

FIFTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

On Friday, April 4th, 1884, the Conference met in the Tabernacle at 10 o'clock a.m.

Conference called to order by President John Taylor.

The choir sang:

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion City of our God.

Prayer by President George Q. Cannon.

The choir sang:

Zion stands with hills surrounded,
Zion kept by power divine

Present on the stand:—Of the First Presidency, John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith.

Of the Twelve Apostles, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Albert Carrington, Moses Thatcher, Francis Marion Lyman and George Teasdale.

Counselor to the Twelve, Daniel H. Wells.

Patriarch of the Church, John Smith. Of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies, Horace S. Eldredge, W. W. Taylor, Abram H. Cannon and Seymour B. Young.

Of the Presiding Bishopric, Leonard W. Hardy and Robert T. Burton.

Also a number of Presidents of Stakes, Bishops and Elders from various parts of the Territory.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR.

He was pleased to have another opportunity of meeting with the Saints in Annual Conference, he was thankful for the favorable circumstances and the beautiful weather which we now enjoy. These occasions were fraught with events of importance to the Latter-day Saints, causing them to reflect upon the goodness and mercy of God and to strengthen and encourage us for the events of the future. This work was one which God our Heavenly Father had instituted; it was not the work of man. It was planned in the heavens. The Father and the Son instituted it, and it had been perpetuated by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the introduction of the Holy Priesthood. Prophets had looked forward with joy and had written and sung of our day. It was "the dispensation of the fulness of times." It was not within the power of any men, no matter what their wisdom or ability, to carry on this work without God's aid. We were indebted to the wisdom and guidance of God for the inception and beginning of this work and in each successive step that we had taken we were indebted to Him for all the progress we had made. Without His aid no man, whatever his position, could do anything for the advancement of this work.

All the children of God were interested in this work, the living the dead and unborn, and we as a people held their destinies to a great extent in our hands, for our actions not as individuals but as a people would have a bearing upon nations as well as individuals in the future. It behooved us as Saints and as the servants of God holding the Holy Priesthood to magnify our callings. President Taylor hailed the congregation as his brethren and sisters invoked the blessings of God upon them in Conference and declared that His wrath and indignation would be upon their enemies and all who would fight against Zion.

APOSTLE GEORGE TEASDALE.

Said, upon receiving the Gospel he received a knowledge of its truth for himself. The history of this people was singularly like that of Abraham, having left all to obey the Gospel. We had believed in the true and living God and obeyed His Gospel and received the promised blessings. The promises that were made and their fulfillment in the case of those who received the Gospel was an evidence that God's power was with His servants and that their authority was valid. The Elders would not dare to make the promises they do in going forth to proclaim the Gospel if they were not called of God. Another evidence of the divinity of this work was the peace that reigned in the families of the Saints, even in what was called polygamy, while it was difficult for persons in the world to get along with one wife, and even among us it would be found that there was more trouble in monogamous families than among those who had received the celestial law of marriage. This was accounted for by the fact that this people came here for the love of God, and they tried to claim the blessings promised to those who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Though the Elders were treated despitely by the people of the world generally, there were a few who gladly received the Gospel, and bore their testimony to its truth, as others had done before them. The signs still followed the believer, and the power of God was continually being made manifest in response to the ministrations of the servants of God. God was at the head of this work and it was our duty to desire that the will of God might be done and to realize the importance of sustaining the servants of God, that they might lead the people aright, and that He would make known to His servants everything necessary to the progress of this work and for the instruction of the people. The only way we could

expect the blessings of God was by keeping His commandments, and if we did this we need not fear the efforts of men. They conceded we had the right to believe, but denied to us the right to practice our religion. Such was the result of the boasted enlightenment of the men of this nation. God help such intelligence! We were interested in doing good to ourselves and all mankind; then let us keep the commandments of God, and we would be blessed with the power to redeem ourselves, to redeem our dead, and have glory added unto us, having made good use of our talents. And we owed it to God, having come here pure, to return with the same character that we had when we left His presence. Theory would not do alone, for we would be judged by the deeds done in the body, and our professions or good desires were not sufficient.

