

SECOND DAY.

In the Tabernacle, Monday, April 5th, 10 a. m.

Conference was called to order by President Joseph F. Smith.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn:

Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation;

No longer as strangers on earth need we roam,

Good tidings are sounding to us and each nation,

And shortly the hour of redemption will come.

Prayer was offered by Bishop Orrin P. Miller.

The choir sang the hymn:

O'er the gloomy hills of darkness,

Look, my soul, be still and gaze;

All the promises do travail

With the glorious day of grace.

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

The equality of man.—Common consent basic principle of the American government and of the Church of Christ.—Two sources of power.—The order of Enoch.—The modern Zion.—The perfect government yet to come.—All things preparing the way.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers

from the consent of the governed.”

These words, I need not inform you, are contained in the Declaration of Independence, issued from the city of Philadelphia one hundred and thirty-five years ago, come next Fourth of July. They embody principles underlying the structure of the government of the United States, which there had its origin. Fifty-four years later, or seventy-nine years ago, come tomorrow, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized at the little village of Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

I am proud and happy today, my brethren and sisters, to be a Latter-day Saint, and I am also proud and happy to be a citizen of this great Republic, the mightiest and best government organized by man that the sun shines upon. I am glad that I can see, as you can, a divine purpose in the founding of this Government, as in the founding of this Church. I believe there is a relationship between them,—not a union of church and state, but the relationship of a common purpose, and that purpose God's—He who was the founder of this Church and also the founder of this Nation. It was something more than a coincidence that the Gospel of Christ, now called Mormonism, but whose proper surname is the Perfect Law of Liberty, should come forth upon this land of liberty in these last days. I desire if I may have the Spirit of the Lord, to indicate some of the

points of relationship between this great religious government and the great civil government that came before it to prepare its way.

It may seem preposterous to many to refer to a nation of seventy or eighty millions of people, as the fore-runner of a movement that has a membership at the present time of only four or five hundred thousand souls. But we must bear in mind that numbers do not determine great principles, and that bigness is not always greatness. This nation of eighty millions was once a nation of three millions, sprung from a few feeble colonies comprising at the beginning only a few hundred starving, ragged souls. We must also remember that this Church began with but six members, and that it now counts its members, as stated, by hundreds of thousands. Fifty or a hundred years hence, it will be found that Mormonism has grown and prospered until no nation under heaven need hang its head in shame at being considered its fore-runner and its friend. We must give all great movements time in which to develop themselves, and meanwhile it is more important to consider principles than the number of people who believe in them.

It was something more than a coincidence, when the Church of Christ was organized in these days, that the same principles which underlie the structure of the American government were embodied in the foundations of the work of God. I have cited two great principles to which I wish to call your attention—the equality of man and the doctrine of common consent. Thomas Jefferson affirmed, when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, that all men are

created equal. We are not to understand from this that all men are alike. All men are not six feet high; all men do not weigh two hundred pounds; all are not rich; all are not poor. All men are not leaders—there are mountains and foot-hills and plains among humanity; there will always be great men and great women to be the leaders and instructors of the rest. Yes, even in a democracy, where all men are declared to be equal. What is meant, then, by equality, as referred to in the Declaration? It is equality before the law; it means that all men are equally entitled to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. It means that the avenues of promotion and advancement should be open to all, as God intended them to be when He sent from Heaven the gospel of salvation, which is no more nor less than a code of laws, a system of principles having in view the eternal progress of man.

Joseph the Prophet declared that God in the beginning instituted certain laws, whereby the lesser intelligences surrounding Him might have the opportunity to advance like Himself. They were not equal there; they are not equal here; they will never be equal in every sense. God will always be supreme. "The Glory of God is intelligence," and what made Him God, was the superior intelligence that recognized those saving and ennobling principles which He instituted as the gospel of salvation, the means of eternal progress. All men are not equal in capacity, in intelligence, but they ought to be equal in opportunities for progression, and God has made them equal in this respect. The king upon his throne can obtain salvation upon no easier terms than the peasant in

his cot. The poor man is the equal of the rich man when he stands before God and asks, What must I do to be saved? There is no purchasing our way into the Kingdom of Heaven; money can buy many things, but it cannot buy membership in the Church of Christ; it cannot buy the principles of truth, the blessings of the Gospel, the gifts of the Holy Ghost. All men are equal before God in respect of these things. In this great government of ours, whose basic declaration is that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and in the Church of God, founded upon the principle and doctrine of common consent, it is intended that all men, so far as possible, shall be equal.

