

FIFTIETH SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FIFTH DAY.

SUNDAY, Oct. 10, 1880, 10 a. m.

The congregation was called to order by President John Taylor, and the choir sang the hymn "The morning breaks, the shadows flee." Prayer was offered by Elder Edward Partridge, and the hymn, "Arise, the glorious Zion" was sung.

APOSTLE ORSON PRATT

was the first speaker. He intended to speak on the divine authority of the priesthood. We have in this Church several thousand male members who hold authority and power which we say is from heaven. If it be from heaven, then the Lord has manifested His mercy in once more bestowing the great power on man. But if on the other hand, it be not from heaven, as our enemies say, we are on the same platform as the world with its various denominations and so-called religious, we are as well off as the balance. We are not indebted to man for the authority we possess, man is not the origin of this world. God has established it and he did not do it all at once. Authority of some kind was bestowed before there was any church, it was so in the finding of the golden plates and the translation of the records. This did not confer the priesthood on Joseph Smith, but it was a portion of divine authority. Joseph held not the priesthood of fleshly ordination when he brought forth the Book of Mormon, but he held a priesthood conferred upon him long before the foundation of the world. We have also learned that all the faithful have had this conferred upon them before the world was made; of this we learn in the *Pearl of Great Price*, where it speaks of the noble ones chosen by the Lord before the world was. Abraham was among that number, and all the high priests who lived from Adam down to the flood. The ordinance of the priesthood was without a beginning and an end; it is being handed down from all ages. We have read in the revelation given on the 22d of Sept., 1832, that without the ordination of the priesthood none can see the face of the Lord and live. In the spring of 1820 the boy Joseph called on the Lord and he had a heavenly vision, seeing the glory of the light of God descending upon him from Heaven which took him high up, so that he beheld the Father and Son and heard the words of the mouth of the Father. Joseph could see this vision and live, because he had been ordained to the priesthood of endless life before the worlds were made. He had been ordained and set apart to introduce the great and glorious work of the preparation for the coming of the Son of Man. After a while, the prophet had the priesthood reconfirmed upon him, on May 15th, 1820, by Peter, James and John, and he received the keys of the Atonement, priesthood and the authority to administer to all the sacred ordinances of the kingdom. The Lord saw proper, after, to build little by little one portion of the priesthood after the other. In June, 1829, he called twelve men to be Apostles. About this body and its callings we knew nothing except what the Lord revealed through his servant Joseph. Some of the Twelve fell away, others retained their standing. After this, Seventies were ordained to work under the direction of the Twelve. Many were called, a few of them were unfaithful and eventually slid out of the Church. Of their duties we were ignorant at the time until the Lord revealed it and set out their duties, pointing out the way in which they were to be organized. He also revealed the principles of their presidency. All was not revealed at once, as we were little children and could not bear it. The Lord gives us knowledge little by little, precept upon precept, just as wise parents give their children the education by degrees. By and by, after the Church was organized, the Lord saw fit to install bishops to take proper care of the property, when, on June 2d, 1831, He revealed at a general conference His will that they should flee from the state of New York and go to Kirtland, Ohio, to escape the wicked plottings of the ungodly. Then there were men set apart to take care of the property, so that the people could leave without incumbrance. The Lord deals with the people according to His own pleasure, and so after the Saints had come to Kirtland, Edward Partridge was ordained a bishop. At that time there were no high priests existing in the Church, and therefore Bishop Partridge was bidden (Feb. 4, 1831) to choose his assistants or counselors from among the Elders. On Apr. 6th, 1830, there was nothing said about high priests, neither about bishops; the two paragraphs referring to such offices in the revelation of the above date, were afterwards added by the Prophet Joseph, to make the revelation more full and comprehensive. Afterwards the high priesthood was instituted after the order of the Son of God, Bishop Partridge had his many duties assigned to him in Kirtland and after in Jackson Co., Missouri. The speaker here gave a historical sketch of the founding of the Colesville branch, southwest of Kirtland, showing the Lord's dealings with His people. In the latter part of summer 1831 Bishop Partridge had further revelations, in regard to dividing the land he had been directed to purchase for the Church, under the law of consecration. We see a great difference between the duties assigned to Bishop Partridge and those imposed on our present ward bishops. Not long after Newell K. Whitney was also appointed a bishop, Bishop Partridge having the general jurisdiction over Missouri, Illinois and Indiana, while Bishop Whitney had jurisdiction in the eastern countries, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. They were both general, but not presiding bishops. The Lord gave a revelation, after the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri wherein Vincent Knight and others were appointed presiding bishops. After Bishop Partridge's death, Elder Millard was ordained in his place as general bishop. By and by it became necessary to have local bishops here and there, to be bishops of wards. Thus we have three distinct callings of bishops, each with its own duties and privileges circumscribed. At present we have no general bishop in the Church, as far as the speaker's knowledge goes. In every stake of Zion we find what is called a bishop's agent, whose duty it is to attend to the temporal affairs,

