

## GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The Fifty-eighth Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., October 6th, 1887, Apostle Lorenzo Snow presiding.

There were on the stand, of the Quorum of the Twelve: Apostles Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, John Henry Smith and Heber J. Grant; Patriarch John Smith; of the Presiding Council of the Seventies: Horace S. Eldredge, Jacob Gates, Abram H. Cannon, Seymour B. Young; of the Presiding Bishopric: John R. Winder. There were also present a large number of Presidents of Stakes and other leading brethren from various parts of this region where the Church is established.

Conference was called to order by Apostle Lorenzo Snow.

The choir sang:

Come all ye sons of Zion,  
And let us praise the Lord,  
His ransomed are returning,  
According to His word.

The opening prayer was offered by Apostle Franklin D. Richards.

Singing by the choir:

I know that my Redeemer lives;  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, He lives, who once was dead,  
He lives, my ever living head.

ELDER JACOB GATES

addressed the conference. He rejoiced in the opportunity of meeting with the Saints in general conference. It was the first time in several years that such a privilege had been enjoyed in this building. He was reminded by what we had been singing that God lives. This is the last time the Lord purposed to prune His vineyard prior to His coming as a mighty conqueror, when every knee would bow and confess that Jesus is the Christ. It will also be acknowledged that Joseph Smith is a Prophet, and that his successors are among the chosen of God.

During the 57 years of the existence of the Church in this dispensation, the Saints had gained experience, and the Lord required that they should have more faith as a consequence. The speaker knew that every phase through which the Church had passed had been overruled for the benefit of the faithful, whose feet had been thus placed upon a higher plane. Brother Gates then dwelt upon the principle of revelation as applied to the calling of men to be ministers for God. To this sphere men must be called of God, as was Aaron, who was selected by the voice of the Lord, fresh from the divine fountain. This system of truth with which the Saints are identified had also been revealed in this way, it inculcated the same doctrines as preached by the Savior and his ancient disciples who dwelt in mortality contemporaneously with Himself. The prediction by John the Revelator in reference to the restoration in the latter times of the fullness of the Gospel was referred to and the speaker held that the very fact of such an event being predicted showed that there was to be a falling away from the true order of the Gospel. If such were not the case a restoration would be superfluous.

It was the greatest blessing that could be enjoyed by mortals to know that God lives. The speaker here gave a relation of the first experience of the Prophet Joseph Smith, when he was visited and instructed by the Father and the Son and when he was chosen as an instrument to inaugurate the marvelous work of the latter times. He could testify to the world that God lives, because his eyes had seen and his ears heard.

The present was a time of trial, and men suffered imprisonment and other inconveniences and hardships for conscience sake. The day would come, however, when freedom would spread over this goodly land, which had been dedicated to liberty. Notwithstanding the forbidding appearance of things on the surface, the speaker considered this a bright day, because it immediately preceded the breaking through of the light of liberty and truth in greater brilliancy than ever. The righteous had nothing to fear, but the wicked had great reason to do so, as the Lord had said through His prophet that he would visit the latter with swift and terrible judgments. The Saints should renew their faithfulness and keep out of their hearts every feeling of animosity toward their enemies.

APOSTLE JOHN HENRY SMITH.

It was ever a matter of pleasure to mingle with the Saints in Conference, and speak of the goodness of God. It had been the happy lot of the speaker not to suffer much tribulation. He had grown to manhood since the arrival of the Saints in this part of the world. He had been taught in the principles of the Gospel from infancy and they had become part of his life. The Lord had done him the honor to give him a witness of their correctness and he had looked upon them as above price. When hearing his brethren speak upon them they awakened glorious reflections in his mind. They had been revealed for the benefit of mankind, that they might have an assurance concerning themselves and their approval by their heavenly Father. It was a matter of surprise that so few people understood them. We have, indeed, cause for rejoicing that our minds have been ready to accept of those truths and to direct our minds in accordance with them. The speaker had never been taught by the Elders any principle but had been sustained by the Scripture and by natural laws. If we fully obey them there is

