

FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

In accordance with an adjournment made at the last semi-annual Conference, held in this Tabernacle, the Forty-Eighth General Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, this 6th day of April, 1878, at 10 a.m. President John Taylor presiding.

Present on the stand:

Of the Twelve Apostles—John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith.

Counselors to the Twelve—John W. Young and D. H. Wells.

Patriarch—John Smith.

Of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies—Joseph Young, Albert P. Rockwood, John Van Cott and Horace S. Eldredge.

Of the Presidency of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion—Angus M. Cannon, David O. Calder and Joseph E. Taylor.

Of the Presidency of the High Priests' Quorum of this Stake of Zion—Elias Morris and Edward Snelgrove.

Of the Presidency of the Bishopric of the Church—Edward Hunter and L. W. Hardy.

The weather being unusually fine, there was a large representation from every Stake of Zion throughout the Territory.

Conference was called to order by President John Taylor.

The choir sang,

Earth with her ten thousand flowers,
Air with all its beams and showers.

Prayer by Elder Orson Pratt.
The choir sang,

Softly beams the sacred dawning
Of the great Millennial morn.

Elder WILFORD WOODRUFF said, the fact that we have a Zion, a church, a kingdom, and a gospel, should fill our hearts with thankfulness and gratitude that we are connected with such blessings, privileges and responsibilities in connection therewith. Reflecting back for nearly half a century, he was sensibly reminded of the few that now remain of the number who took an active and prominent part in laying the foundation of this great latter-day work. This church and kingdom was first organized through the ministration of holy angels from heaven, and had been governed since that time by revelation from God. The stick of Ephraim, which is the Book of Mormon, and the stick of Judah, which is the Bible, are standing testimonies to this generation of the truth of the work of God in these last days. The prophecies in each of these books, either have been, or will be, literally fulfilled to the very letter, notwithstanding the prevalence of the unbelief that so universally exists among this generation.

He then urged on the Latter-day Saints as a community to attend faithfully to the building of temples, that the ordinances of the gospel may be performed for those who are dead. God requires this at the hands of this people, and He will abundantly sustain and bless them in their efforts. Spoke of the inestimable blessings that God vouchsafed to the thousands and tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints when they first embraced the gospel in their own native lands, hence they are a people who have faith in God and will accomplish the great work entrusted to their care. And if we can only obtain eternal life we shall secure the greatest gift that God can bestow on his children. He closed by blessing the whole congregation, and giving a short sketch of his recent visit to St. George and his labor in the Temple.

Elder LORENZO SNOW next addressed the conference. We are dependent for information upon the Holy Ghost. We may be a little neglectful in availing ourselves of the privileges within our reach when we thus meet together. The gospel opens up to our minds a great and glorious future of exaltations to those who are faithful and abide the conditions, and perform the works necessary under the spi-

rit of revelation, which can only be acquired by a life of purity and devotion to the things of God. A knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ is salvation. And the labor imposed upon us by the gospel is of a two fold nature—temporal and spiritual. Such is the character of this dispensation, and the blending of the two together embraces every duty that constitutes the life of a Latter-day Saint. These labors should be characterized by union, according to the revelations of heaven, so that our efforts may be in accordance with the mind and will of God.

No greater joy can be had by the Latter-day Saints, than by acting upon the principles of the United Order, as revealed in the Doctrine and Covenants, and under the guidance of the servants of God who have been appointed under our recent organization, who if they are humble and filled with the Holy Ghost will labor for the good of the people. If the Latter-day Saint ever become a greater and more mighty people than the rest of the nations of the earth, it will not be on account of superior numbers, but on account of our superior principles, and purity of life made manifest day by day. No men occupying a prominence among the Saints can enjoy the confidence and esteem of those over whom they preside, unless their self-sacrificing and unselfish spirit is made manifest for the good of the people. Many are now needed in the various settlements of the Saints, to lead out in the interests of the people, to open up and establish home industries, build school houses, meeting houses, &c. There is a stream of constant enjoyment in laboring for the interest of others, and accomplishing the great work that God has placed upon us.

Elder B. YOUNG bore testimony to the truth. He was satisfied that God was blessing this people notwithstanding our weaknesses. He regretted that infidelity was existing among some of our youth, and wished that a greater bond of union was in our midst. He deprecated the principle of aggrandisement, to the injury of the people. After a few brief and energetic remarks of a practical application, he prayed that God would bless the Saints during this Conference.

The choir sang the anthem—

Resound his Praise.

Conference adjourned till two o'clock.

Benediction by Counselor D. H. WELLS.

April 6th, 2 p. m.

The choir sang,

Come all ye saints who dwell on earth
Your cheerful voices raise.

Prayer by Elder George Q. Cannon.

The choir sang,

Hark, listen to the trumpeters,
They sound to volunteers.

Elder FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS said he shared in joy and gratitude with all true hearted saints for the common blessings that surrounded us to-day. We are not afflicted with the sound of war in our midst or on our borders, neither are we afflicted with a scantiness of daily bread, as in some parts of the earth; none of our people have died from want of the common necessities of life.

