

SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Forty-Eighth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, October 6th, 1878, at 10 a.m., as per previous adjournment.

President John Taylor presiding.
Present on the stand:

Of the Twelve Apostles:

John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith, Albert Carrington.

Counselor to the Twelve:

Daniel H. Wells.

Patriarch:

John Smith.

Of the first Seven Presidents of Seventies:

Joseph Young, Levi W. Hancock, John Van Cott and Horace S. Eldredge.

Of the Presidency of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion:

Angus M. Cannon, David O. Calder and Joseph E. Taylor.

Of the Presidency of the High Priests' Quorum of this Stake of Zion:

Elias Morris and Edward Snelgrove.

Of the Presidency of the Bishopric of the Church:

Edward Hunter, Leonard W. Hardy and Robert T. Burton.

The weather was beautiful and the tabernacle was crowded at the opening services, every Stake of Zion throughout the Territory being largely represented by presidents, bishops and others.

Conference was called to order by President JOHN TAYLOR.

The choir sang:

I saw a mighty angel fly,
To earth he bent his way.

Prayer by ELDER GEORGE Q. CANNON.

The choir sang:

Author of truth, Eternal Word,
Whose spirit breathes the active flame.

ELDER ORSON HYDE

Rejoiced in meeting with the saints on this beautiful morning. The people in the country where he was wont to labor had a sufficiency of the products of the earth to make them comfortable and happy. We had been for many years under the lash of the outside world, and he did not look for any relaxation of their influence until Satan was bound and the saints obtained the victory. He referred to and quoted one of the Revelations of St. John, wherein he saw a beautiful woman clothed with glory, with the moon under her feet, upon whose head was a crown of Twelve Stars, and whose ambition was far superior to anything of a terrestrial character. While those stars continued to occupy that position, the saints would have nothing to fear. In relation to the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, he said most of them had finished their mission and gone behind the veil. Their testimony was good in its time and season, but as the work proceeded, other testimonies became necessary. The servants of God had gone forth and testified before the nations of the earth to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and since then the waster has been sent forth to destroy and many were his victims, falling a prey to pestilence, famine and other calamities. He made a few remarks about the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, now in the hands of David Whitmer. He did not regard it as of any vital importance to the interests of the kingdom, but simply as an interesting relic of early history. The principle of love and union among the saints was of far more consequence to us at the present time.

He then spoke of the responsibility that rests upon those who hold the priesthood, and who should be willing to use their influence to reprove, in kindness, wherever sinful practices came within their purview, and wisdom dictated it. He spoke with feelings of gratitude of the rich and bountiful harvest that God had blessed us with this season, and said if the brethren would be prompt in the payment of their honest tithing, the hands of the servants of God would be strengthened and the blessings of

God would distil upon the people like the gentle dew. He then alluded to the calamities and troubles that will soon deluge the earth and reach kings and rulers and "the high ones who are high," according to the predictions of the prophets, when the only door of deliverance for those who wish to escape will be in Zion.

ELDER C. C. RICH

Said the great object of our being gathered together was to secure our salvation and this can only be obtained by yielding to and carrying out correct principles; we must not dictate the Almighty, but learn by simple and childlike submission, the grand principle of obedience, which will inevitably bring upon us the blessings of God which he has promised to bestow upon his faithful children. We have no spare time to waste, but should devote our time and means to the building up of the kingdom of God, and if we carried out the counsels of the servants of God, our labors would be devoted in the right direction. God had given us power to do the work that he requires of us, and it was as well for us occasionally to ask ourselves the question whether our labors are acceptable to the Lord or not. One duty required of us was to be baptized for our friends who have died without the privilege of attending to that duty themselves, and this must be done in a temple, several of which we were now building. We must also act upon a principle of union and not clash in our daily labor, but always be willing to act in concert with the counsel of the servants of God. He closed his very practical remarks by bearing his testimony to the truth of the work of God, in which he had been actively engaged for a period of over 46 years.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

gave a few very timely hints to the ushers, to keep good order in the galleries and throughout the vast congregation, instructing them not to permit unnecessary walking about.

The choir sang the anthem,

Awake, Awake, put on thy strength.

Conference adjourned till two o'clock.

Benediction by Elder D. H. Wells.

AFTERNOON.

Oct. 6, 2 p. m.

The choir sang,

Though deepening trials throng your way,
Press on, press on, ye Saints of God.

Prayer by Elder Wilford Woodruff.

The choir sang,

We here approach thy table Lord,
At thy command through chosen men.

