances in their behalf. This is indeed gratifying and should be encouraged, for there is no greater work in all the Gospel plan required of us.

The Genealogical Society of Utah, which was organized for the purpose of securing genealogical records for the use of those interested in temple work, has secured many valuable records from Europe and New England during the present year. We suggest that the Latter-day Saints join this society and give it their support that they may have better facilities for obtaining these important records of the dead. In January, 1910, the Society will commence the publication of a genealogical and historical magazine, which will be devoted to the publication of genealogical information, pedigrees and other items that will aid the people in securing their records and performing the work for their dead.

The past year has witnessed the calling to the other side of a number of the veterans who have done much for the cause of Zion at home and abroad. Among these stalwart and faithful Elders from whom we have been called to part during the past year, the names of Lorin Farr, George Reynolds, John Nicholson, Charles R. Savage, Andrew W. Winberg, Amos Milton Musser, Samuel W. Richards and others stand out prominently. The services of these men were devoted to the welfare of humanity and were engaged in the ministry almost since the organization of the Church. They have been faithful and true through all vicissitudes, obstacles, persecutions and hardships, through which they were called to pass. They were pioneers whose lives were spent in constant toil and continued labor, building cities, making peaceful habitations, improving the land, cultivating the barren, unfruitful soil until it yielded, through the blessings of heaven, a bountiful harvest, and the benefit of their labors is now enjoyed by their children. We honor the memory of such men, for they were benefactors of their country. Their lives were not lived in vain, neither will their reward fail. They have been faithful in mortality, and they will be exalted in eternity. The just shall sit on thrones and be counted among the noble and great who shall rule in Jehovah's kingdom.

In conclusion we admonish the Latter-day Saints to live their religion; to remember their covenants made at the waters of baptism, to honor the Lord and keep His commandments, not to be overcome by the follies of the world, but to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, live at peace with all men, magnify their callings, keep and improve their lands and avoid the restless spirit that would destroy their peace of mind and cause them to be dissatisfied in the localities where they dwell, honor the priesthood they hold, seek for wisdom and improve their spare moments in doing good and increasing their understanding that they may be fitted for every requirement of them.

We wish the Saints a joyful Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year, together with the choicest blessings of the Lord.

JOSEPH F. SMITH,  
JOHN R. WINDER,  
ANTHONY H. LUND.