

## THIRD DAY.

Conference continued in the Tabernacle at 10 o'clock a. m., Sunday, October 7, 1917, President Joseph F. Smith, presiding.

President Smith announced overflow meetings to be held in the Assembly Hall this morning, under direction of President Seymour B. Young, of the First Council of Seventy; also an open air meeting at the Bureau of Information, under direction of Elder Benjamin Goddard of the Bureau of Information; and this afternoon, under direction of Elder Joseph W. McMurrin, of the First Council of Seventy, and Elder Benjamin Goddard, respectively, both for the accommodation of people who could not find room in the overcrowded Tabernacle where every seat and all available space was occupied.

The Tabernacle choir sang: "Hear me, O Lord."

Prayer was offered by Elder Alonzo A. Hinckley, President of the Deseret stake of Zion.

Eveline Thomas sang a sacred contralto solo: "Eye hath not seen."

### ELDER ANTHONY W. IVINS.

Faith, devotion and good works of the Saints in general—A few are filled with doubt and disbelief—These, like Koriath, follow doctrine destructive of faith in God—Some observations on the theory of evolution—The doctrine of the Church contrasted—How far we believe in evolution—Tendency of all things left to chance to dissolve, decline and deteriorate—All development leading from lesser to greater

things is the result of the intelligence of God—The strong testimony of a noted writer—God is the author of all intelligence and wisdom—The speaker's testimony to the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

"Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the traditions of their fathers.

"They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ.

"And now because of their unbelief they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened.

"And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the Church. And they were a separate people as to their faith, and remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state; for they would not call upon the Lord their God."

Since the last general conference of the Church, in April, I have visited many of the organized stakes of Zion. I have been in Canada on the north, and to the extreme limits of this state in the south, and it affords me great pleasure and sincere satisfaction to testify before this large congregation of Latter-day Saints to the faith, the devotion and good works of the great majority of the Latter-day Saints wherever I have been. I have found, however, in all of these different localities people who appear to lack faith, who are indifferent to the doctrines of the gospel as taught by the Church, they do not

believe, or least doubt, that the spirit of man existed before coming to this world, that it lives after leaving it, or that there will be a re-union of the spirit and body in the resurrection from the dead. To them this life is all there is of human existence. In searching for the cause which led up to the unbelief of these young people among the Nephites, to whom the scripture which I have read refers, I discovered, to use the words of those who kept their records, that there appeared among them men of cunning device and flattering words, teaching doctrines which were destructive of faith in God. Prominent among such men was Korihor, from whose words I now wish to read:

"Oh, ye that are bound down under a foolish and a vain hope, why do ye yoke yourselves with such foolish things? Why do ye look for a Christ? For no man can know of any thing which is to come.

"Behold, these things which ye call prophecies, which ye say are handed down by holy prophets, behold, they are foolish traditions of your fathers.

"How do ye know of their surety? Behold, ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ.

"Ye look forward and say that ye see a remission of your sins. But, behold, it is the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your fathers, which lead you away into a belief of things which are not so.

"And many more such things did he say unto them, telling them that there could be no atonement made for the sins of men, but that every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime.

"And thus did he preach unto them, leading away the hearts of many,

causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness; \* \* \* telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof."

As I read and reflected upon these words, I thought how like the past the present is, when applied to this question. Recently, in one of the stakes of Zion which I visited, a man professing great learning, before a public gathering, with cunning device and flattering words declared to those to whom his remarks were addressed that their ancestors hung from the branches of the forest trees by their tales. With boldness he advocated the theory that man had gradually evolved, without conscious effort, from the lowest type of created life to what he now is, and that as his past had been a continued process of change so is his future to be.

In this, I thought, he is at least consistent, for if man was not always what he is now, if it is true that he has gradually come up from the lower order of created things, what changes may not the future ages bring to him! I took occasion to question the theory advocated by this man, to point out what appeared to me to be its inconsistencies, with the result that a request was made that I read certain books which treated the subject of evolution; some of them, it was said, were in very general use in our common schools. I did so, with the result that my conclusions, long since arrived at, were more strongly confirmed than ever before, and my faith in the revealed word of the Lord strengthened, if that were possible.

The doctrine taught in these books takes you into the realm of

doubt, teaches that this earth and all things which are upon it are the result of chance, it leaves you bewildered regarding the past, uncertain of the present, and without hope in the future. The truth, as revealed from heaven, teaches the plan of an infinitely wise creator, designed for the accomplishment of a divine purpose.

I know it will be claimed that I am not capable of discussing this question, that I am not a learned man, that I have no college degree, and consequently am incapable of rendering intelligent judgment. I admit that I have not passed my life behind closed doors, reading books written by uninspired men, and accepting their conclusions without reserve. I have not passed it in an effort to produce, by cross breeding, a new species of guinea pig, or by selection and intensive cultivation a new variety of pea; but I have read some books, have been in close contact with nature, unspoiled by the hand of man, have been an observer and student of my surroundings, until I have reached conclusions which satisfy me, and seem to justify my faith, and so I am going to assume to tread upon this ground made sacred to men of so called learning, and express to this congregation the result of some of my observations.

This modern theory of evolution suggests that at a period in the past, so remote that it is almost beyond conception, by some spontaneous action, the earth came into existence. By degrees life appeared upon it; it gradually changed under some natural process until what in the beginning was a very inferior form of vegetable and animal life evolved into what the world now is,

with man representing its highest development.

I take it for granted that if this theory is admitted it must logically follow that this evolution from an inferior condition is still in process of development, and that just as man at present has no association or affinity with the source from which he is said to have sprung, so as the ages pass he will be as unlike what he now is, as he is now unlike what he once was.

In contrast to this theory we have the doctrine taught by the Church that the earth, and all that is upon it, were created by God's fiat, or decree. That the earth, the vegetation, and all life were created in successive periods, and lastly man, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. The only created thing which was in the image of God, the only created thing endowed with reason, and in a degree with the intelligence of the Creator. And God gave to man dominion over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every other created thing. Because of transgression a curse came upon the earth, and it was decreed that thorns and tistles should be its spontaneous product, that the natural tendency of all created things should be toward decay and dissolution, and that redemption from these untoward conditions could only come through the application of the intelligence with which man had been endowed, and the effort which he put forth to subdue the earth and redeem it until it should be restored to its paradisaical glory.

I desire to ask advocates of this theory of evolution without conscious effort, to point me to a single instance where, within the known

history of the world, any living thing has, without application of the intelligent effort of man, which is the application of the intelligence of God, changed from what it was to something else, where a thing has come up from an inferior to a superior condition. On the other hand my own observation has taught me that the moment the most highly developed thing is left to itself, left to chance, without the intelligent application of the intelligence of man, it immediately reverts from what it is to an inferior condition, just as the Lord decreed it should.

I am a believer in evolution. I can very readily believe that my ancestors may have lived in a cave or in the rudest kind of habitation, whereas, to-day they live in palaces. I can very readily understand that these primitive, simple homes may have been warmed and lighted by fire that was produced by the rubbing together of sticks, where today it is produced by the application of those scientific means which have been revealed to man through the Spirit of God by which they have been enabled to apply to their convenience the elements with which they are surrounded. I can very readily believe that whereas they cultivated the earth with the most primitive agricultural implements and fought their battles with weapons made of stone, they now cultivate the earth by the application of the most scientific methods and that their battles are fought by processes unthought of and unknown to primitive man. I can readily understand that they gathered from the beds of the rivers and chisled from the rock the native metal which they hammered into ornaments and used perhaps

as circulating medium, whereas now the ores are mined and the metals extracted by the most intricate chemical process. In this I see the most marvelous progress, the most wonderful evolution; but I see in it all, my brethren and sisters, not the result of chance, but the development of the mind of man, which is after the order of the mind of God; that, as he grew, his observation taught him that there were better ways of doing things than the way in which he was doing them, and that as he reflected and thought and studied, God gave him wisdom to go on and to thus perfect the primitive thought which he originally had. I have seen the most beautiful things in the vegetable world that the hand of man and the wisdom of all these ages has created, left to itself for a short time, left to chance, almost immediately revert to wild condition. I have seen horses and cattle bred up to the very highest standard left only for a short period of time to themselves, become degenerated, illustrating just what God's word declared, that the natural tendency of all that pertains to this earth is towards decline, towards dissolution, not to go on and on without intelligent effort until perfection is reached. But one of these learned men said to me when I illustrated my thought in this way, "Why, that is natural, that is because of environment; those horses degenerated and became mustangs because that was the very best condition that they could be in to adapt themselves to their surroundings." That may be true, but the argument does not hold good, because I took those very same horses, eating the same grass, drinking the same water, exposed to the same storm

and sunshine, and by the application of my own intelligence, my own judgment, I began to bring them back to the condition in which they formerly were, but that did not occur to those which man had neglected and to which he had given no attention.

So, my brethren and sisters, I have reached this conclusion, and that is the thought which I desire to leave in your minds, that whatever of development there is in the world, whatever of evolution has come, leading from lesser to greater things, from worse to better conditions, are the results of the intelligence of God, as it is represented in the only created thing that stands in his image in the world.

Desiring at one time in my life to know something of the rocks, of the earth upon which we live, as its conditions have been determined by scientific research, I went to a book store and purchased this little book, "Steele's Series in the Natural Sciences, Geology," a work written by J. Dorman Steele, author of works in chemistry, physics, zoology, botany, astronomy, physiology and geology, a simple exposition of the scientific truths known to the world at that time, a book which has been used in thousands of schools, a book with which many of my hearers will be more familiar than I, because I have never studied it under the direction of a teacher, but I read and studied it with very great interest by myself. I did not expect at the conclusion to find what I discovered. I shall never forget the impression that the words of this man made upon my mind in his conclusion of this little work, and I want to read them to you because they are entitled to weight, coming as they do from a

man of profound thought and great learning:

"We have traced in the dim light of the past the history of our earth and its inhabitants. Everywhere we have found a Divine Hand shaping and moulding to accomplish a Divine ideal. 'In the beginning God.' We can add nothing to the old Hebrew declaration. We have gone back to the origin of man, and there, too, we have rested on that sublime truth, 'In the beginning God.' We have winged our imagination backward to the time when our earth was 'without form and void,' and here again we have felt the force of that same statement, 'In the beginning God.'

"Was man created directly by God's fiat, or by some intermediate process of secondary causes? 'Alas for the impotence of science and the scope of our finite intelligence!' We bring the subtlest agencies to the accomplishment of our designs—heat, light, electricity—but when we seek to develop from them even the intangible forces which clothe the decaying rock with verdure, or mantle the stagnant pool with slime, failure inevitably waits upon us. In vain do we seek to associate vital manifestation with electrical action, we may resolve the vital organism into cells and granules and nuclei, but the life eludes our proudest philosophy. If, under certain conditions, inorganic matter assumes organic form, those conditions and the laws which govern them are alike unknown to us. And so we pause on the threshold of created life, and, standing reverently aside, lay humbly down our little wisdom as we recognize the unfathomable greatness of the one all-wise Creator."

My brethren and sisters, the thought which I wish to leave with you is this, in your search after knowledge, in your desire to become profound, in your study of philosophy, do not lose sight of this one thought that God, the Creator of heaven and earth is the author of intelligence and all the light, and knowledge, and wisdom which has come to man or which will ever

come to him emanates from that source. Do not allow yourselves, because of the words of men, of cunning device and flattering words—they are here just as they were among the Nephites, to delude you and lead you away from the eternal truth, that we must recognize God our Father, who is the author of all things, the Creator of heaven and earth, to whom all men owe deference, and allegiance, and service, whether they render it or not. Do not deny the atonement wrought out by his only begotten son. Do not become obsessed with the thought that this life is all there is to human existence, because it is a fallacy. I bear witness of it to you in all humility. I have tried to understand, I have studied, I have sought the Lord from my youth until the present time when I am growing old. I find from my own observation, my own study, and the testimony which God has given me, the eternal truth of these things growing stronger and stronger, if that were possible. He has restored the truth to the earth through the agency of the Prophet Joseph Smith; the fulness of the gospel is here; it is the power of God unto salvation and has in it everlasting life to all of those who believe and obey.

May the Lord preserve us from delusions which are abroad in the land, fix faith firmly in our hearts that we may hold fast to the iron rod which is the word of God, and it will bear us safely through, until we find our way back into the presence of our Creator, and then we will understand. Yes, there has been evolution, evolution will continue until we shall become like him, knowing as we are known, seeing as we are seen, and comprehending

that in all these wonderful works that are around us, the wisdom of God is manifest and that the laws by which they have been accomplished are simple, and will be simple to us when we come to understand them.

The Lord preserve us all in the truth, keep us from the delusive snares of the adversary, I pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A bass solo entitled: "Two men went up into the Temple to Pray," was sung by Everard McMurrin.

#### ELDER JOSEPH F. SMITH, JR.

The things of God understood by the Spirit of God—The question of the origin of man—The glory of God is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man—Theories of men and the word of the Lord contrasted—Scientific theories, so called, on the origin of man, have no more right to a place in the school room than the principles of the gospel, nor half as much—Discoveries of modern times due to the inspiration of God—Protest against poisoning the youth with false doctrines on the origin of life.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teach-