

## FIFTY-THIRD SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

On Friday, October 5th, 1883, the Conference met in the Assembly Hall at 10 o'clock a. m.

Present on the stand: Of the First Presidency—John Taylor, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith.

Of the Twelve Apostles—Willford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Albert Carrington, Moses Thatcher, Francis M. Lyman and Heber J. Grant.

The Patriarch of the Church, John Smith.

Of the Seven First Presidents of Seventies—Horace S. Eldredge, Jacob Gates, William W. Taylor, Abraham H. Cannon and Seymour B. Young.

Of the Bishops—Edward Hunter, Leonard W. Hardy and Robert T. Burton.

In addition to the above General Authorities, there was a large representation of leading Elders and authorities from nearly every Stake of Zion, even from those the most remote from headquarters.

The Conference was called to order at 10 a. m., by President John Taylor.

The choir sang:

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion city of our God.

Prayer by President George Q. Cannon.

Our Father who art in heaven, we Thy servants and Thine hand maidens have assembled ourselves together this morning in this place for the purpose of worshipping Thee, the Lord our God. And at the opening of this Conference we come to Thee, our Heavenly Father, in the name of Thy well beloved Son Jesus, and call upon Thee to look down in mercy and tender compassion upon us.

We are thankful that we have this opportunity. We are thankful that our lives have been spared through the various vicissitudes through which we have passed during the past six months, that once more we Thy servants and Thy people are permitted to assemble ourselves together in a conference capacity. When we reflect upon Thy goodness, and Thy mercy and long suffering unto us, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving and praise unto Thee, the Lord our God, for Thou hast wrought wondrously in our behalf. Thou hast preserved us from the snares of our enemies; Thou hast delivered us from their many traps; and we can meet this morning in this place and rejoice in our hearts in the liberty that Thou hast granted unto us and preserved unto us, and we can rejoice in being a free people, notwithstanding the efforts of the wicked to bring us into bondage.

Our Father, we desire to praise Thee in the congregation of Thy Saints for these blessings, for we know they are the gift of Thy hand; we know there is no power of man that could have preserved and blessed us as we are now blessed. Therefore, we give Thee the glory with all our hearts; we praise Thee the Lord our God, and rejoice before Thee that the promises which Thou hast made unto us have been fulfilled even to the very letter. We thank Thee for life; we thank Thee for health; we thank Thee, our Father, for the crops Thou hast given unto Thy people as a reward for their labor. The husbandman has been made to rejoice in the fruits of his hands; the land has been greatly blessed of Thee, our Father, and there is abundance of food for man and beast throughout these valleys, for which we feel to thank Thee. Yea, and Thou hast blessed Thy people with a goodly degree of health; Thou hast preserved them from the power of the destroyer. And notwithstanding the many difficulties we have had to contend with, we feel that our condition is indeed a blessed one. And we thank Thee, our Father, for families, for wives, for husbands, for children, for parents, for brothers and sisters, and for the friendship that Thou hast begotten in our hearts, even the love that Thou hast given unto us through the everlasting Gospel.

We rejoice in the bestowal of these precious blessings upon us as a people; and we desire to come unto Thee this morning and entreat Thee in the name of Jesus to increase this love

within us—love for Thee our Father and God—love for our fellow-creatures—love for those who have entered into covenant with Thee, that we may love them as we love ourselves. Grant, our Father, that this spirit and feeling may be diffused throughout all the branches of Thy Church, and that it may extend wherever the Gospel is preached, wherever men and women bow in submission to its requirements.