no need of offense against any one. They teach love, forbearance and kindness to all, and the good we can do to our fellows will result in good to us. This is the character of the Gospel. In the heat of controversy we may not be as considerate in relation to the views of others as we should be, but this was no part of the Gospel. When the Elders were sent out they were instructed to be as conservative of the religions of others as possible, and to confine themselves to the declaration of the pure principles of truth as revealed in the system they had espoused. Perhaps this teaching had not been adhered to as closely as it should have been. It was not good to create in the breasts of those to whom we preach the Gospel a feeling of combativeness. There has been no necessity for the Elders to assume a spirit of aggressiveness, but rather to carry the spirit of conciliation and kindness. The faith of the Gospel should be declared in simplicity; faith in God, in His Son Jesus Christ, in baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception or imparting of the Holy Ghost.

Many people had been deceived concerning us. They saw us standing alone, as it were, and many forces operating against us, yet we go on our way unmoved, and they wondered at the spectacle, not knowing whether to attribute the phenomenon to the power of God or some other cause.

Faith was a great governing principle and should actuate us as a people. It should enable the Saints to rely upon the promise of God that if they would keep His commandments He would open a way for them out of every difficulty. We cannot claim as a people that we have been altogether free from the improper feelings that have been exhibited toward us. We have acted sometimes without due consideration for the rights and prerogatives of others. Yet we have been fairly consistent. The Lord had promised that if we took a proper course He would soften the hearts of those who had felt ill-disposed toward us, and thus we would be able to accomplish our mission of salvation in benedicting our fellow-beings. It is to be hoped that this will be the case and that many misunderstandings that have existed will, by the light of calm reason, be dissipated.

The speaker not only rejoiced in the ordinances of the Gospel, but also in the moral law, which made personal purity imperative. There had grown up much laxity in the world in reference to the latter requirement. It was required by the Lord, however, that we walk in the light of moral purity. If we fail to remember the obligations of the Lord in this respect, our condemnation will be the result. The world had drifted from purity of life, and the Lord was calling us back to pioneer the road to a better condition. We should ever keep before us our individual responsibility; by our record shall we be judged. The speaker, in conclusion, bore testimony that Jesus is the Christ, and that the Gospel as revealed anew in this age is true.

ELDER MILO ANDRUS

addressed the Conference. He expressed gratitude to God that he was still alive and had the privilege of taking part in the progress of the work in which the Saints were all interested. He dwelt upon prominent periods in our history. To the speaker the history of the Church for the last 56 years had been of deep interest. He had the same aspirations and desires as formerly to bequeath to his generations after him the legacy of a sound faith in the principles of truth. A study of the operations of truth on the earth afforded great joy. In the study of these principles and of the history of men we can draw lessons of wisdom. We can observe what results have occurred from given effects in the past. There is a great lesson given us in the experience of Job, who was loved of God. He was blessed exceedingly, with wealth and prosperity. The enemy of righteousness wished to have an opportunity to test him, with the hope that he might deny God and fall. The terrible trials to which he was subjected are a matter of record. The effect upon Job of his fearful afflictions will be remembered, yet he remained true to His God. When tempted by his wife, he replied that she talked like one of the silly women. Perhaps there may be some parallels in these times to that incident. Was there not some talk of this silly quality when men were persecuted and afflicted? Finally the man of faith and patience exclaimed that in the latter days he would stand on the earth and see his Redeemer. Many men had been tried during the progress of the work of God in these days. Some had been unable to stand the troubles with which they had been surrounded. Others had maintained their integrity, and after their tribulation they had been greatly multiplied and blessed, as in the case of Job. The speaker next directed the attention of the congregation to the experience of Jonah. Although he did not fully regard the word of the Lord, he was not cast off. It would not be proper, on this account, that his example of disregard should be followed by the Elders. We have no time to rest from our labors until our last breath is drawn. In the fifty-six years of his experience in the Church the speaker had never heard the

Prophet, Apostles and Elders teach any one to slay. He could say to all the world that Jesus is the Christ. He had seen the heavens manifest their treasures in the glorious gifts of the Gospel. He concluded with a strong exhortation to faithfulness.

