

1850.

Fifty Years of Progress.

1900.

In the Church.

SUCH are to be the limitations of this article that it can only be written in head lines. My purpose will require a statement of the conditions prevailing with reference to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the 15th of June, 1850, and the conditions prevailing now, in order that the progress of the past fifty years may be to some extent at least observed and understood.

And first as to temporal conditions: The Church was then pioneering Utah. Less than three years before, President Brigham Young's company of Pioneers had entered Salt Lake Valley. Here these advanced agents of the organization to follow pitched their tents, began cultivating the parched and sterile land, and sent back the joyous word to the fellow exiles en route for the West, and to their co-religionists in the East that a resting place had been found for the ex-patriated Church.

During the three years which had elapsed from the advent of the pioneers to the commencement of the period to be considered, settlements had been made in Davis and Weber counties to the north; in Utah and Sanpete counties to the south, and in Tropic and Hatch in the settlement in Salt Lake Valley. Salt Lake City though laid out on its present spacious plan was not yet an incorporated city, and its population was not more than five thousand. Utah had not yet been organized under her subsequent territorial form of government; she existed only the provisional government of the State of Deseret, and that was not recognized by the government at Washington; it subsisted and its laws were enforced because voluntarily honored by the people.

The Church members outside of the few settlements in Utah above mentioned were scattered chiefly between these and Nauvoo. The settlement at Nauvoo, founded by the Saints, and a resting place for them through the troubled years, was in the hands of strangers if not enemies. The Temple at Nauvoo, erected by the Saints in the days of their poverty and at much sacrifice was a mass of ruins. A few of the only twenty days before the opening of our period, having completed the year begun two years before by the hand of an incendiary; so that there was no place where the work pertaining to the dead and the enjoyment of a living could be performed. Schools, colleges and auxiliary associations had practically none, and but little prospect of having these adjuncts of progress and refinement for many years to come. They were doomed to a hard struggle for existence in a sterile land, with a hundred chances to one, to all human appearances, against their success.

This was the condition of the Church as to temporal concerns. And now as to things spiritual:

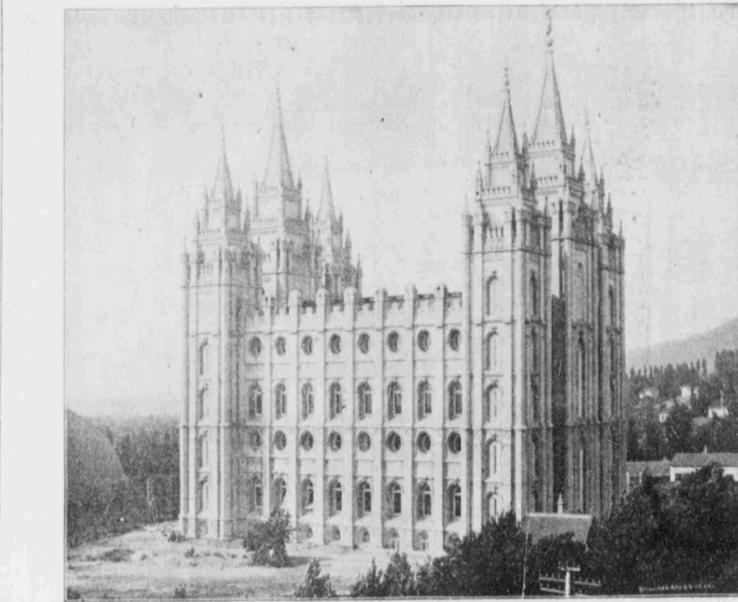
It was doubtless appointed unto Joseph Smith, the Prophet, to complete in his lifetime the introduction of all the fundamental doctrines pertaining to the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times; and to lay the complete foundation for the holy Church of God; so that all the members of the Church of God should be able to understand the principles of the Kingdom of God on earth, and to be able to apply them to their own souls, and to be able to apply them to the souls of others.

The latter part of the year preceding the opening of our period had witnessed a revival of the missionary spirit and labor in the Church. Several of the Twelve Apostles had been sent abroad to open the door of the Gospel to foreign nations; Elder John Taylor was sent to France and Germany; Lorenzo Snow to Switzerland and Italy; and Elias Amos to Scandinavia. But as these Elders did not reach their fields of labor and open their missions until after the middle of June, 1850, the beginning and success of the work in these and many other lands belong to the progress of the last fifty years. Previous to this the Gospel had been proclaimed in most of the States of the American Union, some parts of Canada, in the British Islands, and in the Society Islands of the South Pacific. As yet the Book of Mormon and other Church literature had been published in the English language only. With the extension of the Saints from Nauvoo the several periodicals published by the Church, both those in Illinois and in the east, were discontinued; but at Winter Quarters, on the opposite

side of the Missouri from Council Bluffs, the Frontier Guardian was published; and the publication of the Millennial Star was continued in England.

Another thing to be considered with reference to the spiritual condition existing at the commencement of the period under review, is, the condition of the flock, never sated, and the confusion consequent upon that event resulted in making strict discipline all but impossible. Many in those days wandered away beyond the care of the shepherds of the flock, never sated, and the tree of God's planting could not be carefully watched, or digged about or watered or pruned. To add to the confusion and troubles of those days, a number of men, ambitious of distinction or notoriety, or both, took advantage of the troublous times and claimed to be the legal successors to the Prophet Joseph as President of the Church; and many Saints in the scattered branches, but newly instructed in the faith, and with but little knowledge concerning the order of the Priesthood, were led away by their sophistries. Thus our period opens with the Church more or less in agitation. An incomplete exodus from the east under way; the work of pioneering a new country with the attendant hardships born of poverty and isolation to be endured; as yet nothing settled with reference to the civil government under which they were to live; exiled from the city they had founded; the temple they had bulded in ruins; driven from civilization to inhabit the wilderness and the desert, and be the neighbors to the savage. The Saints were without influence among men in the world—none so poor as to do them reverence; human sympathy was withdrawn from them; their countrymen looked for their extinction; profane scoffers, and the scoffers of the world, hoped for it; their devotion to their faith was sneered at and called fanaticism; by some they were deemed mad; by others, fools led by knaves; few cared them, fewer helped them, though their condition was such, one would think, to soften adamant hearts; unfriended were they, except as God was their friend—all this on the one hand. On the other, they were possessed of a true and holy faith in God, to them had been committed a dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the Priesthood, the authority of God, which alone may administer his ordinances to men or make proclamation of it to the world; within them was the consciousness that they were the children of God; the assurance that they were the Church of the First-born; a knowledge that the covenant they had made with the Lord by sacrifice was accepted. This was their strength. And now let the curtain fall to raise again after half a century has passed away.

Behold a land redeemed! A desert reclaimed and given to fruitfulness and to civilization! The wilderness and the solitary places have been made glad for them, and the land has blossomed as the rose; the parched ground has become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. The few and scattered settlements of fifty years ago have multiplied and expanded into commonwealths—States of the American Union. I use the plural advisedly, for the influence of "Mormon" colonization has not been confined to Utah alone. From Canada in the north, along the line of the Rocky Mountain range, the settlements of the Saints extend into Mexico. From occupying a few straggling settlements a thousand miles beyond the frontiers of the United States, and some thousands preserve along the line of their march into exile, the Church now possesses a habitation in Utah and several surrounding States and Territories in western Canada and Mexico. A habitation permanent, and in a land chiefly redeemed by the industry and enterprise of the Saints. A habitation which affords opportunity for the development of the genius of "Mormonism." A land which enforces industry in order to live upon it, and yet a land which yields to the husbandman a rich return for his toil. A habitation sufficiently removed from the overcrowded centers of population east and west to escape contact with some of the worst evils that riot there; and yet sufficiently in contact with those centers to reap the advantages of modern civilization. And here Israel is growing in numbers—indeed the little one has already become a multitude, having increased from less than fifty thousand souls to something like three hundred thousand; and from possessions scattered in frontier settlements to dwell in, to more than five hundred cities, towns and villages where peace, prosperity and liberty prevail. So here Israel in a favored habitation is increasing in numbers, and growing firmer in the faith and the knowledge of God. The confusion resulting from the death of the Prophet and the expulsion from the east has been passed away, and is succeeded by the most perfect order. The Church in its various gathering places is organized into forty-two Stakes of Zion, each with its presidency of three High Priests, and its High Council of twelve. The respective ecclesiastical



THE SALT LAKE TEMPLE.

The Temple is the most striking building in Salt Lake City, and the total cost of the building and grounds is \$3,469,118. It is built entirely of granite, and the corner stone was laid on April 6th, 1853, while it was finished and dedicated on April 6th, 1893, representing forty years of labor.

Following are the dimensions: Length, including towers, 185 1/2 feet; width, 99 feet; height of rock work on central east tower, 210 feet; height of rock work on central west tower, 204 feet; height of walls of main building, 107 1/2 feet; thickness of walls from footing to first floor, 9 feet; thickness of walls from first floor to top of building, 6 feet; thickness of buttresses, 7 feet.

The building rests upon a footing wall 16 feet thick and 16 feet deep, and covers an area of 4,850 feet. The figure of the Angel Moroni on the center east tower is the work of Sculptor C. E. Dallin, and is 12 feet, 5 1/2 inches high. It is made of hammered copper, heavily gilded with gold leaf. All of the exterior and most of the interior walls are of solid granite, hewn to the square, with the outside courses worked up to a smooth finish.

The ornamental parts, representing the sun, moon and stars, the finials, the stories for the towers, the 800 solid granite steps, each 6 feet in width, extending from the top to the bottom of the building at the four corner towers, were all hewn at great expense, some of the stones costing more than \$100 each to cut. Owing to the peculiar conditions under which the work was commenced, it is difficult to arrive at the exact cost of the building. In the earlier days, when it required four yoke of oxen and four days' time to bring a single stone from the quarry to the Temple, a distance of 20 miles, the progress was slow and the expense high. In 1873, when the railroad was built, the work proceeded with much more rapidity and at a smaller cost. The estimates upon which the total cost, given above, is based, are as follows: From 1853 to 1883, the average cost was \$75,000 a year, or a total of \$2,250,000; for the years 1883, 1889 and 1890, the cost was \$256,146; the last three years of the work, from 1891, cost \$662,972.

wards comprising these Stakes are presided over by bishops—common judges and fathers in Israel, assisted by quorums of Priests, and Teachers and Deacons to jealously guard the Saints in righteousness and truth. Under this organization discipline is regular, order supreme, the lives of the people simple, and, on the whole, innocent. Uncertainty as to Church membership there is none. The order of succession in priesthood and presidency is well known and settled. The Saints have learned that the Church is greater than any man, however great he may be. They have learned that men may come and—however powerful and unopposed for the time necessary as leaders—men may go, even such men, but the Church survives their going and thrives—indeed its progress is uncheckered by their going.

Instead of one temple in ruins and no place on earth where the Lord might come and restore that which had been taken away, even the ruins of the priesthood, and not a spiritual fort on the earth where the Saints might be baptized for the dead, as it was half a century ago, there are now four temples where this work may be performed, and in them more work has been done for the dead than for the living in this generation.

From being practically without the means for educating the youth of her people, the Church is now so situated that her children possess every facility for education enjoyed by other people of our country east or west; and in addition to the common and high school, academy and university advantages provided by the secular authority, the Church herself has established in many of her Stakes schools of the high school and academic grade where, in addition to the ordinary secular courses are prescribed in theological studies in harmony with her doctrines. Nor do her efforts at spiritual and moral education stop at this. She has provided auxiliary associations for such instruction. Among these a Sunday school system, which, while it might sound like vain boasting to say it, is, I believe, the most perfect in the world. In addition to this, too, improvement societies exist in each ecclesiastical ward for the growth of both sexes, and for the same purpose private

associations for the very young. All of which have been developed within the period under review.

Since the opening of our period of fifty years, missions have been opened and the Gospel preached in the following countries: France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Italy, Switzerland, Jersey Islands, Hindostan, Malta, Cape of Good Hope, Mexico, among a number of Indian tribes in the Western States and Territories of the United States, Sandwich Islands, Samoa, Friendly Islands, New Zealand, Turkey and Palestine, while the number of missionaries engaged in preaching the Gospel has been increased from a score or two at most, to eighteen hundred. Instead of the precious word of God as contained in the record of the Nephites being confined to the English language, the Book of Mormon is published in ten other languages, viz: French, German, Danish, Italian, Dutch, Welsh, Swedish, Spanish, Hawaiian and Maori. It has also been translated, but not yet published into Hindostanee and modern Hebrew; the Doctrine and Covenants also has been published in several European languages.

Instead of the Church publishing one semi-monthly periodical in England, and another in a frontier settlement in the United States, it now has the Deseret News, as Church organ, fifty years old today, published daily in the chief city of the Saints and of the inter-mountain West; the Millennial Star is also still published in England, but is issued weekly instead of semi-monthly. Another periodical of like character and issue is published in the Scandinavian language, and another in the German for the Swiss and German mission. Periodicals are also published in the Southern and Southwestern States missions respectively; while monthly and semi-monthly magazines are published by the auxiliary associations of the Church. These periodicals together with the rapid multiplication of books, setting forth the history and the doctrine of the Church, and written in advocacy and defense of the faith, are gradually bringing into existence a stately literature for the Church of Christ, and she is destined yet to be an educational factor in the earth. Ignorance is not the handmaid of the Church. On the contrary, knowledge is her handmaid, science her knaveship, and the arts her servants and history her prophet, and is, and shall be, yet more abundantly, her vindication. Of all churches, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was destined and during the past fifty years has been brought to the one most in harmony with the spirit of the age. The knowledge which men, by slow degrees and painful toil, are acquiring concerning the heavens, the earth, the atmosphere, the ocean, the secrets they are wresting from nature as to her processes; the mastery they are winning over her forces; the development of instant communication, the rapid transit over ocean and continent—all, all are but the fulfillment of her prophecies which she ventured in the early years of her existence to promulgate concerning the development of earth's glories, man's powers and God's greatness and goodness. These and other forces yet to be brought to light have been and will be the means under God's hands of preparing the earth for the abode of men and women redeemed and sanctified through the work of the Church—God's agency to bring about the moral and spiritual preparation in man that will fit him for the glorious sphere of the Almighty and All Glorious Father is preparing for him.

The progress in the work of God so far indicated results from the direct means employed. And should we undertake to trace the progress made by indirect forces that have also been at work I should enter upon a field too extensive for this writing. But I cannot forbear directing attention to the fact that such indirect forces have been operating to spread abroad the great truths which God revealed to His Church through His servant Joseph Smith. Tens of thousands have accepted those truths, many without knowing the source whence they flowed, and others while knowing it, kept it concealed. But whether known or unknown, whether preached of envy or of good will, the revealed truth of God nevertheless has won its way in the earth, and is gradually sapping the foundation of false systems, religions, and already has rendered impossible the perpetuation of many of the theological tenets of a century ago concerning the nature of God, man's relation to Him, and the limitations of salvation. In these and many other things a great revolution has taken place; and while not claiming that the Church has been the only agency in bringing the progress about, I speak both within the lines of truth and modestly, when I say, the Church has been the chief agency in bringing about the changes which mark a wonderful progress toward more rational conceptions of God and man and the means provided for man's redemption. And this progress belongs largely to the period of the last fifty years.

The progress I have endeavored to point out, it should be remarked, has not been achieved without meeting many and serious obstacles. Of opposition there has been plenty. The enemies of the Church by misrepresentation and willful slander have done what they could to stay her progress. These have rendered the progress of the Church more remarkable—more like what truly it has been—a triumphant march over every opposing power.

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ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY.

One of the notable achievements of the half century just closed was the freeing of over 4,000,000 slaves in the United States, and Lincoln's emancipation proclamation of 1863 practically sounded the death knell of slavery throughout the civilized world. The first slaves brought to the country were brought over in a Dutch vessel and sold at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1620. Prior to 1750, about 150,000 slaves had been brought into the colonies, and the number was doubled by 1776. By 1780, the slave population had increased to 400,000. In 1810, the number was 1,191,964. The next decade brought the total up to 1,538,038. In 1830 the number was 2,069,043. By 1840 the slave population had reached 2,487,435, and in 1850 the number was 2,894,213. In 1860, three years before the emancipation proclamation, the number of slaves in the United States was 3,952,801. The present negro population of the United States is over 15,000,000, as announced by Booker T. Washington, at Atlanta, Ga., one year ago.