wherein his jurisdiction extends over that of local bishops. The Lord has thus ordained and ordered all things pertaining to His Kingdom. The City of Zion, when it will be built in Jackson County, will not be a stake, but the headquarters, the center of the Kingdom where Christ will reign in His glory. We are swelling and increasing in numbers and power and our stakes will be more numerous, our cords lengthened. The speaker prophesied that the time will come when the Lord will so manifest His power, that all those who will not believe in the Book of Mormon shall be cut off from among the people. Zion will shine forth in the night and glory of the Lord and the people who have been left after the great destruction will acknowledge the Lord and His people. Hence, as we and our work are growing, we require additional powers and offices to do justice to the increasing responsibilities. In the organization of the First Presidency, soon after the Church was established, the Lord showed His will with regard to the order of government. The Twelve have done their great work in traveling abroad to preach the gospel and also of setting all things in order. They have acted as a presiding council, as the supreme authority in the case of vacancy in the First Presidency. Thus they did after the Prophet Joseph's death until the First Presidency was organized. They have again acted in such a calling since the death of President Young, in 1877. They have, however, realized the lack of some one important counsel, the council of the First Presidency. They had taken the matter in mature advisement and had now filled the vacancy in the First Presidency, whereby, three vacancies in the Apostles' Quorum occurred. Two of them have been filled and the third will also be supplied, thus completing all the various organizations of the Holy Priesthood, for the glory of the Lord.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

then arose to announce that in the afternoon the matter of the complete organization of the Church would be laid before the general conference, for the sanction of the people.

APOSTLE GEO. Q. CANNON

indicated the various positions which the different quorums of the priesthood were expected to occupy in the afternoon, for the purpose of acting on the matter indicated by President Taylor.

The services were brought to an end by an anthem, Benediction by Elder Wilford Woodruff.

two P. M.

President John Taylor called the congregation, which was the most numerous of this conference, to order. The choir sang the hymn, "Oh God, our help in ages past." Elder Albert Carrington invoked the Almighty, and the hymn, "O God the Eternal Father" was delivered by the full choir.

Elder Orson Pratt then presented the general authorities of the Church to the vote of the conference. The first few votes were taken by quorums, in the following order: first the council of the Twelve; then the patriarchs, presidents of stakes and their counselors, and the high counselors, next the high priests, seventies, elders, bishops and their counselors, priests, teachers and deacons, then the presidents of all the different quorums and finally the entire congregation, male and female.

The following authorities were presented and all of them unanimously sustained by the quorums as well as by the entire congregation:

John Taylor, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and prophet, seer and revelator.

Geo. Q. Cannon, first counselor, and Joseph F. Smith, second counselor to President Taylor.

Wilford Woodruff, president of the council of the Twelve Apostles.

The twelve apostles, or nine of them with the counselors, as follows, were then voted for in the manner that the others had been: W. Woodruff, O. Pratt, sen., C. C. Rich, Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Albert Carrington and Moses Thatcher, of the Twelve, and John W. Young and Daniel H. Wells as their counselors. The vote was unanimously in the affirmative.

Francis Marion Lyman was nominated and seconded for an apostle in the Council of the Twelve. The name went through the same process of voting, with a result similar to the others.

John Henry Smith was also named for a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and unanimously sustained.

After these nominations the vote was taken in the old manner, by the whole congregation at once uplifting their right hands.

The counselors to President Taylor, the Twelve and their Counselors were unanimously sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators. Then followed the rest of general authorities and officers of the church.

