

ELDER CHARLES H. HART.

(Of the First Council of Seventy.)

I enjoy this privilege very much, of speaking from the same platform with these faithful presidents of stakes. I have had the privilege of going into their stakes, and know of their good works, and of the faithful people over whom they preside. I have rejoiced with you in the sessions of this conference, at the timely and important teachings pertaining to God, and of our relations to him and of our duties.

For the most part, in the scriptures, there is little reasoning from nature up to nature's God. The existence of Deity is either assumed or directly asserted, without much by way of reasoning from creature to Creator. We have, however, some beautiful illustrations. For instance, the Psalmist exclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard."

In the 104th Psalm, after an enumeration of the works of the Lord, the Psalmist exclaims, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

There is a sublime passage from Job along the same line. "Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?"

Naturalists of high standing have reasoned in the same way, and we have the scientist and philosopher, Spencer, declaring, "One truth must ever grow clearer, the

truth that there is an inscrutable existence everywhere manifested, to which we can neither find nor conceive beginning or end." And again, "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious, the more they are thought about, there will remain this one absolute certainty, that we are ever in the presence of an infinite energy from which all things proceed."

But while this line of reasoning is valuable, reasoning from nature up to nature's God, it requires a revelation to know God in all his attributes.

One of the three comforters of Job put this question to him, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" We have in the efforts of men without the aid of revelation the example of men struggling vainly to discover the attributes of God. I rejoice that in answer to the prayer of faith by the little boy, he was able to say, "I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other: 'Joseph, this is my beloved Son, hear Him.'" In that one clear vision, the mystery, the doubt and the uncertainty of the past were swept away.

If you wish to know what that meant to the world, take as an example the discussion in the September, 1916, number of the *North American Review*, by the Rev. Philip S. Moxom on "The Modern Conception of Deity," and see what value it is and has been to the world for that one clear, glorious revelation to be given of the personality of God. He discusses at considerable length this modern concep-

tion. He confesses that it is difficult to set forth just what this modern conception of Deity includes, but argues for a personal Deity, one that has the power to know and feel and to will; and argues that a being may possess all those attributes of personality and still possess the attribute of infinitude. He also asserts very strongly in favor of the divine immanence of God. Let me read the concluding words of the discussion, which is significant, in view of the general belief, at the time of the Prophet Joseph, that a mere static deity existed, an impersonal power which had ceased to reveal itself. They may call Deity, as the naturalist did, "an inscrutable existence, an infinite energy," but they denied to Him personality. Mr. Moxom concludes his article in these words:

"The deeper experiences of the human soul cause it to repel the old notion of a static deity,—an impassable infinitude of being with which humanity can come into no appreciable relations. It seeks for a God who is not remote from mankind, who is so near, indeed, that the wide sweep and measureless stretch of human experience, in some mysterious way, is also the experience of God, and that through the fulfilment of the life of beings whom he has created, God is finding his own self-realization and self-fulfilment. * * * * *

"No thought is more deeply rooted in the mind of man today than the thought of the divine immanence. Are we not beginning to see that the divine immanence means much more than we have realized, and is freighted with consequences vaster than we have dreamed? The old theological battles have lost their zest because they have lost their meaning. The faint light of a new dawn trembles on the horizon. Let us look up and face the East"

The leaven of "Mormonism" is beginning to leaven the entire lump

of humanity. It was through the revelations in the "Pearl of Great Price" that we have the great declaration of God, "Behold this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." The writer seems to have caught a little of *that* idea, as well as much of the "Mormon" belief in reference to the personal nature of Deity and of his divine immanence throughout the immensity of space, as indicated in this article.

There is need in the world of so-called "Mormonism." Bishop Greer is quoted as having said, on the 25th of last April at consecration services at the St. Thomas Church on Fifth avenue, New York, one of the fashionable churches of that fashionable street, as follows:

"No more urgent question, vitally urgent question, confronts the church today than this, of how to close the gap which now too much exists between the church's creed and the church's Christian life—for this at least is certain, it must somehow be closed. Otherwise the church will lose its influence in the world, its leadership and power, and will cease to be a force and factor in the world's affairs."

Some years ago, as published in some of our prints, copied from the *Anaconda Standard*, of Montana, the remarks of a Reverend T. H. Martin of the Unity church, were made to the effect that the church had lost its magnet, "that the Christian religion of the present is merely a social code and has nothing in it whereby it could claim a divine origin." I shall not take time to read more of his words, but will read an indictment, published in the September number of the *Forum*, which is illustrative at least of some of the charges being made against

the church. I am not discussing the question to whether the proofs will sustain this indictment, in any or all of its counts, but simply call attention to the fact that these things are being said and published in leading and reputable magazines, charging inefficiency of the church today. If true, we would not exult in it but it would make all the greater our sense of responsibility to do missionary and evangelical work throughout the world. The writer, Mr. Mercer C. Johnson, says:

"I have said that the Christian church is in a state of apostasy, that she has tried to serve God and Mammon, and has made an awful mess of it; that she has put away her real Christ; and set us in his stead a Mammon-pleasing Christ; that she is a captive church, under the shameful spell of her ungodly and inhuman captor; that she is the white slave of Mammon, and sits with folded hands watching the cross to which he nails whatever opposes his will, half horrified because of the dreams of the real Christ that haunts her still, half stupefied by the deadly dollar dope that is the meat and drink of her double life, hardly knowing what she ought to say or do, and not caring overmuch."

I trust the charge is an exaggeration. As I said before, we take no pleasure in knowing of the failure to any extent of Christianity, and yet we realize the necessity for the restoration of the gospel—the explanation we have for our existence as a Church.

We also have problems of our own at home that will engage the serious attention of earnest men and women. Some of those grave problems have been pointed out—the necessity of bishops and of stake presidents putting our machinery into operation for the purpose of reaching as many as possible of the

young men and young women of the Church to keep them from temptation, to keep them in the straight and narrow path.

In addition to the care which officers may give children, we need also the loving care of parents,—and there is no love that is equal to the mother love and the father love. We have a beautiful picture in Holy Writ of the mother love of Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, whose two sons with five others were offered to the Gibeonites as a sort of a sacrifice or peace offering; and when the lives of those boys were taken, and their bodies were placed upon the rock, unburied, there was one who kept faithful vigil for O such a long time! The execution took place, we are told in II Samuel, 21:9-10, in the early barley harvest, and that mother placed sackcloth upon the rock and sat there with her dead—her two sons and her husband's five grandsons—and she kept vigil until the rainy season came, until the water from heaven descended. Just how many weary weeks or months that may have been, I could not at this moment tell you—but it is an illustration of the mother love that she "suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night," and that she kept this lonely and faithful vigil from the beginning of the barley harvest "until water dropped upon them out of heaven."

This is but an instance duplicated in a different way in this age of ours. Just last year, we saw, upon the banks of the Little Colorado, a lonely woman keeping vigil, watching and wandering on the banks, pleading no doubt for that treacherous stream to give up its victim, her little boy. All others had ceased

to search, but the mother still stayed, and the father afterwards declared that he would sell his flocks and would join the mother in keeping up the search, to find possibly somewhere in the debris that came down from the breaking of the Lyman Reservoir, the body of their youngest child. We have examples such as that of what people will do for the dead. In Cache Valley, when the son of the late presiding bishop of the church was drowned, Wm. B. Preston, Jr., with his companion Solon Barber, the nearby towns turned out in large numbers. Stores were closed and business suspended. The bishop of Wellsville called me by telephone to enquire how the search was going, and said, "Remember that Wellsville stands ready to send one hundred men if necessary to take part in this search." And it was no idle promise; it would have been fulfilled upon the slightest suggestion of need.

And yet, in all these instances, no living soul could be helped. Rizpah could not bring back the lives of her two sons, or the five grandsons of her husband; the mother, upon the banks of the Little Colorado, could not bring back the life of her child; nor could anything be done for the boys in the Bear River, except to recover the bodies. But there are living children all over this Church who need the care of a mother and of a father; and the plea I make is for fathers and mothers to safeguard their living children!

I have often quoted the words of the philosopher and the humorist, Mark Twain:

"When we consider the tremendous forces of the upper and nether world which play for the mastery of the soul

of a woman, during the few years in which she passes from plastic girlhood to the ripe maturity of womanhood, we may well stand in awe before the momentous drama. Nature must needs center in her all the possibilities of life. What capacities she has for tenderness, goodness; what capacities for vileness, bitterness and evil. Nature must needs be lavish with the mother and creator of men and center in her all the possibilities of life. And a few critical years can decide whether her life is to be full of sweetness and light, whether she is to be a vestal of a holy temple—or whether she will be the fallen priestess of a desecrated shrine."

At no time since my remembrance has there been such a wave of unrest and of evil as is sweeping over the country in this day. The citadels of modesty are being assaulted as never before in my remembrance. The forces of the nether world, to use the expression of Twain, are very active. It is necessary for the forces of good to be equally vigilant. We must be militant in this work. It will not do for us to sit supinely down and think that the ward teacher or bishop is going to look after our boy and girl. It will take the best ingenuity of the stake presidents and bishops to control wisely the dancing situation; and they will need the help of every father and of every mother in doing this work.

A few weeks ago, Governor Kendrick of Woming attended one of our conference meetings. We invited him to speak, and he mentioned the fact that before non-"Mormon" audiences he had held up the fact that "Mormon" people accompanied their children not only to the Church, but also to the ball room, and he commended that practice. I could have wished that the examples he was generous enough to thus mention, were more general

among our people—an old custom which must be revived more generally among the people. We must look after our living children, and not be content in case of an emergency to display wonderful zeal for the dead. Grown-ups must be more vigilant and militant in attacking evil.

I was told by one of the leading lawyers of this city that there was exhibited in one of the playhouses of this very city, where this conference is being held, an act so indecent that no right-thinking man or woman could view it without the blush of shame coming to his face. These things are not necessary,—the evils of the picture show are not necessary. You people in the country districts do not need to sit down and see your children debauched and contaminated by the moving picture show, or evils of this sort. Legislative action may be necessary to control the dance as well as to censor the playhouse and the moving picture show; and I urge diligence in this matter. When this problem was brought to me in one of the stakes, of one of our adjoining states, I suggested if they could not control in any other way dancing in the hall owned by those not of the Church, that a town ordinance be enacted which would make the close bodily contact or any other impropriety or indecency in the dance room a misdemeanor.

We need not only all the faithful attention of the officers of the Church, but also that of parents, to their children; and then have that supplemented by such legislation as may be necessary to protect us from this wave of evil which is attacking the citadels of modesty, virtue and integrity among the young people. Let parents know where their chil-

dren are. I bear the memory from my own home of a mother whom I never went home so late as to find asleep, and very seldom even retired, because she would not do that until the last child came home. And children must be considerate not to drag their parents out to the ball room too often, and not to keep them sitting up waiting too often, or for too long hours; but there must be a co-operation on the part of parents and of children, in order that they may be safeguarded.

May the Lord bless us in this great and important and pressing work which is now before us in all the stakes of Zion, I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The chorus sang: "I know that my Redeemer lives."

ELDER G. E. ELLSWORTH.

(President of Northern States Mission.)

My brothers and sisters, on two occasions during this conference time, one of the revelations of the Lord, given before the organization of the Church, has been quoted. The revelation referred to is the one found in the 4th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Lord says, "A great and a mighty work is about to come forth among the children of men." Each time that revelation was quoted, my mind went back to the beginning of this great work. I stood again in the grove where the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed unto our Father in heaven; and remembered my many visits to that sacred spot. Again I stood, in my mind, with the Prophet Joseph Smith upon the hill Cumorah, where he met the angel by appointment, and year