

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, convened in the Bowery adjoining the north end of the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, commencing Saturday, Oct. 6, 1855, at 10 a. m.

President B. Young presiding.

On the stand, Presidents B. Young, H. C. Kimball, J. M. Grant.

Of the Twelve Apostles: P. P. Pratt, O. Pratt, W. Woodruff, G. A. Smith, E. T. Benson, L. Snow, E. Snow.

Seventies: Joseph Young, H. Herriman, Z. Pulsipher, A. P. Rockwood.

High Priests' Quorum: David Pettegrew.

Presiding Bishop: Edward Hunter.

Presidency of the Stake: David Fullmer, T. Rhoads, P. H. Young.

Clerk of Conference: Thomas Bullock.

Reporter: G. D. Watt.

Called to order by Pres. B. Young.

Choir sung, "The morning breaks, the shadows flee."

Prayer by Pres. B. Young, as follows:

Thou God who dwells in eternity, even our God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of our spirits, it is thee whom we desire to worship and to whom we look, for we feel ourselves under obligations to thee and owe to thee our being upon this thine earth.

We look to thee this morning in the name of thy son Jesus Christ, whom thou hast given to be a ransom for our sins and for the sin of the whole world, and through whose name and atonement we expect life everlasting.

As Thou hast redeemed the earth and all things thereupon, we thy creatures, who are endowed with intelligence, desire to worship thee in spirit and in truth, praying thee our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the light of thy Spirit to know how to worship thee, to know how to build up thy kingdom, to know how to approach thee acceptably and in a manner that shall be acceptable to all holy beings. It is our God whom we worship, and we are assembled this morning in thy name to transact business pertaining to the building up of thy kingdom on the earth.

We feel thankful unto thee, our Father, that thou hast revealed thy will in this our day, that thou hast spoken from the heavens and bestowed the holy priesthood upon men, and again opened up the way of life and salvation, and that we are the happy partakers thereof.

Help us to appreciate the blessings that we enjoy. We have the privilege of assembling here to worship thee, with none to molest or make us afraid; thou hast removed us far from our pursuers, from those that have sought to oppress us, and from those who have killed our prophet and destroyed many of thy saints. We thank thee that thou hast removed us to these mountains. Help us to realize that our blessings are far above those of many of our fellows; while millions are sitting in darkness, in the regions and shadow of death, suffering for food, suffering through the oppression of kings and rulers, bowed down in their iron fetters, having not the liberty of speaking or acting, or scarcely of thinking, for themselves, help us to realize the blessing of having our birth and education in more genial climes and among more hospitable people, where the laws and government under which we were born have tolerated us in freedom of thought and speech; and on this happy soil, even America, where thou hast brought forth the fulness of the Gospel and the eternal priesthood of thy Son, where thou hast guaranteed to all the right to worship thee according to the dictates of their consciences.

We thank thee that we now enjoy that privilege. Help us to realize and appreciate these things.

While we look unto thee, our Father, and contemplate our circumstances and contrast them with the circumstances of the inhabitants of other climes, we can say that we approach thee with shame facedness when we look at thy saints and those who profess to know thee, and at the same time behold that the little, frivolous, trifling affairs pertaining to this probation cause thy people to sin.

O Lord, we feel to beg and plead with thee to have mercy upon our weaknesses—be compassionate unto us.

And as we have assembled this morning for the purpose of transacting business in the capacity of a general conference, we do pray thee in the name of the Lord Jesus that thy Spirit may influence each heart, that we may be enabled to worship thee in spirit and in truth, to forsake all our sins and vanities, and to leave off those things that mar our peace and grieve the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus, for we desire to be thy faithful children.

We pray thee that each heart may be suitably affected by the light of eternal truth, that we may understand thy will concerning us, that we may have a disposition to do thy will, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, to love our neighbors, especially thy Saints, as ourselves, to cleave unto righteousness and to hate iniquity, and to do good even to our enemies.—We pray that the influences of thy Spirit may attend us through our conference, that the heavens may be propitious over our heads and that the veil of darkness, even thick darkness, that covers the nations of the earth may be taken from us, that we may see and know things as they are, and understand the mind and will of the Lord concerning us, that we may understand thy ways and thy goings forth among the inhabitants of the earth, that we may read the destiny of man, and the future destiny pertaining to us thy people, and to thy kingdom, and know and understand things past, present, and to come.

O Lord, we ask thee to let thy Spirit so rest upon us that each one who has assembled here to worship thee may have their spiritual strength renewed, that each one who shall speak before this people may be filled with the power of God, that the Holy Ghost may inspire each heart to speak, to hear, to sing, to pray, and to do those things pertaining to the business transactions of thy kingdom acceptably unto thee, that thy kingdom may advance upon the earth, Zion be redeemed, and thine Israel be gathered, that we may be prepared for the coming of the Son of man, be the happy partakers of thy grace from day to day and be counted worthy to be numbered with the sanctified, who shall enjoy the presence of the Lord Jesus with delight and be caught up to meet him in the air.

Father in heaven, we ask for thy blessings upon those of thy Saints, not now assembled here, who inhabit these mountains. Wilt thou comfort their hearts, inspire them, encircle them in the arms of thy love and mercy, and hedge them about by thy power; and be thou a munition of rocks round about us, towering between us and our enemies, that they may have no power over us.

Inasmuch as the wicked mingle with thy people here, we pray that thy spirit may teach them the right way and convince them of the truth of the everlasting Gospel, though it is despised by men in high places and set at naught by the nations; and though thy people and thy doctrine are held in derision, let those who are honest in heart have the light of thy Spirit, that they may be influenced to acknowledge that thou art God, and be inclined to seek after thy righteousness, that they may know and understand for themselves the influences that are of God and the influences not of God.

We pray thee our Father in heaven, to bless all thy missionaries in the midst of these mountains, on this continent, on the islands of the sea, and upon other continents. May thy angels be with them, may they go before them and be around about them, that they may be preserved from the power of the enemy and be inspired from on high by the power of the Holy Ghost, that they may have power to do good and bring souls to the knowledge of the truth, and build up thy kingdom and aid in preparing the way for the coming of the Son of man. We ask for thy blessing upon all those who believe in their testimony.

We realize, our Father, that the earth is thine and the fulness thereof, that the gold and the silver are thine, that the wheat and the fine flour are thine, that the cattle upon a thousand hills are thine, and that it is for thee to give and for thy people to receive. We ask thee that thou wouldst so give that thy people may be gathered together from the islands of the sea and from distant lands.

Let thy Spirit rest upon thy Saints, that the rich may feel that liberality and that charity towards the poor which they should, and that the poor may feel a heartfelt gratitude to the rich who bestow means upon them, insomuch that they will render to each and every man that which is due, and not be covetous, neither be filled with idolatry; and may both both poor and rich concentrate their efforts and means to the building up of thy kingdom, to the gathering of thine Israel in the latter days, to the redemption of Zion, the re-establishment of Jerusalem and the bringing forth salvation to the inhabitants of the whole earth.

We ask thee our Father, to inspire us all to be of one heart and one mind, that our affections, faith and efforts may all be united and engaged in building up thy kingdom and in the establishment thereof on the face of the earth. Wilt thou bless and heal up the sick among thy people, and comfort their hearts. We would remember before thee those who are now upon the plains journeying to this place, and ask thee to bring them safely to us; may the elements be favorable and propitious to them, and permit them to come to us without suffering, and let their hearts be inspired. Inasmuch as they suffer toil and labor, to assemble with thy saints, may they have thy Holy Spirit with them, and may thine angels be round about them. Bless and preserve their teams and all they have with them.

We pray thee, O Lord, to regard the interests of thy kingdom among the nations of the earth; hasten the gathering of Israel and the redemption of Zion; and may the remnants of the Lamanites feel the power of thy Spirit, that they may cease their wickedness and be divested of their blood-thirsty disposition, and receive hearts of flesh that they may see and understand the ways of the Lord. We dedicate ourselves unto thee, our wives and our children, our houses and our lands, our flocks and our herds, with all that thou hast committed to our charge. We dedicate this conference to thee, and pray for wisdom to transact the business that should be done, and that all things that are not right, and that are contrary to thy counsel and will may be taken from our minds. May all hearts be concentrated in that which will please thee and advance thy kingdom, and cause and make the hearts of thy Saints to rejoice exceedingly that they live to be saints in the latter days.

Hear us, O Lord, and answer these our supplications. Be with us through our meeting, and through our future life, guide us to thy praise and prepare us for thy kingdom and glory, and with the sanctified, bring us to thyself in thy kingdom. These, with all needful favors and blessings we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

Choir sung a hymn.

Pres. B. Young addressed the congregation on the subject of faith, the Holy Spirit, the dealings of the Lord with his people, &c., and was followed by Pres. Kimball, who spoke upon the principle of the saints' living their religion, or the ordinances would be of no benefit to them. The choir chanted, "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness."—Isaiah.

Benediction by Pres. Joseph Young.

Called to order by Pres. Kimball.

Singing by the choir. Prayer by Pres. Grant. Singing.

Elder Nathaniel V. Jones, returned missionary, late from the presidency of the Hindostan and Burman empire mission, related his travels in those lands, and stated that the elders of the church of Jesus Christ had traveled from the Himalaya mountains to near the southern limits of the Peninsula, and said that a Mr. Wilson, Episcopalian bishop of Calcutta, wrote to the clergy in all the military cantonments to forbid the 'Mormon' elders preaching there, and the clergy faithfully obeyed the bishop.

