

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The Sixty-third Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April 4th, 1893, President Wilford Woodruff presiding.

The following were on the stand: Of the First Presidency—Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith; of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund and Abraham H. Cannon; Patriarch John Smith; of the Presidency of the Seventies—Seymour B. Young, C. D. Fjelsted, John Morgan, B. H. Roberts, George Reynolds and Jonathan G. Kimball; of the Presiding Bishopric—William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and John R. Winder. There were also a large number of Presidents of Stakes and other leading brethren from various parts of Utah and adjacent states and territories.

Elder Moses Thatcher, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was unable to be present on account of illness. Elder Heber J. Grant, also of the Quorum of the Twelve, was absent on account of being detained in the East.

The congregation was very large, the great building being filled in every part. There were probably over ten thousand people present.

Conference was called to order by President George Q. Cannon.

The choir and congregation sang:

Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

Prayer was offered by Elder Francis M. Lyman.

Slugging by the choir and congregation:

Come, come ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear,
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you this journey may appear
Grace will be as your day.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF

Said he felt to thank God his Heavenly Father that he had the privilege this day of standing in the midst of such a vast congregation in the house of Israel. He also thanked the 10,000 Latter-day Saints whose prayers had ascended to the Lord in his behalf. By the power of God and by their prayers he had been preserved until the present hour. While he did not feel capable of answering his own thoughts in reflecting upon the scene through which the Latter-day Saints as a people had passed in the years which were gone, still he assured his hearers that his heart was full of blessing and thankfulness towards his brethren and sisters, and all men who had desired to do what was right.

This was a day to which he had looked forward for many years, and when he reflected upon the hundreds and thousands of Elders of Israel, and the Prophets and Apostles with whom he had been associated, many of whom had already passed to the other side of the veil, he marveled at the work which

had thus far been accomplished and that his own life had been preserved so long in the midst of this people.

As Latter-day Saints they had great reason for rejoicing before the Lord, and their hearts should be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving unto the Most High for the many blessings vouchsafed unto them.

When he took a retrospect of their position and saw what had been accomplished through God's mercy, by this people, since they arrived in these valleys on the 24th of July, 1847, it was to him a marvel and a wonder. Though many of their brethren—President Brigham Young, who had led them here, and others who were formerly associated with them in this great latter-day work, had passed away—yet he believed that in the spirit world today they were deeply interested and rejoicing in the work in which the Latter-day Saints were engaged on this special occasion.

They were expecting (continued President Woodruff) by the blessing of God to enter, in a few days hence, the Temple which had been reared here in the name of the Lord, by His people; and he desired in the short time now at his disposal to bless every Latter-day Saint from the bottom of his heart for what they had done towards the achievement of this grand object. No call, he believed, had ever been made upon any people upon the face of the earth which had met with such a hearty and universal response as that for means to finish the Salt Lake Temple. He felt to thank the Lord for the spirit which had been manifested by the Saints in this respect.

They had erected three temples before this one in these mountain valleys. The Elders of Israel had labored unceasingly to attend to the ordinances of the house of God, both for the living and the dead; because he need hardly tell the Latter-day Saints that these holy temples had been erected for the redemption of the dead as well as blessing the living.

The Prophet Joseph Smith laid the foundation of this Church and Kingdom and revealed those principles unto us; but no principle had ever been revealed from God to man which had given the Latter-day Saints more joy and consolation than the revelations whereby the Lord had fulfilled the prophecy of one of the ancient prophets, who said that in the last days He would raise up saviors upon Mount Zion, while the Kingdom was the Lord's. That day had come.

He himself well remembered the time when that revelation was given—the feeling which thrilled their hearts and souls when they realized that in their day and generation they had the power to go forth and attend to these ordinances for their dead progenitors, the same as for those who were still living in the flesh. They did not hesitate, as soon as that revelation came, to make a commencement of this Temple work, and there were scores of men around him today who had labored for years in these temples in this way. He greatly rejoiced at the thought that when he himself entered the spirit world he would meet those of his progenitors who, perhaps, had never heard the true Gospel, who never saw a prophet, apostle, or other inspired

man while in the flesh; and as Jesus went and "preached to the spirits in prison" in His day, so would those men who now lived and held the keys of the Priesthood when they passed behind the veil also preach to "spirits in prison," open the prison doors and let the prisoners free. In all his labors in the cause of this Gospel, for some sixty years, there was no kind of work which he had performed with greater satisfaction than that of redemption for his dead. Who could not, indeed, rejoice before the Lord when he contemplated the future of this great work in the Rocky Mountains and the privileges which they enjoyed?

He was thankful the day had come when they had the opportunity of dedicating this Temple unto the Lord, and into which the vast number of people who dwell in this region of country would be able to enter and perform the ordinances required of them without having to travel long distances, as had been the case hitherto.

He had seen some serious times in the history of this Church—at Kirtland for instance; but when he first heard Joseph Smith preach he knew that he was a Prophet of God. Of that he had had all the testimony he needed. The Prophet Joseph, however, had labored in the cause of this Church and Kingdom about fourteen years only from the time of his ordination until he was martyred. He nevertheless performed a great mission.

At his own advanced age he thanked God that he was surrounded by a quorum of Apostles among whom there existed such a spirit of unity; they were united as the heart of one man. He firmly believed that any one of them would die for him if needs be, and he would do the same for either of them should the Lord require it at his hands. There was a love between all of them that the world knew not of—a love which distinguished all men who bore the Priesthood from the rest of the world.

The Lord had always chosen the weak things of the earth to confound the wise, as He had promised; and this was a principle which he (the speaker) had thought much about from his boyhood. His own view was that the Lord had done this because He desired to choose an element which He could handle and make use of. Many of the Apostles of old were poor fishermen, but they were ready to yield up their lives for the Gospel's sake, without any regard whatever for the honors of the world.

So in our own day and generation. Joseph Smith was called an ignorant, illiterate boy. In some respects he might have been, as the world understood it; but he was ordained, before the foundation of the world, to lay the foundation of the Church and Kingdom of God. Had not this been God's work, and had it not been sustained by His power from the very beginning? In proof of this the speaker instance the remarkable gathering of the Saints to these mountains and their wonderful preservation through persecution and trial. As with Joseph Smith, he said, so with Presidents Brigham Young and