

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

(Continued from Page 20.)

general subjects in the previous Epistles are so copious, and apply so directly to the entire lives and surroundings of the Saints, that we deem it not necessary to repeat them at the present time or to write a lengthy Epistle.

OPPOSITION CONFRONTING THE SAINTS

No people of whom we have any knowledge have been called upon to pass through such scenes and to have such a peculiar experience as the Latter-day Saints. The trials and difficulties we have had to contend with, so numerous and so varied in character, have scarcely been equalled in our generation. But those we have had to meet during the past three or four years, and which still confront us, are new even in our experience. They have come upon us in a new shape. Originating in the same source, prompted by the same spirit, and designed for the same end, and other plans which have been put into operation for our injury and overthrow, the present attack which is made upon us, differs largely in many of its features and methods from anything we have ever had to encounter. We have been led to expect from the beginning that as the work of God grew and developed in the earth, the resistance to it would become more formidable and widespread, would increase in intensity and vigor, and bring into antagonism to it more influential powers. This has ever been the voice of prophecy and testimony unto us concerning the future of the work of God which we have espoused. If, then, we have not been prepared for these trials which we now have to overcome, it has not been because we have not been warned of their approach. By the testimony of His Spirit and by the voices of His faithful servants, God has given His people ample time for preparation. And the Latter-day Saints who have lived so as to enjoy the spirit of their religion have expected, and have prepared themselves to meet, such trials as have come upon us, and others which may yet be in reserve for us before the final victory is achieved over Satan and the embattled powers of darkness.

THE PRIVILEGE OF REVELATION.

It is this pre-knowledge which God has given concerning His work, and which He constantly imparts as it is needed to His people which is one of the chief causes of the strength possessed by the Latter-day Saints. It is the principle of revelation from the Head of the Church to the Church itself—a principle which in its operation is not confined to one man, or to three men, or to twelve men; but is extended to every individual in the Church, in greater or less degree, as each one chooses to avail himself of it. There is an appointed way, however, by which revelation from the Lord for the government of His Church is received. There is but one man on the earth, at a time, who holds this power. But every individual member has the privilege of receiving revelation from the Lord for his guidance in his own affairs and to testify to him concerning the correctness of public teachings and movements.

The great promise which accompanies the preaching of the Gospel, as revealed from heaven in our day, is that the Holy Ghost will be bestowed upon the sincerely penitent who obey its holy ordinances. Through the Holy Ghost a knowledge of things past, present and to come is communicated and the mind and will of the Father made known. In this way the Almighty reveals His purposes to those who obey His commandments and whose lives are pure and acceptable before Him, so that they can be prepared for all the events and trials that may lie in their pathway.

If there are any members of the Church who do not know by their own experience that this is true, they may be assured that they do not live up to their privileges. All Saints should be in close communion with the Holy Ghost, and, through it, with the Father, or there is danger of their being overcome of evil and falling by the wayside.

We, therefore, say to the Latter-day Saints: The Holy Ghost will not dwell in an unholy tabernacle. If you would enjoy the full powers and gifts of your religion, you must be pure. If you are guilty of weaknesses, follies and sins, you must repent of them; that is, you must thoroughly forsake them. In no other way can we please God. "Man of holiness" is His name, and He delights in the efforts of His children to be pure.

ABSENCE OF OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

We feelled to speak in this strain, for the reason that while the Latter-day Saints in order to prosper in their religion and to increase in the knowledge of God must always live close to Him, the present is an extraordinary time which appears to require more help and strength from the Lord than usual. The Church has been left, as never for so long a time before, without the public ministrations of a number of the men to whom its members have looked for instruction and counsel. Not only has the number of the Apostles who could minister in public been greatly reduced, but the same causes which have relegated them to seclusion have had the effect to keep many Presidents of Stakes and their

counselors, Bishops and their counselors, as well as High Councilors and other active men in the priesthood, from officiating in their callings. The people have felt the absence of these men and the loss of their teachings and guidance. But has the Lord, on this account forgotten His people? No, certainly not. The prayers of the faithful men of God, who have been prevented from ministering to the people, and whose hearts have been full of love and earnest desire for their welfare, have been constantly offered to the Lord that He would have mercy on His flock, that He would make up to them, by the more abundant outpouring of His Holy Spirit, for the deprivation to which they have been subjected in not having the presence of many of His servants among them.

THE HAND AND PURPOSES OF GOD.

The Savior said, "It is impossible but that offences will come; but," he added, "woe unto them through whom they come." In our case offences have come, and it has appeared that we could not avoid them. Shall we not acknowledge the hand of God in that which has taken place in our land and which affects us so deeply? We who have seen in all our affairs, and in all the events which have happened to us, His providence so visibly manifested, must feel that the occurrences of the past three or four years have been permitted by Him for a wise purpose. We cannot suppose that these happenings have been by chance and without a design. God has not so dealt with us in the past. Mysterious as have been many things when we had them to encounter, time has never failed to throw light upon and explain them. When they happened we, perhaps, acknowledged the hand of the Lord in them, but because of the Lord having said we should do so; but this was upon the principle of faith. Afterwards, however, we have looked back to these events, and seeing how wondrously God had wrought, we, in the fullness of our hearts and in view of the results, have acknowledged, not in faith but in developed knowledge, that God's hand was in all that had occurred. So with the experience, painful though it be, which we are now gaining.

God has a purpose to accomplish in permitting the treatment which we have received. Whatever the result to others who have prompted and been active in pushing it, to us it cannot be anything but profitable and beneficial. If we receive it in the right spirit and bear it patiently. One good effect is apparent. The Latter-day Saints are compelled, perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, to think and act for themselves and not to depend so much upon others to lead them. Some, not having lived so as to have the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost, may stumble and fall. But those who have lived up to their privileges will find that God has not forgotten His promises and has not left His people to themselves, nor without a testimony as to the course they should pursue.

THE SAINTS MUST BE TESTED.

The pathway of the people of God has been beset with difficulties. They have been environed with dangers. Dark clouds have almost surrounded them. But amidst all these, the still, small voice of the Spirit of God has been heard. His Saints have had a testimony from Him that the course they have been led to take is the right one and that He will never fail to make known His mind and will to them so long as they live up to His requirements.

It appears plain that it is God's purpose to suffer His Saints to be thoroughly tried and tested, so that they may prove their integrity and know the character of the foundation upon which they build. Many things have occurred during the last twelve months which are well adapted to test the faith and integrity of the people. It does not seem possible that those who do not live so as to have the light of the Holy Ghost shining in their souls can escape doubts and fears concerning the work of God. So many things have occurred which are entirely different to pre-conceived notions as to the course that would be taken in building up Zion that each one needs to have a knowledge for himself to clearly understand that God is leading us in the path which we are now pursuing. To some who are inclined to despond and to take a gloomy view of affairs, the ship Zion may, perhaps, appear to be drifting away from its old moorings, because things are being done or movements consented to which, to their eyes, portend disaster to us and to the work of God.

UNJUST CRITICISM.

There has always been a few among us who have been filled with evil forebodings, and who have failed to see the wisdom of God in the steps which His people have been led to take. They have questioned and found fault with the counsel that has been given and the measures which have been adopted, and have asserted that revelation had ceased and the Saints were no longer guided by men to whom God made known His will. The prophet Joseph during his lifetime did not escape the criticism and censure of this class. He was often accused of being a fallen prophet and of leading the Church astray. During the long presidency of President Brigham Young, the same charges were made, and many apostatized because they believed, as they stated, that he was no longer led by

the Lord. Experience has proved that in all such cases those who make these accusations are themselves in the dark.

But the faithful people—those who have lived strictly in accordance with their profession as Saints and with the requirements of the Gospel—have not been assailed by doubts of this character. There might be many things which they could not clearly understand, and the reasons for which might not be fully apparent to them at the time; but possessing the Spirit of God, and being led by it, they trusted in the Lord and felt satisfied to leave the management of His kingdom and its affairs to His supreme wisdom. Time developed to their minds the correctness of the course which the Church had been led to adopt. This has occurred so frequently in our career that the instances will readily suggest themselves to those familiar with our history. In this way, however, the faith of the people has been constantly tested.

THE ANOINTING THE SAINTS HAVE RECEIVED.

The Apostle John, in speaking to the Saints in his day, said: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

The Saints in our day have received this same anointing and they should be in a position to not be dependent upon man to teach and tell them that which is right. They have had a flood of instruction given to them in days that are past. This instruction has covered the entire policy of building up the kingdom of God on the earth. Of this continued instruction they have been to a great extent deprived of late. It has appeared to be the design of Providence that they should be left to show to the heavens, to each other and to the world whether the truths they have been taught have had the proper effect upon them, or not—whether when left to a certain extent to themselves they will be governed in their daily lives and acts by principle—principle to the truth of which testimony has been borne by the Holy Ghost—or by the spirit and customs of Babylon by which they are surrounded, but from which they are supposed to be gathered out.