Elder John Young bore testimony to the truth of the gospel, and spoke upon good works, agency and revelation.

Pres. J. M. Grant briefly discussed the text: "every man shall be rewarded according to his works."

Choir sung the anthem, "Hosannah in the highest."

Benediction by Elder E. T. Benson.

In the evening the seventies met in their Council hall and the high priests in the Social hall.

Oct. 7, 1855, 10 a. m.

Called to order by Pres. B. Young.

Singing by the choir. Prayer by Pres. Kimball.

Choir sung, "O my Father thou that dwellest."

Elder Parley P. Pratt addressed the assembly on a part of the 21st chapter of Luke, and stated that what prophecies had been fulfilled were literally fulfilled, and the remaining predictions will be in like manner fulfilled.

Choir sung, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Benediction by Elder Geo. A. Smith.

2 p. m.

Called to order by Pres. Kimball.

Choir sung, "Come, come ye saints, no toil or labor fear."

Prayer by Elder Lorenzo Snow. Singing.

Elder Orson Pratt addressed the immense congregation on the divine authenticity of this latter day work, the inspiration of Joseph Smith, and the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. During Elder Pratt's discourse, a blessing was asked on the bread by Bishop Edward Hunter, and on the water by Bishop L. D. Young.

Choir sung, "Judge me O Lord."

Benediction by Pres. Grant.

Oct. 8, 1855, 9 a. m.

Called to order by Pres. B. Young.

Choir sung a hymn. Prayer by Elder Woodruff.

Choir chanted a Psalm.

Elder Elam Luddington, late from the Siamese mission, narrated the prominent incidents in his journeyings.

Pres. B. Young remarked that he had been highly pleased with br. Luddington's narration, and that all the brethren who have returned have manifested the spirit of the gospel, a fact comforting to the saints, and more joyful to them than all the gold of India. He then took up the business of the Conference, when the authorities were severally called and unanimously sustained as follows:—

Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator; Heber C. Kimball, first counselor, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator; Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor.

Orson Hyde, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Amasa Lyman, Ezra T. Benson, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, and Franklin D. Richards, members of said quorum.

John Smith (eldest son of Hyrum), Presiding Patriarch.

David Pettegrew, President of the High Priests' Quorum, Reynolds Cahoon and George B. Wallace his counselors.

Joseph Young, Levi W. Hancock, Henry Herriman, Zera Pulsipher, Albert P. Rockwood, Benjamin L. Clapp, and H. S. Eldredge, Presiding Presidents over all the Seventies.

John Nebeker, President of the Elders' Quorum, James H. Smith and Aaron Sceva his counselors.

Edward Hunter, Presiding Bishop of the whole Church.

Lewis Wight, President of the Priests' Quorum, George Dockstader and William Whiting his counselors.

McGee Harris, President of the Teachers' Quorum, Adam Splers and David Bowman his counselors.

Alexander Herron, President of the Deacons' Quorum, John S. Carpenter and Frederic A. Mitchell his counselors.

Brigham Young, Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Daniel H. Wells, Superintendent of Public Works.

Truman O. Angel, Architect for the Church.

Brigham Young, President of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund to gather the poor: H. C. Kimball, W. Woodruff, O. Hyde, G. A. Smith, E. T. Benson, J. M. Grant, D. H. Wells, Edward Hunter, Daniel Spencer, Thomas Bullock, John Brown, William Crosby, A. Lyman, C. C. Rich, Lorenzo D. Young, P. P. Pratt, O. Pratt, F. D. Richards, and Daniel McIntosh, his assistants, and agents for said fund.

David Fullmer, President of this Stake of Zion, Thomas Rhoads and P. H. Young his counselors.

Heman Hyde, Eleazer Miller, Phineas Richards, Levi Jackman, Ira Eldredge, John Vance, Edwin D. Woolley, John Parry, Winslow Farr, William Snow, Daniel Carn, and Ira Ames, members of the High Council.

George A. Smith, the Historian and General Church Recorder.

Not one negative vote was given.

The President then spoke at some length upon the chastenings of the Lord, the principles that should govern those who have grain to sell, &c., and said, as we have now been together 3 1-2 hours we will adjourn for one hour.

Choir sung the anthem, "Saints and Angels."

Benediction by Pres. B. Young.

2 p. m.

Called to order by Elder E. Snow.

Singing by the Choir.

Prayer by Elder Erastus Snow. Singing.

Pres. Grant, spoke a short time on the practical duties of Bishops and Teachers, the Big Cottonwood Canal, and expressed an anxiety for the time to arrive when he could preach the funeral sermon of all the dragons.

Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, Erastus

2 p. m.

