PREPARING FOR THE UNITED ORDER


This is an immense congregation, and in order to edify those assembled it will require the presence and assistance of the Spirit of God. It would seem presumptuous for any man to arise to address such an audience of intelligent human beings if he were depending upon himself for that which he should say. I sincerely trust that in the remarks I shall make I may be assisted by the faith and prayers of those who are present.

I look upon this as one of the most interesting conferences that have been held for a long time. It must be gratifying to the Latter-day Saints to receive, as they do, the continued evidences that God is with the people, that He has not forgotten His promises, and that He has the oversight of the affairs of His Church, and regulates and conducts those affairs according to the counsel of His own will. I never attend a meeting where the Spirit of God is manifested in power without feeling profoundly grateful in the reflection that God is with us, and that He condescends to honor us and to testify to the people by giving His Holy Spirit. This, also, brethren and sisters, is a consolation and a comfort that no human tongue can describe: to know by testimony from the Lord that we are in the path that He has marked out for our salvation; to know that we have a standing among the people whom He acknowledges to be His, and that through His condescension we have the communion of the Holy Spirit. It is a consolation to know, when light is needed, when questions arise which require more than human wisdom for their solution, that we have access unto our Great Creator, and that through the spirit of revelation which He has promised to bestow, we can know and understand for ourselves. What mighty importance attaches to that which was explained to us this morning by President Woodruff! How wide-spread and far-reaching is the ordinance to which allusion was made, by which children will be sealed to their parents, one generation connected with another, and the whole human family be brought within the family of God, to be his recognized and acknowledged sons and daughters, bound together by the power of the everlasting Priesthood and in the new and everlasting covenant which He has given to man. What a glorious system of salvation spreads out before us in the contemplation of that which the Lord has revealed! What a feeling of tenderness and love wells up in our hearts in thinking that we are the children of God, and that we are and shall be bound together by ties that never can be broken! How this draws us together and makes us feel interested in one another! How it causes our souls to expand as wide as eternity; not confining our hopes and our labors to any individual, or to any one family, but embracing in our feelings the entire brotherhood of man.

Certainly the Latter-day Saints should be the most thankful of any people upon the face of the earth. You travel throughout the earth and ask the wisest and the most learned what object our Creator had in placing man on the earth, in surrounding him with the circumstances with which he is environed, and what He has in view for him in the future, and who could answer you? I know that religious denominations have their explanations concerning the future; but how unsatisfactory they are! How little there is in them to comfort and cheer, to create hopes and anticipations that are bright! Even the Indian, when he talks about his happy hunting grounds, probably expresses a more cheerful view. In the sectarian world there is vagueness. In the pictures they present as to the future life there is nothing that is really satisfactory. Very few of them believe that these ties which make our human lives so delightful will be perpetuated in the eternity to come. The great majority believe that husbands and wives, parents and children will be nothing to each other in the eternal world; that is, their relations to each other within the family circle will be no more close or definite than their relations to beings without these holy ties. Now, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us that ties are formed here which are eternal in their character; that family associations are created that never can be dissolved; that men and women are bound together for eternity; that man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord; that they have their children; and that the greatest blessing they can enjoy is to have confirmed unto them for ever the privileges which they possess in this life. There is something grand in the contemplation of this glorious principle. It gives certainty unto every man and woman who will seek for it. The woman is not lost, the man is not lost. However obscure and insignificant we may be, we
cannot be lost sight of. We will be felt after and brought out, unless we have committed unpardonable sins, and
somebody will take interest in us. There is no one in the whole family that will be so insignificant as to be
forgotten. This creates peculiar feelings in our hearts, and it ought to make the Latter-day Saints a broad and
expansive people in their minds, and I have no doubt it will have that effect.

