

DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - APRIL 14, 1880.

YEAR OF JUBILEE.

FIFTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The fiftieth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Large Tabernacle at 10 a.m. An immense audience assembled, nearly filling the huge building, galleries included.

On the stand were:

President John Taylor, and Elders Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, Charles C. Rich, Erastus Snow, Lorenzo Snow, F. D. Richards, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith, Albert Carrington and Moses Thatcher of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Counselor to the Twelve, Daniel H. Wells.

Patriarch John Smith.

Of the seven presidents of Seventies, Joseph Young, Horace Eldredge, Levi W. Hancock, and John Van Cott.

Of the Presiding Bishops, Edward Hunter, Leonard W. Hardy, and Robert T. Burton.

The Presidency of Salt Lake and other Stakes, with members of High Councils, Bishops and leading Elders from various parts of the Territory.

Conference was called to order by President John Taylor.

Choir sang:

"Great God attend while Zion sings
The joy that from thy presence springs."

Prayer was offered as follows by Elder Orson Pratt:

O God, the Eternal Father of Heaven and of earth, we thy children, thy sons and daughters, have assembled ourselves together on this the 6th day of April—the day appointed and set apart for the general conference of thy Saints from year to year—we have assembled in this large and commodious tabernacle, for the purpose of commemorating this day, and of hearing the words that may be spoken from this stand, and also of giving in our votes and our voices unitedly in relation to all business matters that pertain to the Church of God here on the earth that may be transacted on this occasion.

We thank thee, holy Father, that we have been permitted to receive the fulness of the everlasting Gospel revealed anew in this great last dispensation of the fulness of times. We thank thee that thou hast organized thy Church and established the kingdom that was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and other holy men that lived in ancient times, in fulfillment of their words, and that it has been organized to stand for ever, never more to be destroyed or given into the hands of other people.

And we thank thee, Holy Father, that in the midst of all the persecutions and difficulties we have encountered during the fifty years now being brought to a close, that thou hast sustained us, that thou hast not utterly cast us off, that thou hast not suffered us to become victims to our enemies and to those that have persecuted us; but, that thou hast sustained thy Saints and brought them into these mountain valleys and planted them in the midst of the fastnesses of these everlasting hills, and spread them forth upon the right and upon the left, until we have become a great and a numerous people.

We thank Thee for the great gathering which thou hast commanded and inaugurated in this dispensation—the gathering of thine elect, the gathering of the Saints of the Most High—that we have been permitted to come from all the various nations wherever the gospel has been preached and churches raised up, and establish ourselves in these mountain vales.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for all thy peculiar care and thy great mercies that have been extended to this people. Notwithstanding our many imperfections, our many follies and sins, thine eyes have been upon us for good. Thou hast raised us up; thou hast strengthened our hands; thou hast encouraged us in our work; thou hast visited us by the manifestations of thy Spirit; thou hast given

revelations from time to time to strengthen thy servants and encourage thy Saints. And we thank thee for all these blessings in the name of thy beloved Son. And as the 50th year since the organization of thy Church is now about drawing to a close, we pray that thy peculiar blessings may continue to rest upon thy people, and that we may be able to esteem the past year since our general conference as a year of jubilee to the Latter-day Saints. And we pray that as the close of this year of jubilee will come to an end this day, notwithstanding the close thereof, that we may, in all our future years humble ourselves before the Lord our God and keep thy commandments blameless, and walk in all thy ordinances and the institutions of thy kingdom, and serve the Lord our God and be united more perfectly according to the law which thou hast given concerning the union of thy people.

Bless we humbly pray thy servant Brother Taylor. Thou hast raised him up by thy power and placed him in a high and important position in thy church to preside, in connection with his brethren the Apostles, over the affairs of this great latter-day Kingdom. We pray that thou wilt inspire him with great and important knowledge and information for the welfare and happiness and benefit of the Saints over whom he presides. Bless him abundantly with the spirit of revelation; bless him with the visions of eternity; bless him with knowledge that comes down from heaven; bless him with the discernment of thy spirit; bless him in all things, and qualify him for the important and high position in this thy church and thy kingdom, in this thine earth.