Snow, Joseph Young, Zera Pulsipher, Henry Herriman, Joseph Hovey, Joseph L. Heywood, Jacob F. Hutchinson, Horace S. Eldredge, George B. Wallace, Joseph W. Johnson, Thomas D. Brown, John Lyon, Jacob Gates, and William Snow (who answered to their names), and Richard Cook, Gilbert Clements, Levi Richards, Aaron P. Farr, Wm. Gibson, Thomas Grover, Joseph Bates Noble, George Woodward, Dominicus Carter, and Daniel D. Hunt, were unitedly and unanimously voted to go on missions to the Saints in Utah Territory.

Lorenzo Snow, Ezra T. Benson, and Phineas H. Young, were unanimously voted to go on a mission to Europe next spring.

James Townsend was unanimously voted to go on a mission to Carson Valley.

Pres. Kimball made a few remarks on the subject of the canal, marriage, &c.

Pres. B. Young followed, on the same subjects, and then called a vote of all who were in favor of completing the Big Cottonwood Canal, ready for the boats, between this and the first of May, and by the number of uplifted hands, all seemed willing to prosecute that work vigorously.

The President then continued on the subject of the P. E. Fund business, home trade, &c., and said, we will now adjourn this conference to the 6th day of April next at 10 a. m., at this place.

Pres. Kimball gave notice that in the morning he would commence giving endowments to persons from Iron, Fillmore, San Pete, and Weber counties.

Benediction by Pres. B. Young.

In the evening the Bishops, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, and their counselors met in the Tabernacle, and were instructed in matters pertaining to their duties by Pres. B. Young and Grant, and by Bishop Ed. Hunter.

THOMAS BULLOCK,

Clerk of Conference.

Sermons, discourses, and remarks will appear in the 'News' as rapidly as the Reporter can write them out and room be made for them.—[Ed.]

REMARKS

By Elder Parley P. Pratt, in the Bowery, Sept. 23, 1855.

My br. George A. Smith has wished us to excuse his Mahometan narration, but I would feel more like giving a vote of thanks to the Almighty and to his servant for so highly entertaining and instructing us.

I am aware it is not without a great deal of prejudice that we, as Europeans and Americans and Christians in religion, and in our education, so called, have looked upon the history of Mahomet, or even the name, and even now we may think that Mahometanism, compared with Christianity as it exists in the world, is a kind of heathenism, or something dreadful, and the other we look upon as something very pretty, only a little crippled, and for my part, I hardly know which to call the idolatrous side of the question, unless we consider Mahometanism Christianity, in one sense, and that which has been called Christianity, heathenism.

Mahometanism included the doctrine that there was one God—that he was great, even the creator of all things, and that the people by right should worship him. History abundantly shows the followers of Mahomet did not take the sword either to enforce their religion or to defend themselves until compelled to do so by the persecutions of their enemies, and then it was the only alternative that presented itself, to take up the sword and put down idolatry, and establish the worship of the one God; or, on the other hand, be crushed and cease to be, on account of the idolatrous nations around them; they seemed to act on the defensive, although it might legally be considered aggression.

The Greek and Roman churches which have been called Christian, and which take the name of Christians as a cloak, have worshipped innumerable idols. On this account, on the simple subject of the deity and his worship, if nothing more, I should rather incline of the two, after all my early traditions, education, and prejudices, to the side of Mahomet, for on this point he is on the side of truth, and the Christian world on the side of idolatry and heathenism.

In the first place, the latter lay it down as a point of theology, and it is a foundation point too, that there is one only true God, consisting of three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but without body, parts, or passions. Here is the exact image and likeness of an idol established through the principal creeds of Christendom, that is, if it is an image at all, or if it makes a shadow at all, it is that of an idol; it is a being that never existed in heaven, earth, or hell; it will not make even a shadow. Indeed, it is a thing a literally motionless and powerless as much so as any term that can be used to mean nonentity.

Jesus Christ, whom we worship as the Son of God, and the Savior of the world, has body, parts and passions, and he is like his Father; he is the express image of his Father's person and the brightness of his glory, whom we also worship. They are individual personages organized as a pattern after which men were created; they have tabernacles, and are in every way personages an intelligent beings.

Therefore, that something, or that nothing that imaginary being, that idol that is recognized in the creeds of Christendom in general as a god without body, parts, or passions, has nothing to do whatever with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or with the Son of God that came in the meridian of time, who was crucified, died, and rose again from the dead, and ascended on high to lead captivity captive, and give gifts to men. Inasmuch as he and his Father are organized with body and parts, with limbs, joints, flesh and bones, that are immortal and eternal, they have no part or lot, or communication whatever with that imaginary being which is recognised in the principal creeds of Christendom as their God, viz., a god without body, parts, or passions. Therefore, in that sense, in the very foundation of their creeds they are idolaters; and to say that Mahometanism prevailed against Christianity, and