

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Sixty-eighth annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m. on Wednesday, April 6th, 1898, 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, Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Matthias F. Cowley and Abraham Owen Woodruff; Patriarch John Smith; of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies—Seymour B. Young, C. D. Fjelstead, B. H. Roberts, George Reynolds and Jonathan G. Kimball; of the Presiding Bishopric—William B. Preston, Robert T. Burton and John R. Winder.

Conference was called to order by President George Q. Cannon.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn which begins:

How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word.

Opening prayer by Elder John Nicholson.

All hail the glorious day,
By Prophets long foretold,
When with harmonious lay,
The sheep of Israel's fold
On Zion's hill his praise proclaim,
And shout Hosanna to His name,
was sung by the choir.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

OPENING REMARKS.

I feel very thankful to have the privilege of meeting with so many of the Latter-day Saints in this, our Sixty-eighth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had my fears that I would not be able to attend this Conference at all, as I have been quite unwell the last month; but the last day or two I have been blessed with better health. It is a great satisfaction to me to have this privilege. I am satisfied myself that there are many thousands in the spirit world, including the Prophet Joseph Smith and other leaders of this Church, who are quite as deeply interested in this Conference and our work today as we possibly can be ourselves. I hope, while we are together, that we may enjoy the Spirit of God; that our minds may be opened, and our teachings and instructions be led in that channel which shall be unto the edification of the Saints and beneficial to us.

The signs of the times show that the Lord has not forgotten His promises, made through the inspiration of Prophets and Apostles in generations that are past and gone. There has been a great change in the world with regard to "Mormonism" the last year of our lives, as shown in the increase of the work and of the labors of the Elders of Israel among all the nations where they have been called to travel. I hope and pray that we may be in a

condition to comprehend our duties to-day and what is lying before us, that the purposes of God concerning us as Latter-day Saints may be carried out. I trust that the Spirit of God may be with not only those who speak and teach during this Conference, but with those also who sit and hear. My prayer to God is that His blessing may be over us, that our minds may be open to comprehend our duties, our blessings, and those things which are required at our hands; that we may be true and faithful in our labors while we dwell in the flesh, so that when we get through we may be satisfied with our labors here, and be justified when we are called to give an account of the deeds done in the body. I say, God bless you. I pray for His Holy Spirit to rest upon us as the Saints of God, and upon those who may address us; which is my desire in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON.

Dawning of a brighter day—Predictions in relation to the work of God—Guided by the Spirit of prophecy—Trials and deliverances, past, present and prospective—the missionary department—Advisability of using women as missionaries.

It is gratifying this morning to see so large an assemblage in this building, at the commencement of our Conference, and it is to be hoped that the interest that is manifested today by those who are present will be maintained during the Conference, that through that interest we may obtain a goodly decree of the Spirit of God, and may all feel, when this Conference closes, that it has been the best Conference we ever attended. This is the usual feeling which those who attend the Conferences experience. At each Conference the blessings of God that are received appear to be greater than ever before, and of course this feeling is produced by the interest that each one has in attending the meetings and in listening to the instructions and drinking into the spirit of the Conference. It is most gratifying to all of us to see President Woodruff and to hear his voice. As he has said, he scarcely expected a few days ago to be able to attend this Conference, suffering as he did from a very

severe attack of cold. But he is here with us, and it is a cause of great satisfaction and pleasure to all to see him and to hear his voice, even if it is only for a brief period.

As President Woodruff has said, the progress of the work is very gratifying. It is an important period in which we are living. A great change has taken place in relation to this work and its bearing upon the nations. No doubt the greater portion of this congregation will remember the promises that were made by the servant of God during the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple five years ago. Predictions were made then that seemed unlikely to be fulfilled, looking at affairs as men naturally look at them. But not a word was said concerning the progress of this work and the favor that it would find from that time forward that has not been literally fulfilled.

As I have said, a great change has taken place in relation to the work of the Lord. It occupies a different position, in many respects, to that which it has ever occupied before. It was a cause of consolation to the Saints, in the dark hours that we witnessed some ten or twelve years ago, to hear the Elders predict that a better day was about to dawn upon the people, and that we should emerge from the trials and difficulties and sorrows of those days with greater influence and more power, more respected as a people than we ever had been. It seemed highly improbable that those predictions would be fulfilled, because the bitterness entertained toward the Latter-day Saints and their religion was so widespread and deep-seated. But those predictions have been fulfilled.

We have often been surrounded by very difficult circumstances, and there have been many times in our history when it seemed as though this work of God would be overthrown and all his purposes brought to naught. Those who have fought against this work have indulged in those anticipations. (The measures which they undertook, and which they endeavored to carry out, had for their object the destruction of this organization and the breaking up of this people. They supposed these measures sufficient to accomplish the ends they had in view. If they had not felt sure of this, they would, with-