An anthem—

Sing to the Lord in joyful strains.

was sung by the choir.

Benediction by Elder Elias Morris.

## FIRST DAY.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

Singing by the choir:

Awake, ye Saints of God, awake!  
Call on the Lord in mighty prayer,  
That He will Zion's bondage break,  
And bring to naught the fowler's snare.

Prayer by Bishop Samuel A. Woolley.

The choir sang:

The time is nigh, that happy time,  
That great expected, blessed day,  
When countless thousands of our race  
Shall dwell with Christ and Him obey.

ELDER HUGH S. GOWANS.

President of Tooele Stake, was called to address the assembly. Notwithstanding the difficulty he felt in undertaking this duty, he felt a pleasure in lifting up his voice in behalf of the cause of truth. He could unite with his brethren in gratitude to God for the deliverances that have been wrought out for the people. It was a great privilege to associate in our present capacity of a general Conference in peace, to be instructed in our duties. We are here in this life to learn the way in which we should walk to enable us to return to our Father in heaven. That we may take the right path we should and must possess the Holy Spirit. To possess that influence it is necessary that our lives be righteous. If Satan can fill our minds with doubt reference to this Church and its destiny, he will do so. There are many inducements to lead the unwary astray. The design of the Lord, however, was to lead this people to a higher plane and sphere, above the things of the world. We should rise above everything in opposition to the Gospel. If the spirit of God is in our hearts we will clearly discern the good from the evil. By measuring our lives with what God has revealed for our acceptance we will be in a position to know whether our course is acceptable to Him or not. Self-examination will enable us to understand whether or not we are traveling toward that high standard to which the Lord desires we should be attracted. We must be prayerful in spirit, and exercise faith in Him. We should keep the Sabbath day, attend our meetings in our wards and quorums. It is questionable whether these things have been fully attended to. There is more delight to Saints in attending to these things than to spend our time in excursions and other similar ways of seeking pleasure. We should cheerfully pay our tithes and keep the laws of life, that health may abound and that our lives may be prolonged in usefulness. God has revealed a Priesthood and principles by which we can rise above the petty jealousies of life. If we would have faith we must attend our fast meetings and tender our offerings for the benefit and sustenance of the poor. If we do those things we will have faith to administer to our families and rebuke from them the encroachments of the destroyer.

There is nothing in our theology but tends to morality and to spiritual and physical life. We have our religion and our business mixed up, and the former is sometimes allowed to settle to the bottom, causing it to require to be stirred up, that it may come to the top. Some men have so little faith that when propositions are made for the benefit of the work of God they hesitate to accept and act upon them. This is unfortunate, as all should be ready to operate for the general weal. This should not be the condition of any man who holds the Priesthood and has taken upon him the name of Christ. The speaker hoped that the light of the Spirit might dwell in his heart to enable him to participate in any movement of a beneficial character. He hoped this would also be the condition of all the brethren.

ELDER ABRAHAM H. CANNON,

of the Presiding Council of the Seventies, was the next speaker. The truths to which we had listened would save and exalt us if we adopted them. What this people have accomplished under the blessing of God is marvelous. The Lord is ready to bless the Saints still further if they are ready to accept of what he has to proffer. We have to grapple with spiritual and temporal questions.

