

October 1941 General Conference

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The length of time that has elapsed since the April Conference has only served to impress upon me the sacredness of the position I am now called to occupy. I am therefore dependent upon the Spirit of our Heavenly Father today, and pray for an interest in your faith and prayers.

The Lord Concerned in the Welfare of His Children

I trust the words that I shall speak to you this morning will be words of wisdom and words guided by the spirit of this great Conference.

During the last five and a half years my mind has been occupied largely in matters that pertain to the safety and welfare of this people. In my study of this subject and my attention to these matters, I have become impressed with the rich outpouring of the Spirit that has dictated counsel, wisdom, and revelation sufficient for our needs. That the Lord is concerned about the welfare of this people there can be no question, as is evidenced by a revelation given early in the history of this Church to the Prophet Joseph in these words:

And it is my purpose to provide for my Saints, for all things are mine.

But it must needs be done in mine own way. ([D&C 104:15, 16.](#))

I received some time ago a letter from a friend that suggests the concern of our Father, and the way by which His concern will be manifest. I quote:

For over a century men have been preaching the gospel of salvation but have never lifted their eyes beyond the old sectarian concept of a salvation men have to die to get. When we become conscious of the fact that there is no time limit upon the saving principles and powers of the Gospel but that they may be drawn upon to meet the problems of today and tomorrow, as well as of the Hereafter, we will then become the people who will be the light of the world.

Inspired Leadership the Present Need

The dispensation in which you and I live is intended to be a demonstration of the power and effectiveness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to meet these everyday problems here and now. The Lord declared in 1838:

For thus shall my Church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth. ([D&C 115:4-6.](#))

The uncertainty of the leadership of men of the world in this day is evidenced by the fact that we have many changing programs that over night, and day by day seem to fluctuate between poles of the greatest of uncertainty. We hear much about "the abundant life," and "social security," and there are some I fear who are believers in the thought that these goals will come from the working out of the philosophies of men. Enterprising newspaper writers have suggested as you gather to this Conference that you are coming here, perhaps, as you have never done before to hear words of direction and counsel from those who stand as your Church leaders, and well you might come in this day, for the Prophet has declared:

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. ([Amos 3:7.](#))

Last night as we left the Priesthood meeting you heard the thunder roar, you saw the lowering of clouds, and you said to yourselves: "Well, it looks like we are going to have storms tomorrow." And yesterday morning and the day before as the sun came up on a cloudless sky you said, "Well, it looks like we will have fair weather." And you who have thus been able to read most accurately the signs of the weather might well listen to what the Master said to those in His day as He used these expressions as a parable:

O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? ([Matthew 16:3.](#))

The Lord's Plan

My purpose in the few minutes that I stand here will be to give you something of what the Lord has said pertaining to this day, and what might be the expectation of the Latter-day Saints concerning the way by which the Lord would guide us to safe shores. Not only has the Lord given us the plan to follow, but He has given us in the revelations one of the basic, if not the most basic reason for the ills that beset mankind. This is what the Lord said, and I suppose as you understand this you will recognize in it the reason for selfishness and for jealousies that develop into bitterness and hatred, and finally into war and bloodshed. Here is the simple statement of the Lord:

But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin. ([D&C 49:20.](#))

While the world today is groping for a solution, (and I repeat that some of our people, I am afraid, have the mistaken notion that they must look to some development of the philosophies of men in this nation or copied from nations abroad, to solve present problems) the Latter-day Saints should never lose sight of the fact that for over one hundred years the Lord has given us the way, and the plan by which might come the ultimate solution of all the economic problems of this day. Listen to what the Lord said in a revelation:

For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.

Therefore, I give unto you this commandment, that ye bind-your-selves by this covenant, and it shall be done according to the laws of the Lord.

Behold, here is wisdom also in me for your good.

And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just-

And all this for the benefit of the Church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole Church-

Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. ([D. and C. 82:14-19.](#))

The Revelation Pertaining to the United Order

One year prior to the receiving of that revelation the Lord gave the details-the minutest of details-of the organization we have come to call the United Order. He told us how consecrations were to be made and were to be received; He told us how the residue or surpluses were to be handled and distributed; He told us something about the establishment of stewardships and private ownerships, and how those within such an organization should act. This is not the first time that such an organization has been given to this people. We read that shortly after the crucifixion of the Savior the followers of our Lord and Savior established an order where they had all things in common, and two hundred years after the Savior's coming we find a people on this continent of which it was said that they likewise were living in close bonds of fellowship and love, so much so that there was not to be found a happier people anywhere on the face of the earth.

