

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

OCTOBER 6, 1886.

The fifty-seventh Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened this (Wednesday) morning at 10 o'clock, in the Stake Tabernacle, Coalville, Summit County. There were present of the general authorities, Franklin D. Richards (who presided), John Henry Smith and John W. Taylor of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, besides Elder Wm. W. Cluff and other Presidents of Stakes, and local and visiting Bishops, and other officers of the Church.

President Richards called the Conference to order, and the choir sang the hymn:

Great is the Lord! 'tis good to praise
His high and holy name.

Prayer by Elder John Henry Smith.
Singing by the choir.

"Spirit of faith come down,
Reveal the things of God."

PRESIDENT RICHARDS

addressed the Conference, expressing pleasure on his own part as well as on that of the visiting brethren, for the opportunity thus afforded them to assemble in General Conference with the people of Coalville, in their magnificent new building, which had been hurriedly prepared to accommodate the Saints for this purpose. He hoped that the unexpected visitation of the Saints at this place would have the effect to encourage the people of Summit Stake to complete the building and make it a house that will afford joy to the people of the Stake, and that will be an object of gladness and admiration to all friends around.

There were many reasons for gratitude and praise to our Heavenly Father this morning, some of which he deemed it proper that we should be reminded of. In the first place, he had learned that throughout this valley, which, on account of its altitude, was usually subject to early frosts, to the injury of the crops, the people generally had reaped abundantly not only of cereals, but of esculents as well, affording plenty both for man and beast. Not only was this the case in the Summit Stake, but a good, fair harvest was reaped by the people generally throughout Zion; and especially would this be considered the case when a comparison was made with those of the various parts of the earth.

We enjoyed also to a goodly degree the precious boon of liberty, which doubtless many have not yet learned how to appreciate. If we had to experience the distress that many peoples of the earth were now passing through; the oppressions of human governments or the terrible destruction of life and property that had overtaken many of our fellow beings, together with the misery, trouble and want from which so many of God's creatures suffer, our condition would be very different from what it is; in comparison, therefore, we should be filled to overflowing with the realizing sense that there is no other people upon the face of the earth so abundantly blessed in all general respects as are the Latter-day Saints of these mountains. It was true that because of our religious views being in conflict with those of our fellows some of our brethren were deprived of the pleasure of attending this Conference and the association of the Saints, and others were incarcerated; but when we contemplated the lot of true believers of all ages, we certainly, thus far, had reason to be thankful that things were as well with us as they were. Referring to Abraham's having to leave his home to take up his abode in a strange land in order to enjoy the blessings resulting from the observance of the laws of heaven; and to the declaration of the apostle years afterwards to the effect that if they were truly the children of Abraham they would do the works of Abraham, the speaker said, we found ourselves following his example in many of these things without, in many instances, fully sensing and knowing it. And while the barbarism of Father Abraham had been referred to by certain Christian people, it is a fact worthy attention that he was peculiar from his contemporaries in that he had attained to the knowledge of God to a marked degree, while they knew him not at all.

The experience that we were passing through was exceedingly valuable to us; and he asked those who felt annoyed and harassed, not to let personal interests take up all their consideration; no man lives to himself, neither does he die to himself. All exercise an influence upon each other and all should be interested in the welfare of their brethren and sisters as a whole, and thus help to make life profitable not only for ourselves but for one another. This feeling was entertained to a high degree by the fathers of the revolution; in what they did for their fellows and for posterity they invoked the spirit of the fathers that had gone before them to assist them in their purposes. Having been entrusted with the visitations of heaven, we should comprehend in a deeper and higher sense the important consequences that attend our actions and conduct before the Lord and one another.

The Lord had already made us peculiar from other religious bodies, and it is His design to yet make of this a nation of "kings and priests." When we consider the vast opposition he has had to contend with ever since the

beginning, and of His having to take hold of poor humble men to bring about his purposes, the undertaking seemed at times too great to be contemplated by serious men. But such was the fact, and such would be the case; but none could comprehend it except through the eye of faith.

The speaker referred to the early experiences of the Church, and the feeling those experiences produced in the hearts of the people of God, showing that when the exigence of the case required it men had to lay their all upon the altar of sacrifice for the benefit and blessing of their brethren.

Such scenes were unknown to the younger portion of the people, and it was hoped that such occurrences would never be experienced by the Latter-day Saints. In comparison with the many hard and trying scenes through which the Saints had passed, the speaker dwelt upon the present state and condition of the people. Our circumstances were now comparatively easy; we had good, comfortable homes, with well stocked farms and well filled granaries. In consequence of this changed state of things we were liable to give way to temptations that were unknown to us in our poverty. The love of pleasure was descending upon, together with Sabbath-breaking and public enjoyments; and the serious attention of the congregation was called to these things, as well as that of the people generally. The speaker warned the young men against the sin of taking the Lord's name in vain, and the people generally against using their tongues to the injury of their fellow-men; and called upon the people to live so that nothing but good will to all should exist in their hearts, and blessing upon all the creatures of our God proceed forth from their lips, and especially so towards the household of faith.

ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR.

The remaining portion of time was occupied by Elder John W. Taylor. The subjects of his discourse were the keeping of the Sabbath day, and the consequences of its non-observance upon ancient Israel; sending our children to be taught by those whose avowed object is to oppose the onward progress of this work, and the penalty attached to the neglect of a faithful performance of duty toward our children, as far as properly teaching them and setting a good example was concerned; the desire manifested by our people as individuals, and as bodies such as Sunday Schools, to go on pleasure excursions to bathing resorts which he claimed were not always conducted in a manner becoming in the sight of God. His discourse was earnest and emphatic on these points; and it was his opinion that the chastisement from which we were suffering was in consequence of the conduct of the people as a body, and that we need not look for a cessation till the spirit of repentance prompted and brought forth better results in the lives of the people.

The choir sang:

O awake! my slumbering minstrel.

Benediction by Elder Wm. W. Cluff.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 o'clock.

The choir sang:

An angel from on high,
The joyful message has made known.

Prayer by Apostle H. J. Grant.

Hymn:
Come, O thou king of kings!
We've waited long for thee—

ELDER JOHN HENRY SMITH

was the first speaker. He commenced by referring to the remarks which had been made by the brethren that had spoken in the forenoon. He felt that a number of the rebukes that were given struck him with considerable force. He believed that, as a people the Latter-day Saints did not observe the Sabbath day with that strictness that they should. Many people tried to find excuses for doing this, that and the other thing upon the Sabbath day. Many tried to hide themselves behind the faults of others; but this seemed natural to man. Man was naturally a moral coward. The speaker strongly urged upon the Latter-day Saints the fact that every person was responsible for his or her own acts, and asked all to, at once, examine themselves and repent of whatever was wrong. He believed that it was because of the wrong doing of the Saints that so much persecution was being waged against them at the present time. However, he believed that these persecutions would have a tendency to bring the Saints into line, and to compel them to walk in the direction in which it was intended they should walk. The speaker condemned the practice of the Saints intermarrying with strangers, with those who did not believe alike; spoke of the necessity of keeping the fast day; and concluded by bearing a strong testimony to the onward march of "Mormonism," notwithstanding all the attacks that were made upon it and the many prophecies that had been made regarding its near destruction. God was at the helm, and would see that all that had been promised would be brought to pass. It was necessary, however, that the Saints should repent of their sins, and seek unto the Lord, and, if they did this, their enemies would not prevail against them. Many might be called to suffer, but as the day of the Saint so his strength would

ELDER HENRY J. GRANT

occupied the remainder of the time, discoursing upon the individual duties of the Latter-day Saints, and the responsibilities devolving upon every person professing membership in the Church as to the building up of Zion in the earth.

The choir sang an anthem and the meeting was dismissed by prayer by Patriarch John Smith.

SECOND DAY.

October 7th, 10 a. m.

Conference resumed its session this morning, the choir singing the hymn:

"Sing to the Great Jehovah's praise;
All praise to him belongs."

Prayer by Elder John W. Taylor.

Singing:

"Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!
Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!"

ELDER HUGH A. GOWANS,

President of the Tooele Stake, made the opening remarks. He regretted the necessity which called forth the censure of the brethren who addressed the Conference yesterday. He referred to conversations he had had with his fellow prisoners in the Penitentiary, who, with himself, beheld with regret that the chastisement that was being inflicted upon the people was merited by us, and permitted to come in the wisdom of Providence, yet he was encouraged in the confident hope that our unpleasant experience would tend to the improvement of the people individually and collectively. This fact was apparent, that one and all were left to choose for themselves what course to pursue; and the fact that our free agency was in every respect unrestricted, made it the more important that individual responsibility be the more seriously appreciated. He endorsed the remarks of previous speakers to the young; and while he sometimes feared for them in their wild efforts to gratify their desire for worldly things and worldly pleasures, yet, he was satisfied that the Lord would raise up a class of spirits that would be found faithful to the cause of God, and who would prove themselves worthy to perpetuate the institutions of heaven. The speaker, in an earnest and impressive manner, directed the attention of the congregation to the follies and vanities of the world, together with the responsibilities that devolved upon all who had entered into solemn covenants with God, and hoped that the Elders, especially the men of families, upon whom depended more or less the happiness of others, would be found satisfied with their labors when they shall have finished their earthly career. In closing he referred to the high compliment that had been paid the brethren by Warden Dow in regard to the conduct of those who had served terms of imprisonment "for conscience' sake," in that their conduct and presence in the prison had begotten such a moral influence upon the real criminal inmates of that institution that had awakened feelings of astonishment in him, and he was free to acknowledge it and accord to our brethren the credit of such a state and condition of life as brought forth such moral fruit. We were indebted, he said, to the Gospel plan and the Author of it alone for the wonderful power that has made the Latter-day Saints peculiar in all that tends to make men better, and he hoped that this characteristic would be more and more manifested until the world at large should at last concede what a few have already acknowledged.