Bless his brethren the Apostles, fill them with the Holy Ghost, inspire their hearts from on high, and give unto them the spirit of counsel and wisdom, that they may impart unto these thy people that which shall benefit them and build them up in their most holy faith. Bless all the presidents of the Stakes of Zion and their counselors, and also the Bishops and also the various Wards in every Stake. Bless them with inspiration, with the knowledge of God, with an understanding of their several duties and callings; and may thy servants from the highest to the least, in all of the various councils of the priesthood, be inspired from on high, and thus be able to carry out the great purposes which thou hast intended concerning the everlasting priesthood again sent down from heaven and conferred upon man.

We pray, O Lord, that the work of the gathering of thy Saints may continue, that thine Israel may be gathered from all nations and peoples under the whole heavens, to dwell in these mountain valleys, and become a great people, that the borders of Zion may be stretched out, and the cords of Zion be strengthened and thy people be prepared with one heart and one mind for that great redemption which thou has promised to them in the latter days.

Let thy blessing, O Lord, be upon this congregation, upon every man, every woman, every child and every person that attends whose heart is desirous of serving the Lord his God. May the spirit of inspiration rest upon them all. May the spirit of the Most High impart peace and consolation to all who may be sick and afflicted, that are not permitted to meet with us this day—may they find favor in the sight of God, may thine angels be sent forth to minister unto them that they may be comforted, raised up and healed, and that the destroyer may be rebuked from the midst of this people in every settlement.

O Lord, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that during the convention of our Conference from day to day until the close thereof, that the Lord our God may be in the midst of this people, that thine angels may be round about us, that the heavenly hosts may rejoice over us, that the vision of our minds may be opened to contemplate the things of God; and that all who speak may speak by the inspiration of thy spirit and all be edified together.

We ask thee, O Lord, to let thy blessing be upon all the missionaries that are sent forth into the nations of the earth, that they may go in power, go in strength, filled with the spirit and power of God, filled with courage and holy boldness to carry forth among the children of men the glorious gospel of the Son of Man, revealed in these latter

days for the benefit of the human family.

Hear us, O Lord, in these our supplications. Be with us in our deliberations. Assist us in this Conference, and smile upon us from thy holy habitation. And when we have fully accomplished the work thou hast given us to do in this probation, may we be prepared to go into thy kingdom, behold thy face, and receive that welcome plaudit, "Come ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." These, together with all other blessings which we should pray for, we seek for at this time, not in our own name, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Choir sang:

"When earth in bondage long had lain
And darkness o'er the nations reigned."

President TAYLOR announced that important business would be transacted to-morrow, in which the Salt Lake, Utah, Davis and Weber Stakes were particularly interested, and he wished the presidents of these Stakes and as many others as possible to be present.

Elder FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS congratulated the Saints on reaching the fiftieth anniversary of the Church, and upon the wonderful work that had been accomplished by the Almighty. He reviewed the jubilee as celebrated by ancient Israel, and exhorted the Saints to seek for the spirit of jubilee. Reflecting on the progress of this work during the past fifty years, he asked what would be its progress during the next fifty years, if we were in the position we ought to occupy considering our experience. Elder Richards sketched several important scenes of the early history of the Church; among them the incident of the friendship to the Prophet Joseph Smith of Stephen A. Douglass, and of the rise of that statesman until he turned against the Saints and uttered the well known saying about "cutting out the ulcer of Mormonism from the body politic," when in fulfillment of the prediction of the Prophet Joseph, he lost his power and failed to attain the object of his ambition. He referred next to the effort of Benton, by obtaining the call for the "Mormon Battalion," to leave the Saints to perish in an Indian country, and who shortly afterward was smitten with an internal ulcer which led to his death. He then touched upon the providence of God in bringing us into the mountains, where we rested in peace while civil war desolated the land. He next drew attention to the coming of the army to exterminate the "Mormons" and the way in which the Lord turned the event to our material advantage. He came to the time when government officers arrived here, seeking our injury, but in vain. Schaffer, who issued the proclamation forbidding our militia to muster, soon passed away and his dry bones were carried out of the Territory. A certain Judge who had sought to destroy this people, had also perished and gone down to the grave, and peradventure that man to whom he had said derisively, "Thomas, I am sorry for you, very sorry," would have to carry a drop of water to him to cool his parched tongue. In all these things we recognized the hand of the Lord, and we should reflect on His providences and be stirred up to individual righteousness, and to battle against the drunkenness and whoredoms and various forms of evil now being introduced by our enemies for our overthrow. What better could we do this year of jubilee, than turn our minds towards helping each other, to relieve the poor and gather the Saints? Our rich brethren who hold debts against the worthy poor, might send them a receipt in full, and God would bless them. Let those who hold mortgages against the worthy but unsuccessful and struggling brother, release his home from bondage and thus "make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness." Let the poor saints abroad be remembered and be delivered, and then blessings of this year of jubilee should be extended to every part of the earth, that all hearts might be made glad and God our Father crown us with His favor.