ELDER GEO. Q. CANNON

Read a portion of section I viii of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. He said that any one who was called to stand before such a vast congregation, would naturally feel his own nothingness, and the necessity of reliance upon the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so that the people might be fed with the bread of life. We had travelled as elders to the various nations of the earth, published the first principles of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and gathered the people together. With these things and labors, the elders of the Church had become familiar, also with laying the foundation of settlements, and organizing a system of government, and, by having so many labors to perform in the temporal affairs of the people, obtained an experience that perhaps no other body of men was ever called to. Notwithstanding all these various labors, we were now standing but on the threshold of our duties and responsibilities. We now need statesmen and those who are capable of directing the people, and the affairs of their daily life, so as to make our temporal influence as powerfully felt as our spiritual influence. He then spoke of the dangers that now beset and threaten our small republic, and said our only safeguard was the principle of union. Though we might be numerically weak, we should be actually strong, if we could but become united in all our interests. In the early existence of this church, though so few in number, the influence of mobocracy began to appear and persecution set in for its destruction. Nothing but the union that was among this people preserved us upon the earth, and God permitted us to grow and increase, until He gave us a command

to gather out of Babylon, to leave our homes in the east and come to the valleys of the mountains. There was not only spiritual salvation connected with these movements, but temporal salvation also, and we could not accomplish our spiritual salvation without temporal acts and labors. One design of the Almighty in gathering together a great people in these valleys, was to establish a government and dominion over which he should preside, hence the necessity of our being so thoroughly organized, that a power and influence would be developed which we had never attained to. He referred with pleasure to the change that was taking place in the minds of the Elders in regard to the necessity of a more strict and complete system of union. But though the principle of co-operation or of the United Order might be understood by the leading authorities of the Church, it would not be easy to get the masses of the people to adopt it until they could be led to comprehend it. He was happy to say that notwithstanding the many mistakes that had occurred in our past efforts, the subject of union in our temporal affairs had been so thoroughly canvassed among the people that they were now both ready and willing to fall in with any practical measures that might be recommended to them by the leaders of the Church. He suggested that a committee, or board of trade, composed of the best practical business men of the Territory be appointed to superintend and aid the various branches of home industry that may be introduced, so that the benefits arising from home products may be used to enhance the interests of the whole community, rather than the aggrandisement of a few. The servants of God were endeavoring to unite a people that are diverse in their habits and acts. It required great wisdom to accomplish it, nothing short of the wisdom of God could bring it about. A perfect system of organization was what the Twelve Apostles were after, and their labors would never cease until that which God had designed to bring about would be accomplished, not only in relation to us as a handful of people, but the whole family of our Eternal Father. He had called us to this high and holy calling. And while we owed our time and means in this direction, yet we must not on any consideration, be careless and indifferent to the obligations we were under to our own families, every member of which we were in duty bound to support, cherish and instruct. If we were only willing to receive and embrace these principles of union that are now burning in the breasts of the Apostles, God would abundantly bless the Saints in everything that pertains to their present and future happiness. He concluded a very powerful discourse by showing the vanities and evil of living for self, and the glory and honor of laboring for the benefit of others and the salvation of mankind.

The choir sang an anthem.

The mercies of the Lord.

Conference was adjourned till tomorrow morning at 10 a. m.
Benediction by Elder Orson Pratt.

SECOND DAY.

MONDAY MORNING,

Oct. 7, 10 a. m.

Conference was called to order by President John Taylor.

The choir sang:

See how the morning sun
Pursues his shining way.

Prayer by Elder Albert Carrington.

The choir sang:

Mortals awake with angels join,
And chant the solemn lay.

ELDER ORSON PRATT

read a portion of a revelation given to Joseph Smith, the prophet, on the 6th day of April, 1830, being the same day the Church of Christ was organized in this dispensation. This revelation contains a message of salvation that was to be carried to all the inhabitants of the earth, and the inevitable consequences that would follow their acceptance or rejection of the same were that whoever believes and receives the testimony of the servants of God in these days will be saved, and whoever rejects their testimony will be damned.

He then spoke of the testimony of the witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Twelve men bore witness to what their eyes saw

and what their ears heard. The angel of God appeared to three of them, and not only presented the plates before them, permitting them to handle them, but told them that God had enabled his servant Joseph Smith to translate from these plates the Book of Mormon, and commanded them to bear this testimony before the world. Out of the twelve witnesses, eleven had gone the way of all flesh, and only one was now living, whose name was David Whitmer. He then rehearsed a very interesting conversation that he and Elder Joseph F. Smith had recently held with David Whitmer, who bore the same testimony which is contained in the Book of Mormon, and which the speaker had heard him bear 48 years ago. The Book of Mormon had been translated into ten different languages, and the testimony of those twelve witnesses will stand in the day of judgment against all those nations where this work is introduced and they reject it. The message of life and salvation which those witnesses testified to is the same that our Elders have carried and proclaimed for the last forty years among many nations of the earth.

He closed his remarks by blessing the congregation in all their temporal and spiritual labors.

ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH

Briefly referred to the recent mission of himself and Elder Orson Pratt to the States. He related some of the terrible effects of the recent cyclone which had just before their visit, passed over the country; some of the fearful consequences of it were seen in the town of Richmond, Missouri, and in the very place where Parley P. Pratt, many years ago, was a prisoner for the Gospel's sake. The place of his confinement was utterly swept away. They also visited Independence, Missouri, and examined the very spot which God designated to his servant Joseph Smith, many years ago, for a temple. The ground which was purchased for this purpose, was entirely barren without a green leaf that he could gather as a souvenir of the visit. They also had an interview with Wm. E. McEllin, one of the first council of the Twelve Apostles, who apostatized from the Church a great many years ago, and who believed in the mission of Joseph up to the time of his own apostasy.

He then said the chief object of their mission east, was to obtain, if possible, some dates and facts that pertained to the early history of the Church, which, for the want of more correct records in that early day were lacking, supposing that some things might be gleaned from the old settlers still living in that neighborhood, but they found no one who could give them any information, or who knew as much as ourselves on these matters.

They called upon his cousin, Joseph Smith, and had some conversation with him about what is called the inspired translation of the Bible, by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The speaker was well satisfied that the book so published is only a partial translation by the Prophet, and merely contains the translation of King James, with some changes in the first chapter of Genesis and the 24th chapter of Matthew, which had been published by this Church, in the Pearl of Great Price, many years ago. They also had the privilege of visiting the Temple in Kirtland, and the hill Cumorah, besides preaching the gospel where opportunity offered. The entire account of their visit and experience, while east, had been written and placed in the possession of President John Taylor. He then gave a faithful warning to the Saints to continue in their faith, to build up Zion in every possible way, and said that God in his own time would bring forth those other records which are now in the care of the angel. They would come forth to this people, and to no other, and not to them until they were fully prepared to receive them. He closed by bearing a faithful testimony not only to the truth of the work of God, but to the priesthood now held by the present leaders of the Church.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

Spoke of the obligations that rest upon the various quorums of priesthood from the head to the feet. And the necessity there was for all who are placed as shepherds over the flock—to be pure and holy in their minds, and set such examples of righteousness, virtue and up-

rightness, as would be commendatory to all those over whom they preside; to put down iniquity, and always be ready to carry out the designs and purposes of the Almighty, both of a temporal and a spiritual nature.

After making some further practical remarks, he blessed the congregation.

The choir sang an anthem,

"Thine O Lord is the greatness."

Conference was adjourned till two o'clock.

Benediction by Elder Lorenzo Snow.

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

LARGE TABERNACLE,

Salt Lake City,

October 5th, 1878.

The Quarterly Conference of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion convened at 10 a.m., Angus M. Cannon presiding. Present also of the Presidency of the Stake, Joseph E. Taylor.

Presiding Patriarch, John Smith. Of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies, Joseph W. Young and Levi W. Hancock.

Of the Presidency of the High Priests' Quorum, Elias Smith, Edward Snelgrove and Elias Morris. Of the Presiding Bishopric, Edward Hunter.

All the wards of the Stake were represented by some of the presiding authorities, excepting the 20th Ward of the city and the North Jordan Ward of the county; there being also a very fair attendance of the Priesthood and Saints of this Stake generally, considering that the Territorial Fair was open and that it was an unusually busy day in consequence of the near approach of the General Conference.

After the usual opening exercises, the following reports were read:

A statistical report of the Stake for the quarter ending August 31st, 1878. Showing as follows: Apostles, 8; Patriarchs, 7; Seventies, 1,136; High Priests, 489; Elders, 1,601; Priests, 148; Teachers, 170; Deacons, 662; Members, 10,299; total officers and members, 14,520. Children under eight years, 5,529; total of souls, 20,049; families, 4,043; marriages, 32; births, males, 76; births, females, 61; children blessed, 204; members received, 149; members removed, 169; baptized, 229; deaths—males, 53; deaths—females, 53; excommunicated, 8; individuals drawing support, 272; amount of support drawn, \$721.68; amount of fast day donations \$852.76.

A financial report of the Relief Societies of the Stake as follows:

Wheat on hand last quarter: stored by the Central Committee, 1,525 bushels; stored by societies of the Stake, 40,632 bushels; stored during the past quarter, 592 bushels; total now on hand, 42,749 bushels; received in cash and property, \$8,747.21; disbursements in cash and property, \$1,621.79.

A letter from the superintendent and assistants of Sabbath Schools in this Stake, representing them as being in a flourishing condition.

A report from the Tabernacle Committee stating that they had received \$2,119.20 in cash for the purpose of completing the roof of the Stake Tabernacle in response to an allotment made upon the Wards of the Stake, of \$2,820.00, leaving a balance yet unpaid of \$710.80.

President Joseph Young made a few remarks in regard to the duties of the Seventies. Inasmuch as the duty of selecting missionaries devolved upon the Presidents of Seventies, he desired that they should seek the approval of their bishops, that the most suitable men might be selected; men of good character and standing, and capable of properly representing the Saints and the principles of the Gospel to the nations of the earth. He spoke of the joy and consolation afforded the Saints through their obedience to the principles of the Gospel; in the enjoyment of each other's society and the communion of the Holy Spirit, and the prospect, fallen beings as we are, of our obtaining an inheritance in the presence and kingdom of God. He concluded by showing the beauty of the plan which the Lord had revealed for the Saints to settle their difficulties.

President Joseph E. Taylor stated that in view of the fact that the General Authorities of the Church would be presented at the near approaching General Conference, and the Saints of this Stake would then have an opportunity of voting for them, their names would then be omitted.