



ELIAS SMITH.....EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Wednesday.....April 10, 1861.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

At the Conference held on Saturday and Sunday last, there were not as many in attendance, by thousands, as there would have been, had the weather for the two preceding weeks been more propitious. The rain and the snow that had been falling almost constantly, from the Malad to the Santa Clara, during the "equinoctial storm" that continued longer than any other occurring at the time of the vernal equinox, that we remember to have seen in these mountains, watering the earth profusely, had made the roads excessively muddy, and in many places almost impassable, in consequence of which many of those living at a distance who had made arrangements to visit the city and be present at the Conference were deterred from coming; notwithstanding the forbidding operations of the elements, so far as traveling was concerned, every county, excepting, perhaps, one or two, and nearly every city and settlement in the Territory had representatives present, and although we had not the opportunity of being in attendance on either of the days, we had the pleasure of seeing in our office and shaking the hand of many a "brother and a friend" with whom we had not met for months and years. We had not time, of course, to enter into any lengthy conversation with any of them, but so far as we could judge from their expressions and countenances, there were none of them dis-unionists, but if not mistaken in our conclusions, there were not a few of those from a distance who were decidedly in favor of "annexation."

In anticipation of many being in attendance from distant cities and settlements, the people of this city were requested by President Young to extend to such the privilege of seats in the Tabernacle during the Conference, which was readily accorded on Saturday, and measurably on Sunday, as most of the citizens remained at home. Sunday was a most beautiful day, and early in the morning, wagons, carriages, and vehicles of all kinds were seen coming into the city from every direction, filled with passengers, and before the hour of meeting, the Tabernacle was filled to its utmost capacity, and not one half of those who desired could gain admission. When the Conference was called to order, Elders O. Hyde and John Taylor were detailed to repair to the Temple Block, and preach to the "outsiders," of whom there were not a few, as judging of the number of the multitude as seen from our window, some of whom were standing, others sitting, either on blocks of marble prepared for the foundation of the Temple, or temporary seats arranged for the occasion, there was at least "an acre" of hearers, who listened attentively to discourses delivered by Elders Hyde and Taylor in the forenoon, and by Elders Benson, Taylor, Clinton and others in the afternoon.

On the emerging of the congregation at the Tabernacle, and of the out-door congregation from the Temple Block, the streets were literally filled with human beings, and their passage with carriages rendered for a time nearly impossible.

During the intermission on Sunday, Ballo's band, stationed in front of the News Office, "discoursed excellent music" for the entertainment of the countless numbers within hearing, who seemed highly pleased with the treat with which they were thus unexpectedly favored.

On Saturday evening there was a meeting of the Bishops, High Priests, Seventies and Elders at the Thirteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, at which much instruction was given by President Young, in relation to the fitting up and starting out the two hundred wagons, and eight hundred yoke of oxen, which are destined for the bringing of the poor across the plains, and are to make the trip to the Missouri river and back the present season.

Thirty-First Annual Conference

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

The General Conference of the Church convened in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Saturday, April 6, 1861, 10 a.m., President Brigham Young presiding.

There were on the stand: Of the First Presidency, Presidents Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells;

Of the Twelve Apostles: Orson Hyde, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Ezra T. Benson, Lorenzo Snow, and Franklin D. Richards;

Of the First Presidency of the Seventies: Joseph Young, Levi W. Hancock, Henry Herriman, Zera Pulsipher, Albert P. Rockwood, and Horace S. Eldredge;

Of the Presidency of the High Priests: Edwin D. Woolley and Samuel W. Richards;

Of the Presidency of the Stake: Daniel Spencer, David Fullmer and George B. Wallace;

Of the Presidency of the Bishoprick: Edward Hunter, Leonard W. Hardy and Jesse C. Little;

Of the Patriarchs: John Smith and Isaac Morley;

Reporters: George D. Watt and John V. Long.

The Conference was called to order. The choir sang "The morning breaks, the shadows flee."

Elder Lorenzo Snow offered prayer.

Choir sang "Praise ye the Lord, 'tis good to praise."

Elder E. T. Benson was called upon to address the congregation. He expressed himself highly pleased with the opportunity of meeting the Saints in general conference; he bore a strong testimony to the truth of the gospel of Christ, revealed to this generation by Joseph Smith; testified that the people had no need to search for any other, or any stronger testimony than that which they have already received. He exhorted the people to faithfulness, that they might win the prize, and said he rejoiced to know that the Almighty is just as ready as he ever was to bestow His spirit upon his chosen people.

President Daniel H. Wells, said that Elder Benson's text was a very good one, and well worthy of consideration by all, it was "Latter Day Saint." It was highly necessary that we should learn what it takes to constitute a saint. It is the duty of every one to study to be virtuous and true, to be God-like in all our acts. This is certainly a work of time, but we should be constantly progressing in the knowledge of the truth, and strive to gain light, through that channel of communication that is open between the heavens and the earth. He spoke of the power, the glory and the eternal reward that lie before the true hearted saint; the promises of reward and exaltation are enough to enwrap in bliss and glory every thought of the human heart, and every idea we have received. What more could we have to induce us to pursue the right way, he asked, inasmuch as it carries its own reward with it. He regretted that the blessings were so little appreciated by the wayward, and even by the saints of the Most High, in comparison to what they should be. It appeared that the people often forgot their duties, and suffered darkness to creep into their minds, and cover up the little light that was there. We should all see and realize the importance and greatness of the work in which we are engaged. It is our duty to draw light from the fountain of wisdom, and then extend it to others. We can all see the distress of nations, the confusion of the wicked and the distasteful condition of all the governments of the world, hence how thankful we should be that the light of this gospel has reached our hearts and opened our understandings, and that we have been plucked as brands from the burning, and have been brought into this blessed inheritance.

President Heber C. Kimball said that the feelings of his heart were—God bless the Saints, and peace be multiplied unto them; he respected and loved good men and women who were striving to do the will of heaven. He reasoned upon the subject of the vine, as spoken of in the gospel of St. John. Spoke of the necessity of the people praying that the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles might be baptized into one spirit. He quoted the text—"Resist the devil and he will flee from you," and said that he had only to add that, although the devil would flee when resisted, he would watch every faithful saint; the adversary may, and doubtless will, overcome some of this people, but that will not effect the kingdom of God—it will stand forever.

He also counseled the people to be of one heart and one mind; to do as they were told; to be united in all things for the building up of the church and kingdom of God, of which we are members. He told the saints to go to work and adorn the earth; to strive to make themselves happy and independent, both in food and raiment.

President Brigham Young said he was thankful for the privilege of meeting with so many brethren and sisters in general conference. He hoped yet to see a house large enough to hold the people, but did not know that we should ever see a building capable of holding them on this side of the day of rest. We have generally had the privilege of meeting in the open air, but the state of the weather now precludes our doing so.

He observed that the Book of Mormon was translated in the immediate neighborhood

where himself and br. Kimball resided, still it was two years before they were baptized into the church. Since then the people have passed through a great deal, and have learned much of the things of God. He reasoned upon the subject of miracles, and asked—if he saw a man turn a stick into a serpent, sand into lice and water into blood, what proof such things would be that the man was sent of God; and answered that it would be no proof of that at all, for there was only one reliable kind of evidence that a man is sent by the Almighty and that is the Spirit which Jesus diffused among his disciples.

He alluded to Saul, who in his darkness and sin went to the witch of Endor for information. We can now realize, more fully, the blessings attendant upon our being driven to these valleys, for had we remained we should have been obliged to mingle, to some extent, in the turmoil and strife that now afflict this nation. We can see the nations of the earth gradually gliding to the borders of the precipice of eternal ruin. Said how much he had reflected upon the subject of our being called back to the centre stake of Zion, and he felt to counsel the Saints not to be too anxious for the Lord to hasten his work, but to turn their attention to the sanctifying of their own hearts, and thereby prepare themselves for the great things that await the people of God.

