GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The Sixty-Third Annual Gathering Opens This Morning.

THE TABERNACLE WELL FILLED.

President Woodruff the First Speaker—Words of Comfort and Consolation to the Latter-day Saints.

The Sixty-third 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 4th, 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—Seymour B. Young, G. D. Pyper, George Reynolds, Jonathan H. Rowell, Hiram B. 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 sang the following hymn:

Come, come, ye saints, no fear nor dismay
Trouble not the way
Though hard be the journey may seem,
Courage, we soon are home.

Opening prayer by Elder John W. Hess.

Singing by the choir:

Hail! hail to the priesthood!
Thou chosen for righteous,
Go forth in your might and mighty power,
Behold your throne.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

Our hearts ought to be filled this morning with gratitude and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, for the blessings that we enjoy at the present time, for the privilege of assembling this morning with the Saints in Tabernacle, to the 63rd annual conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It does a man good to see the faces of the saints who ought to be there, 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 Book for the last twelve years, and see all that the Lord has done since the organization of the Church, the changes that have passed away, and the many changes that have taken place, we ought to look to all 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 prophecies of God in the revelations in the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants by the mouth of the Prophets of God, are veiling fulfilled before our eyes, before the heavens, and before the earth. We stand here today with this great and solemn 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 of the fulness of times. We ought to be in 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, that we may be able to see and understand the position we occupy today in the sight of heaven and earth; and be upon our power at this day. So 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 lives in the Church of Christ for a long series of years. In the same connection of valor and integrity in truth he referred to the brethren of the Council of the Twelve generally and to the large number of other good, honest brethren who had proven themselves worthy leaders in the work of God.

The speaker then dwell upon the fact of the increasing number of Elders who were being sent into the nations to warn the people of the world. He looked for want in the extension of missionary labor in populous countries which had never yet been reached by the Elders, and anticipated that the missionaries would be sent 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 dwell for some time upon the danger we stood with views of peace and worldly goodwill, unless great wisdom were manifested in a purity of conduct should exist. He pointed out the nature of those dangers and what they consisted of and how they ought to be guarded against. The conditions of peace of his discourse. We desire to the necessity of perfect teaching their children to love the truth and abide in it, giving numerous valuable suggestions upon the value of early training. In the same connection he delineated the wide missionary experience well and solemn facts in the power of Elders who were not settled on testimony, and the conditions which led to the adoption of certain false principles, or at least retaining in the revelation at their mouth.

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 fulfilment of many of those predictions as time has permitted. He felt that those still awaiting fulfilment would not fail. These prophecies had a bearing upon the improvement to occur in the financial and commercial life of the people of God. The inspiration thus shown to the words of the servants of God should be a cause of thanksgiving on the part of the Latter-day Saints.

The spirit of baleful humanity existing against the Saints, and the sentiment 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 learning better an existence, and their minds were fully comprehended and respected. The world has learned through the efforts of the Tabernacle choir and others, that good can come out of Zion, and in the time good would be recognized in the future. Representatives of Utah in the government being now of a friendly character, greater good would be done by good men in Washington, whereas they had been before. The Latter-day Saints have not never, to the speaker's knowledge, been a union of church and state in Utah, and no such union was wanted.

The speaker said he felt all to be 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 Church in the Church.

The audience sang:

Come, all ye pilgrims here,
Thou kind answer the lay,
Wait long by the month.

Benediction by Patriarch John Smith.

Afternoon Session.

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

How do we rejoice in the day of salvation,
We hasten to embrace the truth with joy and
music,
Good things are coming to us and we are
glad.
And every one hail, of redemption with
shouts.

Prayer by Elder Edward Partridge. The choir sang:

Hark! hear the great voice,
Hear all ye ends of the earth!
Prepare for the day of the Lord,
The coming of Jesus, prepare ye the way.

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

The Saints had been called to labor in the vineyard of our Father, and it was one of the best duties that could devolve on us to gain an understanding of the purposes of our calling. Let the world from our labors, and let us put and which heart into the work of carrying it out. We were organized a pretty good class of people before we came here, and were interested when we made our advent in this place. We were in the stage of development. Night obviously shows a distinctness. There was no motion like the Book of Doctrine and Covenants promises to the effect that a time would come when whatever is done shall be done by the Lord receive. Believe that this 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 promises given be fulfilled. We did not have things as we wanted them here. We did not succeed in inculcating all our children to do as we wished them to, but if we proved faithful we would ultimately have all our posterity with us. It might be a great period of time before all this should be realized, but it would surely be realized if we were steadfast. This had been promised to the speaker in the Temple at Kirtland, and he firmly believed that it would be fully fulfilled. He had great faith and confidence in the magnitude and love of God. They were so comprehensive that we could not fully understand them.

Every man, woman and child could do something toward securing exaltation and glory. The opportunities were extensive. It was a mighty work we had to accomplish for ourselves, and when returning it we were also expiating in the interest of others.

President Snow related the experience of a young man who wasted all his estate in profligate living and was on the point of suicide, when a supernatural being checked him and urged him to follow his counsel, with the promise that in 10 years he would give a kingdom. He was to live a certain moral life, and his kingdom would be secured. Seeking honest employment, and living faithfully for two years, he found himself a ruler over his own spirit and course. He was informed that this was the realization of the promise. This was the great object of the second estate of man to overcome obstacles and temptations and learn self-control, preparatory to their being more worthy over others. There was no need of discouragement, though heavy sacrifices might be necessary, and such the could secure a willingness to sacrifice for the benefit of others.

The work of the Lord in behalf of His people had been wonderful during the past few years, miraculous works having been performed in their behalf. The highest rejoicing should be in our hearts of the spiritual blessings of the Gospel, with the glorious truths it has taught. Sons of God, in His image were to become more like him, through overcoming difficulties and temptations. In this respect the prospects were particularly bright. The Lord would be pleased with the ambitious to attain to spiritual advancement, and to become equal with God, through receiving of His fulness. We congratulate with the prophet on this. With the new light thrown upon their condition and prospects by the Gospel, the Saints would certainly not be willing to sacrifice those rejoicing of any earthly consideration. Even in the family relationship, to be continued hereafter, there was sufficient compensation to compensate them for all human losses.

It was a pleasure to the speaker to be 75 years old, the position of a man should be each year in the next life, when all sinfulness would be banished from the earth.

It was a pleasure to see this great audience of faithful Saints, who were associated with the work of God. He rejoiced in invoking the blessing of God upon the people.

ELDER HENRY J. GRANT,

of the Council of Apostles, followed. He said in substance: There had never been a time in the history of the Church when there was such cause for rejoicing as now. Kindness of feeling had increased to a marvelous degree, a fact which demanded the deep gratitude of the saints. Liberty in inheritance and the blessings of the Spirit had attended him in his ministry among the people, and God had blessed the saints through the labors of himself and other servants of God, who had themselves been experienced by the labors themselves. This was not an amount of increased knowledge and power on the part of the Saints, as much as the greater spirit of faithfulness which attended the people themselves. The time of his was having now come, the spirit of God had descended upon the Priesthood and the people alike. Washington, said in the greater faith and confidence of all. If all would live their attending to the preaching of the Gospel by precept and example there would be a great manner of converts made among the people of Zion. Failure to live the commandments of God would weaken the effect of preaching them, and those who thus acted would be responsible for the loss of faith on the part of the young. On the other hand, if all would live in the law of God, marvelous work for God would be accomplished. The changed feelings of the rulers of the land toward the Latter-day Saints were accounted and influenced by none of current history. Still greater favor with all good men would be gained by honesty and sincerity in the lives of the people. All had been taught out to day the simple principles and rules of the Gospel, paid were results by more anxious to perform them or the than to keep the divine commandments.

Turning to the General condition of the people, the speaker stated that if the Word of Wisdom were strictly kept, the money thus saved to the community would give ample employment to all the late men in Zion. In closing, the speaker touched upon the necessity of sustaining home industries.

ELDER GEORGE TEASDALE

Of the Council of the Apostles, was the next speaker. He urged the Saints to live more consistent, and be not into desires of the world, but follow Christ well. It was the greatest desire that we should all have understanding of what God wished us to perform. We were living in the latter-days, which were to be similar to those of Noah and Lot, in the times of the Saints. In consequence they the word of the Lord was precious, and the profoundly wise people of the world did not comprehend it. He motion were a great talent to get rich. There were many inclinations to reject the light of the Gospel and depart from Christ if he had received. As the Apostle Paul expressed it (quotation) We were strong in the Gospel when John Johnson was [illegible] and mighty were strong. The great troubles of his early experience in the Church, illustrated the fact that those who had embraced the Gospel strongly pulled so to prize, are those who in a degree in Not had with the authorities, they seemed darkened in their mind, and finally [illegible] the Church and made shipwreck of their faith.

The rising generation must be tested as the other ones had been, but they had the advantage of individual testimony as evidence. Believe that this 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 promises given be fulfilled. We did not have things as we wanted them here. We did not succeed in inculcating all our children to do as we wished them to, but if we proved faithful we would ultimately have all our posterity with us. It might be a great period of time before all this should be realized, but it would surely be realized if we were steadfast. This had been promised to the speaker in the Temple at Kirtland, and he firmly believed that it would be fully fulfilled. He had great faith and confidence in the magnitude and love of God. They were so comprehensive that we could not fully understand them.

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ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS