

Saints believe in this living, active, vitalizing faith that will bring salvation in the presence of God. We believe in a practical religion, in doing as well as in saying things. I have a testimony, my brethren and sisters, that God lives, and that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Redeemer of the world. I have a testimony abiding in my heart, for which I am deeply grateful, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of the living God, and that all who will obey the teachings of the Gospel, will find it verily, as Paul testified, "The power of God unto salvation." May this salvation be our lot, and that of all the honest in heart, is my earnest prayer for one and all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Serenade," a violin solo, was rendered by Prof. Wm. C. Clive. The congregation sang the hymn :

We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,
To guide us in these latter days;
We thank Thee for sending the Gospel
To lighten our minds with its rays.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Charles B. Felt.

CLOSING SESSION.

In the Tabernacle, at 2 p. m.

President Joseph F. Smith called the meeting to order.

The Tabernacle choir sang the anthem, "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause."

Prayer was offered by Elder Serge L. Baliff.

The choir sang Stephens' anthem, "Grant us peace, O Lord;" James Moncarr and Sarah Wood rendered the solo parts.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE.

Easter significance—The Resurrection a matter of faith—Missionary work among the dead—The fathers and the children—"Mormonism" an up-to-date religion—Pre-eminently a Christian church .

It is with feelings of genuine gratitude that I stand before you to add my testimony to those to which you have listened. A more inspiring sight than that before me could scarcely be imagined, and certainly could not be desired. It is doubtful if anywhere else in this great land a larger gathering graces this Easter day. I feel that the Latter-day Saints have manifested most praiseworthy interest in their religion, most commendable sincerity, and genuine devotion to the cause of truth in the attention they have given in this Conference.

This is indeed a day of days to all Christians. While it is true that the Easter celebration has its counterpart in many pagan customs, nevertheless Easter stands today for Christian belief, profession, and hope. It is the gladsome day of the year; and we believe that in this present year the anniversary comes at very nearly the actual and correct date. It is the anniversary of the greatest event in all history, the most effective miracle known to man—a miracle surpassing all that the mind of man could of itself conceive. It was upon the day we now commemorate that victory over the tomb was proclaimed and the glad tidings of eternal life were made known.

The Latter-day Saints believe in a literal resurrection of the body. They accept the biblical doctrine

in all its beauty and simplicity. They do not invest it with foreign mysteries, nor do they read into the sacred record interpretation and meaning not inherent therein. The Latter-day Saints believe that this life is a necessary part of the education of the soul, that it is a stage marking advancement and progression; that only those of the sons and daughters of God who were worthy were permitted to take upon themselves mortal tabernacles upon the earth. They believe that death is just as much a part of the divine plan as is birth; and that death is but a passing from one necessary stage to another yet more advanced. They believe, without question or doubt, that the body and the spirit shall again be united in a literal resurrection; and be it remembered, the resurrection of the body is the controlling thought and the central idea of Easter service. The man who believes in the resurrection of the body must base his belief upon revelation; and the man who so believes is inconsistent if he questions the truth declared in absolute and literal revelation from God.

It is a fact that we look around in nature vainly for any analogy of the resurrection. I have never been in harmony with the attempts of some to find analogies in nature where they do not exist relating to this great event of such surpassing importance. The egg, which is exhibited as the Easter symbol, has been pointed to as an instance of life after death. It has been said that the coming forth of the bird from the tomb-like recess of the egg is an instance of the return of life from death. The analogy is faulty; the example is not good; for be it

understood that the egg that can hatch or may hatch is not dead; and if it be truly dead, it does not again come to life. The bursting forth of the buds in the spring time, the putting on of their foliage again by the trees, has been strained by some and pressed into service as another instance of a resurrection from the dead; but I believe that this is equally faulty, for the tree that is dead does not put forth leaves in the spring, and the plant that is dead does not again bear blossoms. The sleep of the insect by which it passes from the crawling larva into the death-like, corpse-like chrysalis, from which, after a time, the winged imago comes forth in all the glory of maturity, has been used by others as an instance of the resurrection. But, again, this is faulty and untrue, for the chrysalis is not dead, and if it were it would not burst forth into the winged beauty that crowns the sequence of insect life. When we accept these natural occurrences as analogies of the bodily resurrection from death, we are lead to regard favorably also that analogy which some attempt to affirm, that the crucified Christ was not dead, but that He was in a state of coma, or trance, and came out from that condition by a simple process of revivification, and was seen again of men, not as an immortal Being but as a man who had been revived from a faint. Jesus died upon the cross. His spirit was literally and actually separated from His body; that body was not in a state of suspended animation, while still alive, that body was dead in the sense of being an untenanted tabernacle of clay, and it was only by the power of God that it could be

again brought to life. Let us not deny the literalness of the resurrection as made known through the revelations of God. We believe that we shall in very truth die, and that the spirit—that immortal part of man, which existed before the body was framed, and which shall exist and continue to live after that body has gone to decay, that spirit shall take upon itself again this tabernacle of earthly element, immortalized, however, and destined to serve it as a fit garment through all eternity.

The Latter-day Saints have been charged with great literalness, with astounding simplicity, and as one critic put it to me, with a brutal materiality, in their doctrine. We acknowledge the charge in the sense in which it was meant, although we may object to some of the adjectives. The Latter-day Saints are just so simple-minded that they are willing to believe the Lord when He speaks, and take Him at His word. We rejoice in the hope and the assurance of a glorious resurrection. We rejoice in the work that was inaugurated at that first Easter period, for and in behalf of the dead. For while the body of the Christ lay in the tomb, as we learn beyond question, His spirit went to the spirits in prison, to those who were held in bonds because of their disobedience, to those who had not been privileged to learn of the redeeming efficacy of the Gospel; and He introduced and inaugurated there a missionary labor that has been going on ever since—a missionary work compared with which that which we attempt to do here upon earth, with our two thousand missionaries out in the field, is not even as a drop compared to the

ocean. Men are needed for missionary service among the dead. Who are the dead but those who once have lived? God is Lord of both the living and the dead; and all live unto Him. If it be true that the man who is now living cannot hope to enter into the Kingdom of God unless he complies with the simple law and requirement laid down by the author of our salvation, namely, that we must be born of water and of the spirit, that applies equally to each and every one of the uncounted myriads who have lived and passed beyond.

The doctrine of salvation for the dead came as a revelation to the earth. It had to be made known anew; for while it had been known of old, it, like many other of the saving doctrines of the Gospel, had been lost sight of and forgotten. The labor in behalf of the dead was cited by Paul, an apostle of old, as an argument and evidence of the resurrection; said he: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Throughout the centuries of the deep night of the apostasy, not a single ordinance was performed in behalf of the dead. Yet, the ranks of the dead at that time were increasing by uncounted thousands. We are greatly behind in the work, but the Lord has provided a means by which it shall be done, and by which it is the privilege of those who come in at the door themselves to hold that door open to admit others, others who were once among the living and are now among the dead.

To me there is special significance in our assembling upon this block, by the great temple that is conse-

crated mostly to the work for the dead. For be it known that this great labor of temple-building, for which the Latter-day Saints are so well known and so widely famed, is very largely, though not entirely, a work in behalf of the dead. They are not giving of their substance to erect these great buildings for themselves, for aggrandizement, nor for the beautification of earth. The temple-building spirit manifested among the Latter-day Saints is the spirit of absolute unselfishness; it is the spirit of Elijah, the spirit by which the feelings of the children are turned toward the fathers, and the feelings of the fathers are directed toward the children; for no man stands upon this earth alone. We talk of independence. No man is independent. We are all interdependent; and we shall only rise as we carry others with us, and as we are assisted by others. My own mind is led to that great subject, and I have thought of it much as I have sat through the exercises of the morning, because of the fact that it was at the glorious Easter time the work for the dead was inaugurated; it was at this season the great missionary labor in the spirit world was begun, and the doors were there opened and a means of deliverance preached unto those who had been sitting in darkness, some of them even from the days of Noah.

I feel particularly gratified in this opportunity of bearing to you a humble testimony of the divinity of this work, of the sacredness of the labor for which the Church stands. As we heard yesterday, testimony is oftentimes more effective than argument, oftentimes more potent than reasons, as man counts reasons, and

lists them and collates them, and analyzes them; for, after, all he can only base the correctness of his results upon the assurance that his processes are free from error. Whereas, one who is able to stand forth and say "I know," testifies of himself, because of the knowledge that is within him; and that knowledge is given him of God. This people believe in testimony-making, in testimony-bearing, in testimony-speaking; and while they do not believe that the testimony of one man shall of itself convict or condemn another, they do believe that a man's humble, sincere testimony is entitled to respectful consideration. The Latter-day Saints tell you that they know that the Gospel is true, for that knowledge has been given unto them; and when a man is able to say, as said the chief of the apostles of old of the Christ, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," to him does the answer apply, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but the Father who is in heaven." And, let that testimony come in what way it will, it has a saving power for man; this is the kind of testimony that abides and abounds in the hearts of this people, and they manifest it in their lives. Jesus came with His testimony, and the people were astounded at His doctrines, not because He brought them something that was essentially new in all particulars; for He used their scriptures; He brought into service their proverbs, and referred to the things which they well knew; but He gave to all of this a new application and a new meaning; and they said: "He speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes." His discourse was no

labored compilation of passages. He did not base His doctrines upon what the prophets who had gone ahead of Him had said, though He referred approvingly to many of their inspired utterances; but He spoke from the knowledge He had within Him, and He spoke by reason of the authority that He held; and thus was He distinguished among the teachers of the day, and therefore did He compel attention.

Such, in a measure is the testimony of the Latter-day Saint Elder. He goes forth in humility. He may, perhaps, not be eloquent. He may be far from learned, as the world reckons learning; yet he is not ignorant, when he is able to stand forth and say, "I know that this Gospel is true." We look upon the scriptures of the past with reverence. We believe that they are necessary to the building up of the church in this day; but we do not depend upon them for our authority, nor for the interpretation we place upon the messages from God.

We do not believe in living wholly in the past. We believe in an up-to-date doctrine, in an up-to-date church, an up-to-date religion, a religion that is ever enriched by new revelation, a church that is in direct communication with headquarters, a church that is receiving through revelation the word of God today, pertaining to the affairs of today. When the proclamation was first made, that direct revelation from God was a feature of modern times, there was consternation in the ranks of the churches of the day; for be it known that when this church was established in the nineteenth century, there was not on earth a church sacred to the name of Christ. There were churches in great variety,

churches that bore the names of men, organizations as well as buildings established and erected to the name of Peter, and Paul, and Moses, and Elias, churches named after peculiarities of their worship, Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopalian; churches named after men who had devoted themselves to their establishment—there were the Lutheran church, the Wesleyan church, the Calvinist church. But when it was proclaimed that there was now upon the earth a church sacred to the name of Christ there was fear and trembling manifest among the professors of religion. Consternation entered their souls when that banner was raised; and yet, what other name is appropriate? The profession of this church is set forth in its name. It is not the church of Joseph Smith, nor of Brigham Young, nor of Joseph F. Smith, nor of any other man or combination of men. It is not the Mormon church, though we do not object to that term which was first applied in derision, except for the possible error that may accompany its use; for it is not the church of Mormon! it is the Church of Jesus Christ. If the name, the Church of Jesus Christ, has been assumed authoritatively, it is of itself ample explanation of the phenomenal rise and development of this church; and if it has been assumed without authority, it is the most glaring instance of blasphemy the world has known. No greater challenge can be given to the world than the name borne by this church. I testify to you that this is the Church of Jesus Christ, that the power of the Christ is in it, the very Christ that lived as a man, that died as a God, the one who was resurrected, who

came forth from the tomb with the very body that had been pierced and laid there; that He has again spoken in this day and age of the world, even as had been declared He would speak, that He has again established His saving Gospel among men, and has opened the way by which men may attain salvation and eternal life in His presence and in that of the Father, the only way under heaven by which salvation and exaltation may be attained, the only name under heaven by which man may be saved.

Strange, is it not, that some have said, in their ignorance, that this Mormon Church is not a Christian church. Not Christian when it bears by authority the name of Christ, who is the author of all that is best in Christianity? Not Christian—when its great mission is the preparing of the earth for the coming of its King, that same Lord, Jesus Christ? Not Christian—when it is setting before the world an example of self-sacrifice never before known, and all in the interest of Christ and His work? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is preaching the same doctrine that was preached in the church of old, and is proclaiming the same great message, Repent, repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. We say that Christ will return to the earth, and literally reign here in Person, that it is His right to reign; and that the church is preparing for His coming. The testimonies to which we have listened, the testimonies to which we do listen in smaller gatherings than this, in the various stakes and wards in the Church, all have the same sound, the same truth and divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the di-

vinity of the work of the man who was the instrument, in the hands of God, in establishing this Church on the earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times; for this is that dispensation, to which the prophets of old have been looking, for which they have yearned, toward which their desires have gone forth. It is the dispensation of fullness, it marks the ushering in of the great finale of this drama of the Lord. Right thankful should we be that we are privileged to have a name and standing in the Church in this day and to take part in this great work. I am thankful for that name and for that standing, and for the privilege of testifying to you today, as the last and the least of those who have been called to stand before the world at the present time as the special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ, who verily lives and who verily shall come as hath been predicted, to take His place upon the earth, amongst His people. May His spirit ever guide us, through all the scenes of life, to make us worthy of our name, worthy of our promised destiny, I ask, in His name, Amen.

“O Divine Redeemer,” a sacred song, was rendered by Sister Olive Nixon.

ELDER BEN E. RICH.

(President of Eastern States Mission.)

“The angel said that my name should be had for good or for evil throughout all the nations of the earth.” These were the words which fell from the lips of a young boy, a little over three-quarters of a century ago, in the northern portion of the State of New York; and they brought a sneer and a laugh from