

SALT LAKE STAKE CONFERENCE.

ASSEMBLY HALL,
Salt Lake City,
January 8, 1881.

The semi-annual Conference of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion convened at 10 a.m.

There were present on the stand: President Joseph F. Smith, of the First Presidency; President Wilford Woodruff and Elder John Henry Smith, of the Twelve Apostles.

The Presidency of the Stake, Angus M. Cannon, David O. Calder and Joseph E. Taylor.

William W. Taylor, of the First Presidents of Seventies.

President Abram Hatch, of the Wasatch Stake.

President Elias Morris and Counselor Edward Snelgrove, of the High Priests' Quorum, and others.

After the opening services, the roll was called:

One patriarch and 16 presidents of Seventies were present.

All the Elders' Quorums of the Stake were represented by presiding officers, excepting the 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 16th Quorums.

The First Quorum of Teachers and the Deacons' Quorums of the 19th and Herriman Wards were represented.

The clerk then read the following reports: A statistical report of the Stake for the quarter ending Dec. 31, 1880, showing a total of souls of 20,798, the net increase being 72. There are 1 High Priests, 16 Elders, 2 Priests, 4 Teachers and 39 Deacons' Quorums in the Stake. There are 66 Home Missionaries.

A report showing that there is \$68,675.77 back tithing owing in the several Wards of the Stake which had been accumulating since 1854, of which \$21,093.69 was recommended for remission by the Bishops of the Stake.

It was decided that the Bishops of the several Wards be authorized to remit according to their recommendations the amounts recommended for remission, and to cancel the same on the Tithing records of their respective Wards, this action having been approved by the First Presidency and Presiding Bishop of the Church.

A report of receipts and disbursements to the Jubilee Fund was then read, showing that the several Wards of the Stake had as per previous report contributed \$5,724.37; they had received from funds in the hands of the Presidency of the Stake, \$859.47; contributed since the former report, \$199.50; total receipts, \$6,783.34, of which \$5,196.35 had been used in the several Wards of the Stake for the relief of the poor, \$365.33 had not been collected, \$326.00 had been paid into the Stake fund, and \$895.66 was still in the hands of the Bishops to be used for the poor in their Wards.

A general statement was also read showing the receipts and disbursements of the general Stake fund as follows:

Received from the Trustees-Trust on account of Church donation to the several Stakes of Zion, for the benefit of the worthy poor: 424 sheep, valued at \$2	\$848 00
Sixty cows, sold for \$16	960 00
Amount received from sundry wards, as per tabulated statement	326 00
Paid to sundry wards of this Stake as per tabulated statement: Cloth, 230 22	
Provisions, 532 35	
Sundries contributed by this Stake, 96 90	859 47
Sheep out on shares	972 00
Bills payable	15 00
Expenses and losses	17 00
On hand and subject to order	169 00
Credit at John C. Cutler's	19 78
Credit at General Tithing Store	111 75
	\$2,149 00 \$2,149 00

President A. M. Cannon explained that all the recommendations for relief asked for above the donations to the Jubilee Fund in the Wards had been aid and it had been deemed advisable to let the sheep contributed by the Church and what there was to spare from the Ward donations, be held as a fund for the benefit of the poor in the Salt Lake Stake of Zion.

The reports were received and adopted.

The Bishops were requested to collect the donations still unpaid, and disburse the same to their wards.

A report was read showing the amounts paid for the completion of the Assembly Hall, in accordance with a resolution that each Saint would donate the proceeds of one day's labor. The total amount paid was \$670.57, \$369.20 of which was paid in cash

and \$227 in sundries, the 3rd, 4th, 11th, 14th, 18th, West Jordan, South Cottonwood, Draperville, East Mill Creek, Granite and South Jordan Wards had not responded.

President Cannon regretted the small amount collected on this account and urged the importance of having the debt of this building closed off.

Reports from the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 9th, 11th, 12th and 16th Quorums were read, also from the Y. M. and Y. L. M.I. Associations and Sunday Schools.

Prest. Jos. E. Taylor then read the petition to the Mayor and City Council found elsewhere in this paper.

It was decided to place copies of the petition in the hands of each of the Bishops of this city, to be circulated for the signature of all of responsible age and returned to the Clerk of the Stake at the Council House by Tuesday, the 11th inst., at noon.

Adjourned till 2 p.m.

2 p.m., Saturday Jan. 9, 1881.

After the opening services the names of several brethren recommended by their Bishops to be ordained Elders were presented and sanctioned by unanimous votes of the Conference.

President Joseph E. Taylor then presented the General Authorities of the Church who were sustained at the preceding conference. The authorities of the Stake were presented and sustained as at the preceding Stake Conference, with the following exceptions:

The names of Nathaniel H. Felt, Edward Shoenfeld, Jabez W. Taylor, Matthias F. Cowley, Henry P. Richards and B. F. Cummings, jr., were omitted from the Home Missionary list.

The following names were sustained: John Nicholson, Hugh Watson, Rodney C. Banger and Nelson A. Empey, of Salt Lake City, and John Haigh and Hyrum Bennion, of the North Jordan Ward. John W. Taylor was sustained as the first counselor to the president of the First Quorum of Elders in place of Matthias F. Cowley, ordained a Seventy.

The name of Wm. Leo Ball, as second counselor to the Bishop of the Second Ward, was omitted, he having removed from the ward.

James C. Watson was sustained as second counselor to the Bishop of the Sixth Ward, in place of Jesse West, who was at the time of the appointment on a mission.

Martin Lenzi was sustained as second counselor to the Bishop of the 12th Ward, in place of Leonard G. Hardy, who was at the time absent on a mission.

John Tingey, formerly first counselor, was sustained as Bishop of the 17th Ward, A. W. Davis, formerly second counselor, was sustained as first counselor in place of Brother Tingey, and Alonzo E. Hyde as second counselor, in place of Bro. Davis. These changes being necessitated by the appointment to the Quorum of the Apostles of Elder John Henry Smith, formerly Bishop of the 17th Ward.

Edward Shoenfeld was sustained as second counselor to the Bishop of Brighton Ward, in place of John R. Jones, who was absent.

Elder L. John Nuttall at President John Taylor's request, read some questions propounded and the answers given in regard to the observance of the law of tithing.

Prest. John Taylor said: As there is considerable misunderstanding in regard to the law of tithing, he felt impressed to make some explanations on this subject. There were revelations requiring the Saints to consecrate all their property which they failed to observe, and in answer to the inquiry of the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord gave the revelation on tithing, as follows:

Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church of Zion.

For the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion, and for the Priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my church;

And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people;

And after that, those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy Priesthood, saith the Lord.

Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass, that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.

And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you;

And this shall be an ensample unto all the Stakes of Zion. Even so. Amen.

President Brigham Young had adopted the system of asking one-tenth of the property of the new comers in lieu of the surplus spoken of in the revelation. After this the Lord required one-tenth of our interest annually. This was not a requirement of man but of God, and no man had a right to change or modify this commandment. He did not care personally whether this law was observed or not, so far as the means contributed was concerned, nor did he think the Lord did, but it was given as a test to the people of God, and was as much a portion of the law of God as any other ordinance or requirement of the gospel and did not admit of modification. The priesthood was not called to pervert the ways of the Lord, and if there were those who sought to modify this law or teach or justify others in doing so, they must do so on their own responsibility, he would not bear it. No one had any right to divert the tithing they owed for any other purpose or object, but were required to abide the law, and then whatever they did in addition to this was a free-will offering, which they were at liberty to give or withhold according to their discretion or circumstances. He did not consider it consistent for persons to be recommended for the blessings of the Lord's house which many holy and righteous men who lived formerly did not enjoy, unless they observed this law, as the Lord expressly declared such persons should not be found worthy to dwell among us. Rather let men repent and make restitution as far as they were able. It might be said that men would go to the justices of the peace to get married according to the law of the land; this was their own affair, and no one could blame a justice of the peace for performing this ceremony as an officer of the law. But the priesthood should not take the responsibility of becoming partakers of other men's sins.