APOSTLE F. M. LYMAN

Rejoiced in the opportunities afforded on these occasions. Our religion required not only good intentions but good works. Faith would not avail us, only as it prompted us to works. If the true faith existed it would prompt us to action. What advantage had we if we only professed to believe in the various ordinances and principles of the gospel, and had not faith to go forth and perform the work. A religion without works is dead. It was singular liberality that would only permit us to believe. God required us to keep his commandments as well as to believe in them, and it were better that we had never been born than to break the commandments of God. We could not do it: we had too much at stake. All our hopes depended on us doing the works of righteousness. We would be just the kind of people that God desired us to be if we kept His commandments. We were chosen to perform this work before we came here; we had made covenants to keep the commandments of God. We did not expect to wait until the hereafter to receive blessings, we were receiving blessings here every day. We knew that God lived, and had an assurance of this beyond all the reasoning and sophistries of men. We knew also that this was the work of God. We knew these things beyond all doubt as we know that we have a living. And we knew that the nations that fought against Zion would be destroyed and cut off. The servants of God were bearing these testimonies to the nations, but the people hardened their hearts and rejected the truth. If they would listen and obey they might receive the same blessings as we enjoyed. As we had this knowledge let us strive to keep all of the commandments, that we might be blessed with the unspeakable riches of eternity, which through our mortal imperfections we were not now prepared to fully realize. He testified that the kingdom was never more firmly rooted than at present, that there were never so many persons who were devoted to the truth, and that it would continue to grow in power as God had intended.

President W. Woodruff announced that a meeting of the Mutual Improvement Societies of both sexes would be held in the Assembly Hall, at 7 o'clock this evening; also a meeting of the Sunday School Union most likely in the same place on Saturday evening, and a meeting of the Priesthood on Sunday evening.

The choir sang:

"Who can stand against the works of the Lord."

Conference adjourned till 2 o'clock p.m.

Benediction by Apostle Wilford Woodruff.

Friday, 2 p.m.

The choir sang:

We're not ashamed to own our Lord,
And worship him on earth.

Prayer by Apostle Lorenzo Snow.

The choir sang:

O awake my slumbering minstrel,
Let my harp forget its swell.

APOSTLE MOSES THATCHER.

Rejoiced at the remarks made this morning. As stated by our venerable President, we can accomplish nothing without the aid of the Lord. It was not difficult to discern the hand of God in the affairs of nations, but it was not always so easy to see it in the affairs of individuals. Yet God is the author of life, and overrules all things. During the past few months the speaker had reflected much upon the malice exhibited by the world against us, and had been led to see that we are hated more for our virtues than for our errors. We were ourselves filled with pity for the evil-doer and compassion for the erring. When hatred was directed against the innocent, the shafts were generally dipped in malice before they were shot from the bow of envy. Cain hated Abel, not because Abel was guilty, but because he was pure. It had been so in every age. Trace up the history of persecution, and it would be found that those who invented instruments of torture were moved by malice and envy, and by the spirit of him who would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. It was the good deeds of Joseph the Prophet which urged the wicked in their hatred to shed his blood. Divest the enemies of the Saints of malice, hatred and envy, and there would be little left. If we copied the vices and wickedness of the world we would be taken by the right hand of fellowship. We were rowing against the tide of the world's corruption. We were seeking to solve the

