

SIXTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Sixty-sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m., on Saturday, April 4 h, 1896, President Wilford Woodruff presiding.

Of the general authorities present on the stand there were, 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, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill and Abraham H. Cannon; Patriarch John Smith; of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies—Symmour B. Young, C. D. Fjelsted, George Reynolds, Jonathan G. Kimball, Rufus S. Wells and Edward Stevenson; of the Presiding Bishopric—William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and John R. Winder.

Conference called to order by President George Q. Cannon.

The choir and congregation sang:

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

Opening prayer by Elder John W. Hess.

Singing by the choir:

Hark! listen to the trumpeteers!
They sound for volunteers,
On Zion's bright and flowery mount,
Behold the officers.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

Our hearts ought to be filled this morning with gratitude and thanksgiving to God our Heavenly Father, for the blessings that we enjoy at the present time, for the privilege of assembling this glorious morning in this tabernacle, in the Sixty-sixth annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If there is any man on the face of the earth who ought to be thankful, who ought to have gratitude, who ought to be faithful to the God of Heaven and the Church and kingdom of God, it is myself. When we look over the field in the last sixty-six years, and see all that the Lord has done since the organization of this Church, the number who have passed away, and the many changes which have taken place, we ought to be thankful for the blessings of God. Our history has been a very peculiar one, and we have been called to pass through many events. We have arrived where the promises of God in the revelations in the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants by the voice of the Prophets of God, are being fulfilled before our eyes, before the heavens, and before the earth. We stand here today with this great and mighty responsibility resting upon us as the Holy Priesthood and the Saints of the Living God, to labor, and to be true and faithful to God, to our covenants, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to those laws and principles which God has revealed concerning the last dispensation and the fullness of times. I feel thankful for these blessings, and hope that during this conference the Apostles and the Elders of Israel and the people may be filled with the inspiration of the Almighty God; that we might comprehend and understand the position we occupy today in the sight of heaven and earth;

that the spirit and power of God may be with us, that we may know the mind and will of God and rejoice together and be able to perform the things required at our hands. I ask God to bless the Latter-day Saints who are assembled in this conference, that these blessings may dwell with us during these meetings, from henceforth and forever. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH

Expressed his gratitude for the presence at this general conference of President Woodruff, who had been wonderfully blessed and preserved by the Lord, to minister to the people in His name. He spoke similarly concerning President George Q. Cannon and Lorenzo Snow, and Elder Franklin D. Richards, who had led useful and faithful lives in the Church of Christ for a long series of years. In the same connection of valor and integrity to truth he referred to the brethren of the Council of the Twelve generally and to the large number of other good, faithful brethren who had proved themselves worthy laborers in the work of God.

The speaker then dwelt upon the fact of the increasing numbers of Elders who were being sent into the nations to warn the people of the world. He looked forward to the extension of missionary labor to populous countries which had never yet been reached by the Elders, and anticipated that the missionaries would, before long, have access to classes of people with whom they had not heretofore been able to come in contact. He spoke of the wonderful change of sentiment that had taken place regarding the Latter-day Saints. It had been brought about by the Lord. This condition might not always exist, as opposition must be met in the future, but the people would have increased wisdom to meet with obstacles as they might arise.

President Smith dwelt for some time upon the danger associated with times of peace and worldly goodwill, unless great wisdom were exercised and purity of conduct should exist. He pointed out the nature of these dangers and what they consisted of and how they ought to be guarded against. The concluding portion of his discourse was devoted to the necessity of parents teaching their children to love the truth and abide in it, giving numerous excellent suggestions upon the value of early training. In the same connection he delineated that kind of missionary experience which cultivated faith in the young Elders who were sent abroad on missions, and the conditions which tended in the direction of destroying that principle, or at least retarding its development in their minds.

ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR.

of the Council of Apostles, followed. He expressed his gratitude at the privilege of listening to the inspired teachings of the Prophets of God. He referred to the prophecies made by the servants of God some years since, when conditions were much less favorable than at present; and testified to the fulfillment of as many of those predictions as time had permitted. He felt that those still awaiting fulfillment would not fail. These prophecies had a bearing upon the improvement to occur in the financial and social condition of the people of God. The inspir-

ation thus shown in the words of the servants of God should be a cause of thanksgiving on the part of the Latter-day Saints.

The spirit of hatred formerly existing against the Saints, and the contempt of the world toward the people of God had disappeared to a great measure, and a feeling of respect and confidence had been established. The Saints were becoming better understood, and their mission more fully comprehended and respected. The world had learned through the efforts of the Tabernacle choir and others, that good can come out of Zion, and more of this good would be recognized in the future. Representation of Utah in the government being now of a free and efficient character, greater good could be done by good men in Washington, whether they be non-Mormons or Latter-day Saints. There had never, to the speaker's knowledge, been a union of church and state in Utah, and no such union was wanted.

The speaker exhorted all to new courage and hopefulness; and to press onward in the work, not giving way to despondency. He closed with a testimony to the truth of the work of God, and the self-sacrificing spirit of the officers of the Church.

The anthem:

From afar, gracious Lord,
Thou hast gathered Thy flock,

WARRING by the choir.

Benediction by Patriarch John Smith.

Afternoon Session.

2 p. m.—Singing by the choir and congregation:

Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation;
No longer as strangers on earth need we roam,
Good tidings are sounding to us and each nation,
And shortly the hour of redemption will come.

Prayer by Elder Edward Partridge.

The choir sang:

Hark! listen to the gentle strain,
O'er hill and valley, grove and plain!
It echoes from the heights above
The voice of freedom, peace and love.

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

The Saints had been called to labor in the interest of our Father, God. It was one of the best desires that could possess us to gain an understanding of the purpose of our coming into the world from our former estate, and to put our whole heart into the labor of carrying it out. We were doubtless a pretty good class of people before we came here, and were innocent when we made our advent to this probation. We were in this stage of life that we might ultimately obtain a fulness of joy. There was in section 101 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants a promise to the effect that a time would come when whatever a man shall desire he shall receive. Before that time shall come a great change should come over the whole face of nature. This would affect the whole animal creation as well as man. All destructive agencies would be banished. These things would take place and the promise gave us joy. We did not have things as we wanted them here. We did not succeed in inducing all of our children to do as we wished them to, but if we proved faithful we would ultimately have all our posterity with us.