It is also intended that men shall be free; but our idea of freedom does not go so far as to shut out God from a voice in the government—this religious government to which we belong. It was necessary, when the American government was founded, that no religion should be recognized—no particular religion—no man's religion and that the people alone should be regarded as the source of civic power; because this government was organized for the benefit of all men, religious and irreligious; men of all religions and of no religion; consequently it had to recognize the people, and the people alone, as the fountainhead of authority. But in the Church of God, we are not so handicapped. We all believe alike, we all have the same religion, and we recognize God as the primal source, and the people as the secondary source of power. God speaks, and the people say amen. It is different in a secular government, such as the government of

the United States. But these great Democratic or Republican doctrines—I care not which you call them, for I am not speaking in a partisan sense—these great principles involving the rights of man underlie both the government of the Church and the government of the State.

When Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, on the 6th of April, 1830, brought the little flock together that were subsequently known as Latter-day Saints, these leaders were required by the Lord to present their names to that little congregation, to see whether or not they would sustain them as the presiding officers of the Church. These men had communed with angels; they had had the hands of angels laid upon their heads; Joseph had seen the Father and the Son. But these wonderful manifestations, and the powers of the priesthood which they had received, did not qualify them to preside over that congregation. There was yet something necessary, and what was it? "The consent of the governed." The people who were to be presided over by these men—the first and second Elders of the Church—had the right to consent to the exercise of that authority over them. God will select a prophet, a mouth-piece, a bearer of His priesthood, a teacher of His truth, without asking any man's permission; but He will never foist upon any man, nor upon any set of men or women, a leader, a presiding officer that they are not willing to sustain. This is a recognition of the great doctrine embodied in the Declaration of Independence—that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. You will see this great principle exemplified during this conference.

You will be called upon to hold up your hands to vote whether or not you will sustain men and women as your leaders, your teachers, and presiding officers, and you have a perfect right to decide that question for yourselves.

If that little congregation which I have mentioned had lifted their hands against Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, what would have been the result? Would it have taken from Joseph and Oliver their priesthood? No. Would it have blotted out the fact that they had conversed with angels, and been ordained by them? No. Would it have made them any less God's mouth-pieces to that generation? No. What would it have done? It would simply have prevented them from presiding over that particular congregation; but they could have gone anywhere else where men and women were to be found willing to receive them, and could have organized the Church of Christ by virtue of the priesthood which God had bestowed upon them. Let us remember that God has some rights as well as the people. While the people are duly considered, and a jealous care exercised for them and for their rights, the Lord must also be taken into account. He will not be deprived of His prerogatives. It is God and the people who make up the government of the Church of Christ.

Now as to the principle of equality—that also is one of the fundamentals of the Church. Not only are the Latter-day Saints equal in the votes which they cast at a conference, and in their opportunities for eternal salvation, but from the beginning it was the design to establish in the midst of this people an order that would make men equal in temporal as in spiritual

things. It was called the Order of Enoch, for, in the days of Enoch, when his city was sanctified and taken into the heavens, "The Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind and dwelt in righteousness, and there was no poor among them." It was the same system that the Nephites established upon this continent, and for two hundred years maintained as a promise and a foreshadowing of the Millennium, when all men will be equal and free. It was the same order of things that the Apostles at Jerusalem sought to introduce; and it seems to have been manifested whenever the fullness of the powers of the priesthood have been upon the earth. Whenever the fullness of the Gospel has been enjoyed by men, there has always been this tendency, this trend toward equality, for it is the most perfect social condition.

"For forms of government let
fools contest;
What's best administered is
best."

So says the poet Pope. Nevertheless, I am convinced that of all governments the greatest and the best is that government in which the people govern themselves. The Prophet Joseph Smith was asked by a stranger visitor at Nauvoo, "How do you govern these people, these Americans, these Britons, these Scandinavians, these men from all parts of the world, all nationalities, speaking different languages, having different customs and traditions,—how do you govern them, that they live together in peace, with a common purpose, and in the spirit of unity?" The Prophet sagely an-

swered—and he never said a wiser thing—“I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.” That government in which the people can and do govern themselves by obedience to correct principles, is manifestly superior to any government that depends upon one man’s will. The word of God declares, “It is a slothful servant who waits to be commanded in all things.” Even in a government where God might command and direct in everything, the condition would be inferior to what it would be in a community of enlightened freemen, enjoying the fullness of the Gospel, filled with the knowledge of the heavens, doing good of their own accord, governing themselves, loving their neighbors and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.

This blessed condition is the destiny of the Latter-day Saints, who have been called upon to build up Zion on the North American continent. The City of Enoch, and that order of equality which Enoch established, was only a token and a type of the greater Zion of the last days, which is to become the joy of the whole earth. The Prophet Isaiah spoke of it in these words.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

And when that Zion is established which is to be a magnet to the nations, and unto which they will

bring their gold and glory as a tribute, a glad and willing tribute to Christ, the King—when the Saints succeed in accomplishing that wonderous work, it will be because they have put into practice the principles that recognize the equality of man, and the right of man to consent, under God, as to who shall govern him, and how he shall be governed.

There is no time now to preach a sermon upon such a subject, but a sermon might be preached that would show still further the relationship between the government of the United States and the government of the Church of God. I believe that if we knew the whole of human history, we would see that men and nations, from the beginning, have carved out and prepared the way for other men and nations! We would find that all that has taken place in the world—God-inspired, heaven-directed—has had as its purpose the setting up of that perfect government which will yet sway the scepter over this planet, when Christ shall reign as King of kings; that Kingdom or Commonwealth for which all existing governments, knowingly or unknowingly, are preparing the way, and of which the work miscalled Mormonism is the immediate fore-runner.

Each ray of light, each principle of power,

Each epoch-making hap of history,

Had it a tongue would it not testify:

There cometh after me a mightier;

I but prepare the way his face before;

I but baptize with water, he with fire?

All these movements have as their decreed fulfilment and consummation the mighty purpose of the allwise Ruler—

“That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off, divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

Sister Claudia Poulton sang the soprano solo, “Oh shining light divine.”

ELDER SERGE L. BALIFF.

(Late President of Swiss and German Mission.)

(In introducing the speaker, President Smith said: “Brother Baliff has just returned from a long mission in Germany and Switzerland. For four years he presided over the Swiss and German mission.)

My beloved brethren and sisters: In standing before you this morning, I feel my weakness, and I place myself in the hands of the Lord. I desire from the bottom of my heart that He will inspire me, in order that I may say a few words that will encourage some one on the path of life and salvation.

The greatest testimony, to me, of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith is this conference—to see this vast assemblage of people who have gathered from all nations of the earth in response to the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I rejoice, my brethren and sisters, in this great work in

which we are engaged. It is inspiring to see an assemblage of such a class of people, who have gathered from all nations to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. I have a testimony of this work. The Lord has revealed unto me that Joseph Smith is a prophet. I know, as I know that I live, that he was called of God to establish this great work upon the earth in our day. I have traveled in many large cities in the world. I have met with many people, but in all my experiences I never met such an assemblage as was present here yesterday. I never felt such a spirit, such a power of the Almighty, as was in our midst yesterday. It was a testimony to me that this is the work of the Lord, that the Lord is directing this work, and that we need not worry about the things that threaten it. I assure you, my brethren and sisters, that this work is in the hands of the Lord; He is directing it, and will continue to direct it until He brings the ship Zion to a safe anchor.

I have had the privilege of bearing my testimony to many people, and I rejoice in this privilege. I thank the Lord for the privilege I have had of going into the nations of the earth and raising my voice in defense of the Gospel of truth. I know that God lives; I know that Jesus is the Christ; and I know that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of the Lord. I rejoice in the opportunity I have had to raise my voice among the people of the world, informing them that God has again spoken from the heavens, that He has established His work upon the earth for the last time, and that the same gifts and blessings that existed in the primitive church exist in our day. Educated men often