The Sunday School.

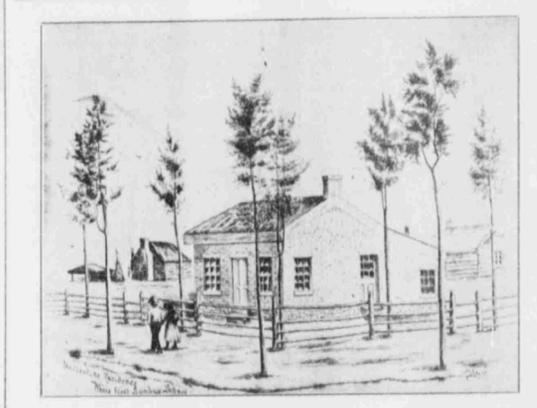
FIFTY years ago yesterday the first copy of the Deseret News was issued. The semi-centenary of the Sunday schools of Utah came a little earlier, as the first Sunday school in this inter-mountain region was held Sunday, December 9th, 1849. This, however, was not the first Sunday school of the Saints, as one existed for a short time in Nauvoo, of which today but little can be learned. The first Utah Sunday school was held in a small adobe house in the Fourteenth ward, Salt Lake City, at the corner of what are now known as First West and Third South streets. It owed its existence to the zeal and devotion of Elder Richard Ballantyne, who was its first superintendent. Elder Ballantyne was indefatigable as a Sunday school worker and in later years established schools in Nephi, Plain City, Fifteenth ward, Salt Lake City, and, I believe, other places, and was at the time of his death the Stake Superintendent of these institutions in the Weber Stake of Zion.

The first Sunday school, as may be readily supposed, was a very primitive affair, and so were many that followed after. In those early days every school

larger Stake there is a corps of Sunday school missionaries. All these brethren are expected to visit the schools as often as possible. All the schools, except the very small ones, when fully organized, have the following officers: a superintendent, first and second assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretary, choir leader, librarian, assistant librarian, treasurer and sufficient teachers. It is not always that the largest schools are the best, or that even the best schools are to be found in our chief cities. Far from it. Some of the most perfect schools are sometimes found in remote villages, so much depends on the diligence, wisdom, intelligence, zeal and tact of the presiding officers.

All the schools of ordinary proportions are divided into four departments—the Primary, the First and Second Intermediate and the Theological or High-er. In the very large schools these departments are sometimes divided into two or more sections. In some schools there are also kindergarten and normal departments. When a department is divided into sections it is understood that those sections all study the same lessons and are under the direction of the head teacher of the department. A departure from this order entails confusion and delays progress.

Every year a Sunday school conference is held in each of the Stakes of Zion, at all of which one or more of the general board attend. This helps to



House Where First Sunday School in Utah Was Held.

(By Courtesy of S. S. Union.)

"did the best it could" according to its advantages and environment. There was no Deseret Sunday School Union to give counsel, direct, unify and solidify. There were no Stake organizations to aid in this good work. Every Sunday school followed its own devices, its scholars were taught according to the best light its teachers possessed, often hampered greatly by the lack of proper books and other appliances, and the time of gathering differed according to the judgment of the officers, or was influenced by local conditions.

It is not surprising that many of the early schools were short lived, some closed as others opened. But year after year the numbers increased until the move of the Church south in 1858, which migration effectually closed, for the time being, the schools established in the northern parts of the Territory. Indian raids had, indeed, previous to this, been the cause of the closing of a number of schools in the south, either temporarily or permanently. In the early sixties Sunday schools increased, and within a few years they sprang up in all parts of the country then settled.

In the schools of the earlier years the scholars almost universally brought their own books, and they were few. The exercises were largely confined to the reading of the Bible. Very little besides reading was done. In many schools classes were devoted to teaching the scholars to read, and McGuffey's Readers and the like were much in evidence. This lack of books was the great drawback of those days, and strange to relate, considering our present ideas of the advantages of the Sunday schools, another obstacle was the indifference and, once in a while, the opposition manifested by the ward and local authorities. A few not realizing that Sunday schools were "the nurseries of the Church," gave them the cold shoulder as sectarian innovations. But times have changed, we know better now. In those early days the singing also was very primitive. There were no organs and hymn books were scarce, and again, the hymns sung did not appeal to the hearts and understandings of the children, as there were at that time no special hymn and song books published for the use and adapted to the comprehension and tastes of our juvenile population.

So for years the Sunday school cause languished in Zion. Elder George Q. Cannon gave it a fresh start on his return, in 1864, from presiding in the European mission. In 1866 he commenced the publication of the "Juvenile Instructor," which has done a world of good in its sphere. This was followed by the organization of the Deseret Sunday School Union in 1867; but it was not until 1872 that the union fairly took hold of matters and gradually gave to the Sunday schools the unity, the strength and the excellence that now distinguish so many of them, and make them the great power for good in the midst of the people of God, which we are all pleased to acknowledge. President George Q. Cannon has been from the first the head or general superintendent of the union. For some time he had no assistants. Then Elder George Goddard was sustained as his only assistant, and later Elder John Morgan became his second assistant. After Elder Morgan's death Dr. Karl G. Maeser was appointed to fill his place, but no one has yet been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the more recent death of Brother Goddard.

Besides the general board of the union each Stake of Zion has now a Stake superintendency, secretary, treasurer, librarian, etc., and in some of the

solidify and unify the work of the schools. In November, 1888, the first convention of the Sunday schools of the Church was held. It was a remarkably large, the enthusiasm unexpected. The good that was done cannot be satisfactorily stated. Another, the second, convention will be held in Salt Lake City next November, when everything possible will be done to keep it abreast of its predecessor in excellence, harmony and effectiveness.

During the period of its existence the union has published numerous works—books, music, charts, leaflets, etc., that have greatly aided and strengthened the work of religious education. A special committee is now engaged in preparing an exhaustive illustrated history of the Church Sunday schools from the inception of the work to the present time, and anyone who is acquainted with what writing, original history means, knows that labor such an enterprise entails.

Our first Sunday school (1849) numbered, all told, about fifty souls. In 1872 the number—officers, teachers and scholars—was not less than 16,000. Our statistics are not complete, but the largest of all the schools is that at Lehi, Utah Stake, its enrollment exceeds 1,270; next comes St. George, with 878 officers and scholars, while East Bonifant stands third with 701. The average enrollment in the Stakes of Zion is 165.

One of the most remarkable things connected with the present Sunday School Union has been its financial policy. Until 1891 it wholly depended on the profits arising from concerts, celebrations and the like for its income. In that year the Nickel Fund was established—that is, on one Sunday in the year (now the last Sunday in October) each teacher, officer and scholar is asked to give five cents to the general fund. One fifth of this donation goes to help defray legitimate Stake Sunday school expenses and the remaining four-fifths is remitted to the treasurer of the Union. It is a noteworthy fact that year after year the union board has returned to the schools in books, charts, leaflets, and other publications, nearly the amount of its portion of the nickel fund. The present officers of the Union are: President George Q. Cannon, general superintendent; Elder Karl G. Maeser, his assistant; Elder Hezeka S. Ensign, secretary; Elder George Reynolds, treasurer; Elder Phoebe C. Briggs, business manager; Elder Leo Hunsaker, reporter; Elder Joseph W. Sumnerhays, chairman of the executive committee, and Elder George Reynolds, chairman of the publication committee. The board, whose rooms are fitted up for the accommodation of visiting superintendents, with a library, writing materials, etc. These rooms are also used for the weekly meetings of the board (Thursday afternoon) and for special meetings of Stake officers with the union board at the times of the general conferences, for the consideration of such business as cannot advantageously be brought before a large semi-annual meeting of the union, which are held in the Tabernacle, as the rule, on the Sunday evenings during the conference sessions.



FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

LORENZO SNOW, PRESIDENT BORN APRIL 3, 1814. JOSEPH F. SMITH, SECOND COUNSELOR BORN NOV. 13, 1805. GEO. Q. CANNON, FIRST COUNSELOR BORN JAN. 11, 1827.