

throw and destruction. Oh surely we cannot be so unwise, so indifferent to the counsels of the Holy Priesthood.

I testify to you today, my brethren and sisters, that this Gospel is true, that it is the saving power and that those who will yield obedience to its principles will be saved and exalted in the presence of God. There is nothing truer, there can be nothing truer. This Gospel is as true as the stars of heaven, as true as the sun which shines in midday, as enduring as the everlasting hills, and is without defect; it is suited to the conditions of all men in all ages, in all circumstances and conditions of life, and it needs not to be modified, amended or changed. I testify that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God; I know that, although I never saw him. I know it as Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ—because God revealed it unto him. Who can see the mighty results of the proclamation of Gospel truths, the fruits that have come forth from the tree and then condemn the tree? He is a disbeliever in the word of God who can do so.

I pray the blessings of the Lord to be with you, my brethren and sisters. May His peace abide with you in your homes. May God's blessings attend us in the continuance of this conference, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem,
"Rouse, O ye Mortals."

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

Liberty's perfect law.—Charges against Joseph Smith and "Mormonism" refuted.—Eternal origin of the Gospel.—

Review of the dispensations.—Freedom and her champions.—Joseph Smith an American patriot.—His views on unrighteous dominion.—"Mormonism" versus tyranny.—No king till Christ comes.—How the world will be compelled.—God watches over His own.

The spirit of poesy seems to have pervaded this conference to some extent, and perhaps that will account for a little stanza that is now floating through my mind:

"Break! Break! Break!
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my heart could utter
The thoughts that arise in me."

Many good things have been said by the various speakers who have addressed the congregations, and it would be difficult indeed to decide which are the most important or the most edifying. The main difficulty with a speaker at conference time is not to find a subject, but rather to select one from the many that are presented to the mind, and to so condense his thoughts and his words as to come within the allotted time. I hope that I may have the good Spirit to inspire me, that I may speak the things most needful to be spoken. I have no other desire than to declare the truth, as God shall give me utterance.

I was very much impressed, upon the opening day, with the address of President Joseph F. Smith, and particularly with what he said in relation to the kingdom whose king is Jesus Christ. I have also been impressed with what Brother Nibley has said regarding the purpose, spirit, and mission of what the world terms "Mormonism;" and I marvel, in the light of such utterances, and in the light of what I know to be true concerning this people and this religion, that the

grossest of misunderstandings and misconceptions can and do exist in relation to them. It was alleged during the life-time of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that he wished to make himself a king, to possess himself of the properties of both Mormons and Gentiles, as his subjects, and to ride roughshod over their liberties. It has been asserted from the beginning that "Mormonism" seeks to overthrow free institutions, to overturn the government of the United States, and to set up, in this land of the free, an Asiatic despotism. I marvel at such charges as these. It is difficult for me—*anxious as I am to credit all men with honesty and sincerity, wherever I can—to believe that such charges are made in sincerity.*

What is this thing called "Mormonism?" You have heard during this conference that it is what Paul, the apostle, declared the Gospel of Christ to be: "the power of God unto salvation." Paul also maintained that the Gospel is "the perfect law of liberty." What he said of the gospel of Christ is true of "Mormonism," for they are one and the same thing under different names. Hence, "Mormonism" is "the perfect law of liberty," and is itself a free institution. Why then should it be charged with seeking its own overthrow?

Joseph Smith taught that the Gospel was of heavenly origin. He said that God, in the beginning, finding Himself in the midst of spirits and glory, and being the most intelligent of them all, saw fit to institute laws whereby the rest might advance like Himself. Here was the first exhibition of tyranny, of despotism, in the history of "Mormonism," when God decreed that laws should be insti-

tuted whereby the blessings enjoyed by Him might be extended to and enjoyed by those around Him—the lesser intelligences who looked up to Him for guidance. He, as their God, ordained a way whereby they might advance and become like Him, making possible the final attainment of a glory described as the fulness of the presence of the Father, where He makes us equal with Himself, and places in our hands the possession of all things. Joseph Smith taught that before the world was, this plan of salvation, known as the Gospel—and now nick-named "Mormonism"—was instituted and ordained as the means of saving the world, of doing for man that which he could not do for himself, redeeming him from the bondage of sin and death, and restoring him to the presence of God, from which he fell through transgression. Does this look like tyranny? Does it bear any semblance of despotism? Is there apparent in this great plan, having such an object, any design to overthrow the freedom of man? No! My brethren and sisters, you know, as I know, that Jesus Christ is the author of liberty, that He is the great champion of human freedom, and that He laid down His life that the world might be free.