problem of the kingdom of God, and if we kept free from the contaminations of the age we should surely succeed. We were accused of being law-breakers. The speaker could trace his lineage to the revolutionary fathers, and he loved the Constitution and institutions of the country. And he held that if Congress could pass a law in relation to marriage, it could enact laws in regard to the sacrament and to baptism. We did not violate any constitutional law. We had gathered here not to be slaves but to be freemen. And the very persecutions we suffered would cause our sons to defend freedom and educate them to be statesmen. We had never thought of secession. We expected to gain our liberties under the flag and within the purview of the United States. And those who called us disloyal, were often themselves violators of their oaths to sustain the Constitution and laws of their country. Out of all the evil heaped upon us good would come to us and our cause. There were thousands of people in this nation who, if they understood us, would defend our cause. And he was satisfied that "Mormonism" was becoming better known, and the efforts of our enemies tended to draw attention to the truth. While excitement raged abroad, all was calmness and peace at home. And this was not because we were not aware of the relative strength of 150,000 and 50,000,000 of people, but because we trusted in God and in the cause in which we were engaged. He bore testimony to the final triumph of this work and could sincerely pray for those who fought against it.

APOSTLE ALBERT CARRINGTON

knew that the cause in which this little handful of Saints were engaged was the great and grand latter-day work of our Father in the heavens. The wicked could do nothing against this work, but for it. He rejoiced in this. If it were not for this knowledge, considering the great odds against us, we might find our knees trembling. But God and one righteous person were a very great majority against the wicked. And there were thousands who were striving to actually live by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of our Father in the heavens. When Enoch labored, after working for over three hundred years he only gathered a few. The great majority rejected the truth and were destroyed from the face of the earth. Noah, after preaching a hundred and twenty years, only gained seven besides himself out of that perverse generation. But there were thousands upon thousands ready to stand up shoulder to shoulder with our President in anything in which our Father in the heavens inspired him to lead forth in. The speaker marvelled at the blindness and perverseness of the people of the world in closing their eyes against this grand latter-day work revealed in this our day. No man by human experience could find out the ways of God or understand His purposes. Yet the way to their comprehension was so plain and simple that "a wayfarer man though a fool need not err therein." Yet this was not followed because the people loved darkness rather than light. Was not this course absolutely absurd? Yet it was a fact that the majority of mankind were thus blind and foolish and self-willed. No man had the right to do wrong. The claim that he had was incorrect. He felt to pity all that class of mankind who preferred evil to good and the slavery of sin to the freedom of the gospel. He felt that he could pray for those who were bond-slaves to wickedness, that our Father would cause the scales to fall from their eyes. It was no use to argue with them in regard to the beauty of this grand work of our Father, but he would not put a straw in the way of their agency or injure a hair of the head of the worst enemy of this work. The Lord had fitted the backs of this people to the burdens imposed upon them. If he had been told years ago that he could have borne with cheerfulness the opprobrium that had been heaped upon us he would have refused to believe it. With all the fancied freedom, and loyalty, and liberality of the world, they were filled with animosity against the Saints and were in bondage to their own lusts. Yet he knew there were many noble men and women, some of whom, notwithstanding the folly and extravagance and wickedness of a wayward and wicked world would yet come out and receive the everlasting Gospel.

APOSTLE F. D. RICHARDS.

These opportunities were like coming up to a banquet of the Lord. Those who were in any wise cast down could find rest and recuperation. And all could be refreshed and invigorated. During the past few months there was an evident increase of improvement among the Saints and the efforts of the wicked against us had brought us nearer to the Lord. Many had laid aside their vestments and had come into the liberty of the sons of God. The Lord was revealing the abundance of peace and truth. And when the wicked were imagining that they were accomplishing something against the Saints, behold the people of the Lord were but impelled to a closer walk with God by which they became strengthened. The animus of the adversary was exhibited, but it did no harm to the Saints. Those who had worked for our injury had only driven from their own souls that measure of light from the spirit of God which had enlightened them. He felt that a duty rested upon the Saints to set forth the