His counsel was, seek not to bring destruction upon the wicked, but let the Lord have his own way and his own time, and let us be diligent in preparing ourselves for those times that are coming. Let each and every one be true to their covenants, and to each other. He longed to see the time when the people would be ready to receive the counsel of God, and live by it. If the counsel of the servants of God is harsh, and is not acceptable, it is either because it is not the truth, or that we are not right before God. If the Almighty speaks from heaven, and we are not pleased, and therefore do not receive it, we are not in the enjoyment of the Spirit of truth.

He remarked that he sometimes wondered if the great men of our nation ever asked themselves the question, how can a republican government stand. There is but one way in which it can endure, and that is as the government of heaven endures upon the eternal rock of truth and virtue. Said if Martin Van Buren had ordered the State of Missouri to restore the Latter Day Saints to their property, the nation would have been much stronger to-day than it is. Although he had no reason to doubt that President Lincoln is as good a man as ever sat in the chair of state, yet he is powerless, because of the corruptions that have been introduced and fostered by the chief men of the nation. They have put aside the innocent, justified thieving, and every species of debauchery, and have fostered every one that plundered the coffers of the people, and have said let it be so.

Choir sang, "Arise O glorious Zion." Benediction by Pres. Joseph Young.

2 P.M.

The meeting commenced by the choir singing "Great God attend while Zion sings."

Prayer was offered by Bishop Lorenzo D. Young.

Choir sang another hymn.

President Young requested the attention of the congregation till the several quorums of the Church were presented for their sanction and approval.

Elder John Taylor then presented the authorities of the Church as follows:—

Brigham Young, as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Heber C. Kimball, his first, and Daniel H. Wells, his second counselors;

Orson Hyde, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Orson Pratt, sen. Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Amasa Lyman, Ezra T. Benson, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Frankin D. Richards and George Q. Cannon, as members of said Quorum;

John Smith, Patriarch of the whole Church; Daniel Spencer, as President of this Stake of Zion, and David Fullmer and George B. Wallace, his counselors;

William Eddington, James A. Little, John V. Long, John L. Blythe, George Nebeker, John T. Caine, Joseph W. Young, Gilbert Clements, Brigham Young, jun., Franklin B. Woolley, Orson Pratt, jun., and Howard Spencer, as members of the High Council;

John Young, as President of the High Priests' Quorum, Edwin D. Woolley, and Samuel W. Richards, his counselors;

Joseph Young President of the first seven Presidents of the Seventies, and Levi W. Hancock, Henry Herriman, Zera Pulsipher, Albert P. Rockwood, Horace S. Eldredge and Jacob Gates, as members of the first seven Presidents of the Seventies;

President Brigham Young arose and gave the following instruction:

We will readily perceive that the Quorums of the Seventies are somewhat different from other Quorums in the Church. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is one Quorum, they are the apostles to all the world. The High Priests' Quorum is strictly but one quorum, though many quorums of High Priests are made to accommodate members of that quorum living in different localities. The Seventies are definitely multiplied by Seventies. The first Seventy was called in the winter of 1835, the winter after we returned from Missouri. What is called Zion's camp went to Missouri in 1834. The next following winter the Twelve Apostles were chosen. The Prophet Joseph also then began to organize quorums of Seventies. He organized one quorum, then he told the brethren to call up

other Elders and ordain them into the Seventies, forming another Quorum of Seventies, and then another, and then a fourth quorum, and a fifth, and a sixth, etc. How many quorums are there now, brother Joseph? [Brother Joseph, "62."] There are now sixty-two Quorums of Seventies.