NECESSITY OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

The present is an appropriate time for each member of the Church to indulge in self-examination—to measure his conduct and life in the full light of the heavenly principles revealed to us. Ours is no ordinary calling. Great opportunities and privileges have been bestowed upon us. To us, as a people, has been entrusted the grand and glorious labor of laying the foundation of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Every act of our lives should be performed with this in view. Nothing should be done by any one calling himself a Latter-day Saint that will conflict with the policy which God has announced as proper to be adopted in establishing that kingdom. In this connection there are questions which each one should ask himself: Do I, in all my words and influence and in all my transactions of my life, constantly keep before me the advancement and prosperity of the Zion of God as the first and most important consideration? Do I, through covetousness or a desire for personal profit and advantage, depart from that line of conduct which God, through His Spirit and the teachings of His servants, has said His Saints should follow? Do I, by my words and acts, set such an example before my family that my children will grow up to manhood and womanhood fully imbued with a love of Zion and with an understanding of the principles upon which Zion will be built up.

Many more questions of a similar character each one can ask himself in the process of self-examination. If these can be answered correctly, there need be no fears indulged in concerning the effect of the Edmunds-Tucker law, the confiscation suits, the state movement, the "boom" as it is called, or any other measure which may be adopted either in favor of or against the Zion of God. Respecting all these movements, about which there is more or less agitation and concern and perhaps excitement, there need be no fears if the Latter-day Saints will only be true to the covenants they have made with their God and strictly carry out the principles which He has told us must govern us in the building up of His Zion.

CONSEQUENCES OF FORGETTING COVENANTS.

If, however, we forget our covenants, and depart from and disregard the teachings which He has given us, then be assured, Latter-day Saints, our position is full of peril to us. God's purposes will not be thwarted; but we shall be scourged, and those who persist in this course will be rejected and be deprived of all share in the blessings promised to Zion. Where those professing to be Latter-day Saints knowingly and flagrantly act in contravention of the counsels which he has given us, then we have cause to fear and the plots of the wicked against us, joined by the foolish disobedience and rebellion of professed Saints, become a serious menace to the peace, prosperity and progress of Zion.

Praying the Lord to endow every officer of the Church who desires to magnify his calling, with every gift and

qualification which belongs to the Priesthood which he bears, and to fill the members of the Church with the Holy Ghost and its gifts,

I remain your Brother and Servant in Christ Jesus,

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

In behalf of the Quorum of the Twelve. April 6th, 1888.

After the reading of the Epistle

BISHOP O. F. WHITNEY

spoke substantially as follows:

It is the request of President Snow that I should occupy a portion of the time in speaking. I assure you I do this only in the hope that you will sustain me by your faith and prayers, that what I may say may be the offspring of the Spirit of Truth. There is no subject of such importance as the possession of the Holy Ghost. To secure it has been strongly enjoined upon us by the Epistle which you have just heard read. We have been left in the darkness of this world with this Spirit as our guide. We have been left of late more than ever before to listen to its promptings. We are told that there is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Wherever we go we will find the offspring of God manifesting this light in various degrees of intensity. The great difference between the Saints and the rest of mankind is that a channel of communication has been opened up between heaven and earth. The Priesthood has been restored and by the power thereof men have gone abroad preaching a restored gospel. It is the same gospel that was preached and practised in olden times. It was possessed by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and other holy men. It was taken from the earth in the days of Moses because of hardness of heart and unbelief of the people, and the law of carnal commandments left, that the descendants of the ancients might be prepared for the fullness of the Gospel in later times. This time the Gospel will never be taken from the earth until it is redeemed. The Saints are required to prepare for the coming of Christ when He shall come in power and great glory to take the reins of government; and this globe will be celestialized and become the eternal home of the people of God of all ages. The Lord showed Abraham the intelligences He had organized before the world was, and showed other Prophets His work from beginning to end. Enoch was informed that the inhabitants of the holy city that bears his name would descend in the latter days and join with the new Jerusalem on the earth, and the meeting would be one of great joy. Are we asleep that we can sit down and devote ourselves to the pleasures and ways of this world with such a stern and glorious prospect before us? How is it with us—Saints, especially in Salt Lake City? The line of demarcation which divides the Church of Christ from the world grows thinner and thinner every day. We are "living after the manner of the world." We have gathered from the four quarters of the earth in obedience to the command of God "Come out of her my people." But no one who listened to the words spoken here this morning can fail to see that the object of the gathering is being partially destroyed. It behooves us to call a halt, and obey the words of this Epistle. We must come out of Babylon morally and spiritually as well as physically. Let us ask God to purge us, even though it bring us into the dust of penitence. It is better that we should suffer here rather than be placed at a disadvantage hereafter. We may well heed the wise counsel of the servants of God; of the Holy Spirit, which dwells not in unclean temples. This is the day of the coming of Jesus Christ, the King of kings. A work of preparation is in progress. We are supposed to have come here to pave the way for that event. We are the children of Abraham. If we were to inherit the same blessings as were promised to him, we must do his works. We must be as unflinching and obedient as he was in the face of every trial, obstacle and opposition. How will the heavens weep if we fail to perform our mission. The Son of God speaking to His disciples said: "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt hath lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted?" Because God has said this work shall stand forever, this does not give us a license to be indifferent and neglect to fulfill our great mission. High sounding words may be pleasing to the ear, but "faithful are the wounds of a friend." A man in a day like this is not faithful in his calling who does not warn his neighbors and search and reprove his own soul. We came to the earth to learn a great lesson. We are sent here to be proved to see if we will do everything required of us. This does not mean that we shall be swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. It means that we shall do everything that God requires. We cannot serve God and Mammon. Where our treasure is there will our heart be also. In relation to the commands of God we should be as clay in the hands of the potter. Our selfish inclinations may often rebel against that course. We may flatter ourselves that it is the spirit of the Lord that incites to seek the attainment of selfish objects. Sometimes we may be led to mistake the spirit by which we are actuated, by practicing self-deception. There are three distinct spirits, alluded to by the Prophet Joseph—the Spirit of God, leading upward; the spirit of Satan, leading downward; and the spirit of man sus-

ceptible of being operated upon either of those two, but man has er to resist the promptings of tempter, hence the agency and responsibility. That which persuadeth to do good is from God, for Satan snadeth no man to do good, and their fruits are all men know. examples and teachings should be that they will preserve our culture if they are lost because of unrighteous course, we will held responsible. Many young people of honored names in Israel are growing up in ignorance of the Gospel and in everything aim at that God forbidden. The harvest will be me and disaster. On the other hand are serving God, are teaching and ing taught the principles to the God of Christ. Their prospect is a glorious one. Life is a serious matter some people act as if they viewed a gigantic joke. This is a day of paration. The voice is calling: "pare ye the way of the Lord; His paths straight. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill be made low." The haughty and proud and they who do wicked will be brought down and the poor meek shall be exalted; hence many instances the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Lits equality, fraternity should be watchwords of the hour, and our effort the establishment of order of unity and righteousness will prepare the world for the coming of the great King.

The choir sang:

The Battle Hymn of Israel.

Benediction by Elder Lorenzo Young.

FOURTH DAY.

MORNING SESSION, SUNDAY, APRIL 10 a.

Singing by the choir:

Sweet is the work, my God, my King. To praise Thy name, give thanks and To show Thy love by morning light, And talk of all Thy truths at night.

Prayer by Elder Abram H. Cannon

The choir sang:

O my Father, Thou that dwellest In the high and glorious place: When shall I regain Thy presence And again behold Thy face?

APOSTLE JOHN HENRY SMITH

was the first speaker. He read Malachi:

Behold I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The hymn that has been sung this morning has probably awakened the hearts of the Saints to reflections and earnest. It carries those of them who embraced the Gospel in other lands to the day there came to them an humble and clad most likely, in coarse garb, rude in speech, lacking the polish many instances of those who had educated as ministers among the people. These humble Elders came to doors asking rest, or that they might speak with us of a message which had committed to them. They planned the principles of the Gospel; they reasoned with us the Scriptures, and labored to plain the Gospel which they claimed had again been revealed to men; explained the doctrine of faith, laws by which man should be governed, and the means by which could make an acceptable offering to God. Their words were not so quaint as those of the gifted scholars they brought with them the word of God, and while they sometimes unable to explain the concerning man in a worldly sense, opened to our view the holy Scriptures and taught us to understand what they taught us that holy men old spoke as they were moved upon the Holy Ghost, and explained to the way in which we should live; they taught us of our parents who had gone before, and by the spirit inspiration gave us a knowledge brought gladness and joy to our hearts. We had heard the ministers of the world dwell on the beauties of the Gospel and the mission of Jesus, we never had awakened in our hearts a knowledge of God's plan till the humble Elder of Christ brought to the intelligence that removed from hearts all doubts and fears and gave us in the right path.

The hymn opens to our understanding a key of knowledge, and brings our realization the condition that lies beyond. We have been called from that sphere on a mission, placed in a position to accept or reject that which God has revealed. We had when the Elders of the Church came. We believed in Jesus and the Scriptures, and with the eyes of faith we looked for a reward for our good lives. We were ready to receive the principle of faith; it not new to us—it was one of the which gladdened us when repentance and baptism were spoken of, and we learned that God was looking for salvation of His children as a reward. We rejoiced when the principle of gathering was taught to us when we had the privilege of participating for the rolling on of God's dominion. When we were called to our homes, and gathered with the Saints, we obeyed with joy and thanksgiving. Probably no other principle revealed to us in our day has so enabled