Our Father, we beseech Thee this morning to be with us in our Conference, and let the Holy Spirit descend from on high upon Thy servants and Thy people, who have come together, and who may come together, and upon Thine Elders who have come from afar for the purpose of being instructed. O Father, grant that they may be instructed, that they shall not go away hungry or unsatisfied in their spirits; but pour out Thy Holy Spirit in power upon Thy servants and upon Thy people, that those who speak may not speak their own thoughts or their own words or reflections, or the feelings that are peculiar to them; but that they may speak Thy word and Thy will, that they may bring forth from Thy treasure house those things that shall be adapted to the circumstances and conditions of Thy people individually and collectively, that those who have hungered and thirsted for righteousness may be fed and made to rejoice, having their hearts softened under the powerful influence of Thy Holy Spirit. And grant our Father that the hearts of the people who have assembled this morning and who shall assemble, and who shall assemble from day to day during our conference, that they may be prepared to receive Thy word, that every heart may be softened under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and that a contrite spirit may rest down upon all.

We thank Thee, our Father, in heaven for the presence of Thy servants who bear the Holy Priesthood. We thank Thee for the presidency of Thy Church; we thank Thee for the Twelve Apostles, we thank Thee for the High Priests, the Seventies and Elders, and for the local organizations; we thank Thee for the Presidents of Stakes and their Counselors, for High Councils and for the Bishops of the various Wards with their Counselors. We thank Thee for the higher and the lesser Priesthood; and we ask Thee to pour out Thy spirit in power upon Thy servants, and let the people see that Thou hast indeed restored the Holy Priesthood to the earth, and that they are indeed Thy servants, by the honor which shall be bestowed upon them in the eyes of the people; that the gifts and qualifications of their various offices and callings may rest down upon them in great power, and that those who see and hear them may feel that they are indeed the men whom Thou hast chosen, and that they do not profess to have power which Thou hast withheld. O Father, we ask Thee now to bless in a special manner Thy servant President Taylor, and let the gift and qualification and endowment that pertain to his high and holy calling rest down upon him. Fill him with the revelations of Jesus; fill him with the knowledge necessary to enable him to magnify his office acceptably to Thee and to the satisfaction of his fellow-servants, and the Saints. And grant that these blessings may rest down upon all in their various offices and callings; and upon Thy missionary servants who are preaching the Gospel; may the spirit that we ask for ourselves rest down in power upon them, and they be made instrumental in bringing many souls to a knowledge of the truth.

We now dedicate ourselves unto Thee, our Father, with all we have, and implore these blessings upon us, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The choir sang:

Zion stands with hills surrounded,  
Zion kept by power divine.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

Announced the nature and object of the Conference. It was proper that all parts of the land of Zion should be represented here, that all things pertaining to the welfare of Israel might be comprehended, digested and disseminated among the people; that they might fully understand the position they occupy in relation to the past, present and future. Enumerated the various organizations of the Priesthood, general and local, together with such special institutions as Sunday Schools, Relief Societies, Mutual

Improvement and Primary Associations, spoke upon the duties and operations of each, under the influence of which all things were ordained to move along in order according to the will of the Lord. The present system was perfected by President Brigham Young, a short time prior to his death, but there had been more or less laxity and neglect made manifest, which was exceedingly reprehensible. Exhorted the High Priests, Seventies, Elders, Patriarchs, etc., to humility and righteousness before the Lord, that they might be filled with His Spirit, and fully qualified to act in their several offices and callings for the perfecting of the Saints and the on-rolling of the Kingdom of God.

APOSTLE H. J. GRANT

Said he had no other desire, in speaking or acting, than to serve God and benefit his brethren and sisters, and he did not ask anyone to perform any duty or keep any commandment, which he was unwilling to do himself. Mingling with the world caused him to appreciate his own religion more fully. No one who understood "Mormonism" would ever exchange it for any of the forms of faith prevalent in the world. But in order to understand it, it was necessary to live it. God had laid down certain laws for our guidance and had made promises as the result of obedience to the same. One of these was the Word of Wisdom, through obedience to which some of the greatest of blessings would accrue. This law was adapted to the weakest capacity, yet some of the strongest violated it. Some were afraid to pay tithing for fear of losing by it, and falling behind their associates in temporal affairs. Such had not the spirit of this work, for they measured the things of God by a worldly standard and would bring themselves under condemnation. In regard to temple building, the speaker said he was mercenary enough to feel that those who refused to contribute of their means for that purpose, ought to be denied the privilege of obtaining the blessings only to be secured in such places. He believed the dividing line was being drawn. Was thankful for the passage of such measures as the Edmunds Law; it drew a line separating the true from the false, and exposed the half-hearted and the hypocrites. Touched upon the principle of plural marriage and denounced those who failed to live it according to the spirit and meaning thereof, and quoted the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that such would be damned.