truth to their kindred who were scattered abroad, and to correct the falsehoods which were circulated against this work, that so much might be done to give them a chance to resist prejudice and learn the truth. The circulation of the DESERET NEWS would aid in this good work, as many of the missionaries had testified. We should never know how much good we had done in our labors until the day of judgment. Many of our brethren labored in the missionary field apparently without result. But if they performed their duty they would find that they had at least sown seeds of truth which would act so as to keep men in whose hearts they were sown, from those overt acts of opposition which bring people into the greater condemnation. There were many patriotic people who do not countenance the oppressions and persecutions heaped upon us and we should do our duty towards them in striving to convince them of the truth. The few men who dared to stand up for our rights in Congress have been sustained by their constituents as shown in their very general return to the National Legislature. Our existence here was designed of God to try us and if we would hearken to Him all that happened would tend to our benefit. He rejoiced in the increase of the Saints whose posterity was multiplying in the land, and who ought to be reared up to become a nation of kings and priests. If we could understand something of the glory which we, like Jesus, had with the Father before the world was, we would be strengthened to perform those duties which would qualify us to return to it. The speaker portrayed the liberty, prosperity and blessings, temporal and spiritual, which the Saints enjoyed above all people on the face of the earth, and the increase of wickedness in the places from which they had gathered, and urged the Saints to live according to the vital principles of the Gospel, individually, that they might endure to the end, withstand every evil day, keep all the covenants made with God or one another, sanctify their natures, and be prepared to enter into the glory of God. He exhorted the Priesthood to teach each other so that all might be thoroughly informed, and desired that we might all be strengthened and become truly the embodiments of the principles of eternal life.

The choir sang an anthem:

O give thanks unto the Lord.

Conference was adjourned till tomorrow (Saturday) at 10 a.m.

Benediction by President Joseph F. Smith.

SECOND DAY.

Saturday, April 5th, 10 a.m.

Conference called to order by President John Taylor.

The choir sang:

Come thou glorious day of promise,
Come and spread thy cheerful ray.

Prayer by Apostle Franklin D. Richards.

The choir sang:

How are Thy Servants blest, O Lord,
How sure is their defense.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

Said that it was almost impossible to hear in this large congregation when there was confusion or noise, in consequence of the sensitiveness of this building to sound. When order was preserved it was one of the best places in the world for persons to hear in, but for this very reason, when there was confusion, the voice of the speaker was drowned. He requested the congregation to preserve silence, and the sixty-three ushers to maintain order.

APOSTLE LORENZO SNOW

Said that we were entitled to the inspiration of God, without whose aid this work could not be accomplished. It was a delightful privilege accorded us to meet in conference. He was impressed with the appropriateness to this people of the hymn commencing "We're not ashamed to own our Lord and worship Him on earth." No one who had truly known the Lord could feel otherwise than this. God had made Himself known to His children in various dispensations. Abraham was treated as a friend of God, he talked and reasoned with Him as one man would reason with another. Others of the servants of God had seen God and beheld His glory while in the flesh, and lived afterwards. The Divine Being, who manifested Himself to the ancients, came to the earth in the meridian of time and took upon Himself mortality and ministered unto the children of men. It seemed singular that it was necessary, after laboring with the Father in creating the world, for the Lord to be sanctified through suffering. But the Scriptures said that it was necessary that He should pass through trial and suffering that He might have compassion for others. If it was necessary that the Savior should pass through trial and suffering it, was also necessary that all who expected to attain the same glory should be willing to bear all for the Gospel's sake. We could not attain to exaltation and glory except by passing through this probation. It was strange that such ideas could prevail with reference to the being of God as were entertained by the sectarians, considering the plainness of the Scriptures on this question. Men who now lived had beheld the face of the Savior. He had appeared in the Kirtland Temple and talked face to face with the servants of

God. Moses had tried to teach the people to prepare themselves to meet the Lord. It was our duty to prepare ourselves for the advent of the Savior, for He would come again and meet with the Saints of God in sacred places.

APOSTLE BRIGHAM YOUNG.

It seems the privilege of the servants of God if faithful to speak the words of inspiration to the people. There were some principles dwelt upon years ago which our brethren now seemed to be seldom prompted to speak upon. Were these things forgotten? No. The time was approaching when this people would be prepared to receive instruction on the subject of union, and to carry out those principles as they had never done before. The spirit that was manifested by the people to observe the fundamental principles of the Gospel was deep and widespread. Those who had deviated from the commandments of God were repenting and turning unto the Lord. This was no spirit of excitement and wildfire but a quiet determination to keep the commandments of God and observe His counsels. Under these circumstances he thought the question as to what we were going to do to sustain ourselves was one of paramount importance. The time was coming when we must sustain ourselves or we must lose our status financially. All that we did to sustain ourselves tended to strengthen us in the work of God, and all that we sent away weakened the hands of this people. We were importing everything and exporting nothing, comparatively, and the time would come when the supply of cash would stop. There were hundreds now out of employment, and it behooved us to use as little as possible of that which was imported, and encourage every branch of home manufacture.

APOSTLE ERASTUS SNOW.

Said that all persons who reflected upon it must feel that the subject of home production was one of paramount importance. In the early settlement of this Territory there was plenty of work in cultivating the earth and developing the natural resources of the country. In those times goods were high and money scarce, and people resorted to the spinning wheel and handloom. Tanneries were common, and many articles were manufactured at home which are now imported. We had abundance of iron, coal and precious metals, but while we were consuming vast amounts of iron, glass, leather and other articles that could be procured here, we manufactured scarcely anything. We were getting to be a commercial rather than a manufacturing people, having large mercantile establishments, and depending principally upon our silver mines. Where agriculture was properly conducted it was the foundation of self-sustenance. Next to this home industry should be cultivated. The same capital invested in manufacture employed ten persons where one would be employed if invested in commerce. Those who took a comprehensive view of this question would seek the welfare of their fellows, for any other course must sooner or later result in their own ruin. This was an opportune moment to establish home industries in view of the scarcity of money, and abundance of labor and provisions. Efforts were being made to develop our iron, glass and fine crockeryware. There were some who were sanguine of success, but their efforts were not seconded as the should be by men who had means. The development of iron and steel in view of the immense consumption was infinitely more important than that of the precious metals. Our agricultural resources and cultivatable lands were not by any means exhausted though much had been done, there was yet much that might be done. There were many places that would support a much larger population if the natural facilities were properly developed, and the people should avail themselves of these advantages. Capitalists should seek to employ the surplus labor in manufacturing, and on the other hand, laborers should be ready to work for fair wages, so that they might obtain more steady employment and be better off. It was a mistaken idea that a man could do as well to earn large wages for six months, and remain idle the rest of the year, there was nothing more demoralizing than idleness.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

presented the following names of brethren selected as missionaries to the places named, who were unanimously sustained by the vote of the Conference:

GREAT BRITAIN.

Frank Talton, Beaver.
Rollin Ray Tanner, Beaver.
Albert Jones, Provo.
L. John Nuttall, Jr., Kanab.
Moroni M. Sheets, 8th Ward.
Asahel H. Woodruff, Farmers' Ward.
Thomas Wright, Sr., Nephi.
James W. Paxman, Nephi.
Isaac Gadd, Nephi.
James McPherson, Nephi.
Reuben S. Collett, Mesa, Arizona.
Thomas P. Biggs, Mesa, Arizona.
George Fraser, Richfield.
Edward Morgan, Mill Creek.
Samuel Mitton, Wellsville.
Joshua Brown, Wellsville.
George Goddard, 13th Ward.
James Eardley, 3rd Ward.
Thomas Aubrey, 13th Ward.
Thomas F. H. Morton, 3rd Ward.
James L. McMurrin, 8th Ward.
Laurence H. Young, 18th Ward.
Wm. Smith Reed, Ogden.
Wm. C. B. Orrock, Richfield.