

of creed; but the glory of God is in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of us, His creatures.

May the Lord help us, my brethren and sisters, to accept and put into practice the important doctrines and truths we have heard during this conference, that shall help to make us better citizens of this great country of ours, and better members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I ask it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sister Judith Anderson Bird sang the contralto solo, "Lord hear us, we pray Thee."

BISHOP CHARLES W. NIBLEY.

The variety of instruction that we have had at this conference, and the kind of instruction, is certainly to be commended. I do not see how any right-minded person, of whatever creed or persuasion, or of no creed, could object or find fault with the teachings that have been given to the Latter-day Saints during the sessions of our conference. We have been taught to be good citizens, good fathers, good mothers, good children; to love our neighbors; to pay our debts; to keep out of debt; to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and many more items of instruction to which I have not time to call your attention. We have also heard of the work of the Betterment Committee, in looking after our children, and this was emphasized by President Smith in the beginning of the conference. The work of the Bureau of Information, on this block, extending courtesy to strangers, has also been called to our attention. All of these things have

been talked about, and many more, and everyone of them are good.

Nor have we been wanting in manifestation of the spirit of patriotism and love of country. The remarks of Elder Hart, the previous speaker, alluded to this matter. I thought as he was speaking, if we only knew and could sense always what this priceless boon of liberty has cost the children of men, we would appreciate it perhaps more than we do; and if we only knew and could sense, always, that beyond the liberty of our country and its God-inspired Constitution, which we have for the government of the country, we have beyond that, and higher than that, a perfect law of liberty in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All other forms are naturally imperfect, being largely the product of man; but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Saint Paul tells us, we have a perfect law of liberty. Indeed, we have it recorded here in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, which may be called the constitution of this Church, that no man should exercise his Priesthood, or the rights of the Priesthood in any degree of unrighteousness. The dominion, the control that is given through this organization must be on righteous principles.

Mormonism holds a singular and unique position in the world, claiming as it does to be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is a creed founded in righteousness, established, in this perfect law of liberty, and it challenges the world to produce anything like the organization which the Lord has revealed, and through which He makes manifest His righteousness and His purposes in the earth. Without this Priesthood, we are told, the power of godliness is not

made manifest to men in the flesh.

We mistake greatly if we think that in the struggle for this liberty, in the fighting which began three hundred years ago, and continued during two hundred years—we mistake greatly if we think that that contention and struggle was for the purpose of establishing any particular creed, or branch of the Church. The contention of the Protestants, who protested against the misrule of the Catholic Church, was not that they should establish any particular kind of a church, it was a contention and fight against tyranny; it was a fight for liberty—liberty that they might establish a church, if they chose to do so, or do without one if they chose; but it was for liberty and against oppression. I say all honor to Protestantism. No man shall go before me in honoring that spirit of patriotism which was manifested all through the struggle in the Netherlands, in the low countries, in fighting that terrible oppressor the Duke of Alva, sent by the Spanish government and the Pope—not in the interests of liberty but to crush out the spirit of liberty. But the little thing that the Lord had planted, this desire for liberty, grew in the hearts of the children of men, and it became the great thing in England, as well as in Holland, in Queen Elizabeth's time, with Sir Francis Drake scouring the seas and capturing the Spanish galleons, with their treasure loads of gold from Peru and Mexico. All that was not that any particular brand of church might be established; that is to say, that they wanted this church or the other church; the fight was—let me tell you again—that liberty should be established, so that men could wor-

ship as they pleased, how they pleased, or not worship at all, if they so pleased. The time had not yet come for the Church of Jesus Christ to be established; and all honor, I say, to the Protestant countries and Protestant peoples who caused liberty to become established.

So, a little later, in our own country, the same fight, the same contention, the same struggle is on—not to establish one church or the other, but for liberty. In Washington's time, the liberty, which this flag [pointing to the national emblem], now represents was fully accomplished, when there was enacted in our Constitution a full fruition of this fighting and struggling,—in these words: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, nor abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, nor the right of the people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances." That being enacted into law and becoming the law of the country, then the liberty that all these people had been fighting for was granted to our country, and became an accomplished fact. Now, when that was accomplished, God Almighty, in His own way, sends forth what? A more perfect law of liberty and righteousness, more perfect than the Constitution of the country itself, in the bringing forth of His Church in these last days, in raising up the Prophet Joseph Smith as He did and instructing him how to prepare this wonderful organization, with the Priesthood of the Son of God as its governing power.

Our contention is that the Priesthood was taken from the earth in

an early age of the Christian era. As soon as the Primitive Church dwindled into darkness and unbelief and the Church itself adopted rules and measures, regulations and ordinances which were subversive and destructive of the spirit of liberty, then the Priesthood was withdrawn from the earth; so that the question as to when this Priesthood was taken from the earth is answered in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants itself in these words:

"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."

If that is true with respect to one man, it is true with respect to one million of men or any number of men. That shows when the Priesthood was lost. That is why it needed restoring again.

"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."

So I say that of all people, in all this world, the Latter-day Saints stand for liberty and righteousness, and ought to stand, and must so stand, under this doctrine and constitution of our Church. If we

maintain the Church of Christ in the earth, and it will be maintained, it will be upon principles of righteousness. No man will be put to death by this Church because he does not believe its doctrines—even if it were possible under the law that they could be compelled in any way. You can't maintain the rights and authority of the Priesthood in that way. You can believe what you please, of course, this liberty exists. Anyone can establish a Church. Doctor Eliot? Yes, just as much right, under the law, as any man—just exactly—and nobody will say him nay. He hasn't any authority from God Almighty to bestow the Priesthood—that is a very different proposition; he does not claim it; neither do the other churches, except one, claim it. But Mormonism claims it; this church claims it.

This is not a church established by some man, by man's wisdom—any old kind of a church, so to speak; it is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Herein is the truth, and the light, and the way—a perfect law of liberty and of righteousness. All the counsel of this whole conference has been to that end, and makes for the establishment of that aim; makes for righteousness; makes for liberty, right-living and the well-being of the children of men upon the earth. You shall not oppress any one, nor attempt to oppress any one. Men may believe, as our Catholic brethren profess to believe, that the bread that is blest becomes into the living flesh of Christ. Of course we do not believe that; we believe it is ridiculous, and know, in fact, that it is not true. But they have a right to believe it, if they want to; and I glory in the fact

that, through the fighting of the three hundred years that have passed, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, I glory in the fact that I cannot be put to death because I refuse to believe it; that is where our liberty comes in.

This is God's Church; this is *The Church*,—the only Church that He acknowledges in the earth, as having His Priesthood—the only one in all the world. We challenge the attention of the world on that proposition. It is guided by Him. I know as I live, that this is the Church of God, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is His prophet, sent of God to establish the Church whose law is a perfect law of liberty to all mankind. God bless you. Amen.

ELDER HEBER J. GRANT.

Appeal to increase membership of M. I. Associations, and subscribe for *The Era*.

I have asked permission to say a few words in the interest of the Mutual Improvement Associations. As is known, the organization of classes in the Priesthood has taken away from the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association regular religious study, that is, regular scriptural study, and many people have expressed the idea that there is now little or no use for the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations. We feel the exact opposite. The General Superintendency, and all the members of the General Board, feel that there is as much necessity for improvement of our young men in other lines as in ecclesiastical study.

We have, at the present time, 1,097 members of the Mutual Im-

provement Association on missions. Fully one-half of all the missionaries are members of our association. There are 685 wards in the Church, and 629 Young Men's Mutual Improvement associations; so there are fifty-six wards that lack these associations. I appeal to the Bishops of these wards to see that at the next report there shall be none lacking this organization. We have over 3,500 officers, and 32,225 members. There are 12,752 male members between the ages of 14 and 45, in our Church, who are not enrolled. We appeal to the presidents of stakes, the High Councilors and the Bishops to assist in decreasing this number; we did decrease it last year by 2,429. We have 1,400 teachers, and there are more than 1,200 classes. Twenty-five thousands Manuals are printed and sold each year. Many thousands of dollars are spent every year in educating the young people of the Latter-day Saints, in our Church schools, but all of the education that is given in the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations is given free of cost. There are over 32,000 members in the Young Men's associations, and there are more members in the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations; so there are over 60,000 young men and ladies in these two associations. We appeal to each and every one of you to take an interest in these associations; and now that the Improvement Era is the organ of the Priesthood, we appeal to those holding the Priesthood to support it. We have, from the beginning of the magazine, supplied it free to all of the missionaries. Over two thousand copies are going out now to the missionaries, free of cost. That