

SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Sixty-fourth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City at 10 a. m. on Friday, Oct. 6, 1893.

The following were on the stand: Of the First Presidency—Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith; of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, John W. Taylor, Mariner W. Merrill and Abraham H. Cannon; Patriarch John Smith; of the Presidency of the Seventies—Seymour B. Young, John Morgan, George Reynolds; of the Presiding Bishopric—William B. Preston and John R. Wiader. There were also many Presidents of Stakes and other leading Elders from all parts of Utah and surrounding states and territories.

Conference was called to order by President George Q. Cannon.

The choir and congregation sang:

Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Brigham Young.
Singing by the choir:

For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our Fathers' God.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

Delivered the opening discourse. He treated instructively upon a variety of subjects. His opening remarks were devoted to the financial affairs of the Saints, and he made special reference to the establishment of the sugar factory. The favorable change of sentiment among the people of the world, especially those of our own nation, was spoken of. The remainder of the discourse was devoted to the question of missionary work in this country and abroad in all the nations of the earth. The speaker predicted many good things concerning Zion.

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW

was the next speaker. The following is a brief summary of his remarks.

There never was a day since the organization of the Church that the Saints had more cause to rejoice than now. The Lord had been with us from the time the Church was founded. He accomplished all for us that we could have reasonably anticipated. Tribulation has been the experience of the people of God and He designed that it should be so. Before we came to this probationary life we, doubtless, foresaw that conditions here would be in many respects unpleasant. Trials and afflictions, if we might so call them, were necessary for our future exaltation. It had seemed at times as if we could scarcely endure them without murmuring, but God gave us strength to pass through them unscathed. It appeared to be needful that the Captain of our Salvation had to endure trials, and even He, great as He was, found some difficulty in enduring them. His immeasurable distress in the garden of Gethsemane illustrates this. He said clearly what He would have to undergo. His feelings were so exorcising that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and an angel was sent to give him encouragement and strength.

A great change had come over the feelings of the people of the world in reference to us—especially with the people of our nation. This has been brought about by the Lord. The work that had been accomplished in the nations had been wonderful, by the preaching of the Gospel by the Elders. Besides, during the last few months a great work had been done for the redemption of the dead. Many thousands had been officiated for in the Temples. The great bulk of those who were in the spirit world for whom the work had been done would receive the truth. The conditions for the spirits of the dead receiving the testimony of Jesus in the spirit world were a thousand times more favorable than they were here in this life. Those who labored in this glorious work to redeem the dead were in a degree saviors of their dead kindred.

It was pleasant to have all worldly concerns go forward agreeably, yet the Kingdom of God was not meat nor drink, but righteousness. As a people we did some things that we became ashamed of. It we repented the Lord would forgive us. In most things we had acted like the wise man of the parable who built his house upon a rock. We had built upon the rock of revelation. This being the case, as Christ said to Peter on a certain occasion—as a church the gates of hell would not have power to prevail against us. Our prospect was grand and glorious. In the future life we would have our families—our wives and children. Even if they did not follow our counsels, if we shall be successful in gaining exaltation we would eventually have them, for they will be where we shall be. The Gospel was comprehensive and through that divine system all the sons and daughters of men would be saved to some degree, with the exception of comparatively a very few. The difficulties of our present life perplexed us now, but they ought not to disturb us to any extent, because of the greatness of our promised reward. We could afford, for the sake of what God had promised to the faithful, to sacrifice everything of a worldly character.

The speaker drew a contrast between the conditions of the time when President Woodruff and others went to Independence, Missouri, in 1844, and the situation now. Then the lives of the brethren were endangered by threatening mobs, while during the recent visit to Independence of President Woodruff and his counselors, they were received with great cordiality and treated with respect and consideration. The change was significant as relating to the anticipated future return of the Saints to the center location of Zion. The speaker concluded by praying God to bless all the people.

ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS, of the Council of the Twelve, testified to the truth of the remarks of the previous speakers. He felt to rejoice in the progress and triumph of the truth and the manifestation of the power of God in our behalf. The repeated release of the Saints from temporal and spiritual embarrassments had been a characteristic of the work of God, and these unfavorable circumstances had been occasions of

drawing together the hearts of the people. It was needful that we should experience adversity, that our glory might be increased by our triumph over trials. These things had the effect of enlarging our views and softening our hearts, and, in this respect, they were blessings.

The blessings of God had been upon us in this land, to which we had been driven with a prospect of temporal destruction. Our homes, farms, and other possessions here exceeded in value those acquired by us elsewhere and the building of temples had been attended with greater success and ministrations therein with greater results than previously.

When Peter confessed Christ, the promise was made that the testimony of Jesus should be the foundation of the faith of the Saints for all time, and in spite of periods of doubt and darkness, the same promise made to Peter applied to all who were successful in securing this testimony of Jesus and endured in the faith. The Lord told Peter that he should be proved, as Satan desired to get him. So were we tried, but by the sustaining power of the Lord through our faithfulness, we would triumph over every obstacle which stood in the way of our salvation.

While the body of the Savior was lying in the tomb, His Spirit went to the prison house to open the doors to the captives. The duty of continuing this work rests upon us in this day.

The Saints should maintain a reputation for honor and integrity, and God would assist their earnest labors in this direction, and their credit will remain secure. Extravagance and wastefulness must be avoided, that the means which had been wasted in the past, might be spent in bearing the Gospel to the nations of the earth and gathering Israel. We were apt to forget our great duty in this respect, and this was especially the case in times of great prosperity. If the present hard times would make us realize this duty more fully, they would prove a great blessing.

Zion had stooped to conquer all opposing influences, and through her humility and power with God all obstacles shall be overcome. We should profit by our experiences of trouble, and make them the means of our triumph.

When the Gospel first came to the people of the world, the word was that the hour of God's judgments had come. We were losing sight of this truth and were building "castles in the air," forgetting that we were expected to walk in paths untrod before. Examples of fraternity in the world were becoming general, and these would pave the way for Zion to accomplish the unity of the people of the earth by the spirit of Zion. The point of sanctification must be reached by us, where we could say, with the Savior, "The Evil One cometh, but he hath nothing in me."

The Lord was preparing a people of honor and integrity, to make them a depository of all the precious thing in the earth, and we must live so as to be wise in this stewardship. To do this, we must trust in God, for He alone could give us the required assistance. We must not make flesh our arm, for God would be glorified.