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## GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.

Thirty-six years and six months ago, on Saturday last, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized with six members. Those six individuals had as strong an assurance that the organization then commenced would continue and endure, grow and increase, and fulfil the prophecies concerning the kingdom of God, as we have to-day. The spirit of truth and the light of inspiration rested upon them, and they could see the work of the Lord in its glory, covering the earth, embracing all the honest hearted among mankind, and giving liberty to the oppressed and down-trodden everywhere on the face of the globe.

From the first the Church has had to endure persecution of no ordinary kind. Strange that in the enlightened (!) nineteenth century, and in this free republic, men and women should be persecuted for their faith. Yet so it has been and is. To say that such has not been, nor is the case, is but poor consolation to those who have suffered and endured, and who are now held up as objects for the public ire to be turned upon. Yet in the face of persecution, and while contending with the most untoward influences, the Church has grown and increased in an unparalleled degree.

In a little over thirty-six years, our missionaries have traversed the globe, preached in almost every nation on the earth, and gathered to this continent honest souls from many countries. During these labors, themselves and their families have been repeatedly driven from their homes; robbed and plundered of their property; and have been compelled to recommence life under the most adverse circumstances. The Church as a body was forced from the abodes of white men; compelled "to flee into the wilderness;" broke up and planted farms by the way for the weary and needy of their brethren who might follow in their track; opened a path to the great west where a foundation was laid by them for a bright galaxy of States yet to adorn the "flag of our Union;" and peopled a Territory with a population happy, industrious, united, virtuous and sober beyond any to be found elsewhere on the earth, so far as our travels have extended.

When it is considered that all this has been done by faith in God, energy and perseverance, without wealth except that created by the industry of those engaged in the work, he must be dull indeed, or wilfully blind, who cannot see the hand of the Lord and His overruling providence in guiding and directing His own work.

In meeting with the Saints at the present Semi-Annual Conference, these and other similar reflections forced themselves upon us. They who ask for a miracle, connected with the effects of the gospel, can see it before them to-day in this Territory in the Latter-day Saints. And when it is considered how the work of God has thriven, with the bitterest animosity directed against it by those who, naturally speaking, had the power to destroy it, and strove to do so, they who now labor to accomplish the same object might take a lesson

from the past and learn how futile are the efforts of men when opposed to the Being in whose hand is all the power of all the children of men.

They also who love and seek to live the truth can ever draw consolation from the past. If the founders of the work, buoyed up by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, could feel joyous and assured under the most adverse circumstances, knowing that God reigns and that He will take care of His work; how much stronger reason have the Saints now to be even more strongly assured, with their past experience added to their present faith and knowledge? The fulfillment of the promises of God in the past, gives us an additional assurance, if such were needed, that those yet to be realized will be as surely fulfilled.

## THE CONFERENCE MEETINGS.

The meetings which have been held during the present Conference have been very numerous attended, and the Spirit of God has been poured out in rich abundance upon speakers and hearers. At some of the meetings the Bowerly was crowded long before the appointed time for commencing service, every inch of ground within hearing distance being occupied, with hundreds around who could not get sufficiently near to hear the words of the speakers.

The unanimity which pervaded the vast congregations can find a parallel nowhere else outside of this Territory, in any assembly, religious or political. It is this union which the enemies of the truth cannot understand nor account for; and, judging by their own evil intents and desires, they dread that it may be employed for purposes such as they themselves would use it for, could they obtain it among those would work with and for them in the accomplishment of their unholy objects. Yet if they were not wilfully and wickedly blind, they could not fail to see in it a practical development and realization of that unity which the Savior declared should exist among those who received and lived according to the Gospel, when he said, "If ye are not one ye are not of me." An increasing knowledge of the truth, and the workings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who receive it, can alone produce such union; and the unanimity existing among the assembled thousands of the Latter-day Saints is one of the grandest and strongest testimonies that could be borne to the world, that their hearts are swayed by the same holy influence, and that the principles of the Gospel are held and observed by them. It is a lesson from which the wise and reflecting among mankind may learn much. It tells that the work of God is growing and increasing, and that the day is hastening on when peace and goodwill shall extend their dominion over the earth; and when "Every man in every place will meet a brother and a friend."

## THIRTY-SIXTH SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Semi-Annual Conference convened in the Bowerly in this city on Saturday morning, Oct. 6th, 1866. President Brigham Young presiding.

On the Stand during the meetings were Presidents Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells, the First Presidency; Orson Hyde, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Amasa M. Lyman, Ezra T. Benson, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow and George Q. Cannon, of the Twelve Apostles; John Smith, Patriarch; Joseph Young, sen., Levi W. Hancock, Albert P. Rockwood, Horace S. Eldredge and John Van Cott, of the Presidency of the Seventies; John Young, Edwin D. Woolley and Samuel W. Richards, the Presidency of the High Priests Quorum; Daniel Spencer and George B. Wallace, of the Presidency of this Stake of Zion; Edward Hunter, Leonard W. Hardy and Jesse C. Little, the Presidency of the Bishoprick; Peter Maughan, presiding Bishop of Cache Co.; Lorin Farr President, and C. W.

West, presiding Bishop of Weber Co.; George D. Watt and Edward L. Sloan, Reporters, with other Elders, and Bishops from various parts of the Territory.

In front of the stand were the Tabernacle choir, led by Elder Robert Sands; the Ogden choir, led by Elder William Pugh; and the Logan choir, led by Elder William Knowles.

The Conference was called to order by President Brigham Young; the Tabernacle choir sang "The Morning breaks." Elder Orson Hyde prayed. Singing "Go ye Messengers of Glory" by the Tabernacle choir.

President B. Young expressed himself that his desires and prayers were and are that the Elders of Israel and all the Saints may have the Spirit of God to such an extent that they may never be deceived; and he asked, would it not be well for the Elders in speaking to bear testimony to the work of the Lord. He bore testimony to its growth, and the growth of the Saints in the principles of eternal life; and inquired, if any had failed to increase in faith and in receiving the revelations of God, who had hindered them from so doing, or taught them anything that would prevent them from receiving any blessing they could desire in righteousness?

Pres. H. C. Kimball spoke in testimony concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of God, quoting the words of Jesus "The Kingdom of God is within you," and showing that those who have rendered obedience to the truth and have the Spirit of the Lord with them and the principles of the Kingdom in their hearts, are the recipients of the blessings expressed in those words. He bore testimony to the Saints, as a people, having increased in righteousness, faith and good works.

Pres. D. H. Wells reasoned upon the promise made by the Lord to His Elders, that if they would go forth without purse and scrip and bear His gospel to the nations they should be fed and clothed and have means put into their hands, and pointed to the realization of that promise by all who had gone forth in faith. Also, the promise made through the Elders that those who would obey the gospel should receive a testimony of its truth, a promise which no impostor could make with the most remote prospect of its being fulfilled. Yet it has been proven true by thousands; and thousands to-day can bear testimony to its truth. He exhorted the Saints to diligence and faithfulness in the performance of the duties which are required at their hands and referred to the rich blessings which we enjoy, blessings of the heaven and the earth, enjoining the necessity of taking care of the grain which the earth has abundantly brought forth this season, and of every blessing, temporal or spiritual; and urged prayerfulness and humanity before the Lord, that the Saints might be preserved from evil.

Singing by the Choir. Prayer by Elder Geo. Q. Cannon.

2 p. m.

Singing by the Ogden choir. Prayer by Elder John Taylor. An original piece, composed by Elder H. W. Naisbett for the occasion, was sung by Elder George Teasdale, chorussed by the Tabernacle choir.

Elder Orson Hyde addressed the congregation in a very instructive manner, quoting the words of Jesus to the Nephites "Then shall the work commence with the Father among all nations &c.," showing by figure and illustration that the work of the Lord for the accomplishment of His purposes has commenced among the nations, and that they are being prepared for desolations and great misery if they will not receive the truth; as the Saints of God are being prepared for unnumbered blessings if they continue faithful. He bore a strong testimony to Joseph Smith being as Prophet of God, and to President Brigham Young being the man appointed and accepted of the Lord to lead His Church since the death of the Prophet Joseph.

Singing by the Logan choir.

Elder John Taylor treated on the order of the organization of the Church of Christ, showing that the churches of modern christendom are wrong in doctrine and organization according to the Bible on which, as a revelation from God, they professedly are based. He referred to his early studies of the Scriptures, and to his being satisfied that the Church of Christ, as organized in the days of Jesus and his immediate disciples, had in it apostles, prophets, helps, gifts and blessings, which were to continue while the Church was recognized and owned by God. These he could not find in the churches of the world; but when he found them, with the power of God, as received through Joseph Smith, he had revealed the message brought with gladness. The

Lord had confirmed to him, as to thousands of others, the truth of the words spoken by His servant. He showed that the preaching of the gospel, the authority of the priesthood, and bearing the testimony of the truth in power to the nations, had gathered all who have come together to keep the commandments of God.

Speaking of testimonies, he said, "God has spoken; the heavens have been opened, and who of the Saints does not know it. He has spoken from the heavens; He is our God; we are His people and we know it; and no power can stay the onward progress of His work."

Singing by the Ogden choir. Prayer by Bishop P. H. Young.

Sunday, 7th, 10 a. m.

The vast Bowerly was crowded to excess, with an interested and attentive congregation, while crowds were compelled to go away, being unable to get within hearing distance of the speakers.

Singing by the Tabernacle choir. Elder Lorenzo Snow prayed. Logan choir sang "Sweet is thy work."

Elder Wilford Woodruff occupied the stand and spoke by way of testimony in a most interesting manner, referring to the way in which the Lord had worked upon him when a young man, before he had heard of the Gospel, preparing him to receive it; and of the manner in which God had worked upon President B. Young and many other Elders, for the same purpose. He also spoke of the efforts of the adversary to destroy those noble spirits who had received the truth at an early day of the Church, and of evil spirits coming to them in numbers at various times and places with this object; bearing testimony of having been so attacked in London, when in company with Elder George A. Smith, and of three angels appearing to him who relieved him from the power and presence of the wicked spirits. This testimony, he said, he had never borne publicly before; and the spirit which accompanied it declared its truth to the immense congregation to whom it was for the first time given. During his remarks he related many interesting incidents of the protecting care which the Lord has exercised over his servants.

Elder John D. T. McAllister sang "I live for those who love me."

Elder Erastus Snow followed, speaking of the gospel being brought to him when a boy in the State of Vermont, and of the power of God which rested upon him sealing upon his heart the truth of the testimony borne to him by Elder O. Pratt who first preached the truth to him. From that time until the present he had been engaged in bearing testimony of the gospel to this and other nations, seeking out the honest-in-heart. He narrated part of his personal history connected with the Church, and some of the persecutions he had endured with his brethren for the truth's sake; and testified that it was and is the power of God and not of man which has ever sustained His servants and controlled the destinies of His work. In bearing testimony to the work of God, he pointed out the effects of the gospel upon those who receive it, and referred to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the simplicity of the doctrines contained in it, and the blessings which are received by those who believe in and accept it as a revelation from God.

Singing by the Ogden choir. Prayer by Elder George D. Watt.

2 p. m.

The congregation was larger and denser if possible than in the morning.

Singing by the Tabernacle choir. Prayer by Elder W. W. Phelps. Singing by the Ogden choir. Sacrament administered by Bishop Hunter and assisting brethren.

President B. Young spoke of the unanimity of feeling enjoyed by all who receive the gospel, and their desires to make known its truths to all the children of men. Mankind can never find out God by any other than the Lord's own appointed way. He referred to his first hearing the gospel, and to the correctness with which the plan laid before him by illiterate men corresponded with the plan laid down in the New Testament; and spoke of the overwhelming testimony by which the work of God was sustained in this age, even in an early day after the organization of the Church. The systems of religion taught among men do not teach mankind, nor have they power to advance them in the knowledge of God. The gospel is the only true philosophy in the heavens or in the earth; and when it is preached to all nations as a witness, then will come the end of the reign of wickedness on the earth.

He reviewed the settlement of this country by the Latter-day Saints; the difficulties which had to be encountered.