

The choir sang the anthem, "O beauty of Holiness."

Prayer was offered by Elder Thomas E. Bassett.

The choir sang the anthem, "God is our refuge."

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

The Gospel of Salvation.—A ladder to eternal life.—Joseph Smith's authority.—The mighty problem of Mormonism.—Redemption of the living and the dead.—The Latter-day Saints the friends of humanity.

Two ministers of the Christian church were once conversing together, and one of them asked the other this question:

"Why is it, my friend, that the people love to hear you preach, and why is it that they do not love to hear me? Why is your chapel always crowded with eager worshippers, while mine is always nearly empty?" His friend answered him in these words:

"I believe it is because I am always telling the people that if they will pursue a certain course they shall be saved, while you are always telling them that if they don't do certain things they'll be damned."

I gather from this that there is something in the human heart that prefers the affirmative to the negative in the presentation of the Gospel message. I have always rejoiced in the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Salvation. Paul the Apostle, declares it to be so:

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

While it is true that the Savior, when He commissioned His apos-

les to preach the Gospel, used these words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,"—there is nothing in this to indicate that the Gospel is a Gospel of damnation. Damnation is no part of the Gospel of Christ. There is no damnation in it, but there is plenty of damnation outside of it. When the end comes, and Christ's mission is consummated, it will be found that He has exhausted every means for the salvation of man; and those who stand condemned after the Gospel has done its work, will be found to have condemned themselves. God is bent upon saving, not damning, the human race; and He will use every possible means to that end. He will send His servants with the voice of persuasion, the voice of solemn warning, and will fashion, shape, mold and manipulate all things for the spread of truth—the message of salvation. And then, as He has said:

"After your testimonies come the testimonies of earthquakes, the voice of thunders, the voice of the waves of the sea, heaving itself beyond its bounds."

"All things shall be in commotion."

"And not only the earth shall shake, but the starry heavens shall tremble."

These powers will be put forth for salvation—not for damnation. Condemnation follows, as the night the day, the rejection of the means of salvation; it is the alternative, the inevitable consequence of a refusal to accept and make use of the redemption that God has provided. Let me use an illustration:

Suppose a man to have fallen into a pit, and to be unable to scale the sides thereof, and emerge upon the plane above. He has intelligence, strength, wisdom, perhaps skill as a

climber, but he cannot climb, because there is nothing to climb with or by. A friend comes to the mouth of the pit, hails him, and says :

"I will help you; you cannot use your own powers, they are ineffectual. I will give you the means of putting them to their proper use." He lets down a ladder, and says to the man below, "Now, climb."

Suppose the man refuses to climb. Who is responsible for his failure to emerge from the pit into which he has fallen? Is he not worse off, by rejecting the means of escape, than if it had never been offered to him? He can do nothing for himself, and when assistance is tendered, he rejects it. Who is to blame?

That is the light in which the problem presents itself to me. By the transgression of our first parents, the human race fell into a pit, and there was no help, and no hope, this side of heaven, for the race could not redeem itself. Man cannot be honest enough, nor virtuous enough, nor truthful enough, nor benevolent enough, to save his soul. That is why the Gospel was provided, as a means of salvation, and it had to come from above. No part of that which was under condemnation could be used as the means of redemption. Adam and Eve, with their posterity, were under the curse, and it was the curse of eternal death,—death spiritual, death temporal,—never-ending banishment from the presence of God.

But the Son of God came down from the Courts of Glory, and offered Himself as a sacrifice, a ransom. He was not under the curse; He had not fallen; and His life could pay the debt. It could be used as the means of the world's redemption; and it was so used, and

thus He became the Author of life and salvation to us all. He was the first fruits of the resurrection, and He declared: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

He let down the ladder into the pit, and bade those who desired salvation at His hands, to climb. They were not to plead their own merits, nor rely upon their own strength, but were to use their powers in climbing up by the way that He had provided. The first round of the Gospel ladder is faith in God; the second round is repentance from sin; the third round, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and the fourth round, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

But having placed our feet upon the fourth round of the ladder, we must not stop there; we must keep on climbing—keep on obeying the principles of the Gospel. They reach from earth to heaven, and salvation in its fulness is only to be attained by those who do the will of God, and continue in His service, enduring unto the end.

This is the problem of salvation, from the view point of a Latter-day Saint. Mormonism, so-called, is the Gospel of Christ. It is a Gospel of salvation through and through, and it proposes to save, not only the living but also "that other living, called the dead."

I was once conversing with a gentleman, a minister of one of the leading churches, and he said to me:

"I do not believe that Mormonism would have had an existence, if Joseph Smith had been acquainted with the church to which I belong, with the religion that I profess and preach. Joseph Smith's revolt"—that was the word he used,—"was against Methodism, the straight-

laced Puritanism of his time, and the lurid and gloomy theology of the Presbyterians. These were the sects he came in contact with, and I do not wonder at his revolt. But if he had known my church, and become acquainted with my religion, there would have been no Mormonism, for there would have been no need for it."

I assured him that he was very much mistaken if he imagined that the Prophet did not comprehend his religion, as well as all the others. The word of God to Joseph Smith, in answer to his inquiry as to which of all the churches he should join, was this: "None of them; for they have all gone out of the way." He was told that the true Church of Christ did not then exist upon the earth, but was about to be established, and that he had been chosen as an instrument for that purpose.

Let us consider briefly some of the claims made by the modern Prophet. His movement was no mere "revolt" against this creed or that; he did not belong to any church or sect; but he was an earnest seeker after truth, and was bewildered by the confusion and contention that prevailed in the Christian churches. Reading in the Scriptures: "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally," he resolved to put that promise to the test. He therefore asked of God, and received the answer I have quoted. Joseph declares that while he and Oliver Cowdery were translating the Nephite plates containing the Book of Mormon, and while praying over a certain doctrine mentioned in the plates, a messenger from Heaven came down, and laying his hands upon their heads, spoke these words:

"Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and these shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

Up to that time—Mormonism affirms—there was not a man upon the face of the earth, in Christendom or in heathendom, who had the right to preach the Gospel and administer even in the outward ordinances thereof.

The angel who ordained Joseph and Oliver told them that his name was John, anciently called the Baptist. He informed them that there was still a higher Priesthood, a greater authority, called the Priesthood of Melchizedek, the keys to which were held by the Apostles, Peter, James and John, under whose direction he was acting. This higher Priesthood should in due time be conferred upon them, and it would qualify them, not only to call men to repentance, and baptize them for the remission of their sins; but would also empower them to lay hands upon those whom they baptized, and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost. By means of these two Priesthoods, spiritual and temporal authority—for it was temporal as well as spiritual salvation that was provided for,—the Church of God would be established, and the great dispensation opened wherein was to be brought to pass the restitution of all things. Such was the substance of the angel's message. Under this divine authority, the Priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, April 6, 1830, at Fayette, Seneca county, New York.

Six years later, while the Church was at Kirtland, Ohio, a series of visions were given in the Temple to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In the first vision, they beheld the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jehovah, the God of Israel; and then, as it is written:

"The heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

"After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying, that in us, and our seed, all generations after us should be blessed.

"After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

"Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come,

"To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.

"Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors."

Is it not evident to the student of Mormonism, if he delves deeply enough into the subject, that there is something more in this great and magnificent problem than a mere "revolt" against the inconsistent, and unscriptural doctrines of some of the sects of Christendom? Do you think, after what I have read to you, that Joseph Smith's course would have been different, if he had become better acquainted with any particular church or creed than in existence?

Let me read again, and show

something further of the wonderful conception of God's plan of salvation, as it existed in the mind of that mighty prophet of God. In the year 1842, while in hiding from his enemies, who were seeking his life and who succeeded in taking it two years later, Joseph Smith addressed a communication to the Church, showing what was weighing most upon his thoughts, as his career drew to a close. In that communication, he says,—after quoting the closing verses of Malachi:

"It is sufficient to know that the earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other; and behold, what is this subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we, without them, cannot be made perfect; neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the Gospel also. For it is necessary, in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations and keys and powers and glories, should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time; and not only this,—but those things which never have been revealed, from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings, in this the dispensation of the fulness of times."

Two great thoughts are borne in upon the mind when reading this wonderful passage of modern Scripture: one is, that the past belongs to Mormonism, and the other is, that the future belongs to it also. Mormonism is no mere nineteenth century religion; it is not merely a religion of time. It is the religion of the eternities, and has come down from the presence of Jehovah, as the preordained plan for the salvation of the children of men. It has been

upon the earth many times in a series of dispensations, and this great and crowning Gospel dispensation has been introduced for the purpose of binding together all the dispensations, welding the present and the past, and preparing the world for still greater things in the future.

When and where did the Gospel originate? I know of no better explanation than that given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said:

"In the beginning, God, finding Himself in the midst of spirits and glory, because He was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest might advance like Himself."

We learn from this, that the Gospel—now called Mormonism,—which comprises and codifies those laws that were instituted of God in the beginning, was framed before the world was created; that it is the means of man's progression, both in time and in eternity,—the ladder up which all must climb who attain to exaltation. Adam's fall was a step downward, but it was also a step forward—a step in the eternal march of human progress; and it is by means of this everlasting Gospel, and our own individual efforts in making use of the powers that God has given us, that we lay hold upon eternal life, and go on to perfection.

This being true, is it reasonable to suppose that God would wait six thousand years before revealing to His children for the first time the plan of salvation? Is it reasonable, that He would wait four thousand years, or even two thousand years, before He gave to man a knowledge of the Redeemer who was to come? Would it not be a waste of time? Why not let Father Adam and Mother Eve know? Why not give

them the joy of knowing that a Savior had been provided, in anticipation of their fall, and that they and their posterity were heirs to salvation, through the atonement of Jesus Christ?

Mormonism declares that this was done; that Adam and Eve had the Gospel revealed to them before the coming of Christ; that they were baptized for the remission of their sins, and received the Holy Ghost. By their faith in the Redeemer, whose coming Adam symbolized by erecting an altar and offering a lamb thereon,—by virtue of Christ's atonement, and their obedience to the principles of faith, repentance, baptism and all other things that God required of them, they were redeemed from the fall. They had to wait for the resurrection of their bodies, but did not have to wait for some one to be baptized for them. They were baptized in person, not vicariously. There will be enough of that kind of work, without the elect being added to the list. It will take a thousand years to redeem the dead for whom we build temples and officiate. But some men and women, all down the ages, have had the Gospel, and have been redeemed by their obedience to it here, in this life. They do not need the vicarious work that will have to be done for perhaps millions of our race who never heard the name of Jesus Christ. Mormonism tells us that Adam, bowed with age, blessed his posterity, and predicted what should befall them to the latest generation. The relationship between that first and this last Gospel dispensation is shown in the fact that Adam is to come again, as the Ancient of Days; that he will call his children before him, and perform a great part in the winding up scene,

in binding his dispensation to this dispensation, which is destined to swallow up the others, even as the ocean swallows up the rivers and the streams.

After Adam's day, when the world had departed from God, a dispensation of the Gospel was given to Enoch. He built a city called Zion, which was redeemed and sanctified by principles that we, as a Church, have received, but to the perfect practice of which we have not yet attained. We falter, some of us, in the presence of the law of tithing. What shall we do when the greater law comes—the law of consecration, when our all will be required for the building up of the Zion of God, of which the City of Enoch was but a type, a symbol, a foreshadowing, the lesser coming before the greater, pointing out and preparing the way?

To Noah, also, came a dispensation of the Gospel. In his day the earth was baptized with water, prefiguring the baptism of fire, which our planet is destined to undergo, prior to its glorification. "For as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man."

Abraham also had the Gospel revealed to him; and what was the part he played? What is the relationship between his dispensation and our dispensation? God said to him, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That promise was fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ through the lineage of Abraham; but it was also fulfilled in the scattering among all nations of the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, preparatory to the great gathering in the latter days, when they are to be brought from the four

parts of the earth, to build up Zion, and make ready for the second coming of the Messiah.

Next came Moses, standing at the head of a Gospel dispensation, holding the keys to the gathering of Israel. He bestows those keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith, in order that he may begin the work of the gathering, bringing to God all who will come: the Jew, the Gentile, and the Israelite from among the Gentiles. All who will do the works of Abraham are counted with the children of Abraham, justified by their faith and obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the meridian of time the Savior made His mortal advent, choosing twelve apostles to preach the Gospel upon the eastern hemisphere, and after His resurrection, appearing to the Nephites in America, and choosing twelve among them to preach the Gospel to this part of the world.

Eighteen hundred years later dawns the great and last dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Mormonism, with the Bible in one hand and the Book of Mormon in the other, is reaping the results of all the work done by servants of God in past ages. It avails itself of all the good that has been accumulated by the human race, not only by prophets and apostles, but by poets, philosophers, inventors, discoverers,—all the good and wise teachers of Christendom and heathendom. It seeks after and makes use of all that is pure, wise, virtuous, and praiseworthy; and by the learning of the past, and the revelations of the present, proposes to erect a monument to the honor and glory of God, that shall endure throughout the endless ages of the future.

The Gospel designs to save all men, but it will save them upon the principles of eternal justice, every man according to his works. There is a glory of the sun, a glory of the moon, and a glory of the stars, and even as the stars differ in magnitude, so will it be in the resurrection of the dead. The only class of human beings who need fear that there is no salvation for them, are those who have received the Gospel in its fulness, who have been given every key and passport to eternal glory—the power to be exalted to the highest estate of which intelligence is capable, and then have thrown it all away, trampling it under foot as a thing of naught and denying what they know to be true. All others can be saved, because all others can repent. Men can be forgiven as long as they have the power to repent.