We witness disunion growing among the nations. There is an increasing element and disposition toward a disruption of organized society. The spirit of destruction is abroad, and bitter disputes between labor and capital are multiplying. We have been led to expect such things. There are duties in a temporal capacity devolving upon us. We have not been visited by the evils rife elsewhere, but unless we are careful we may be confronted by them. In this country we may expect that greater differences than have heretofore existed will make their appearance. We must be prepared to meet and cure them. The Lord has said it was not given that one man should be above another. He has told the Saints that if they were not

united in temporal things, they could not attain to spiritual excellence. We have been paying too much attention to the accumulation of wealth, and not so much as was needful to duties that are higher. The speaker then dwelt for some time upon those revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants in reference to the temporal affairs of the Saints. The principles they inculcate were of a nature to exalt the poor and humble the rich, and produce other equitable results. He expected to see these laws and principles established among the Saints and he understood that the Zion of God would be built by that divine system.

The work of God requires the whole-hearted devotion of its adherents. It involves the sacrifice of all things deemed valuable in this life, if necessary. If we are divided against ourselves, we cannot, according to a principle enunciated by the Savior, stand, but must fall. If we are united however, we cannot be moved. We have looked to human aid for a way to escape from present troubles. It would, however, be provided by the power of God. If we rely upon human help we will be disappointed. In God lies our only refuge and hope. If we trust in Him every cloud will disappear, and the Saints will return to Zion where the Temple, upon which the glory of God is to rest will be reared. The Saints should be governed by the law of God, written upon their hearts. That law will not and does not conflict with the principles of the glorious Constitution of our common country.

ELDER ELIAS MORRIS

addressed the assembly. He expressed himself as delighted with what he had heard. It had been accompanied by the Spirit of the Gospel. Charity and good feeling had been expressed toward all men. This disposition ought to be cultivated. The Gospel we have received—many of us in distant lands from this—embodies life and salvation. It has been revealed in our own day, and has not been picked up by the wisdom of men. It was not known in our day—notwithstanding that there were many men honest and devoted to God—until revealed in this generation. This system had not been discovered by the wisdom of men. It was the same that had been hidden up in Christ. If the Bible were not in existence it would make no difference to the Gospel as revealed anew. But if we had not this record, the various sects would have no foundation for their religions. It is questionable whether Joseph Smith, when first called of God, knew much of the principles contained in the Scriptures. Nevertheless between what is contained in the good book and that revealed through the latter-day Prophet there was a most beautiful harmony. The system was revealed to him line upon line and precept upon precept.

There is something here that testifies to the truth of the scriptural saying: "No man knoweth the things of God, except by the Spirit of God." For ages men, by their own wisdom have searched, and searched in vain for a knowledge of the true principles of the Gospel. An unlearned youth, by the power and Spirit of God, had discovered them by that gift in their fullness.

We are called a peculiar people. When we heard the first sound of the Gospel, there was an echo from our hearts. We could not explain it, but it was there. We knew the testimony of the servants of God was true. Many of us were prepared for the message of heaven by dreams and visions, and we have known the Elders, recognizing them on sight as God's servants although we had never before met them. As soon as we received the Gospel in different lands we were imbued with a powerful desire to gather with the body of the Church. It was irresistible, and we found no rest, day or night, until we obeyed its promptings. These things show how we are a peculiar people. They were manifestations of the fact that God is in this work.

It has been imagined that forces could be brought to bear upon the Saints to eliminate from their hearts the love of the work with which they are identified. This can never be done. It is impossible. It is everything to the people and they will be found willing to suffer all things for its sake. Victory will perch upon the banners of Zion, for this is the promise of the Lord to His people. We may, however, be called to pass through many trials before that condition shall arrive. But every ordeal will redound to our good, and prepare us for that which lies in the bosom of the future.

