

SPECIAL CONFERENCE AT
OGDEN.

The Special Conference held at Ogden for the purpose of more completely organizing the Stake of Zion at that place, commenced on Saturday, May 24th, at 10 o'clock a. m.

On the stand were Presidents Brigham Young, John W. Young, and D. H. Wells, of the First Presidency; Elders John Taylor, Orson Pratt, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, F. D. Richards and Geo. Q. Cannon, of the Twelve Apostles; also Bishop Farr, of Ogden, and President Moses Thatcher, of Logan.

The meeting was called to order by President F. D. RICHARDS.

The Choir sang the hymn, commencing with the words—

Sweet is the work, my God, my King.

Elder ERASTUS SNOW offered prayer.

The Choir sang—

The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Lo, Zion's standard, wide unfurled.

President D. H. WELLS, in addressing the congregation, said it afforded him great pleasure in meeting with the Latter-day Saints at Ogden, under so favorable circumstances, and also to bear testimony to the truthfulness of the Gospel which had been sent down from heaven, and which was being preached to the world by the people called Latter-day Saints. Through obedience to the requirements of the Gospel, we were so highly privileged as to be counted worthy to operate with the Lord and the heavenly beings in the establishment of its principles, laws and government on the earth. When the Lord spoke to the children of men, his word was law as well as Gospel; it was applicable to and obligatory upon all, and must be obeyed.

The era in which we lived was an important and eventful one. Truths had been brought to light, which had been kept hidden from before the foundation of the world. They revealed to us the relationship we sustained to God our Eternal Father, also his grand and comprehensive purposes which were to take place, even down to the end of time, with regard to the whole of his numerous family living and dead. Although the circumstances of the people of God of this dispensation were somewhat peculiar, differing from those of his people of any past time, the gospel itself was everlasting and always the same. His people of every age from the beginning had suffered more or less persecution, and in many instances even unto death. At a time when the spirit of cruel persecution was manifesting itself, it was asked by one of old, Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted and slain? At this later day the question with the same propriety might be asked—Which of the prophets and apostles escaped death for the gospel's sake? The truth had now been restored again and that too to stay, never more to be taken away from the earth. The Saviour could not be crucified afresh, nor again put to an open shame; and for those who would do so if they could, having deprived themselves of the benefits of the atonement and plan of salvation wrought out, we were commanded not to pray. After men had received the Holy Ghost and then sinned against that source of light and knowledge by actually denying it, they could not be forgiven in this world, neither in the world to come. The speaker said it was not known to him how far in former generations people could so commit themselves, as the gospel was not revealed then to the extent of its fullness as it now existed. He believed there were many things, that the Saviour did not deem wisdom to reveal, but that might have been had the people been prepared to receive them. Everything, however, was revealed to them necessary for their salvation. The mission of the gospel then was different from what it was now. Then it was according to the programme, as foretold that it would be trampled under foot and rejected of men; but now it was to continue forever. The Lord Jesus Christ would also take the reins of government in his own hands, and rule from the rivers to the ends of the earth. There would be a thousand years of continuous rest, during which time ordinances pertaining to the redemption and salvation of the living and the dead would be performed in temples built for that purpose, and the work would grow

to such dimensions that it would fill the whole earth, the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. This was a feature entirely new in the history of gospel truth, and in order that it should actually transpire according to the predictions, it would receive the immediate supervision of God Almighty, under whose instructions his angels would operate in connection with his faithful children on the earth; and they would continue their labors until the whole earth was reclaimed from sin and wickedness, and the glorious victory of truth achieved. We were now forcibly reminded of the great and serious responsibility that devolved upon the Saints of the Most High, for at their hands would be demanded an account of their stewardship, how they had treated the principles of life, the word of salvation committed to their trust. The condemnation of the world was because great light had come and was being opposed and rejected by the great majority of mankind. A few comparatively had hearkened and rendered obedience to the voice of God in thus coming to the valleys of these mountains, not for the purpose of introducing Babylon here, its vices and follies; but of divesting ourselves of the "man of sin," which so characterized her, and which would eventually be so thoroughly developed in her midst as to prepare her for the destruction that awaited her. The Latter-day Saints had no right to bring or introduce in Zion the iniquities of the world, nor any of its ways that were not in accordance with truth and the government of God. They were required to be righteous; if they should be found otherwise they defeated the object for which they had gathered, namely, to escape the plagues spoken of. It was said anciently to those who sought signs, that no sign would be given except the sign of Noah. Although its meaning was not given, we might safely infer that it meant no more or less than the wicked were destroyed and the righteous saved. It would be even so in this dispensation. It behooved the Latter-day Saints to bear the precious fruits of the gospel, and to cease folly of every kind. The reign of peace had already commenced in the earth. It could not be fully established, however, as long as wickedness predominated. The armies of peace had gone forth, the warfare had already commenced, and the enemy would have to give way; but the victory would not be achieved without a good deal of contention, for every inch of the ground would be contended for by those who had usurped the dominion; and those who would be defenders of the peace and the truth must stand manfully in their own defense, and in doing so God would support them. If the righteous scarcely would be saved, where would the ungodly appear? They would not be saved at all. It was the disposition of the enemy to destroy the people of God, root and branch. The remark of President Young at our last General Conference was a truthful and a significant one, namely, in substance, that the more righteous and united we became, the greater would be the rage and efforts of the adversary and wicked men to destroy us, but the less power they would have to do so.

Here the speaker showed how a knowledge of this latter-day work could be obtained. It was not characteristic of the Lord to give every man supernatural evidence of the divinity of his cause, but it was in keeping with his dealings with men to do as he had done, namely, to reveal the truth to a certain man and commission him to impart it to mankind. It was much safer for men to receive the truth through the latter source than the former.

The speaker instanced the case of some of the first Elders of the Church, who had received supernatural testimony, who had either fallen away or apostatized. This was because their temptation had become correspondingly weighty, to which they had succumbed.

After speaking on the divinity of plural or celestial marriage, the speaker reminded the Elders that it was part of the faith we had espoused; that in consequence of women being more susceptible to the reception of truth than men, marriageable females were in the ascendancy in our community; that numbers of them had immigrated here with a thorough understanding that it was practised here,

and of course it was natural that they should desire husbands; and said that it devolved upon the brethren, in wisdom, to take to wife the daughters of Zion, and see that there remained not a single woman who desired marriage.

The speaker closed in briefly treating on the proper training of children in the nurture and admonition of God, so that when the time came for the fathers to step behind the veil, the kingdom could be transferred, glorious and increasing, to their posterity; and admonished all to hold fast to the truth, for those only who endured to the end could be saved.

President JOHN W. YOUNG followed, saying he felt greatly blessed in this opportunity of meeting with the saints at this place, and in listening to the excellent remarks which had been given, and prayed that sufficient of the Spirit of God might be given us to treasure up the words of truth spoken from time to time. The work of God in which we were engaged was worthy of our time, our talents and the means with which God had blessed us. We were permitted to live when the gospel was revealed to man upon the earth. Did we appreciate the great favor? Millions of people had passed away without a knowledge of the truth. The former-day Saints had not the encouraging promise that we rejoiced in, namely, that the gospel had been restored never more to be forced away from the earth. We had gathered here to be trained in the ways of the Lord, to be prepared for future service in the great work before us. It was the intention, before this conference closed, to organize more perfectly this Stake of Zion. When this was done, every individual and family, however remote from settlements, would have a recognized standing in the church, and would be looked after, and all would have the opportunity of doing all the good they had in their hearts to do towards the literal building up of Zion.

The people of this locality had opportunities beyond those of other settlements, in being favored with a market for their produce, and besides labor was more easily obtained. Here the speaker dwelt upon the principle of union in our temporal affairs, and the advantages derived from combining labor of every kind.

Elder JOHN TAYLOR occupied the remainder of the time. He referred to the more perfect organization which was about to be effected in this Stake of Zion, and the increased facilities it would afford in the better government of this branch of the church according to the pattern given of the Lord. In former years if a man got drunk, broke the Sabbath, or otherwise did wrong, he was required to acknowledge the same in the spirit of repentance, or be dealt with according to the laws of the church. Things had been going on quite loosely for a length of time, and in too many instances broken covenants had been allowed to pass unnoticed. It had been said that the merciful should obtain mercy, but while this was perfectly true, justice could not be overlooked; and therefore it became necessary, in order that the laws of God might be obeyed, that every member of the church be held accountable for his acts, and his transgressions dealt with on the just and equitable principles of the gospel. Unless this was done we became partakers of other men's sins, which we were expressly forbidden to do. The speaker enumerated the various offices in the Church, from that of the First Presidency down to the deacon, speaking on the duties of each, dwelling perhaps more particularly on that of a teacher. He said the bishops should be very choice in the selection of teachers, taking the greatest pains to get the best men they could find in their wards, men that sought after God themselves and who were filled with his Spirit; at the same time they should be possessed of good judgment, and capable of giving advice and counsel. We were living in an important age of the world, when the wicked raged and the people imagined vain things. The word of the Lord to this people was unity—man uniting to man, sister to sister, friend to friend, and man to God. The ungodly trampled under foot his holy commandments, and they found fault with us for not doing as they did. We were the friends of God and he was on our side; if we were not his friends, he had none on the face of this earth.

The Choir sang the anthem—
Holy is the Lord.

Elder C. W. PENROSE offered the closing prayer.

2 o'clock p. m.

After the usual opening exercises Elder ORSON PRATT, referring to the object of the Conference, namely, to more completely organize the priesthood in that Stake of Zion, pointed out the facilities that this change would afford its central officers in the discharge of their several duties. The Lord intended to raise up in the latter-days a kingdom of priests, and it was doubtless the will of God to bestow the high priesthood, which was after the order of the Son of God and of endless lives. The fact of this being done would not do away with the appendages of the lesser priesthood, for men holding the higher priesthood could be appointed to officiate in any of the lesser callings. There were some who claimed membership in this Church who were addicted to absenting themselves from the meeting, who spoke evil of their neighbors, who broke the Sabbath and otherwise committed sin, which persons heretofore had not been dealt with according to the laws of the Church, as revealed and contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In ancient times the anger of the Lord was enkindled against the whole congregation of Israel if transgressors were permitted to go unpunished. This was strikingly manifested in the case of Achan whom the Scriptures inform us stole a Babylonish garment and a wedge of gold. Although this act of theft was performed secretly, the whole people were severely chastened until the transgressor was found out and dealt with. But while ancient Israel had the power to execute the penalties of broken laws, both civil and religious, we, according to a revelation given in Feb., 1831, dealt with transgressors only so far as their Church membership was concerned. The organization of the priesthood, in its more perfected state, would have a tendency to correct any existing evils, as it was expected that the laws of the Church would be more strictly enforced than heretofore.

Elder ERASTUS SNOW occupied the rest of the time, speaking on the importance of Latter-day Saints paying their serious attention to what many termed the "little things," which, although appearing of little moment, were significant, in forming character, in making us appear what we really were. He cited the words of the evangelist, as having been spoken by the Saviour, that for every idle word and thought we would be brought to judgment; indicating that the gifts of reason and speech with which we were endowed were intended for good and not evil, and should be subservient to the will of God and the happiness of each other; otherwise, they would be turned to evil, producing misery and unhappiness.

Bro. Snow spoke at some length, treating on the mission of the Saviour and the efficacy of the atonement, by virtue of which all the sons and daughters of Adam, both living and dead, were redeemed, affecting the original as well as individual sin. He also treated on the nature of that work which made men "saviours on Mount Zion."

The North Ogden Choir, under the leadership of Bro. Fred. Ellis, sang the anthem—

But in the last days.

President JOHN W. YOUNG offered the closing prayer.

On the following day, Sunday, the meeting in the morning was addressed by Elder GEO. Q. CANNON and President B. YOUNG, and that of the afternoon by Pres. LORENZO SNOW and again by President B. YOUNG.

Towards the close of the afternoon's meeting Elder David H. Peery was elected President of the Stake of Zion at that place, and Elders Lester J. Herriek and Chas. F. Middleton as his counsellors; and Elder Lorin Farr was elected president of the High Priests' Quorum. The vote, indicated by a forest of uplifted hands, was unanimous.

After this business had been attended, to President B. Young said that the members of the High Council had been elected and were already ordained to the High Priesthood, and now that the organization was so far completed, he

could return home well satisfied with his visit to Ogden.

Elder F. D. Richards announced that a priesthood meeting would be held to-morrow (Monday) for the purpose of completing the organization, to which all were invited.

The Tabernacle was densely crowded, there was no standing room unoccupied, and many were outside, unable to get in. The singing of the choir was good, the music selections very good. With such musicians as Bro. Pugh, as a leader, and Bro. Fowler as organist, the Ogden choir should certainly excel in their singing.

President B. Young and party (with the exception of Elder John Taylor and Erastus Snow, who remained) left Ogden by special train at 6 o'clock the same evening, arriving in town at 7.10.

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