The first Quorum of Seventies, where are they? Seven of them are here as First Presidents of the Seventies, and sixty-three of them now stand at the head of different quorums of Seventies. Sixty-three of them have been made presidents over quorums. It works very differently to what it does in other quorums in the Church. That leaves the first seven men, apparently isolated, over the body of the first Seventy. The quorum they were called to preside over have been taken and made presidents of other quorums, consequently there are only seven men now belonging to the first Quorum. Do we say that is a fact? No, only apparently, for, when the seven presidents over the first Quorum wish to call their quorum together (they meet in quorum meetings such as you attend frequently in the Seventies' Hall,) they call the presidents of the various quorums together, and that is virtually their quorum. There are now seven presidents to transact business, to guide, dictate, and direct the presidents of all the Seventies, and to call and ordain other quorums, of Seventies. This virtually makes them the presidents of all the Seventies. What is their true position in the kingdom of God? They are the first seven presidents of all the Seventies.

Bro. Joseph is the senior president over the first seven presidents of the Seventies. Bro. Orson Hyde is the senior man now in the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, of those first chosen into that quorum. This calls him, by his age, to be the president of that quorum. Now, I will go a step further for your consideration. The oldest man—the senior member of the first Quorum will preside, each in his turn, until every one of them has passed away. The next quorum that comes in action may take the senior man for a president, but not until the first Quorum is gone. Bro. Orson Hyde and br. Orson Pratt, sen., are the only two that are now left in the Quorum of the Twelve that br. Joseph Smith selected. Perhaps there are a great many here who never thought of these ideas, and never heard anything said about them.

I will remark a little further. When br. Lyman Wight was ordained into the Quorum of the Twelve he was an older man than I, and yet I was the President of the Twelve. He and others believed that he ought to be the president, but you can read the revelation in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord said to Joseph, I have given to you my servant Brigham to be the President of the Twelve. Lyman could not be the President of the Twelve. This will explain all that is now necessary on this point.

To return to the Seventies. The first seven are now presented. They are a body of men presiding over all the Seventies, and they are all presidents; but in all organized quorums in the kingdom of God there must be a head, or a presiding officer, as well in the first Quorum of Seventies as in others, as you can read in the revelations.

Elder Taylor then resumed presenting the authorities as follows:

John Nebeker, as President of the Elders' Quorum, and Elnathan Eldredge and Joseph Felt, his counselors;

Edward Hunter, as Presiding Bishop; Leonard W. Hardy and Jesse C. Little, his counselors;

Lewis Wight, as President of the Priests' Quorum; William Whiting and Samuel Moore, his counselors;

McGee Harris, as President of the Teachers' Quorum; Adam Speirs and David Bowman, his counselors;

John S. Carpenter, as President of the Deacons' Quorum; William F. Cook and Warren Hardy, his counselors.

Brigham Young was presented as Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints;

Daniel H. Wells, as Superintendent of Public Works;

Truman O. Angell, Architect for the Church; Brigham Young, President of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund to gather the poor;

Heber C. Kimball, Daniel H. Wells and Edward Hunter, his assistants and agents for said fund;

George A. Smith, Historian and general Church Recorder, and Wilford Woodruff his assistant.

The foregoing quorums and authorities were all voted for separately, and each and all were unanimously sustained by the conference.

Elder John Taylor made some pertinent remarks on the principle of union among the Latter Day Saints. He said there was a little difference between the Church of Jesus Christ in its actions and the democrats of this nation: the saints are united, but they are divided against themselves. Where all the people are seeking to do right, that makes one of the best governments in the world. He gave it as his opinion that there is no people under the heavens capable of governing themselves, and no man is able to govern the human family aright without the wisdom that comes from God. He recommended secret prayer, especially to the stubborn and self-willed; said that by that means they would gain the favor of the Almighty, and be able to act as sons of the Most High. He thought that the following poetic sentiment would apply to many who were fond of talking about their dignity and their rights: