

SECOND DAY.

In the Tabernacle, Saturday, October 5th, 10 a. m.

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

The congregation sang the hymn:

O ye mountains high, where the clear
blue sky
Arches over the vales of the free,
Where the pure breezes blow and the
clear streamlets flow,
How I've longed to your bosom to
flee.

Prayer was offered by Elder John L. Herrick.

The congregation sang the hymn:

O, say what is truth? 'Tis the fairest
gem,
That the riches of worlds can pro-
duce;
And priceless the value of truth will
be when
The proud monarch's costliest dia-
dem
Is counted but dross and refuse.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS.

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

I wish I knew who it was that said, "In essentials let there be unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity." But if I ever knew who said it I cannot now remember who it was, and I don't know that it matters, because the beauty and truth of the utterance is self-evident. It is one of those things which the world has accepted into its literature as being true and sensible, and it matters little who said it since it does not require other authority than the thing itself to commend it to men.

Listening as I have at least in some of the meetings of this conference to the discourse of my brethren, I have felt to rejoice in a knowledge of the fact that so far as essentials, absolute and positive essentials, are concerned, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands on very firm and solid ground. We do know the things that concern the salvation of men. We know of God: not only of the fact of His being, but the *kind* of being He is, because He is fully revealed in the person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh. He is the Son of God, and as He was and is, so too, is the Father. As He acted and taught so the Father would have acted and taught had He come among men. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only the express image of the Father's person, and the brightness of the Father's glory, as the scriptures declare, but also He is a complete revelation of God, of all that is divine. So that we know God through the revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ; and that the Father and the Son and the spirit-personage known as the Holy Ghost, constitute the supreme godhead for us men, to whom we owe allegiance; to whom we submit our judgment and our will, for this alone is true worship. We know these divine personages also through their chief functions. The Father primarily is Creator. The Son primarily is the Revelator

of God, and the Redeemer of men; and the Holy Spirit is God's witness of the Father and of the Son, and of all truth, the whole volume of it; the divine Witness for God to the souls of men. Whatever divisions and opposite opinions may exist in the world concerning the Godhead, the Latter-day Saints are so blessed that there is perfect and absolute unity with reference to this great central truth of the Christian religion.

We are equally at one in relation to the great fact of human redemption; we know that we are redeemed from the consequences of Adam's transgression through the atonement of the Christ, without condition, so far as that mere fact is concerned, that is without condition on our part; for as in Adam all died, even so in the Christ will all be made alive. We are redeemed from the consequences of our individual sins and transgressions also by acceptance of the atonement of the Christ; and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel; and we know, from the revelations of God, without any doubt whatsoever, what those laws and ordinances are. We know that we must signify our acceptance of the atonement of the Christ by submitting to and performing the symbols of the atonement in our baptism; symbolizing therein the death and the resurrection of the Christ; and in confirmation by the laying on of hands we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Being brought by that ordinance and a right disposition into complete fellowship with the Holy Ghost—to have Him for friend and guide and witness of the truth in our souls.

In order to keep in memory the covenants and obligations that we

make, we repeat these symbols of the atonement in partaking of the holy sacrament; partaking of the broken bread in remembrance of the broken body of the Christ; partaking of the water or the wine in memory of the shed blood of the Christ, witnessing unto the Father that we will always remember Him, and keep His commandments that He has given us; in order that we might have all this crowned with the realization of that beautiful and splendid promise, that we shall have His Spirit always to be with us.

In all these matters there is absolute, and must continue to be absolute unity among the Saints. There can be no variation. There can be no alteration. There can be no deduction from nor addition to these things. They are essential. We know also that these ordinances of the gospel are to be performed, and can only be performed properly by those who have received divine commission from God, who hold divine authority. God has made of His Church a depository of His truth, and has commissioned that Church with a divine authority to teach, in the power and demonstration of His Spirit, these essential truths to all the inhabitants of the earth, our mission extending to every nation and kindred and tongue and people under the whole heaven—a universal church with a universal mission. In these essential things we are united. We know also that in addition to this commission received of God to *teach* the truth, it is the mission of the Church to perfect the lives of those who receive the truth she teaches; and that through teaching, persuasion, patience, and long suffering. Such, in brief, is the mission of the Church of Christ; and we are

united with reference to all these things. And not only are we united in relation to these things—these essentials—but in relation to the moral law of the gospel, the ethics of the Church of Christ, and of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I think there exists no ground for division in relation to the law of righteousness. We know the law of righteousness—I had almost said, perfectly well; at least there is no ground for serious division among us in respect of what is truth, and justice, and righteousness, and morality in all things, and in all relations.

The Latter-day Saints are a blest people. There *does* exist—I was about to say there can exist, but I would rather say there *does* exist—perfect unity in relation to all these essentials; in regard to the faith we have received, in regard to the dispensation of the fulness of times which God has revealed in these days unto us. And so I rejoice in these blessings, and can look forward with perfect confidence that in all these great and essential things, touching the salvation of men, the Church of Christ will remain absolutely united. Belief in and acceptance of these things are essential to the unity and integrity and the very existence of the Church.

Now, when you contemplate that other division, the non-essentials, here you have a field wherein liberty should exist; wherein should exist tolerance: tolerance in our social relations and activities, in our commercial affairs, and in industrial pursuits; in the sphere of civil government. These things in which the judgment of men may be exercised, and where it is merely a question, perhaps, of policy, or of ad-

ministration. If only we can infuse into this sphere of the non-essentials, where one man's judgment may be as good as another's, if in that field we can only bring in the principle of charity, and of tolerance and the recognition of the liberty of all men, it seems to me then we shall have good reason to believe that in this sphere of non-essentials, we shall get along quite as happily as we may in the field where we are united in reference to absolute essentials. I believe that we are entitled to take an optimistic view with reference to these matters that make up the sphere of non-essentials; and especially in relation to the sphere of civil government. There is a passage in the Book of Mormon that to me has been very instructive, and also very encouraging. I think I will read to you this passage, since some of you may possibly have missed it. It occurs in the Book of Mosiah, where there is described a transition from a monarchical form of government to a reign of judges, which in reality was a sort of republic, or rule by the people. The value of this passage that I shall read is in that it expresses confidence in the ability of the people to rule, to govern themselves; and this inspired man, Mosiah, calls upon them to exercise that duty, and to do it in the fear of God. In recommending the changes in the form of the Nephite government, he said:

“Therefore choose you by the voice of this people judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our Fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord. Now, it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser

part of the people to desire that which is not right. Therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law, to do your business by the voice of the people. And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you, then is the time He will visit you with great destruction even as he hath hitherto visited this land. * * * And I command you to do these things in the fear of the Lord, and I command you to do these things, and that ye have no kings; that if this people commit sins and iniquities they shall be answered upon their own heads, for behold I say unto you, the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings. Therefore their iniquities are answered upon the heads of their kings. And now I desire that this iniquity should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land, yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land."

To my mind Joseph Smith, in bringing forth that principle through the Book of Mormon—the principle of personal, moral, responsibility to God for the government that obtains in free republics—has contributed one of the mightiest thoughts to the political life of the age in which he lived, that any man has brought forth in all the contributions that have been made to political thought in America. Patrick Henry's idea that men had an inherent right to rebel against insufferable tyranny is not equal to it. Jefferson's great doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed with the inalienable rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is not greater than this Book of Mormon doctrine. Webster's great contribution of "nationalism," viz., that this nation was an indestructible

union of indestructible states, is not superior to it. And Lincoln's great thought, that the principle of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are of right free, must hold good as to the colored race as well as to the white race, does not surpass it. Because this great Book of Mormon thought is this: that while governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, there goes with that the awful, moral responsibility, direct to God, of every man and woman participating as sovereigns in a free government, for the kind of government that obtains in such country. The great doctrine of direct, moral responsibility to God of a free people is indeed a soul-inspiring utterance, but it is also an awe-inspiring condition, and on its face bears evidence of the divine source whence it comes.

It was upon this principle of confidence in the ability of the people to govern themselves that the Lord inspired those whom we call the "fathers of our republic," the founders of the constitution—it was upon this great principle of belief in the ability in the people for self-government, that the corner stones of this republic were laid. Governments were announced in the Declaration of Independence to be the creatures of the people; and indeed it was further announced in the Declaration of Independence—and you must remember that the Declaration of Independence is the preface to the Constitution, the Constitution merely organized agencies for carrying out the principles of liberty announced in the document known as the Declaration of Independence—it is announced, I say, that if governments become destructive of the liberties

and rights of the people, it is the right of the people to alter or even abolish them, and institute new forms that shall, in their judgment, tend better to preserve their rights and their liberties.

Upon this subject I desire to read to you one declaration of President Brigham Young, who had some reputation for constructive statesmanship and intelligent grasp of things. In this document before me I might possibly read to you things which in our present status might be regarded as somewhat startling, but I do not desire to do that. I would rather not bring confusion, but peace; and since I am a man of peace, and desire it with all my heart—that is, that peace which is consistent with human liberty, and the preservation of human rights. But dear as peace is to me, it is not so dear that I would purchase it at the sacrifice of human rights and human liberty. But I read to you that which I am sure we will all be in accord with. "The general constitution of our country," said Brigham Young, "is good; and a wholesome government could be founded upon it; for it was dictated by the invisible operations of the Almighty. God's purpose in raising up these men and inspiring them with daring sufficient to surmount every opposing power, was to prepare the way for the formation of a true republican government. They laid the foundation, but when others came to build upon it they reared a superstructure far short of their privileges, if they had walked uprightly as they should have done. * * * * The signers of the Declaration of Independence and the framers of the Constitution were inspired from on high to do that work. But was that which was

given to them perfect, not admitting of any addition whatever? No; for if men know anything they must know that the Almighty never yet found a man in mortality that was capable at the first intimation, at the first impulse, to receive anything in a state of entire perfection. They laid the foundation, and it was for after generations to rear the superstructure upon it. It is a progressive and gradual work."

I think it is divine wisdom manifested in the Constitution of our country that provision is made for its amendment, from time to time, as experience and larger views and changing conditions may warrant. However, upon this subject of change in the Constitution, I believe that the conservative spirit should prevail; that care, and very great concern ought to be exercised with reference to change in the fundamental law of our government; but let us not think because we believe in the great truth that the Constitution of our country was the product of divine inspiration, that new conditions and a constantly changing status would not warrant, from time to time, changes in the fundamental law of the land.

Now, in relation to all these matters, we are operating in the realm of the non-essentials, that is, the realm where human judgment may be exercised; and where men may not be able to come to absolute unity of understanding in relation to matters, and in that event, let us remember that it is the realm where liberty and tolerance prevail, and it is proper that charity also should abound.

I thank the Lord and the brethren for this opportunity of saying so much in relation to these questions that are occupying the attention of

the people. I rejoice that in the great field of the things which are essential, that the Lord has spoken, and that there is ground for absolute unity existing among us; and I sincerely trust that for this other field, in the realm of non-essentials, there will be liberty, and tolerance; and in both—in the exercise and administration of both essentials and in the realm of liberty—the great principle of charity—which is the pure love of God—may abound.

In conclusion, my brethren and sisters, let me once more bear witness to you of the truth of the great latter day work, and proclaim once more my love and devotion for it. I love the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe and accept it with all my heart. If it is possible for the consciousness of man to be awakened to a knowledge of the truth of a thing, then I know, as I know I live, that God lives; that Jesus is the Christ; that men can form a companionship with the Holy Ghost; that forgiveness of sin is true; that the resurrection from the dead is a true doctrine; that the divinity of the Church is beyond question; that the power of the Holy Priesthood is divine; and that man may hope for immortality and eternal life in the realms of freedom under the law of God. I testify to you that my soul has a witness that all these things are true, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT SEYMOUR B. YOUNG
(President of First Council of Seventy.)

My brethren and sisters: Indeed I am deeply appreciative of the honor that I have in this privilege of addressing you for a few minutes this morning. I have listened with very much pleasure, and I hope some profit, to the remarks

of my brethren, and especially the introductory remarks of our President at the beginning of this conference. A spirit of universal charity, of forbearance and brotherly love, has been characteristic of the speakers on this stand, and I take it that no better theme could be introduced, and that no better thought could be inspired by any other line of doctrine that could be taught.

For the past few days, before the beginning of this our semi-annual conference, I have had the pleasure of being associated with the International Irrigation Congress, meeting with men who seem to be deeply interested in the welfare of these great communities of our western country. The Irrigation Congress brought to this city some very choice men, representatives from about thirty states of the Union, also from Canada, from Old Mexico, from some of the southern republics, and from far distant Japan. These gentlemen were unanimous in expressing their views in regard to the great benefits already attained, and that will be consummated in the future, through irrigation of the arid west, and through the reclamation services in which our great government is taking so prominent a part for the benefit of settlers upon the arid lands of this once desert country. All of those gentlemen that I heard express themselves were in one accord in stating their sincere regard, and appreciation, for the welcome extended to them by the people of our beautiful city, and especially commending the authorities of the "Mormon" church for the splendid reception in this great building, on the first day and the first session of the congress.

The National Irrigation Ode,