ELDER WARD E. PACK

was pleased to mingle among the people at Conference and partake of the spirit manifested by the brethren, in their private conversations and public utterances. He could perceive that if the people failed to take to themselves the portion of advice, instruction or rebuke, that was most adapted to their several positions, but little, if any, real profit would be derived from attending our Conference meetings. The wise would receive chastisement and mend their ways, while the thoughtless and the worldly minded would pass by regardless of serious thought the words of life and salvation that come to us from time to time through the servants of God. And the faithful would rejoice in whatever circumstances we might be placed in, knowing as they do that the Lord will rule and overrule in their behalf, and lead them through the fiery ordeals that will eventually make them shine the brighter among the numerous family of our Father and God.

The speaker referred to the planned attack that is being made by our enemies upon our children, and warned parents to use every effort to guide their children in the ways they should go until they themselves shall see and know as their parents do.

ELDER A. D. WOOLLEY,

President of the Kanab Stake, endorsed, with pleasure, the remarks made by the brethren both yesterday and to-day. The people of God ever were peculiar from the world generally, and such peculiarities could only be maintained by acts of moral courage, which men in possession of the principles of the Gospel were eminently fitted to practice. If wrong existed in our signs or words, we should discourage such wrong doing irrespective of the person or persons in

whom it existed. Living by principle alone could make us the peculiar people that God designed to make us, and which, he was satisfied, we would become eventually. He believed that the time was near when the people generally would be more united both spiritually and temporally; and the object of the Lord in allowing chastisement to come upon us would, therefore, be accomplished; a better state of things would be produced, and the will of the Lord, to an extent at least, be brought about with regard to us.

ELDER JESSE W. CROSBY,

President of the Panguitch Stake, testified to the divinity of the work in which the Latter-day Saints were engaged; and he appreciated the opportunity of assembling in general conference to receive instruction or rebuke, as the case might be. One of the peculiarities of the Latter-day work was individual responsibility, and all would be held accountable for the opportunities we have and the works we do. Many, he said, were willing that others should suffer for the truth, and while they were being tried and perchance chastised, they were being judged and criticised not only by enemies but by their friends as well. There were doubtless, in Summit County, as there were in other places, many who were neither hot nor cold, and who were afraid to be tested for fear of falling a prey to the enemy. He advised all to stand upon their own merit, and not depend upon that of others. It was a day of individual responsibility, of individual action. All men and women must act for themselves, and in so doing the Lord tested the integrity of the whole.

ELDER LORENZO HATCH,

of the Arizona Stake, was the next speaker. It was 44 years since he became acquainted with "Mormonism," and he had taken pains to notice the growth of the work during that time, as well as the labors of individuals with whom he was more immediately acquainted. He was pleased to find the faith of the people growing stronger in the Lord; and he was pleased also to be engaged personally in imparting the faith of the true and living God to the descendants of the noble men who lived and labored in the earlier history of this continent, and was encouraged in the hope that the days were being ushered in when that afflicted people would come in remembrance before the Lord, according to what had been said of them by their progenitors. He rejoiced in the fact that the Kingdom of God was established never more to be taken away or thrown down; and he was thankful to hear the warning voice of his brethren who were the true friends of the people; and he hoped they would be long spared to labor among the Saints, and that the people would receive their instructions in the spirit in which they were given, and profit thereby. He bore a faithful testimony to the divinity of the work, and of the goodness of God to His people.

BISHOP GEORGE Q. PITKIN,

of Millville, Cache County, said he realized that faith was truly a gift of God, and that it was necessary to exercise true faith in order to accomplish the purposes of God in the work of our individual salvation and that of building up His kingdom on the earth, and earnestly prayed that the Lord would inspire His people to seek after Him, and to labor diligently to accomplish all the righteousness they have in their hearts to do.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

expressed pleasure in what had been said by the several brethren. It was desirable, he said, to know how such men felt, especially since our leading men had retired from the active service of laboring personally among the people; and he hoped that they and the Presidents of Stakes and the Bishops generally would sense the additional responsibility that devolved upon them in consequence of the retirement of the First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve, and prove themselves indeed and of a truth shepherds to the flock of God.

The choir sang an anthem, and Elder Alma Eldredge pronounced the benediction.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

2 o'clock.

Conference re-assembled this afternoon.

The choir sang the hymn:

Lord, we come before Thee now,
At Thy feet we humbly bow.

Prayer by Elder Wm. W. Cluff.

Singing:

When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.

ELDER A. K. THURBER,

of Richfield, was the first speaker. The tenor of the instructions that had been given, he said, tended to the purification of the Church. There never was a time when such instructions were more necessary than to-day. When we were baptized, we entered into covenant with God to reform our lives and help to reform those of our fellow-beings; and he wondered oftentimes how we were disposing of the obligations that devolved upon us. In the Sevier Stake of Zion, the officers there were not without censure because of neglect of

duty; and he hoped that they, in connection with their fellow servants, would bring themselves into the line of duty. The speaker referred to the Word of Wisdom; claimed that the aged were under equal obligation to observe it as the younger portion of the community. He felt that he could testify that aged people as well as young, if they set themselves properly about it, could overcome pernicious habits. And he felt it the bounden duty of all, especially the officers of the Church, to set a good example. He referred to an incident that occurred while traveling in his Stake of a child asking its parent why he did not ask a blessing on the food when no strangers were present. Such was a great rebuke from a child. It was not proper, he held, for men to preach that which they themselves did not practice. The speaker read from the Book of Nephi on this subject, showing how people felt because of their worldly practices. The precepts of men, he considered, had too much influence in our dealings one with another as well as in the performance of duties to God, in all of which there was much room for improvement. In conclusion he urged the people to faithfulness, and the road to this was to pay particular attention to and be sure to carry out the instructions of the servants of God as they had been given at this Conference, and at all other times.

ELDER SAMUEL W. RICHARDS

said the advice and instructions given were of that character that they could appreciate as coming from the servants of God, the same having a tendency to build up and strengthen the Saints in the faith of the Gospel. Jesus, in his day, said, if he had not come and spoken, they could not have sinned; but because he had come and spoken sin lay at their doors. This was applicable to us in our day. We could not afford to disregard the counsels of the living oracles; they had spoken and we would be judged according to the attention we paid to what they say unto us. The gate was strait through which the few entered; the popular will was to go with the multitude which led to death. The instructions given were of a general character, and applied therefore to the people as a whole. The present was the greatest of all the dispensations, and the people now living were accountable to God for the great opportunities it afforded. The general desire was to accumulate the wealth of the world, but the Savior taught those of his day to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; this instruction is repeated to-day, and comes home to all Latter-day Saints. The sacrifice the Gospel requires of its adherents comprehends all that man can pay or do, all that he can give or impart even to life itself. The injunction was to seek another's good before one's own; and this is entitled to the candid consideration of all. The righteousness of the Kingdom of God consisted in its commands and laws, and we had no right to its immunities unless we emulated the example of its best advocates. This was the condition on which we agreed to receive the blessings the Gospel of the Kingdom afforded. The speaker then called attention to the character of the work, and its origin; and referred to the labors of Adam, Moses and Abraham and others as guides of former times, some of whom, and whose associates had revealed its fundamental doctrines to us in our day. When the speaker beheld men toiling for the good of their fellows, and the little time they had to live, it made him yearn to better the condition of the human race. Time was short at the best, and we could accomplish little when every opportunity was improved because of the numerous duties that demanded our attention. But the things of God were essential to our salvation, and therefore we should hold them as first and foremost in our every day life. The promises of God were great; we should merit them not because of a desire to escape punishment, but for the love of truth and righteousness; and we should, in our great desire for truth, feel that we could endure anything and everything that we might be called upon to pass through. Not till we reached that state could we hope to merit a fulfillment of the promises of the Lord upon us and our children. We must consider that we ourselves and all we possess belong to Him who created us, and that we are his agents laboring in the vineyard for the welfare of the human race, in order to prove ourselves worthy of a full salvation in His kingdom, which he hoped would be the lot of the Latter-day Saints.

ELDER CYRUS H. WHELOCK

expressed pleasure in being present on this conference occasion. It was thought in olden days by women that if they had a husband or sons worthy to be in the congregations of the Lord, they were greatly honored. How much more honored were we in being allowed to take part in administering the affairs of the Church and kingdom of God! How great the honor, too, was conferred upon us in being able with assurance to approach God as our Father in the way pointed out by Him to approach the throne of grace! The Gospel required sacrifice. Persecution was the lot of the faithful. The Prophet Joseph Smith, about four hours before his martyrdom, in answer to the question by Col. Markham, "What will be the result of this?" said that "if they slay me and the Twelve, while there is a man on the earth that is endowed with the Melchisedec Priesthood, and he is an honest man,