It is Lucifer, on the other hand who seeks the overthrow of free institutions, free churches, free government, and who saps wherever he can the foundation of the rights of man. That same fallen being, once called the Morning Star, presented himself before the Father, at the beginning, and offered himself as a candidate for the saviorship of this world. He declared—had the audacity to declare—that his purpose was to save man in his sins. "Not one soul

shall be lost." He proposed to compel all to be saved, and sought to destroy the free agency of man. But his plan was rejected, and he and all who followed him were cast out of heaven, because they were the enemies of freedom and sought the overthrow of that freest of institutions, the Gospel of salvation. Therefore they were rejected, and one was chosen as the Redeemer who avowed it to be His purpose to maintain the free agency of man. This One sought not His own honor, his own glory, as Lucifer had done—who demanded as a reward for his proposed service that he might dethrone the Father and reign as God in his stead, but that other Being said: "Father, let me be thy Son; I will go down; I will die for the world, and thine be the honor and the glory." He proposed to save man *from* his sins to make salvation a free gift, to leave all men at liberty to accept or reject the Gospel, and the purpose of his mission was to break the bands of death, to redeem man from bondage, and therefore His plan is known, and truly known, as the perfect law of liberty.

The Gospel was revealed first to our father Adam, whom it redeemed from the fall and restored to the presence of God. After his descendants became degenerate, it was revealed to Enoch, whose city was taken into the heavens. Later in another dispensation, it came to Noah, who preached it to the world and succeeded in saving eight souls, including his own. After his day, Abraham had the Gospel; Abraham, the head of the house of Israel, through whom the Savior came in the flesh, and by means of whose descendants the blood of faith was sprinkled over many nations; a scattering of Israel prepar-

atory to the great gathering of Israel in the last days. Then Moses had the Gospel, and sought by means of it and the powers of the Holy Priesthood, to bring his people into a condition where they could look, as he had looked, upon the face of God; but they would not have it. That generation would not accept the Gospel, and it was taken away, as it had been taken many times before, and the powers of the Melchisedek priesthood went back into the heavens, and Israel was left with the Aaronic priesthood and the law of carnal commandments, to whip him as a schoolmaster until the days of Christ. Then came our Savior, restoring the ancient faith, the everlasting and unchangeable plan of salvation, framed in the heavens, Himself being the author of it; for He was no other than the king of heaven, Jehovah, the God of Israel. He came as a babe into the world, and grew to manhood without sin, unto salvation, showing what man can do if he will, even in this mortal state. He laid down His life to break the bands of death, to redeem man from the effects of the fall of Adam and Eve. He chose twelve apostles to establish his Church upon the eastern hemisphere, and then came in His resurrected body to the western hemisphere, where He also selected twelve disciples to establish his Church upon this chosen land. But the world again departed from the faith, and in the last days God raised up another prophet, another champion of truth and liberty, and he, standing at the head of the greatest and last of the gospel dispensations, preaching no new doctrine, but proclaiming the old-time principles, the eternal principles of

freedom; he, Joseph Smith, was accused of seeking to make himself a king.

I say of all these prophets, these apostles, these patriarchs, who have stood at the head of or figured in the dispensations of the past, that they are the friends of freedom, the champions of liberty, reflecting the light and power of Jesus Christ. And I say also that a measure of that same light and power, has rested upon other men, upon poets and philosophers, upon warriors and reformers, upon scientists, inventors and discoverers; who have played their parts according to the light given them, and have helped to prepare the way for the great consummation of the latter-days, when the restitution of all things is in prospect and in progress; when God has decreed to pour out His spirit upon all flesh, and gather into one all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.

Luther had a portion of this spirit when he stood before the Diet of Worms, and being asked to recant what he had uttered, laid his hand upon the open Bible, faced a frowning tyrant, and exclaimed: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me!" Cromwell and his Ironsides were animated by a portion of this spirit when they arrayed themselves against a despot king, and ended by cutting off his head. William of Orange was inspired by it, when he successfully met the encroachments of the Spanish invader, and battled for the freedom of the Netherlands. Columbus had this spirit when he "pushed his prow into the setting sun, made west east," and uncovered this long hidden hemisphere, the land of Zion, the land of Joseph, where the house of Joseph is

to assemble and the New Jerusalem to rise. Washington had this spirit when he carved out with the sword of patriotism the independence of his country; "the embattled farmers" had it when they poured their patriot volleys into the ranks of the British regulars on the slopes of Bunker Hill. Jefferson had this spirit when he wrote with pen of flame, "All men are created equal, and to secure the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Joseph Smith, in far greater measure, possessed this spirit of liberty, this love of freedom, and there is nothing in his life, in his character, nor in the whole history of the Mormon people that is contrary thereto.

Who was this man Joseph Smith? He was a native American; a descendant of the pilgrims, and of the patriots whom God inspired to found this nation. He loved his country; drank in the spirit of liberty with his mother's milk, and was taught its principles at his mother's knee. Why should he seek to be a king, to overthrow free institutions, to plot for the ruin of his country? On the contrary, he sought the glory of his country. The last and crowning act of his life, politically, was an endeavor to become president of the United States; and in the platform of principles by him enunciated, he favored the extension of the Union, with the consent of the red man—yes, he even thought of the poor Indian and his rights—with the consent of the red man, he favored the extension of the Union from sea to sea. He also favored the annexation of Texas, of Mexico, of Canada, whenever they

should desire it—so anxious was he to spread the benefits and blessings of free government. And yet this man could be falsely accused of seeking to make himself a king.

