

to destroy and to break down rather than to build up the system. Let them teach in their homes faith in God—for we all know it is necessary that faith should be taught among the people. I believe, of course, that in this regard we are far ahead of any other people in the world. We have greater faith because we have a better understanding of the truth, and because we are to a greater extent striving to keep the commandments of the Lord. But I am impressed with an expression of the Savior's. I think it is found in the eighteenth chapter of Luke. Speaking of the latter times, in one of His discourses He said to the people: "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" I think the proper answer to the question is that if He finds faith on the earth it will not be to any great extent; and I believe that the condition in the world today proves that this is what He had in mind. But we should be faithful, we should have knowledge, we should have understanding and be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is within us, and walk uprightly and justly before the Lord, and keep the commandments as they have been given to us. This is our duty as it is recorded here in the fifty-ninth section: "Wherefore I give unto them [that is the people] a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve Him." This is our duty as Latter-day Saints. This is the great commandment and if we will put into practice this commandment which has been reiterated unto us in this dispensation, and love our neighbors

as ourselves, we need have no fear regarding our salvation.

I pray that when we go to our homes we will remember the things we have heard and put into practice the teachings that have been imparted and will yet be imparted here during the conference. I hope we will also carry these instructions to those who are not so fortunate as we are, and are not here to be fed the words of eternal life, and teach them, that faith may abound in the hearts of the people, and truth prevail among them, that we may stand united as one body, worshiping the Lord and keeping His commandments, because we love to do so. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

At the conclusion of his remarks Elder Smith read the report of the auditing committee, so that those unable to attend the session on Monday, the 6th, at the time of transaction of other business, should have the privilege of hearing it. The report appears in full in statement of proceedings on April 6th.

A soprano solo, from Stephens' "Ode to the Pioneers," was sung by Edna Anderson.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE.

Phenomenal nature of these great Conferences—Simplicity of our teachings—Oratory and eloquence—People who tire of sound doctrine—Vagaries of higher criticism—The Latter-day Saints accept the Bible as the word of God—The Philosophical Society of Great Britain, a Christian organization—The miracles of the Bible believed in by leaders among men—Not unscientific to accept the simple Gospel of Christ.

These great gatherings of the Church have come to be looked upon

as a very remarkable phenomenon. It is indeed something to be wondered at, that men and women in such great numbers will leave their employment and at very considerable sacrifice of time and money come up from the stakes both near and afar off, twice a year, to this appointed place, the block upon which stands the great house of the Lord, and remain in session for three or more days, receiving instructions and admonition, and occasionally good and well intended rebuke, in order that they may be the better fitted for their duties as professing Latter-day Saints. It cannot be that curiosity brings them here, for the many decades through which this custom has continued must have abolished the element of novelty. Nor do I think the people come to be entertained, certainly not to be amused. It is true we have the privilege of listening to music of the very highest order—music of prayer and praise; and great shall be the blessing that shall come to every one of our talented singers and musicians who are so ready and willing to use their God-given gift in praise and worship. We do not come to be impressed by pulpit oratory. There is none of the attractiveness of oratorical display about the addresses that are delivered from this stand. I have rejoiced many times and do now rejoice, that our public speaking in the Church of Jesus Christ is devoid of those characteristics usually classed under the name of oratory. Oratory too often means little more than the sounding of brass and the tinkling of cymbals to tickle the ears. I do rejoice, however, in the eloquence of those who speak under the influence of the Spirit of God. Oratory is addressed to the ears; eloquence given of God,

to the heart. I cannot conclude otherwise than that our people thus come together so willingly and so eagerly because they receive something worth the coming. They find it pays them to come; they go away satisfied. If they went otherwise they would be less inclined to come back again, and we know that every recurrence of the conference, both at the April and at the October season is marked by the gathering of these great concourses of people who have come up from all parts of the land of Israel. I feel that they come to hear the word of God, proclaimed in its simplicity; and it is the simplicity of the word that pleases the people, and that carries it home to their hearts. I call to mind that it was predicted by the inspired apostle of old that the day would come when people would tire of simplicity, and would look for something other than the eloquence of truth. Paul in writing to his beloved son in Christ, as he called him, Timothy, admonished him as to his duties; and as I read in the fourth chapter of the second epistle that passed between these two worthy ministers of Christ, Paul said:

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry."

Who can doubt that this predic-

tion has seen fulfillment and that the fact of its fulfillment is apparent to-day? Many there be who will no longer endure sound doctrine, but turn away after fables that tickle their ears and please their fancy, and demand of them none of that self-denial, sacrifice and earnest effort so characteristic of the requirements made of those who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ.

Our attention was called in the opening session of this conference to the dangers of our being led astray by those who would make believe that the very word of God itself is a fable, a collection of myths and legends, meaning not what it says but what men may fancy or would suppose. There be men who have arrogated to themselves the claim of superiority, who pronounce themselves higher critics of the scriptures of Almighty God, and proclaim that the scriptures mean not what they say. Right glad am I that my people are pleased with sound doctrine; that the wholesome food of the Gospel is still sweet in their mouths. There are some who would make it appear that it is to-day an evidence of inferior perception to accept the word of God for just what it professes to be, and that one is not up with the times unless he can read between the lines and unless he can perceive the metaphorical and the figurative in the Holy Scriptures. There are parts of the Bible that are plainly figurative; but no one who can read can be in doubt as to when a figure is used, and as to when the plain truth is declared in the simplest of language. Parables there are, and of great value are the lessons set forth thereby. But there is no parable, there is no metaphor in the plain declarations of the scriptures as to

what is the price of salvation.

I don't believe the Latter-day Saints are influenced by these vagaries of the so-called higher criticism of the scriptures. I believe our people stand upon the platform of the word of God as it has been delivered unto them through the mouths of men who have been empowered and directed to declare it unto them. But there are some, particularly of our younger people, who perhaps are inclined to believe that it is a little superior to profess doubt as to the truth and plain meaning of the Holy Scriptures. To them let me say, it is not the leaders in thought in the world today who are doubting the scriptures, and reading into them a meaning that was never intended. The majority of the really great men, great thinkers, men who have influence amongst their fellows, accept the scriptures in their literalness and simplicity.

There is now in existence a society known as the Philosophical Society of Great Britain. It embraces not only subjects of the King of England, but men in many other nations. It is known also by another name, given in honor of the late Empress Queen who was its patron for many years, The Victoria Institute. Upon its rolls you will find the names of many of the leading scientists of the world, philosophers, literary men, theologians. The conditions attendant upon membership in that great association are precise. The first is that the candidate shall be a man or woman of recognized ability. The second is that he shall be without reservation a Christian, believing that Jesus Christ was in very truth the Son of God, that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived as the scriptures declare He did, that

He did suffer death and that He did literally come forth from the tomb, an immortalized Being. And that society whose president today is the Lord Chancellor of England, whose honorary president and patron is the King, declares that it has no time to go over the ground again and thresh the old straw and winnow the old chaff of infidelity, or of questions that arise respecting the integrity of the Holy Scriptures. Men who will not accept Christ as the Redeemer of mankind can have no place there; and yet I am told that it belittles one in the eyes of learned men to accept the plain and simple declarations of the scriptures with respect to the mission of the divine Son of God.

I have been told that no really great mind can believe for a moment in the actuality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, particularly those attributed to the Christ Himself. Yet that body of men, amongst whom are some of the most prominent of the leaders of men in the world, have but recently put themselves upon record. The subject of the miracles of the New Testament has been investigated scientifically, and according to the accepted canons of analysis, and the report unanimously adopted and put upon record by the Philosophical Society of Great Britain, is that the miracles of the Testament from that of Cana in Galilee to the greatest miracle of all, the coming forth of the Christ from the tomb on the resurrection morn, are attested by evidence that is as trustworthy and in every way as acceptable as the evidence attesting any event of past history; and the Philosophical Society of Great Britain declares its acceptance of the miracles of the Bible as the very manifestation of

the power of God. Those men are not above saying that because they can't perform such miracles, no such miracles were ever performed; but they proclaim that to say they cannot understand them is no argument that they did not take place. I am inclined to accept the opinions of such men as those before the opinions of little-great men who seek to stir up doubt in the minds of those who believe in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Most pernicious is the effect that such have upon children and young people of immature powers who cannot analyze for themselves and who follow their teachers and are impressed by those who instruct them in more things than the mere subjects which are set down on the program.

Young Latter-day Saints, I say unto you as I have said before, it is not unscientific to believe in God, the very Eternal Father, nor in Jesus Christ as the one and only Redeemer of mankind. It is not unphilosophical to accept the scriptural record of His birth, of His life, of His death, of His resurrection. I have met men of science and philosophy in many lands, and have discussed the scriptures with them, and I testify to you I never yet have had to take a back seat nor to bow my head because of the principles which I profess to believe, nor because I was a Latter-day Saint. I have found the teachings of my Church, which is your Church and the Church of Jesus Christ, to be abreast of the very best of scientific conception, discovery and teaching of the day. Beware of these who come telling you that you are behind the times in accepting the faith of your fathers.

I am most happy to add my testimony to those to which we have lis-

tened in the course of this conference, most grateful that the Lord has been with us in these meetings, and I recognize in it a fulfillment of His glorious promise while He lived in the flesh when He declared: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst." He has been in the congregations of the Saints who have assembled here, and the result is inspiration in the words of those who have spoken and who have instructed us. While perchance we have heard nothing that is strictly novel or new, nothing that we may not have heard before, we have been reminded of those things that are most precious pertaining to the duties that shall save—the neglect of which shall condemn. I rejoice with my brethren who have already expressed their joy that the Gospel revealed unto man fits man to his environment and enables him to meet the exigencies of the present day. Its scriptures are not alone the scriptures of the past but those of the very day in which we live.

Is it not strange that this people who a few years ago were severely arraigned and criticized because in their declaration of faith they said, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly," should now be criticized because of their literal acceptance of that volume of holy writ. We accept it for what it is. We believe

that other scriptures are necessary, and we affirm that other scriptures have been written, and that yet others shall be written; but the Church of Jesus Christ stands for the integrity of the Holy Bible, and defends it against the attacks and the assaults of those who would make you believe that it is but a compilation of fairy stories that pleased the people in by-gone centuries, but that are not adapted to the greater and higher development of the present day. The Bible and other scriptures given of God will always be up to date in their fundamental principles, and other scriptures will be given as occasion may require, to meet the condition of the advancing years. Let us go hence with the spirit of the conference burning in our hearts, that we may shed light and warmth in our homes and impart it unto those who have not been privileged to meet with us here. We are simple minded enough, child-like enough, thank God, to believe that He meant what He said when He spoke of old, and that He means what He says when He speaks to-day. God be with you. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "Oh, beauty of holiness."

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Joseph E. Cardon.

Conference adjourned until 10 a. m., Monday, April 6th.