I look for the communication that was made to-day by our President to have a great effect upon this people.
It will stimulate our love for our families. At the same time it will check any feeling of building up anything like
tribes among us. It will attach us to our own kindred and race. It will promote the love of race in our hearts, and it
will give our children something to live for; for when a man comes of a family that is an honorable family, there is
something that appeals to his pride to do nothing that will bring discredit or disgrace upon his name. Our lineage is
not known to all of us. We may not know our origin; but this we may be assured of: that we who have received the
truth are choice spirits. The Latter-day Saints have shown their integrity, their valor, and their independence of
character in the midst of contumely and reproach, of persecution and hatred, and the threatened loss, in many
instances, of employment, property and life. They have come out from the world and have been indifferent to its
popularity. They have espoused the principles of truth and righteousness, and valued them more than any other
earthly consideration. Where do you think this nobility of character has come from? It has come from ancestors who
obtained promises from God, through their faithfulness, in regard to their posterity. Our ancestors may have come
through poverty and obscure channels; and some of them may not have possessed any noted characteristics; but when
our ancestry is known it will be found that the noblest men and women of God have been the progenitors of this
people. God has chosen us for a great purpose. He has brought us out of the world, has shaped our lives and the lives
of our parents, and has thrown around them His providences, for the purpose of bringing a people forward in the last
days that would help lay the foundation of His kingdom and be willing to bear every persecution and trial connected
with it. Of this I feel assured. I can testify of it, and know it to be so. As was said this morning, the communication
which the Lord has designed to give to us through His servant enables us to see how we can honor the ancestry
through which we have come, and also prevent the breaking of the ties that should connect us with them, and avoid
confusion and disorder in regard to these matters.

There are many things that the Lord will give us revelations about from time to time. He has done this in a
marvelous manner thus far. There has been nothing that we have needed for the progress of the Church that has not
been given. We have built these temples, and we are doing a very important work connected with them; and it is
necessary that that which we do should be done aright. It is necessary that adoptions should be correctly made. Think
how important this is! It affects the whole human family. How important it is that we should know the plan that the
Lord wants carried out, and not the plan that man wants! And there will be many things revealed from time to time.
You will see difficulties probably in carrying this out, and it will require the wisdom of heaven and the word of the
Lord to settle points connected with it; but the Lord is able to give the necessary light. His hand will be manifest,
and we shall see how good and kind He is to us in making communications upon every point that is necessary for
the progress of His work.

There are other matters that I would like to mention this afternoon, if I can get the Spirit to do so. We have
heard from President Joseph F. Smith a little concerning secret organizations. I do not know any subject that needs
to be spoken upon with greater plainness to the Latter-day Saints than this.

Of course, there are many other things that we need to be warned about. We need to be warned about these
false spirits that are going abroad. I do not suppose there ever was a time when there were so many delusive spirits
going abroad among the people as at the present time—false Christs, false prophets, and all sorts of things to lead
away the people of God. Everything, it is said, will be shaken that can be shaken. God is going to have a pure
people. Those who commit sin and persist in it will lose the Spirit of God and be removed from among the people
of God. We may expect that sinners will leave us, and that we shall have men and women falling into the dark
because of transgression; but it is our duty, as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, and as the shepherds of the flock of
Christ, to lift up our voices and warn the people of the dangers there are around them, and to point out the path of
safety, that they may not stray away from the flock and be devoured. We therefore feel to warn the Latter-day Saints
in regard to these delusive spirits. We warn you to be on your guard, to watch carefully, to pray earnestly, to live in
purity, so that you shall have constantly the light of the Spirit of God to be with you. Do not be carried away by
every wind of doctrine, nor by deceivers; but listen to the voice of the Spirit of God, which bears testimony to you in your hearts concerning the truths which you hear. You ought to be able to tell the voice of the true Shepherd from all other voices, so that no one assuming sheep’s clothing and professing to be what he is not can deceive you. It is your privilege to recognize the voice of the true Shepherd, and to know by the testimony of Jesus whether that which you are taught is true or not.

There are now many societies being formed that make great professions. They claim to be benevolent societies and to do great good to the people. I have not the least objection to this. I would not say one word to cast any reproach upon any organization, by whatever name it may be called, that has objects of this character in view. It is not my purpose to decry them. It is not my purpose to belittle philanthropic efforts by individuals or by societies for the welfare of their fellow creatures. The Lord forbid that I should ever do anything of this kind! It is not in that spirit that I allude to these things. But I want to say to the Latter-day Saints that the Lord has organized a system which is perfect in all its details. There is no need to have it supplemented by anything of man's device. It is that thought which I desire to impress upon the Latter-day Saints. God has founded Zion, and the poor of His people will put their trust in it. There is nothing lacking in this organization. There is no benevolent society that exists, or that can be formed by human beings, that will reach the wants of the children of men as effectively as the organization which the Lord has given to us, and of which we now are a part. I know that there are men who have very plausible and attractive ideas concerning the evils that exist in society and the manner of correcting them. Attempts to correct them have been made for years and years; but they have not resulted successfully. I can state, without the least fear of successful contradiction, that the Latter-day Saints have done more as an organized society towards redeeming the people and correcting the evils that exist in society, and under which society groans, than any other organization on the face of the earth. I make that statement with a full understanding on my part of its meaning and extent. And that which we have done is only the beginning of that which we propose to do in the Lord’s good time. The Lord has not left us in ignorance concerning these matters. This doctrine of equality that the anarchists, nihilists, socialists and such people dwell upon (some of them are resorting to the most dreadful violence to carry out their schemes), is understood by us, for the Lord has revealed to us how and to what extent it shall be fulfilled. He has given us the law with a great deal of plainness. But we are not prepared to carry it out. The leaders of the people are doing their best in teaching the people the primary principles of equality; but it will take time, it will take the power of God, it will take circumstances that will almost compel us to adopt that which God has revealed, in order to carry out that which He has laid before us as a duty that we must perform. I want to say to you that the day will come—and it will be brought about by the Latter-day Saints—when there will be such an equality in all things among us that there will be no want, no deficiency of any element necessary for man's happiness, no monopoly; when one man will not have more than he can use and another man be destitute. We are aiming at that, my brethren and sisters, and we are the only people, I am free to say, that can entertain the least hope that they will ever accomplish it. These secret organizations may throw down thrones; they may destroy dynasties; they may cause blood to flow in torrents; but they will never accomplish this reform that we shall achieve, and that, too, by peaceful methods—by the operation of the laws which God has made plain, so plain that, as the Bible says, a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

The Lord has given enough to the earth to make all its inhabitants happy. There is no element that is not in sufficient abundance for all. And it is contrary to the will of God, so He has revealed to us, that one man shall possess so much above another—one wallow in luxury while his neighbor goes destitute. He has taught us the way by which this shall be corrected. This being the case, shall we turn our eyes from the Zion of God in this or in the other direction, looking for something better? If we do, we despise the wisdom and counsel of God; we throw aside that which He has revealed in the greatest plainness, and we turn our backs upon the history and experience of this people.