Patriarch of the Church—John Smith.

As the first seven presidents of the Seventies—Joseph Young, Levi W. Hancock, Henry Herriman, Horace S. Eldredge, Jacob Gates, John Van Cott and W. W. Taylor.

The presiding bishop of the Church, Edward Hunter, with Leonard W. Hartly and Robert T. Burton as his counselors.

John Taylor, as Trustee-in-Trust for the body of religious worshippers known and recognized as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, to hold the legal title to its property and contract for it.

The Twelve Apostles, their two counselors and Bishop Edward Hunter as counselors to the Trustees-in-Trust.

Albert Carrington, as president of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund for the gathering of the poor, and F. D. Richards, F. M. Lyman, H. S. Eldredge, Joseph F. Smith, John W. Young, Angus M. Cannon, Moses Thatcher, Wm. Jennings, John K. Thatcher, Henry Dinwoodie, Robert F. Burton, A. O. Snow and H. B. Cannon as his assistants.

Orson Pratt, a historian and general church recorder, and Wilford Woodruff as his assistant.

Truman O. Angel, as general architect of the church, and E. O. Angel, jun., and Wm. H. Folsom as his assistants.

As auditing committee—W. Woodruff, E. Snow, F. D. Richards and J. F. Smith.

George Goddard as clerk of the general conference.

George F. Gibbs as Church reporter.

On presentation of Elder George Q. Cannon and motion of Elder Joseph F. Smith the new revised edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price were unanimously accepted by the conference, as containing the revelations of the Lord, binding upon all Latter-day Saints.

Elder Cannon read a list of amounts of P. E. Fund indebtedness recommended for remittance by the presidency of the various stakes of Zion, and passed upon by the president of the P. E. Fund Company as follows: In Bear Lake Stake, principal and interest together, \$12,323.67; Beaver Stake, \$3,147.32; Box Elder Stake \$9,608.94; Cache Stake, \$22,896.55; Davis Stake, \$20,477.70; Juab Stake, \$3,571.53; Kanab Stake, \$1,092.35; Millard Stake, \$5,391.85; Morgan Stake, \$10,559.86; Parowan Stake, \$6,919.74; Sanpete Stake, \$27,291.96; Salt Lake Stake, \$103,615.19; Sevier Stake, \$5,824.84; Summit Stake, \$6,532.34; St. George Stake, \$7,950.55; Tooele Stake, \$21,002.85; Utah Stake, \$53,560.60; Wasatch Stake, \$9,261.27; Pangwitch Stake, \$981.53. Total, \$337,015.64. Weber, Little Colorado and eastern Arizona no reports.

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

now arose, during the administration of the sacrament. It was a source of gratification for him, he said, that all the various organizations of the Church had been properly provided for. He explained how the Twelve had acted in the capacity of the First Presidency, since the death of President Young, just as they did for some time, after the death of the Prophet Joseph. The Twelve had magnified their calling and he, the speaker, might have preferred to leave the authority remain with them, if it had been the will of the Lord. But no one has a right to change the plan that God has instituted. The spirit of God had suggested to him the necessity of having the First Presidency of the Church filled, and his brethren of the Twelve had coincided with him when he stated the matter to them. It was also gratifying for him to see the oneness of feeling and the united sentiment manifested in the votes of the people on the new organization. Such votes could not be found elsewhere, but here in truth the voice of the people was the voice of God. The speaker then referred to the Council of the Twelve who had displayed an unequalled sense of duty and willingness to conform with the will and mind of the Lord. He also prayed that the spirit of oneness and unity manifested by the people in this conference should be continued in all things, and blessed all who loved God and feared Him and tried to keep His commandments, by virtue of the Holy Priesthood, in the name of Jesus Christ.

ELDER WILFORD WOODRUFF

also arose and bore testimony to the truth of this work. He also mentioned how he had often seen the Prophet Joseph in dreams, since his death, and also President Young, Brother Kimball and Jedediah Grant, and closed with an impressive exhortation to the Saints to remain steadfast and firm in the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The meeting came to its close by the singing of the hymn "The spirit of God like a fire is burning," in which the whole congregation joined, standing. The benediction was pronounced by Elder Joseph F. Smith, and Conference adjourned until April 6th, 1881, at 10 a. m.