

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FIRST DAY.

The Sixty-ninth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints commenced in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 a. m. on Thursday, Oct. 6, 1898, President Lorenzo Snow presiding.

Of the general authorities present on the stand there were of the First Presidency—Lorenzo Snow, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith; of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Mariner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund, Matthias F. Cowley and Abraham Owen Woodruff; Patriarch, John Smith; of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies—Seymour B. Young, 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:

Redeemer of Israel,
Our only delight,
On whom for a blessing we call;
Our shadow by day,
And our pillar by night,
Our King, our Deliverer, our all.

Opening prayer by Elder John Nicholson.

The hymn which begins as follows was sung by the choir:

Zion stands with hills surrounded—
Zion, kept by power divine;
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine;
Happy Zion,
What a favored lot is thine.

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

OPENING REMARKS.

Brethren and sisters, at the commencement of this Semi-Annual Conference I wish to say a few words. I suppose that many of the audience now before me have come from a long distance to meet with us in this general conference; and that all have been moved to gather here by pure motives—by a desire to improve and perfect themselves in matters that pertain to their usefulness in the kingdom of God. In order that we may not be disappointed in this, it becomes necessary that we prepare our hearts to receive and profit by the suggestions that may be made by the speakers during the progress of the Conference, which may be prompted by the Spirit of the Lord. I have thought, and still think, that our being edified does not so much depend upon the speaker as upon ourselves. When we come together on occasions like this we are entitled to

receive something that will be of great importance to us in our lives. We ought to understand—and I presume that we do generally—that the work which we have come into this life to perform cannot be done to the glory of God or to the satisfaction of ourselves merely by our own natural intelligence. We are dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord to aid us and to manifest to us from time to time what is necessary for us to accomplish under the peculiar circumstances that may surround us. It is the privilege of Latter-day Saints, when they get into difficulties, to have supernatural power of God, and in faith, day by day; to secure from the circumstances which may surround us that which will be beneficial and advance us in the principles of holiness and sanctification, that we may as far as possible be like our Father. It certainly is possible to advance ourselves toward the perfections of the Almighty to a very considerable extent, to say the least. In fact, we are commanded to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. From everything that arises, whether it be of a disagreeable nature or of a pleasant character, we should derive information and secure power to serve ourselves in the path of exaltation and glory over which we are moving. I know that we should never have been able to endure the severe trials that we have experienced during the past few years, had we not been gradually educated in times past and prepared to struggle with difficulties as we passed along.

I desire to suggest to the Latter-day Saints this morning that they should not lose sight of the object which has prompted us to gather ourselves together, that we may not return to our homes without having received lessons of encouragement to assist us in the surrounding difficulties. It is impossible for Latter-day Saints to move along in the path of glory we are now treading unless they devote themselves fully and wholly to the work and make the preparation which is absolutely necessary to meet and over-

come the temptations that might otherwise overpower us. Here, I suppose, are brethren and sisters who hold important positions in the Church and have most solemn and pleasing duties to perform, and it is their ardent desire that they may be properly qualified to discharge these sacred duties satisfactorily to themselves and in a way that shall promote the interests of those they preside over.

There is something grand in the consideration of the fact that the Lord loves us with a most ardent love. The love that a woman exercises toward her offspring cannot equal the love that God exercises towards us. He never leaves us. He is always before us, and upon our right hand and our left hand. Continually He watches over us. The antediluvians rejected the Lord in their day. The message which He sent to them was of the highest importance. Upon their acceptance of the message depended their temporal and spiritual salvation. But they rejected it. When the Lord communicates to man that which pertains to his most important interests, it is a solemn and serious thing for him to reject so direct a message. But the antediluvians rejected the message, even the fullness of the Gospel, as it is now preached to us. If they had then embraced the opportunity they might have received the fullness of the Gospel and been prepared, when Christ was crucified and arose from the dead, to receive through the resurrection of their glorious bodies, free from disease and corruption—the most glorious object that ever man set his mind upon. Those people failed to embrace that opportunity; but the Lord did not fail to love them and to have regard for them, and He gave them another opportunity, although it was about two thousand five hundred years afterwards. After Jesus was crucified, He went and visited that people and gave them the opportunity of receiving that which they rejected when Noah proclaimed to them the principles of spiritual and temporal salvation.

Now, in some respects we differ from

any other class of people. Opportunities are before us which are not before them, though at some future time they will have the same opportunities as we have received and acted upon. But our prospects are different from their prospects; things are required at our hands which are not required of them; and there could not be placed before men more glorious prospects than are placed before the Saints. No mortal man could wish anything greater or that will ultimately prove more satisfactory. Everything that pertains to perfect peace, happiness, glory and exaltation is before the Latter-day Saints. We should enjoy the spirit of this, and keep it actively before us. We should not let our prospects be darkened in the least by doing that which is not acceptable before the Lord.

Brethren and sisters, I pray that the Lord may be with us during this Conference; that He may be with those who address you, and especially with you, that you may receive and comprehend some principle or some suggestion that will be of the most sacred importance to you.

The brethren will now address you, and through the exercise of your faith you will be greatly and abundantly blessed; which may God grant, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON.

Condition of missionary fields—Preparation for the ministry—Relating to immigration—Providing employment—efficacy of faith.

The six months that have passed since our last General Conference was held here have not been particularly fruitful in changes in the missionary field, or in any other direction, excepting the loss of our beloved President. The Elders have been blessed in their labors in all the countries where they are endeavoring to propagate the Gospel, and more have returned from their fields than the number of those who have gone. We have, therefore, a smaller number of Elders now in the various fields than we had at our last Conference. There is one thing that has been noticed in the reports that

have come from the fields, and that is, there is more diligence on the part of the missionaries and a better class of work is being done. There has been more care taken in sending out missionaries; more strictness observed to have men go out who would not bring discredit to the name of Latter-day Saint by their indiscretions or by their lack of faithfulness. It may be said, I think, truthfully, that the standard is being raised. Our young men are entering more into the spirit of the work, and are seeking to qualify themselves in a manner that will be more acceptable to the Lord and more satisfactory to their fellow servants. There is plenty of room for improvement in this respect. There was a time—probably many of you can remember—when if a man were called on a mission it was frequently asked what he had done that he should be called on a mission. But now the question is asked, if a man is eligible and not called, "What have I done that I should not be called to go and preach the Gospel?" I think that is the rule at the present time among the Saints throughout Zion. It is looked upon as an honor to go out and preach the Gospel. I was talking to several strangers last night, and we were conversing about our sending out missionaries, and how quickly they responded to the call. I remarked that a young man was always looked upon more favorably by the gentler sex if he were called on a mission than he would be if he were not called. I believe this is true. I believe the girls among us look with favor upon the young men who are called to go on missions, and they feel that their lovers are slighted if they are not called when they are at the proper age; and if they marry, they feel as though their husbands are not taken notice of as they should be if they are not called. This is a good spirit and feeling.

We want our young men to qualify themselves for this labor. Education is easily procured now. There was a time, in the early days, when education was not common—that is, it was not uncommon for very able men to