Let me say to you that it is in vain for men to endeavor to patch up systems to remedy the existing evils. They have not the wisdom to do it. You can see the condition of the world in consequence of man's wisdom being exercised. On every hand there is confusion, turmoil, strife. There is poverty and misery on one hand and luxury and a superabundance on the other hand. This is not right, and it will be corrected. How? Well, the Lord attempted it in the early days of this Church; but the people did not have faith. He is now schooling us. We shall have faith sooner
or later, and we shall be chastened probably till we do it. I do not want to prophesy any evil concerning Zion. I do not want to threaten. I have none of the spirit of gloom about me connected with Zion. I feel to prophesy good always about Zion. But the Lord will bring us through circumstances that will open our eyes, and cause us to see the value of the counsel that He has given to us. We should teach it to our children. We must unlearn the traditions that we have received from our fathers. Those traditions teach us that it is the duty of each one to look out for himself and to care but little for his neighbor. We have got to unlearn that lesson. We have got to live for the benefit of all. But, like all benefactors, in doing so we shall very likely be misjudged. Did you ever see a man that was a benefactor, from the Lord Jesus down, that was not loaded with opprobrium and misunderstood? Jesus set us the example of self-sacrifice. What a life His was! The Redeemer of the world, coming down from the mansions of glory, taking upon himself mortality, living in humility, and doing all that He could for man's redemption; yet He was hung upon the cross, crucified between two thieves! So it has been, to a greater or less extent, with every man that has attempted to benefit his fellow-man. He must expect to be misunderstood, to be misrepresented, and to have his motives traduced. He must not expect to have the love of those he is trying to save. He may have a little of it; but men are so ungrateful by nature that they do not recognize their true benefactors. It requires the Spirit of God to enlighten the mind. You Bishops who have labored incessantly; you Presidents of Stakes, you Apostles, and all who have labored among the people, you know by experience that your labors are not appreciated as they ought to be, that your motives are frequently misunderstood and traduced, and you have to labor with the expectation of getting reward from the Lord and with the satisfaction of having the approval of your conscience. So it is in relation to this whole people. We are the benefactors of mankind; but we do not get credit for that which we are doing. We need not expect to get the praise of the world, or even ordinary credit. Nevertheless, the labor devolves upon us. We shall, doubtless, see evidences of selfishness in carrying it out, and advantage will be taken by one and another before this system can be fairly introduced among the children of men.

In these remarks I refer to what is known among us as the United Order. I know that many have thought that this has passed off; that it is a phantasy, an idea that cannot be carried out; that it is impossible, as human nature is constituted, to make it practical. Probably many among us entertain that idea. But I can assure you that this is not the case. It is the plan that God has devised, and I want to hold it up before you if I can, so that you will see it and understand that God has devised a plan that is far superior to that which men have concocted. And it can be and will be carried out. By what means has Satan power to-day over the hearts of the children of men? It is by the misuse of this world's goods. Would there be any thieving if men did not have property as it is now? Here is what the Lord said sixty years ago:—

It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship,

That every man may give an account unto me of his stewardship which is appointed unto him;
For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as stewards over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth as a very handy work, and all things therein are mine:

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; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low;
For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment. [D&C 104:11-18.]

He will go with the rich man under whose table Lazarus would pick the crumbs that fell, and whose dogs licked the sores of the poor man. Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom; but the rich man, as this says, lifted up his eyes in torment, being in hell.

In another part of the revelation the Lord says:—
And again, a commandment I give unto you concerning your stewardship which I have appointed unto you. Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain, and ye are found hypocrites, and the covenants which ye have made unto me are broken;

And if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards, otherwise ye are not stewards.

But, verily I say unto you, I have appointed unto you to be stewards over mine house, even stewards indeed; And all moneys that you receive in your stewardships, by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses, or in lands, or in cattle, or in all things save it be the holy and sacred writings, which I have reserved unto myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the treasury as fast as you receive moneys, by hundreds, or by fifties, or by twenties, or by tens, or by fives;

Or in other words, if any man among you obtain five talents (dollars), let him cast them into the treasury; or if he obtain ten, or twenty, or fifty, or an hundred let him do likewise;

And let not any man among you say that it is his own, for it shall not be called his, nor any part of it;

And there shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the treasury, only by the voice and common consent of the order,

And this shall be the voice and common consent of the order; that any man among you say unto the treasurer, I have need of this to help me in my stewardship;

If it be five talents (dollars), or if it be ten talents (dollars), or twenty, or fifty, or an hundred, the treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires, to help him in his stewardship.

Until he be found a transgressor, and it is manifest before the council of the order plainly, that he is an unfaithful and an unwise steward;

But so long as he is in full fellowship, and is faithful, and wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the treasurer, that the treasurer shall not withhold. [D&C 104:54-75.]

This is the plan that the Lord has devised. Will this be abused? Some men say, "Yes; the men that are wise and prudent, and good managers will work for the rest, and the idle man and the poor manager will derive the benefit." That is the argument used. But the Lord who has devised this plan will be able to provide means to carry it out successfully. On what principle can you make men equal in earthly things, in order that they may be equal in heavenly things, unless it is upon some such principle as this? Here are men who have labored their entire life for the benefit of this people. Are they any poorer for it? Here is the oldest man among us, the people's leader, the longest in the service of God—Wilford Woodruff—who for years and years worked in his Apostleship and never drew a dollar to support himself or his family. Here is Lorenzo Snow, eighty years of age who did likewise. Ask these two veterans in the cause of God if they have not worked incessantly and without thought about themselves for the work of God, supporting their families as best they could; and ask them if God has not blessed them abundantly for all they have done. Do they begrudge the labor they have bestowed upon this people? And when I allude to them I also allude to their predecessors, from Joseph down, who labored night and day, in season and out of season, for the benefit of the people. Have they lost anything by it? No, they have not. God has been with them, and has rewarded them. So it will be whenever we carry out this Order. There will be men, doubtless, that will labor harder and to greater profit than others; but God will reward them, because they are carrying out His purposes and seeking to elevate their fellow-beings, laboring with an eye single to the glory of God and the salvation of the human family.

I do not know that you understand how this will be done. Suppose that we have our stewardships appointed to us, each according to his family. That was the order. Edward Partridge as the Bishop of the Church, was instructed in very early days to assign to the people property, each according to his family. Now, a man takes his stewardship. He has his land, his cattle, his horses, or whatever his vocation requires. It is assigned to him. He manages it, and makes a profit on it. Is that profit his? No; that goes into the treasury, for the benefit of others who may need. But suppose he is a wise steward. He manages his affairs in a way to bring profit. He wants more capital. When this is brought before the council of the Order, and it is allowed to him, if the circumstances are such as to admit of it, he makes increase with that also. But he does not build himself up. He does not take all the profits of that business and consume it upon his own family. He does not take it and build fine houses, or spend it on horses and carriages, or on elaborate furnishings. He does not do this, only so far as will be compatible with the general weal. All will be built up together. But will all, under these circumstances, have the same? If this Order were established, would every man...
have the same sized house, the same sized garden or field, the same number of fruit trees, or the same number of cows? Why, no. That is not the equality that the Lord means. The Lord will give to us according to our circumstances and our wants. Some families will be larger than others. Some men will need more cows than others.

Some men's business will require more horses than other men's business will. In this way there will be differences. Then there will also be diversified circumstances. Every man will have the opportunity of exercising all his talents. There will be no restriction. He will have the opportunity for the exercise of the most commanding talents. The field will be before him, and he will have means to carry out His purposes and plans, if they be wise and such as his brethren will think prudent and judicious. Thus the poor will have their wants supplied, and there will be no want in the land. The equality which the Lord teaches us to look for is this:

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. [D&C 82:17-18.]

So that each man in his stewardship will not be laboring for himself; he will be laboring for the whole, every man and woman being looked after, having a common interest, through inheritance, from our Great Creator, who created this earth for us. He did not create it for a few, not for a class, not for an aristocracy, not for monopolists; but for every one of us, each of us having an equal claim on the elements, and all laboring for the whole human family. Every want supplied, every proper desire of the heart gratified, until misery will flee from the face of this fair earth, until want will be unknown, until the cry of the widow and the fatherless and the distressed will not be heard in the land. The heavens will not be pierced with the cries of suffering humanity, and neither man nor beast will be destitute of that which is good for him. This is the plan which God has devised. It may require what many trained as we have been under the old and existing conditions may look upon as sacrifices to bring it about; but it will come; for God has devised it, and it is the only plan by which we can ever get into the celestial kingdom and become joint heirs with Jesus Christ. He has set us the example of deserting all things in the heavens, leaving His power and high estate to come down here and suffer for his brethren and sisters. We must look to Him and follow Him.

The lesson that I would like to impress upon our hearts—for in speaking to you I speak to myself—is, let us teach our children these principles; let us teach them that they are in the earth, not to labor for their own gratification, and to accumulate wealth for themselves, but to benefit humanity, to be a blessing to their race, to fill the earth as far as they can with gladness by their presence, that we may raise an unselfish race of men, men that will have higher aspirations and aims than the mere gratification of their personal wants, passions and appetites. Teach the children self-denial. It is a thing that is much needed among us. Brethren and sisters, I want to say to you that as sure as God lives this Order will be brought about; and it will be with us as it was with the children of Israel who came out of Egypt—if we do not do it we will be removed, and a generation will be raised up that will do it; for God is going to carry out His purposes, and no power can prevent it. Remember the condition of the children of Israel and what befell them. Their carcasses fell by the roadside in the wilderness, because they would not come up to the standard that God had revealed. They not only perished, but the Melchizedek Priesthood was taken from their midst, and everyone over twenty years of age that came out of Egypt, except two, of all the hosts of Israel, laid down his life in the wilderness. We do not want to be in this condition. We want to live, and our children to live, and to be the heirs of all the ages. We want to lay the foundation of this great work in this manner; for it is the great reform that cries aloud to be carried out among mankind at the present time.

Our circumstances at present do not admit of our entering upon these things. There are many changes that will have to occur in order to make that which I have said unto you practical. Laws perhaps will have to be changed, because they might interfere with this now; and it might not be wisdom for us under the present circumstances. I do not speak of this because I think it ought to be carried out immediately. I do not want you to go away from this Conference with the idea that I, as one of the First Presidency, am giving counsel to you to carry out the United Order. What I have desired to do is to draw your attention to the fact that God has revealed a plan, and that you need
not go after every will-o’-the wisp, every false guide, every deceptive light that may appear, and think, “Oh! if I join this, we shall have the millennium right off.” I speak on this to warn you; to put you on your guard; to show you that the Lord’s plan is broad enough to cover the whole subject and to furnish all the relief that could ever be desired by human beings. I trust that we will be a stable people. We have the credit in the world for being united; and I would say to you, do not act unwisely and foolishly. When you hear any new doctrines, political as well as religious, do not be deluded by them and run after them; but maintain your steadfastness. You have divided on party lines. Do not split up into fragments because you have done this. Do not think you are manifesting your independence by cutting loose from everything; but be a stable and a conservative people, and act up to your convictions. Maintain the influence that God has given you, and by your wise course cause it to increase in the land, so that men from all parts of our nation will look towards this community and say, “There in the Rocky Mountains the Mormon people live; they are a reliable people; they mind their own business, pay their debts, are punctual in their engagements, are an honest people, are not all the time running after office, but are content to maintain good government.” Let us get a character of this kind. We have it to some extent, and let us maintain it. I want to say that whenever you see men aspiring for office and planning to get office, do not encourage them. Let the office seek the man, and let us not be plotting and resorting to all sorts of dodges to secure success to our party, in order that some of us may get into office. Such arts are despicable. They are the arts of the low politician. We want to stand on a higher plane, and look at these things as men who have been enlightened by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and try to maintain our credit; for I say to you, that the people in Washington or in Kane County in the south, or in Cache or Rich County in the north, or anywhere else in the Territory, cannot be guilty of folly without its reflecting on the entire people of God. We are a part of a great whole in that respect; and the Saints in Idaho or Arizona can do foolish things and entail a great deal of trouble upon the Church in this country because of their want of wisdom. Therefore, be wise. Why do I say this? If you get into trouble, to whom do you come? You know how it has been in our troubles that commenced nine years ago. We looked all around and where could we see friends? To whom could we appeal? Why, the eyes of this people turned to the men who were their leaders, who had planted these settlements in these mountains, and who had made everything successful that they had put their hands to. The people appealed to them to know what they should do. So it will be always when there is trouble. Therefore, it is the duty of leading men to counsel the people in wisdom—not to take away the people’s agency — to avoid snares and to pursue a course that will avert trouble, so that we will not have burdens to bear. I do not say this because of any desire to interfere in the least with political matters, but to give you a little counsel on these points.

I pray God to bless you and to fill you with His Holy Spirit, and to help you to remember the excellent instructions you have heard during this Conference, in the name of Jesus. Amen.