APOSTLE BRIGHAM YOUNG.

The spirit of God had been with His people from the beginning of their history, and that spirit was necessary for their preservation. The powers of darkness are strengthening for the purpose of destroying the work of God. The Saints were now enjoying the spirit of the Lord to an extent hitherto unsurpassed. The most perfect organization on the face of the earth to-day is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord had given His people every opportunity and facility for carrying on His work, and He would stand by them in so doing. No power could affect the well-being of this people, for evil, only as they themselves permitted through their neglect. This truth had been made repeatedly manifest. It is when we tear down each other that there is danger of our being overthrown. God will not uphold the Saints in following after the ways of the world. He will not justify them in selecting from His word such portions of doctrine and law as suit their selfish fancies and ignoring all the rest. The revelations of God were adapted to his people, and absolute obedience to them all was therefore necessary. It is often a trial to accept certain laws without reservation, and many therefore wrest the Scriptures and take advantage of technicalities to act dishonestly before the Lord. The revelations of God are serial and progressive, and would be given, first the milk and then the meat, as fast as His people became strong enough to receive them. Those who reject one revelation are not prepared to receive that which is to follow.

ELDER DAVID P. KIMBALL

was pleased, after an absence of six years to meet again with the people of God, though his object in coming to Conference was not to teach but to be taught. He felt thankful for a standing in the Church and Kingdom of God. Referred to the good feeling among the Saints in Arizona and the region

south, and spoke of the manifest improvement among the Saints in this locality since he last was among them.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

Testified to the presence of the Spirit of the Lord, and said he should be very much disappointed were it otherwise. The Saints needed the Spirit at all times. This work was spreading and increasing rapidly, and nothing short of divine inspiration could qualify God's servants and Saints for the important duties they were called upon to fulfill. When we look around and see that notwithstanding the efforts of our enemies, we still have the privilege of meeting together and worshipping God in His appointed way, we have cause to be truly thankful. No human power could have planned so wisely and successfully as God has done to preserve us in the enjoyment of our rights and liberties. And if the Saints will prepare themselves for God's greater blessings, the veil between them and their heavenly Father will become thinner, and in time will be rent, and all that they seek in righteousness will be poured out upon them. It is the duty of every Saint to be an example to all around him. The angels of God are watching over His people. The approaching completion of the Temple now being erected should remind us of what is expected through them. No power, from the beginning of our history, has been effectual in hindering our progress, and our advancement from henceforth will be even more rapid. The time is coming when revelation will be poured out upon this people to an extent hitherto unknown; when the heavens will be opened and God and His angels will be nearer to this people than ever.

Conference was adjourned to the Large Tabernacle to 2 o'clock p. m.

The choir sang an anthem:

"Who can stand against the work of the Lord."

Benediction by President Joseph F. Smith.

Friday, 2 p. m.

The choir sang:

We are not ashamed to own our Lord,  
And worship him on earth.

Prayer by President Joseph F. Smith.

The choir sang:

O awake my slumbering minstrel,  
Let my harp forget its spell.