Elder L. John Nuttall read the statistical report of the various Stakes. President Taylor said as the house was rather cold the meeting would not be prolonged. The choir sang the anthem, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord." Adjourned till 2 p. m. Dismissed with prayer by Elder Lorenzo Snow.

TUESDAY, 2 p. m.

Choir sang:

From Greenland's icy mountains
From India's coral strand.

Prayer by Elder ALBERT CARRINGTON.

Choir sang:

Ye Gentile nations cease your strife
And listen to the words of life.

Elder L. J. Nuttall read the financial report of the Trustee in Trust containing a detailed statement of the receipts and disbursements during the year 1879.

First, TAYLOR stated that vouchers were on hand for all the accounts read, and thought that the Auditing Committee should examine them.

Elder LORENZO SNOW moved that we accept the report and that it be referred with the accompanying documents to the Auditing Committee. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

The financial report of the Logan Temple was then read, also of the Manti Temple.

An exhibit of the receipts and expenditures of the Perpetual Emigration Fund for the past six months was presented.

Elder ERASTUS SNOW addressed the congregation. He congratulated the Saints on this auspicious occasion; on the general outlook; on the prosperity that had attended our efforts; the peace that prevailed; the good degree of unanimity exhibited; and the good spirit and general interest manifested by the people. The financial reports coupled with those of school superintendents and other public functionaries, showed that the people were progressing in all things that make a nation great. The number of meeting-houses and school-houses and the improvement in education, coupled with other things mentioned, all caused a feeling of gratitude to God. He endorsed the views expressed by Elder F. D. Richards in the morning, and hoped that the spirit of kindness and charity and forgiveness and union would be more than ever manifested among the people of God. When would they have a more suitable time than the present, the commencement of the second half of the first century of our history, to make a renewed effort for improvement? He alluded to the operations of the P. E. Fund Company, and urged the necessity of those who owed the Fund to settle, that the means might be used for the deliverance of the poor in foreign lands; for as it was in the days of the Savior and John the Baptist, one of the signs of this ministry was, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." It was in contemplation that this should be a year of jubilee and release from debt to the Fund of those who had striven but were unable to pay what they owed. The duty of all was, to cease their hard-speaking, their covetousness and their undue desire to get rich. His experience of many years among the people as well as that of the Bishops was, that, as once declared by President Young, there was not more than half an honest titling paid in the midst of Israel. If an honest titling were paid, there would be no need for any extra donations for temple building or other Church purposes. The amounts of titling received might seem to aggregate a large sum. But it would be seen that in consequence of most of it being in produce and labor and little of it in cash, and the numerous purposes for which it was disbursed, that the whole amount was necessarily expended. He spoke in praise of the general thrift of the Saints, and showed that this provoked the jealousy of our enemies, as it had done in Missouri in the early days of the Church. Our Sabbath School statistics showed 30,000 children, and a better educational showing than any of the other Territories and several of the States into the bargain. Our social relations were an object of hatred, not because our wives and mothers and sisters were not virtuous and good, or that their purity was not guarded, but because our system gave an opportunity for woman to fill the position designed for her, and accomplish the object of her creation. This was contrary to the way of the world. He considered that if the State forbade a large-souled honorable man from caring for the neglected portion of womankind, the State should compel bachelors to marry. He portrayed the terrible social condition of the world and the injustice towards woman, of modern Christendom, and the deep hypocrisy of the priests and leading men in opposing plural marriage in the face of the evils which they themselves supported. The law in Israel made the