ELDER F. A. HAMMOND,

President of San Juan Stake, addressed the congregation. He felt repaid for his labor and effort in getting here to attend Conference. He had been laboring for about two years in San Juan County, in the southeastern portion of Utah. He had had no desire to return until it was time to come to Conference. He referred to a mission he performed to the Sandwich Islands. The Elders were on one occasion engaged in blessing each other. A prominent Elder promised him then that he would be a blessing and consolation to those among whom he labored. He hoped to fulfill this prediction. As he entered the city recently and beheld the beautiful Temple rearing its walls and towers to heaven, he was impelled to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

This feeling was intensified by his recollection of the earliest settlement of this valley. The transformation is most wonderful. God would never forsake His people but would bless, multiply and increase them. The speaker said he embraced the Gospel in San Francisco in 1847, he being then a full grown man. From his experience he was impressed with a feeling of charity for people whom we sometimes call Gentiles. He then related some incidents concerning two Elders who visited his native village in the Eastern States, when he was about 11 years old, on which occasion he heard the first gospel sermon preached by Latter-day Saints. His next meeting with the brethren was in San Francisco, as before stated. He gave an account of his early experience in the Church, the discovery of gold in California and other matters of historical interest.

The choir sang:

Jerusalem, my glorious home!

Benediction by Apostle Heber J. Grant.

## SECOND DAY.

## MORNING SESSION, OCT. 7TH.

Conference opened at 10 a. m.

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God!  
He whose word can not be broken,  
Chose thee for His own abode,

was sung by the choir.

Prayer by Elder Joseph B. Noble.

Singing:

Zion stands with hills surrounded—  
Zion, kept by power divine;  
All her foes shall be confounded,  
Though the world in arms combine.  
Happy Zion,  
What a favored lot is thine!

APOSTLE JOHN W. TAYLOR

said, in substance: He was gratified for the privilege of meeting with the Saints in Conference. He desired the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many changes have taken place since we last assembled in this building in a similar capacity to this. They had seriously tried many of the people. We are living in a day when each individual member of the Church should be in possession of the Holy Spirit. It is a time when we need comfort, and instruction such as cannot be given by man. The Savior informed his ancient disciples that they must tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power. He promised to send upon them the Spirit of Truth. Those who know its operations are aware that it imparts comfort and knowledge. The greatest desire of the speaker was that he might enjoy the presence of that Spirit. He thought of this more especially when he partook of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. When it was taken unworthily such action was followed by condemnation. Some of the Saints asked where they could go to seek counsel. All who had the Holy Spirit could receive it in every time of need from God. It is said of some that the Saints are poor and illiterate. There may be some truth in this, but it is not entirely true. A few of them were wealthy when they embraced the Gospel, but the bulk had been poor. This verifies the statement of the Savior, who thanked the father that He had given Him the weak things as pertaining to the world that by them the things that are powerful might be overturned. There are many churches here who claim to have been established among us to redeem us from bondage and sin. The facts will show that the Latter-day Saints will compare favorably on the plane of morality and religion with their professed regenerators. Examine all the denominations and it will be found that they claim to enjoy the Holy Ghost. The chief office of that spirit is to guide the possessors into all truth. If they have it why is it that they walk in so many ways diverse from each other? There is a method by which it can be ascertained whether people possess the Comforter. The presence of that Spirit is attainable by all. When John was banished upon the Isle of Patmos, and was in bondage for the testimony of Jesus, he was about to fall down and worship an angel who appeared to him. He was told not to do so, as that holy being was one of his fellow-servants the prophets. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, consequently those who possess it have the prophetic spirit. Paul proclaimed that no man could say that Jesus is the Christ, save by the Holy Ghost; therefore it is the Holy Spirit that imparts the testimony of Jesus.

It is of infinite importance that the Saints understand these things for themselves. The same ancient Apostle exhorted the people in his day to contend earnestly for the best gifts. He also enumerated the various miraculous gifts conferred by the Holy Ghost. The Comforter was to show the disciples things to come, and lead them into all truth; consequently all upon whom it rests are to a greater or less extent prophets. An understanding of things yet future is the prophetic gift. It was by the power of the Holy Ghost that all the ancient prophets were enabled to foretell events that still lay in the bosom of the future. The speaker illustrated his remarks by scriptural references, and various Biblical incidents. He also explained that even the prophets possessed this power in different degrees. The Savior is said to have possessed it without measure, while it was given to