But some will not repent until they pass into another world, where those spirits went whose bodies were drowned by the deluge in the days of Noah. In these days, a great principle, that of salvation for the dead, has been revealed. This is the welding link that will bind together the dispensations—the child to the parent—the present to the past. Can you think of anything that would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, or the hearts of the children to the fathers, more effectually than a principle of this kind? Mormonism deals with the past, the present, and the future. It proposes to save all who are willing to be saved. It will save even the damned, after they have paid their eternal debt; but these cannot be saved with the fulness of God's glory.

Mormonism is not an enemy to the human race; it is not an enemy

to the Gentiles. We do not recognize the word "Gentile" as an opprobrious term, though some of our outside friends take umbrage at it, as if we were trying to fling at them an unsavory epithet. What is the meaning of "Gentile?" The word springs from "gentilis," which means of a clan, a family, a race, a nation. In the days of the Jewish commonwealth, Gentile simply meant one who was not a Jew; in the early ages of the Christian Church, it meant one who was not a Christian, and in these times it designates one who is not a Latter-day Saint.

The Gentiles are the children of Japheth, while the Israelites are descended from Shem, through Abraham. Ephraim, from whom most of us claim lineal descent, has been mixed with the Gentiles, and is now being gathered out from the midst of them. The Gospel, when the Jews rejected it, went to the Gentiles; God wanted to save them. Cornelius, a righteous man, was a Gentile, and upon him and other Gentiles the Holy Ghost was poured out, even before baptism. The Gentiles of today are the nations of modern Europe, and this great nation of which we form a part. Columbus was a Gentile, moved upon by the Spirit of God to discover America—the land of Zion; Washington was a Gentile, who carved out with the sword of patriotism our independence. They were Gentiles who founded this government, the mightiest and most beneficent upon which the sun shines. God tells us in the Book of Mormon that the Gentile nations shall be mighty in His eyes in carrying forth the children of Israel to the lands of their inheritance. He declares further that if the Gentiles will, they

shall come into the Church, partake of the blessings of the Gospel, and help the House of Israel to build the New Jerusalem, preparatory to the glorious coming of the Son of God. The blessing of Noah upon Japheth was, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." We are not the enemies of the Gentiles, we are not the foes of the human race; our mission is friendship, peace, and good-will; our work is to preserve and bind together all that is good, both past and present, and to labor for the consummation of Christ's work in the great and wonderful future.

May God speed His cause, keep us steadfast in the truth, in lifting up an ensign of peace to the nations, and in preaching to all the world the Gospel of Salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The choir sang a hymn entitled "True to the Faith."

ELDER DAVID O. MCKAY.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."—Faithfulness to duty is the most acceptable service.

One of the greatest benefits derived from meeting together, is the experiencing of new and beautiful thoughts and feelings. These thoughts and feelings are not always those expressed by the speaker. Words do not convey thought—they only call up thought; but those who, while listening, experience new thoughts, or noble feelings, always derive one of the greatest blessings that come to those who meet together. You will agree with me that this conference has been particularly fruitful in

awakening in our minds the noblest of thoughts, the highest and purest of feelings.

One passage of Scripture has been repeatedly called to my mind ever since President Smith emphasized for the Priesthood the Gospel of *Doing*. That passage is this:

"Choose you this day whom ye shall serve."

I believe, with Professor Stephens, whose thought was expressed in the beautiful song just sung, that in making this choice, the youth of Zion will act wisely.

"Shall the youth of Zion falter
In defending truth and right?
While the enemy assaileth,
Shall we shrink or shun the fight? No!

"True to the faith that our parents have
cherished;
True to the truth for which martyrs have
perished;
To God's command,—soul, heart and
hand,
Faithful and true we will ever stand."

If each of the twenty thousand individuals who are this day assembled on these sacred grounds will say to himself, "I this day choose to serve the Lord," what a mighty army there would be in defense of right! Why not make this choice? Recently, I heard a testimony from one of the presidents of stakes to this effect: "I am never happier than when in the performance of my duty." There is nothing in life that brings more happiness than righteous living—than serving God. Then why cannot the twenty thousand people here today—nay, why cannot all Israel choose this day to serve the Lord? The line between truth and error has been distinctly marked throughout this conference, and the members of the Church of Christ are given the choice of truth or error. The Church, though *it*