Beginning of the Church Welfare Plan

Five and a half years ago when I, under an assignment from the First Presidency, accompanied Brother Melvin J. Ballard throughout the Church to make the initial announcement of the present movement known as the Church Welfare Plan, he was asked everywhere: "Is this the beginning of the United Order?" And to all such questioners Brother Ballard's answer was the same: "No, it is not the beginning of the United Order, but it may be that in this movement the Lord may be giving His people an examination to see how far they have come toward a condition where they might live as one."

As I have thought about that question, and as I have thought about his answer, I have had difficulty understanding how a people who are not able to sacrifice to a point where they can pay a tenth of their interest annually and abstain from two meals on the first Sunday of the month and

pay that as an offering for the care of the needy, I have difficulty in understanding how we can believe that many of our people are more than ten percent ready for the United Order.

Furthermore, I have difficulty understanding that they would be able to live in the United Order were it to be instituted in this day. I also have grave doubts that prosperous times will make possible that happy day spoken of. I fear we must yet see more difficult and trying times than any we have yet passed through before such a day can come.

There are some things of which I am sure, and that is that contrary to the belief and mistaken ideas of some of our people, the United Order will not be a Socialistic or Communistic set-up: it will be something distinctive and yet will be more capitalistic in its nature than either Socialism or Communism, in that private ownership and individual responsibility will be maintained. I am sure also that when it comes it will come from the leaders of this Church whom you sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators, and will not come from some man who does not occupy that position. It will not come as a political program, legislated by men not possessed of that authority. I am also convinced that the time is here when Zion must put on her beautiful garments preparatory for the second coming of the Savior, and I believe firmly that that preparation is in progress. I am likewise persuaded that the Church Welfare Plan is contributing mightily to that preparation.

It is more than just a coincidence that our Presidency, in 1936, from this stand announcing the beginning of this Welfare movement, made this significant statement:

No pains must be spared to wipe out all feeling of diffidence, shame, or embarrassment on the part of those receiving relief. The Ward must be one great family of equals.

The Purpose of the Plan to Help the Poor

I have seen from a humble beginning an organization grow to where now there has been produced throughout the Church great quantities of foodstuffs. I have seen a system of equitable distribution of those foodstuffs grow up under the guidance of our leaders, so much so that the eighty-three storehouses we now have, or that are in course of construction, may each have an equitable supply of all these commodities, and as great a variety as though they were here in the center part of the Church. I remember also that no Bishop today who is faithful in bearing his responsibility may say that he cannot take care of faithful members of his Ward because he has insufficient funds. I know that in these years we have been striving to a great end, and we have been led by the hand of our Father.

We have come, yes, in a day when "The way of the Lord," as He described it, would be applied, when the poor would be exalted, or in other words stimulated to success and pride, and uplifted because the rich have been made low, or in other words, because the rich have been made humble and willing to give of their substance, their time, and their talent, and their wisdom, and their example that the poor might be thus guided and directed. I have seen team work and cooperation grow, and I have seen the Priesthood take its place in blessing this Church temporally and spiritually in a most glorious way.

Preparation Necessary Before the Second Coming of Christ

I am persuaded that the days of trial and tribulation, the time for testing the fidelity of the Latter-day Saints is here as has been foretold. I am also convinced that you and I will not be prepared for the living of the Celestial law in preparation for the Second Coming if we are notable to live the law of tithing, and pay our Fast offerings, and subscribe whole-heartedly to the workings of the Welfare Plan at the present time. In my mind there is grave doubt that any man can abide the day of the Second Coming who is not willing and able to follow the leadership of these men whom the Lord has set to counsel and guide us in this day.

I thank the Lord that we are not dependent alone upon the faith of those who lived centuries ago, or even a hundred years ago, for revelations that were given unto them in that day. In this day He has given us leaders who are possessed of the same spirit of revelation. This is what the Lord said, speaking to those who held Apostleship:

And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation. ([D&C 68:3, 4.](#))

Inspired Words of Past Church Leaders

It should not be necessary today for us to expect new written revelation on every point when we have these men thus possessed of that same spirit of revelation. A brief review of the past instruction of our leaders should only serve to warn the disobedient and to encourage the obedient to continue faithful. Today listen to the words of President Wilford Woodruff that he spoke more than forty years ago:

So far as temporal matters are concerned, we have got to go to work and provide for ourselves. The day will come when you will see the necessity for making your own shoes and clothing, raising your own food, and uniting together to carry out the purposes of the Lord. We will be preserved in the mountains of Israel in the day of God's judgment.

I therefore say to you, my brethren and sisters, prepare for that I which is to come.

Have you made that preparation? Have you become a self-sustaining people? We were warned to be so by a man whom we sustained as the representative of our Heavenly Father here upon this earth. Today we are suffering from difficulties between capital and labor. Are you aware that our leader of nearly forty years ago told us something that if we would have heeded would have guided us safely past some of the ills of the present time.

Lorenzo Snow spoke these words:

Ye toiling millions who in the sweat of your faces earn your daily bread, the day of your redemption draweth nigh. Cease to waste your wages on that which helps to keep you in want. Regard not the wealth of your enemy and your employer is your oppressor. Seek for the union of capital and labor. Be provident when in prosperity. Do not become a prey to designing men who seek to stir up strife for their own selfish ends. Strive for your rights by all lawful means, and desist from violence and destruction. Dissipation and vice are the chains that bind you to slavery.

Men and women of wealth, use your riches to give employment to the laborer; take the idle from the crowded centers of population, and place them on the untilled areas that await the hand of industry. Unlock your vaults, unloose your purses, and invest in enterprises that will give work to the unemployed and relieve the wretchedness that poisons the moral atmosphere around you. Make others happy and you will be happy yourself.

We have heard much said in this Conference about keeping out of debt and avoiding speculation. From this stand just nine years ago now, from the inspired lips of our late President Anthony W. Ivins he spoke these words; (and they should be something of a condemnation to those who disregarded his words, and should be something of a blessing to those who listened to and kept that counsel.) This is what he said referring to and warning against borrowing and going into debt:

I fear that under existing conditions we are gradually drifting toward a pattern government, a government which will so entrench itself that the people will become powerless to disrupt it, in which the lives and liberties of the people at large may be jeopardized. They are pouring millions of dollars in this time of need into sources for the benefit of the people, and it is a great benefit and perhaps salvation, but it is going to result in this, I am going to make this statement, that if the present policy is continued it will not be long before the government will be in the banking business, it will be in the farming business, it will be in the cattle and sheep business, for many of these debts will never be paid. This will mean the appointment of innumerable agencies. The government now is overloaded with commissions and agencies, some of them administering the very laws that Congress itself has enacted. Someone else should be administering those laws. If you want to save yourselves from the bondage of debt and political influences which are not of your own choosing, I ask you to think of what I have said.

Now, my brethren and sisters, we have men today who have told us repeatedly and also warned against the evil and vice of liquor in our midst. We have been told that we must patronize and foster home industry, to avoid speculation, to make savings in foods and clothing for at least a year. We have had our leaders plead with us to pursue a course that would tend to keep us out of war. I admonish you in all sobriety and seriousness to listen and heed before it is too late.

Oh, may we not be those of whom the Lord complained:

In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me. ([D&C 101:8](#).)

Remember that the Lord said:

For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world,

you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you. ([D&C 78:7.](#))

Safety in Following Counsel of Church Leaders

Today you and I are here because we listened to the counsel of President Brigham Young, and turned deaf ears to the pleadings of men like James J. Strang, Sidney Rigdon and others who would have led us from the path of truth and right. I bear you my witness in all humility that if your children and my children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren, remain faithful to this Church it will be because you and I remained steadfast in the testimony that these men are the prophets of the living God and that we must follow their counsel if we would be saved in the days of peril. Therefore, "stand ye in holy places and be not moved," that we might abide the day of the coming of the Son of Man and be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet our Redeemer when He comes on earth to reign, and reign with Him a thousand years with our children and the redeemed of our Father's house, I pray humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.