

THE CONFERENCE.

This being the first day of the sixty-fourth semi-annual conference, the NEWS, and with it the whole community, extends a hearty welcome to Saints and friends who have come and still may come from far and near to visit the city and enjoy the blessings promised to those who come together in the name of the Lord. It is not to be expected that the attendance during these gatherings will be quite as large as on some previous occasions. Vast multitudes gathered here during last April and a great many of the Saints are not prepared, during the prevalent stringency, to incur for a second time during the year the expenses connected with the journey and absence from home. But whatever the conference may be as to numbers attending, one thing is certain, as already evidenced in today's sessions, the blessings of the Almighty will be poured out upon the people abundantly. Times may change, and it may not always be easy sailing in financial matters, but those truths that the Saints have embraced never change, nor does their power to gladden and enrich the heart of the honest believer abate. When once grasped they enable him to trace the hand of the Father in what is present and direct his hopes towards a brilliant future extending through all eternity. "Hard times," as they are called, are not always a curse. Many a blessing is poured down upon the earth from a thick cloud. If the present stringency in financial matters could be the means of emphasizing the fact that there are treasures worth more than all silver and gold on earth, and lead us more earnestly to seek to obtain those riches, it might be looked upon as the greatest boon at the present time, something perhaps just now absolutely necessary for the education of the people of God.

WHAT A STRIKE HAS COST.

Readers of the NEWS have been kept well-informed, not only by the telegraphic dispatches, but by correspondence direct from the affected section, of the great coal-miners' strike in England. There can be no doubt of the distress and widespread sorrow that exists and will ensue through the loss of employment to the many thousands engaged in the trade. A Philadelphia paper, basing its estimates upon the figures given in the Birmingham Post, now comes forward with the statement that up to two weeks ago the strike had cost upwards of \$50,000,000. The wages alone represent \$10,000,000, with 300,000 men out of work, and the railroads lose as much more. The pit-owners are losing \$1,500,000 a week, or \$20,000,000, and the industries which have been stopped by the strike have had a loss of \$20,000,000. Now that a fortnight more has been added to the strike, which is still in progress, the aggregate loss is probably \$60,000,000, with the certainty of failure for the men from the start. Thirty years ago England was producing two-thirds of the world's coal; thirteen years ago its pits were turning out just short of half; today they are producing a bare third.

This steady increase in the world's coal consumption inevitably means lower prices for English coal and lower wages for English workmen.

THE GULF DISASTER.

The storm that swept the shores of the Gulf last Monday, October 2, was the cause of one of the most appalling disasters on record during this very disastrous year. It is now reported that over two thousand lives were lost and a large amount of property destroyed in a few hours. The graphic descriptions of eye witnesses, harrowing as the details are, give but a dim impression of the real horrors of the awful night. All the day the wind raged, increasing in violence as evening approached. When night came it had grown into a hurricane. The waves rose and rolled, hissing, roaring, thundering towards the shore. Impenetrable darkness covered land and sea, except when flashes of lightning illuminated the scene, revealing for a moment the terrors of the situation. Onward sped the gigantic tidal wave, dashing itself to pieces against the shore and receding after having wrought death and destruction on every side. At the dawn of day the extent of the disaster became apparent. In the stricken settlements only the foundations marked the spots where houses had formerly stood. Faces pale in death were turned upward to the skies. Broken arms and legs, bruised and battered bodies were strewn on the ground amid a confusion of clothing, bedding and furniture. It was a scene that made the stoutest heart feel sick and drew tears from eyes used to the dangers of the mighty deep.

In reading of the catastrophes that have visited various parts of the earth lately, one is reminded of the fact that sacred writ foreshadows such events as one of the marks of the closing years of this dispensation. John the Revelator, among his incomparably grand visions, has one about the "last plagues" that are to precede the coming of the Lord. This vision follows the gathering of the Saints and the opening up of the temple of God in heaven and is a preliminary to the final reckoning of the Almighty with that great power of the world which is represented as "drunken with the blood of the Saints." In the highly figurative language of the Book these calamities are represented as vials poured out upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, etc., and the results are epidemics, drought, wars, earthquakes (Rev. xvi.). Whatever the figures employed may mean in their various details, they certainly seem to remind the reader of the mighty natural phenomena that preceded the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and point to the conclusion that something of a similar nature is to be the prelude to another deliverance of the human race, as predicted by the followers of the Lord.

It is a peculiarity of prophetic writings, as the time for the fulfilment of predicted events draw near, that the expressions grow clearer and more detailed. The rays of prophecy, like the dawn of the day, gradually increase in splendor until the full light is poured

out in the final fulfilment. This peculiarity is visible in the revelations on the subject under consideration. Joseph Smith, who in many instances speaks with the clearness of Isaiah and Daniel, has the following well known, remarkable prophetic declaration:

"Entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean, until the Lord come; for not many days hence and the earth shall tremble * * * and after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people; for after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground, and shall not be able to stand. And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunders, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds, and all things shall be in commotion; and surely men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people." (Doc. and Cov. lxxxviii, 87-91.)

If disasters of the kind now reported from the Gulf or others equally appalling should multiply, the people of the Lord are not unprepared for them; for as they believe in the Divine word, they are expecting them; and while they sympathize with the sufferers and stand ready to aid them to the full extent of their ability, they know that such things mark the last days and are an admonition to turn from all that is evil and to serve the Lord in faithfulness and with full purpose of heart.

IMPROVING THE INDIANS.

An excellent movement pertaining to the Navajo Indians is on foot and approaching consummation. We learn that the Indians' Rights association, pursuant to permission granted by the Indian bureau of the Interior department of the government, is to extend education among that tribe by means of practical proceedings embracing object lessons in civilization and advancement. It seems that last spring the present agent, Lieutenant Plummer, applied to the association spoken of for aid in sending a party of the Indians on a visit to the East, so that the gross ignorance of a certain number of them as to the government and the advantages of civilization might be dispelled. The association promptly acted on Lieutenant Plummer's suggestion. The department expressed its entire sympathy with the project, but confessed its inability, through lack of funds, to meet the cost. The association then offered to raise the sum of \$700 if the department would grant its official sanction to the carrying out of the plan. This the authorities promptly granted. The sum of \$624.50 has been raised, and Lieutenant Plummer expects to start with eight Navajo Indians for a visit to the World's Fair about Monday next, all being well.

This movement is of more importance than might be supposed at a glance. The Navajos are known to be in the main well disposed and intelligent; but many of them living in the more remote parts of the reservation, mostly the youth of the tribe, are at times of some trouble mainly through