He then traced the benefits that thousands in the Territory had realized through our Perpetual Emigration Fund, and those who have been most faithful in paying up their indebtedness to the fund, and the most prompt in paying their tithing, have been among the most blessed and prospered of the whole community. In regard to the laws of the land, there are no people on the face of the earth who can and do more sacredly observe the laws of our country than the Latter-day Saints; and no person could point out a single infraction until the Congress of the United States passed a law, making penal the observance of a commandment which God had given to His people; hence we were driven to decide whom we should obey, God or man, and we most unequivocally preferred to obey God rather than man, and leave the issue in His hands. Notwithstanding the observance of this law it has cost some of the best blood on the earth. We are still determined to make God our friend, and trust Him in the future as we have in the past.

He then spoke of the trouble and calamities that hang over this nation unless they repent of their sins and political chicanery, and

seek after the favor and blessing of God by doing right and sustaining correct principles and practices.

Spoke of the goodly proportion of our population that consisted of children, being one-third at least of our entire people. How important, therefore, it is that they should be taught in their early days to fear God and keep His commandments, that they may be able to resist the evil influences which they will have sooner or later to contend with. Union was next dwelt upon, as one of the vital principles of our holy religion, and which should be thoroughly inculcated in the minds of the young.

He was pleased to find from yesterday's meeting that a brighter feeling was made manifest towards our Co-operative Institution. While many large concerns had been broken up through the pressure of the times, this institution had retained its existence, and announced yesterday a dividend of 2½ per cent. He trusted that every one's confidence towards that institution would increase, and the whole people sustain the same, that it may continue to be a power and blessing in our midst.

Elder ERASTUS SNOW next addressed the congregation. Of all people that dwell on the face of the earth, none are under greater obligations to God than the Latter-day Saints. We have representatives here from nearly every nation under heaven, and we see the various races in this Territory mingling together with their various phases and characteristics. It is not a new gospel or new Christianity that God has revealed, but a fuller development of what existed before. The Christian people of Europe and America have so widely strayed from the simple principles of Christianity as taught in the primitive age, that as a consequence, infidelity stalks through the land. They have lost the keys of power, and it became necessary that God should again reveal those keys in these the latter days. The idea of God having neither body, parts nor passions, was without either reason or Scripture to sustain it. Godliness is not mystery, except to the ignorant; all is simple and easy to comprehend to the mind that is enlightened by the spirit of God. All things are governed by law and are comparatively simple when understood. The crude ores in the mountains, after being manipulated by the science of chemistry, are converted into useful articles of daily life. Our spirits are the express image of our tabernacles, and, united together, the Scriptures inform us, are the ex-duties of our religion, that we may become a kingdom of priests, and entitled to all the blessings and glories that belong to the Holy Priesthood. Our course is onward; let us take courage, and do right, and when the reign of righteousness sets in, whatever glory and happiness we may expect we shall enjoy, if we only continue to faithfully keep the commandments of God.

The choir sang an anthem,
Sing unto God.

Conference was adjourned until 10 o'clock Sunday morning.

Benediction by Elder C. C. RICH.

SECOND DAY.

Sunday, April 7th, 10 a.m.

Conference was called to order by President John Taylor.

The choir sang:

The rising sun has chased the night,
And brought again the cheerful light.

Prayer by Elder BRIGHAM YOUNG.

The choir sang:

To Him who made the world,
The sun, the moon, the stars.

Elder ORSON PRATT read an extract from the Book of Mormon on the subject of "pruning the vineyard for the last time." The servant spoken of in that parable was the great prophet and seer of these last days, Joseph Smith. The words of the parable were the words of an ancient prophet who lived on this continent. Forty-eight years ago, yesterday, the church of Christ was organized with six members, and since that period God has revealed from time to time, a more perfect organization, as the number of its members increased and the necessities of their condition required. Apostles, High Priests, Seventies, Bishops, &c., were ordained to regulate the temporal and spiritual affairs of the church, that no division of feeling or sentiment should exist, but that

union should characterize the whole body politic.

He then defined the duties of the different orders of priesthood, and the responsibilities that attach to their particular position.

This more perfect organization as it now exists, is to fill the purposes and designs of the Almighty, and to bring the Church into one compact body, where union in every sense of the word may abound in the midst of the Saints of the Most High. The union among the people of God in these mountains, as contemplated by our present organization, infringes on no law, and could not consistently be found fault with by any of the inhabitants of this continent. There is no subject, whether of a spiritual, political, or any other nature, in which union of interest and purpose will not prove a great blessing among the people. That is what we are aiming after. He wished the whole world to understand our true position, for we are striving to become one in politics as well as in religion, having the good of the whole people in view, and using no other means but what is strictly constitutional.