APOSTLE LORENZO SNOW

Read from the 93rd Section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, respecting the eternal nature of truth and intelligence, and of man's advancement from grace to grace until he inherits a fulness of glory. The saints were entitled to revelation, for that instruction and support necessary while passing through this probation, and it was on such occasions as the present that they could by the spirit of prayer, unitedly exercised, draw forth such things from the speaker as they might need. That system of religion was worthless which would not give a proper understanding of things as they actually are. This religion taught that man could progress eternally and be exalted in due time to the presence and glory of the Lord. The Saints have the same knowledge concerning the divinity of this work, as ancient Israel had respecting the dealings of the Lord in those days. Moses, when called to lead Israel, received manifestations from heaven to convince him that God had indeed chosen him, and the subsequent history of that people was a series of similar proofs that when God requires his children to do a work He is willing to give them every evidence of its divinity. Any system of religion which would not bestow this knowledge would be of no value. Jesus Christ Himself organized this Church and sent unto Joseph Smith, His Prophet, those messengers whose right it was to confer upon him the keys of power and authority to act as a representative of God upon the earth. The Savior told Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed to him that He was the Son of God, but His Father in Heaven, and He also promised to His disciples, when He left them a Comforter who would come and lead them into all truth. The want of this was evident throughout the sectarian world, who worshipped a God without body, parts and passions, a nonentity, dwelling beyond the bounds of time and space, i. e. nowhere. But the Latter-day Saints had the privilege of piercing the veil and knowing for themselves the true nature

and whereabouts of the Being they worship. Joseph Smith had the same privilege as John the Revelator in beholding Jesus Christ. It was through the authority bestowed upon Joseph Smith and others that the present work was being performed, it would never be destroyed. It had reached that point where it was impossible for it to be overthrown. The disbelief of the world and the persecution of the wicked would make no difference with the fulfillment of God's purposes. The way had been opened whereby men could go from grace to grace, ascending from height to height of intelligence, knowing for themselves what was expected of them in order to attain salvation. The Priesthood was placed in the Church for the perfecting of the Saints, and men were qualified to day to prophecy and act in the name of the Almighty. The faith of the Saints in these things was evident from the sacrifices they had made and were still willing to make for the cause they had espoused.

President George Q. Cannon then presented a financial report of the Logan Temple 50 cent monthly donation. He also presented a report of the Manti Temple.

On motion, both the above reports were unanimously received.

APOSTLE ERASTUS SNOW.

It was a source of pleasing satisfaction to know that there was communicating His will to servants, and to see the quorum of the Priesthood in good, working order. The work of ministry was great, the field wide, and the word of the Lord was to thrust in the sickle and reap. Angels were superintending this work, under the direction of the Almighty, and the responsibility resting upon the Elders of Israel had not diminished. Blessings were in store for all who were willing to labor. It had been a custom in the past, with some people, to suppose when Elders were called upon missions that they had done something wrong and had been sent off duty to get them out of the way. narrow, contracted notions do not prevail among this people. The qualifications required of missionaries by the Lord and His servants were faithfulness, integrity of heart and willingness to labor, and they were not seeking after any other kind. For these were the only ones that would be useful in the earth, or that the Lord would be willing to uphold and justify. time was not far distant when the work of the Lord would go forth among all the House of Israel. The Elders of this Church should diligently prepare themselves for the great work. There was a great improvement among the people already, but there was room much more, in order that the saints might be purified and prepared to meet the Lord. They should be taught to depend upon God, in times of sickness and in the ordinance for the healing of the sick, rather than upon physicians; but where doctors were played they should be of faith in God, for medicines not administered the inspiration of the spirit of which knoweth all things, was as liable to work injury as God was desirous to build up amidst of these mountains healthiest, purest and most faithful people in the world, and obedience to His holy laws and wise counsels of His servants was destined to be affected.

After which the choir sang an anthem:

The gathered Saints

Conference was adjourned till tomorrow, Saturday, at 10 o'clock.

Benediction by Apostle Willford Woodruff.

SECOND DAY.

Saturday, Oct. 6

Conference met in the Tabernacle and was called to order at 10 o'clock a. m. by President John Taylor.

The choir sang,

Come, thou glorious day of promise,  
Come and shed thy cheerful ray.

Prayer by President John F. McAllister.

The choir sang,

Arise, arise, with joy survey  
The glory of the latter day.

APOSTLE F. D. RICHARDS.

If a retrospective view were taken of the providences of the Lord to the Latter-day Saints, especially at their sojourn in these mountains, the kind care of our Heavenly Father would be everywhere apparent.