whole people the executioners of the adulterer, who was to be stoned to death outside the gates of the city. This was a consistent law, accompanying that liberty which prevented a surplus of marriageable women. The customs of the semi-civilized Indian tribes who followed the same law were a rebuke to the "Christian" civilization of the age. He showed that we were an aggressive people; not by war or force, but by industry, growth, spreading abroad and possessing "the gate of the enemy," by purchase, by gathering the poor, multiplying and replenishing the earth; and while the native American families are dwindling, we were rearing large numbers of robust and vigorous children. If God and angels were to show themselves they would blush at the devilish arts invented by science and adopted in this nation to produce abortion and secret murder of "Christian" offsprings. These iniquities cried aloud to heaven; and the cities which protected them while they cried out for destruction upon the Saints, would be judged of heaven. He asked, should the Latter-day Saints pattern after these infamies, restrict honorable marriage and leave a surplus of women for a prey to the ungodly lusts of brutal men? God forbid! The speaker contrasted the crime of bigamy contemplated in the Roman monogamic law and the laws of England, with the social institution of plural marriage, which were totally opposite to each other, and argued that the religious liberty contemplated by the fathers of this country would extend constitutional protection to the Mahomedan and his families as well as the Christian, as expressed in one of our hymns composed by the Apostle Parley P. Pratt.

"Come ye Christian sect and Pagan
Indian, Moslem, Greek or Jew,
Worshippers of God or Dagon,
Freedom's banner waves for you."

Elder Snow closed with a powerful arraignment of the authors and enforcers of the anti-polygamy bill.

Choir sang the anthem:

"Glory to God."

Adjourned till 10 a. m. to-morrow.
Dismissed with prayer by Elder WILFORD WOODRUFF.

SECOND DAY.
Wednesday 10 a. m.

Choir sang:

The morning sun has chased the night
And brought again the cheering light.

Prayer by Counselor D. H. Wells.

Choir sang:

Let those who would be Saints indeed
Fear not what others do.

Elder LEVI W. HANCOCK said he was 77 years old to-day, and nearly 50 years ago he was baptized, after receiving the testimony of the Prophet Joseph, who received the word of the Lord and was slain by the professed followers of Him who died for his fellow man. He was familiarly acquainted with the Prophet, lived with him for three years, worked under his direction; and he was one of the most pleasing spirits that he had ever been associated with. He then bore testimony that this gospel was true; the Book of Mormon was true; the Twelve were true; he heard Joseph say that this work could not be built up without twelve Apostles and Seventy to follow in their wake. Their decisions if made in righteousness and unity were as valid as the decision of the first presidency in the days of the Prophet, as was declared in the Doctrine and Covenants, and if there were no divisions among them their voice would be the voice of the Lord and all Israel should say Amen to it. He exhorted all the Saints to works of righteousness and invoked the blessings of God upon them.

President JOHN TAYLOR said that Bro. Hancock was one of the Seven Presidents of Seventies, an old veteran, in the Church whom we were glad to hear from, but his voice was not strong enough to speak long in this large building. President Taylor then made some remarks on the Perpetual Emigration Fund, stating that he thought in this year of jubilee, we ought to do like the ancients and take off the yoke from those who were in debt to the Fund and unable to pay, and release them from their bondage. His brethren of the Twelve joined with him in a desire to do this and cause a feeling of joy and liberty to abound among the poor. It was desirable for the officers of the Church and those who had contributed to the Fund to have a voice in the matter, as they should have on all leading questions of the Church. Elder A. Carrington, Pres-