Elder GEORGE Q. CANNON said until a few days ago he had no idea of being present on this interesting occasion, but having important business to attend to here he was thankful that one week from last Friday he was enabled to make arrangements, so as to secure leave of absence, and to spend a few days with his brethren in these valleys. We were living in a very important epoch; there was an immense amount of labor to be performed. Responsibilities were thickening around us. And every moment of our time seemed to demand action at our hands. Though small in numbers, we had made a deep impression on the religious, political and scientific world, and he attributed that fact to the power of God that accompanied the career of this people. Each individual wielded an influence for good or evil. It is universally conceded that this Territory stands preeminent for its good government, its sobriety, its morals, and freedom from heavy indebtedness. With these and many other advantages that exist in this Territory, with a population of over fifteen thousand more than the congressional requirement for a State, yet we cannot enjoy the privilege of being admitted into the Union of States. Why? He knew of no other reason than from the fact that we are polygamous in our faith, though its practice was not extensive.

Here is a vast community who in numbers and every other qualification are entitled to a State government, yet are denied that privilege, because a mere moiety of the people practice polygamy. It seems that the nation is determined to give this principle a world wide importance. The time will come, however, when the rights of this people will be not only respected but enjoyed, the dawn of political and religious liberty is already to be seen on the distant horizon; the many wrongs that have been inflicted upon this people, both before and since we came into this Territory, have had a tendency to educate us in the practice of forbearance and toleration, and prepare us more fully to appreciate the true principles of liberty, and the rights of political freedom when it comes, which it most assuredly will, and to extend its benefits to others. He had been trained to regard the constitution as a heaven-born instrument which it was the destiny of the Latter-day Saints to defend when it should be in danger of destruction. He then gave some excellent counsel to the bishops, to be interested in finding employment for every one in their respective wards, also to encourage our young men to marry at a suitable age, and to look after the proper education of our youth. He continued, in a powerful appeal, to urge the importance of having our children thoroughly educated in every domestic and useful employment that will eminently qualify them for any position that they may be called to fill in after life.

The choir sang an anthem.

The Lord will comfort Zion.

Benediction by President Joseph Young.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON,

2 p.m.

The choir sang,

Though deepening trials throng your way,
Press on, press on, ye saints of God.

Prayer by Elder FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS.

The choir sang,
Again we meet around the board
Of Jesus, our redeeming Lord.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered.

President JOHN TAYLOR addressed the Conference. He was gratified to witness the union that existed among the people in regard to the great principles of eternal truth, for therein consisted our strength, and it is in God that we live, and move and have our being. If we ever attain to eternal life, it will be through the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father, and the merits and sacrifices of his Son Jesus Christ our Savior. The God whom we worship is the Father of all the spirits of men that dwell upon the face of the earth, and he controls the destinies of the whole human family. The Lord has in these last days, and for the interests of humanity, revealed His mind and will, and pointed out the way by which we may secure eternal happiness in the celestial kingdom of our God. He has restored again the everlasting Gospel, with all its gifts, power and glory. He has selected his servants, and sent them forth as messengers to the nations of the earth. He has brought us here in accordance with certain eternal principles, which existed in the heavens before the world was. The work we are engaged in is not the work of man, it did not originate with man, but has been prophesied about by all the holy prophets since the creation of the world. It is the dispensation of the fullness of times. Any knowledge that we have received about God has emanated from God, through the ministration of holy angels, and by Himself and His son Jesus Christ, for the purpose of benefitting and blessing the human family. It was not to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, or the Twelve Apostles, that we are indebted for the mind and will of God, except as his ministers. God instructed His servants to go to the world to teach mankind the way of salvation, and not to be taught by them, for they had gone astray from God and His ways. We have been gathered together in these valleys that there might be a people who would listen to the word and will of God and become Saviors upon Mount Zion. If we rightly understood and appreciated our position before God, we should see things very differently to what we now do. We are not here to seek after our own interests and emoluments, but to learn of the laws of life, and teach the people the way of salvation. God is one, those who dwell in his presence are one, and we as a people ought to be one—one in faith, one in practice, one with God, one with the holy angels, one in time and one in all eternity. To secure that oneness, baptism was introduced, that we might all partake of one baptism and enjoy the selfsame spirit, that the Saints might be brought into union with the Almighty, and their united prayers ascend into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. The nations of the earth have their representatives and messengers, with power and authority to act in their behalf; but Joseph Smith was God's chosen minister authorized to establish on earth the Church and Kingdom of God. He also selected others by revelation, press image of God. The mystery with some is how a personage of tabernacle can control the heavenly bodies and hold the planets as it were in a balance, and how and by what power he can be everywhere present. This seems to have been the main cause of such erroneous views as are entertained by the Christian world in relation to God, whom they recognize as being only a spirit. The speaker showed the Scripture doctrine of the Deity, which is made still plainer by the revelations of God in the present dispensation. He then spoke of the importance of the Latter-day Saints attending to the practical such as Apostles, High Priests, Bishops, and all other necessary authorities to regulate the affairs of the Church. The present organization through the various Stakes of Zion is a pattern of what exists in heaven, and was revealed by the Lord to his servants. Our ordinances for the dead are only a part of the same great plan of salvation which we have embraced. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, that we who hold the holy priesthood, should be honorable representatives of God upon the earth. The time will come