The institutions of the Church that Joseph founded breathe the same spirit of liberty, the same respect for the rights of man, that characterize the government of the United States, also God-inspired. You saw an exhibition of this fact yesterday. You saw submitted the names of men who bear the Holy Priesthood, who have held sacred positions in the midst of this people for a lifetime; you saw their names submitted here, for the people to manifest whether or not they would still accept them as their leaders, their spiritual teachers. That practice has prevailed in this Church from the beginning. Joseph Smith, who had looked upon the face of God; Oliver Cowdery, who with Joseph had seen angels and been ordained by them to the Aaronic and Melchisedek priesthoods—they, after all, were required by the will and the word of God to submit their names to the little flock which they had converted, to see whether or not they would sustain them as the first and second Elders of the Church. The doctrine of common consent, "the consent of the governed," which Thomas Jefferson proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, and which is practiced in all the electoral concerns of the American people—this same doctrine is practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and yet this Church is charged with seeking the overthrow of free institutions.

Joseph Smith wrote with his own hand the Articles of Faith for this

Church, and the 11th and 12th articles read as follows:

"We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."

"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law."

Let me now read a notable utterance of Joseph Smith's, showing what he thought of tyranny and unrighteous dominion:

"Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?"

"Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

"That the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

"That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood, or the authority of that man.

"Behold! ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks; to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

"We have learned, by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

"Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge,

which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile,

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death;

"Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly, then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy sceptre an unchanging sceptre of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee for ever and ever."—*Doctrine and Covenants*, 121: 34-46.

Another brief selection from the same book:

"Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.

"And for this purpose have I established the constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood."—*Doctrine and Covenants*, 101: 79, 80.

These are among the principles taught by Joseph Smith. The *Doctrine and Covenants*, the *Book of Mormon*, every record that emanated from the mind of that great man, bears testimony to the divinity of the principle of liberty and declares for the free agency of man. From the *Book of Mormon* I will read one paragraph, to show the spirit of that ancient record, and the spirit of the man who translated it. I will say here that the entire *Book of Mormon* is one great plea for liberty, one mighty protest against tyranny and wrong. Here is a promise of the Lord to an

ancient prophet among the Nephites, regarding this land, North and South America, which Joseph Smith declared to be the land of Zion:

"And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon this land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles;

"And I will fortify this land against all other nations;

"And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God,

"For he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words."—*II Nephi*, 10: 11-14.

Does any sane man believe that Joseph Smith would have sent forth such a proclamation, would have published it to the world, and then have sought in this land of liberty to make himself a king?

Perhaps this is sufficient. President Smith was speaking by the record when he declared that Jesus Christ is the king of this kingdom; it is not Joseph the Prophet, it is not Brigham Young, nor John Taylor, nor Wilford Woodruff, nor Lorenzo Snow; it is not Joseph F. Smith; it is not any man. There shall come no king upon this land until Christ, the king of heaven, comes in power and glory to reign over the earth. He is our king, the only king we recognize, the only king we serve, and these men are servants of the King, for whose coming we are here to prepare.

This theme is interminable; I could go on for hours and tell you of the feelings and sentiments that animated Brigham Young and his successors, but let this one fact suffice; that all who have led this Church from the days of Joseph Smith down to this day, have only built upon Joseph's foundation and

reiterated the principles that were near and dear to his heart, principles revealed to him by the God of Heaven, Jesus Christ, the King.

There is only one element of compulsion in the dealings of God with man, and it will never coerce the human mind. It is illustrated in the word of God spoken to the early Elders of this Church, in fulfillment of a parable of our Savior, the one in which He likened the kingdom of heaven unto a feast:

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

"And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

"And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

"And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

"So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

"And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—Luke, 14: 16-23.

What! Compel men to be saved? God coerce the human mind? Never! And yet they were compelled to come. The literal meaning of this parable is embodied in a commandment to the Elders of the Church in these days, repeating the great command of our Lord to His servants two thousand years ago.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized

shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."—Mark, 16: 15-18.

These words were repeated through Joseph the Seer, and then followed other words, not spoken aforetime, but reserved unto the latter days, when the judgments of God should supplement the testimony of the Elders. "And after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, and tempests, and wars, and famines, and pestilences, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds." "All things shall be in commotion," and "not only the earth shall shake, but the starry heavens shall tremble."

That is how God will compel men to listen to Him, if they turn a deaf ear to the voice of kind persuasion. He will not coerce the mind, but will create conditions and shape circumstances that will induce men to come unto Him and of their own accord bow in obedience to His holy will. Meanwhile, it is for this people to abide in the liberty wherewith they are made free, to lift up an ensign of peace to all nations, to return good for evil, blessings for cursings, and leave their cause in the hands of that God who inspired an American poet to write:

"Truth forever on the scaffold;
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own."