Adjourned to meet at 10 a.m. on Sunday, January 9, 1881.

The choir sang an anthem.

Benediction by Elder Thomas C. Callister.

SECOND DAY.

Sunday, January 9th, 1881, 10 a.m.

Meeting called to order by Counselor D. O. Calder.

The choir sang the hymn, "Softly beams the sacred dawning."

Prayer was offered by Elder Lorin Farr.

The choir sang the hymn, "Arise, O glorious Zion."

President John Taylor was the first speaker. In relation to the subject of tithing, upon which he spoke yesterday, he wished to say a few additional things. He again read on the 418th page (new edition) of the Doctrine and Covenants (or section 119 old edition), the answer of the Lord to Joseph the Prophet respecting the matter of tithing. He said an opinion was held by some that the payment of tithing was something to be decided entirely by the individual himself; many considered it of little importance and thought it had little to do with their good standing in the Church. He spoke of the diversities of opinion existing among the people, and among bishops and presidents of Stakes, regarding tithing, and the manner in which and the amount which should be rendered the Church. Described the order of the priesthood, the various duties pertaining to and required of each office, and reminded his hearers that this system, so complete and harmonious in all its parts, and so different to anything existing anywhere else, was revealed from God for the benefit of his earthly children. Said that many had a great deal to say about free will and liberty, and that these were good and true principles, for all men should have the privilege of doing, without coercion, anything they chose to do which would not interfere with the rights of others. Some say, "You Latter-day Saints are serfs, under a sort of domination which compels you to do its will, whether it be your own or not. If any of you think you are in this situation, I freely absolve you from it to-day." The speaker further showed that no Latter-day Saint is forced to do anything by the Church of which he is a member. It is his own choice to do right or do wrong, and assuredly a man may believe and think as he pleases. A person's faith cannot be taken from him. His life may be, but his faith will still exist and he will take it with him to another world. Our faith is that God has revealed certain laws from heaven and commanded us to obey and teach others to obey them.

What for? To establish his kingdom, to root out wickedness, and redeem the human race from their fallen condition. He felt to bless all who were endeavoring to do this, in the name of the Lord; whether they were operating at home or abroad, presiding and laboring in Zion or preaching, exhorting and instructing among the nations of the earth. We are the friends of all men, the friends of our government and its righteous principles, and of all other good governments and principles, and though we are abused and persecuted by those for whose welfare we are working, we must still be their friends and do the will of God in the interests of humanity. Our aims and intentions are misinterpreted, our words and actions misrepresented, but we must not despair; we must push on in the good work in which we are engaged, return good for evil, and leave the result with God. To return to the law of tithing, which is one of the laws revealed for the government of the Saints; it was given in the year 1838 in Far West, in answer to prayer, as a preparatory law to the establishment of the United Order which will eventually prevail among this people. It will be seen by the Doctrine and Covenants that the people of God in that day were expected to give all their surplus property into the hands of the Bishop of the Church, and that all who joined the Church were to be tithed of their surplus means, or they should not be considered worthy to abide with the Saints. This law has never been annulled. It is the word of God, plainly expressed, which we have had 42 years to study upon, and yet to-day many of us do not know what it means. Do we want to know what it means? But what is to be done with those who will not observe the law of tithing? First, each them the law, so that they may understand it and afterward they will be held personally responsible. Harsh measures should not be employed. Mercy and kindness first. In regard to donations of various kinds, they were matters outside of the law. There is no law commanding these things. But there is a law on tithing. The speaker gave illustrations of carrying out this law, and again referred to the example given yesterday of a person asking for a recommendation to the House of the Lord, who did not observe nor believe in the laws of God, but was willing to make concessions of will for the purpose of accomplishing certain selfish ends. Should such men be recommended? "No. And I forbid you in the name of the Lord, to give such men recommendations." No man who does not sincerely believe the law, and does not bring forth fruits meet for repentance, is not worthy to receive any ordinance of the Church, much less the ordinances of the House of God that are for the purpose of exalting men to the highest positions in the eternal worlds. No man is eligible for the Kingdom of God simply because he undergoes an ordinance. He must believe in it, or he cannot yield acceptable obedience thereto. The speaker exhorted all to believe and observe the law of tithing, not for the sake of man, but for the sake of the word of God, who has said, for some good reason yet to be revealed, that it shall be a standing law to all the people of His Church. He prayed God to bless all who did so, and lead all in the ways of life and truth.

President A. M. Cannon continued the subject of tithing, alluding to the prophecy of Malachi, who spoke the burden of the Lord in regard to tithing in these words:

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

He referred to the parable of the Sower, which likened the kingdom of God to a vineyard let out to husbandmen to cultivate, and afterwards called upon by the owner of the soil to render up accounts of their stewardship. If we fail to do this, God will appear and remove us out of our place. He returned to the law of tithing, spoke of the necessity of its observance. Also touched upon the subject of the manufacture and traffic of liquor in the midst of the saints. Should such men be

worthy to hold the priesthood of God? "Cursed is he who putteth the cup to his neighbor's lips" has been written; is not this applicable to the Saints to-day? He dwelt earnestly upon the evils of intemperance, deprecated the actions of those who practice them in any way, and exhorted all to be pure and upright in their conduct, and thereby not only be able to lay hold upon and claim the blessings and favors of God, but set good examples to all the world.

The choir sang the anthem: "Worship the Lord."

Adjourned till 2 p.m. Benediction by Elder Feramorz Little.

At the appointed hour, the afternoon session commenced.

The choir sang the hymn, "Let us who know the joyful sound." Prayer was offered by Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter.

The choir sang the hymn, "Twas on that dark that solemn night." The Sacrament was dispensed.

Apostle Wilford Woodruff was the first speaker. He quoted the words of Paul the Apostle: "Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel," and applied it to himself and his brethren. He then spoke of the opening of the last dispensation and of the commission received from on high by the Elders of this Church to spread the gospel among the nations. It is no light thing to receive such a commission, for men are responsible for the trust reposed in them by the Almighty. The speaker earnestly endorsed what had been said by President Taylor in the forenoon meeting respecting tithing, and quoted from the Doctrine and Covenants the words, "It is a day for the tithing of my people, etc." Referred to the prophecy of John, on Patmos, of the restoration of the gospel, and showed its literal fulfillment in the setting up of this Church, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and declared that we must take hold and build up this kingdom or be under condemnation. We have covenanted and been ordained to do this, and we will be held accountable for negligence in the performance of this work. The gospel must be preached to all men and the Saints are those who must preach it. Tithing must be paid by the Saints, or their names and the names of their children will not be written in the law of the Lord. The speaker told an anecdote of Cyrus the Great, showing how temperate, moral and strict his life was in many things superior to many who called themselves Latter-day Saints, and drew the contrast between such men and those who professed more and accomplished less, and warned the Saints against the various evils which had crept into their midst. He touched upon various subjects of importance in the working out of the great plan which had been instituted for the redemption of the world. Again referred to tithing; said that if he did not pay tithing he would not preach it. He knew that the Presidency of the Church, the Apostles, the Presiding Bishop and many others paid their tithing and that they did it because God had commanded it. Why has God commanded it? Not because he needs our substance, but because he will have a tried people. There are many things we are required to do, for we are candidates for celestial exaltation, and the higher our aims and aspirations the more arduous will be our experience in attaining it. It was the prayer of the speaker that the Saints might be able to overcome all things, and obtain an eternal reward of faithfulness.

President Joseph F. Smith next addressed the meeting. He spoke of the plainness which had characterized what had been said during the conference, and commended it as not only plain, but truthful. Said his soul delighted in plainness. He believed in practicing whatever he preached. This is the only way for a preacher to get the confidence of his hearers. He also believed that obedience to the law of God is the only way to deserve or receive the blessings of God, for all blessings are predicated upon law. Touched upon the subject of the Word of Wisdom. How can anyone expect to realize the blessings connected with this revelation, except by obedience to it? It is the same with tithing, and all other revelations. One very important commandment from God is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." In ancient days the crime was punishable with death. Yet to-day, though this great offense is the one under which the earth is groaning most heavily and which is fast ripening