

AFTERNOON MEETING

The meeting commenced promptly at 2 o'clock p. m.

President Heber J. Grant presided and announced that the congregation would join in singing the hymn, "Do what is Right."

After the singing, the opening prayer was offered by President Joseph M. Holt of the West Jordan Stake.

The congregation sang the hymn, "High on the Mountain Top."

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

My brethren and sisters, I was very much edified at the morning meeting. The instructions given and the testimonies borne were thorough and spirited. It was an extremely enjoyable meeting. I trust that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us this afternoon to inspire what may be said and to give the congregation an understanding concerning matters pertaining to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

WITNESSES WHO TESTIFY CONCERNING GOD'S WORK

I am quoting now from Second Corinthians, 13th chapter, 1st verse: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

We understand very well that in the courts of the land, when cases are brought forward and a verdict is to be rendered, if the matter can be established by two or three witnesses who speak under oath, it is regarded as a very strong case. And so it is in relation to matters pertaining to the Church and Kingdom of God. If those things that are claimed are sustained by two or three or more witnesses it becomes a strong case indeed.

In respect to the things which God puts forth regarding his work, he usually leaves the world without excuse by furnishing an abundance of evidence in the matter of witnesses. That is peculiarly the case in respect to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have very strong witnesses concerning the great work in which we are engaged, in the standard works of the Church. There is the Holy Bible, King James' translation, one of the standard works of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The truths set forth in the Bible are greatly reinforced and strengthened by the testimony of the Book of Mormon, of which we have heard at this conference. Much information was given to us in the discourse delivered by President Ivins respecting the Book of Mormon. And then we have the further witness of the truth in our Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and still again in the Pearl of Great Price. These four records constitute the standard works of the Church.

THE BIBLE AS A WITNESS

We know very well the value of the Bible which has come down to

us through the ages, and which is widely distributed throughout the world today. In nearly every room of the standard hotels of the country, in the large cities, there is a Bible for the consultation and study of the guests of the hotel. We find the Bible in the homes of hundreds and thousands of people. It is a wonderful record. It is a religious history of the people of God upon the eastern continent. It is the history of the children of Israel, who it seems have not been held in the highest repute by many Christian people during the last eighteen hundred years; and yet the world is indebted to the Jews, or the children of Israel, for this precious record. In this record they are called the people of God. Therein you will find an account of the holy prophets of old, how that they spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and made many precious predictions.

In the Bible you will also find rather a full account of the life and works of the Savior and his Apostles, and there you read of the great atonement that was wrought out for the children of men. We do not always stop to consider that the Christ came to earth through the lineage of the children of Israel, but so it was. His Apostles were of that lineage, and in fact we believe as Latter-day Saints that we are of the same lineage. We realize as a Church that we are greatly indebted to the Jewish race for much information respecting the plan of redemption. We ought not to forget that. It appears to me that we should be kept in remembrance of it, and that we ought to feel an interest, and probably we do, in the Jewish people, because we believe that the time is not far distant when they will accept the Gospel, will acknowledge the divine birth of the Savior, and consequently will not be looking for another Messiah. This has been predicted by the prophets of old.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

Now, as to the Book of Mormon, the second witness mentioned. It is a wonderful book and it has come to us in a most remarkable way. The story reads almost like a romance and yet we know and testify that it is absolutely true. The Book of Mormon is a history of the ancient inhabitants of America, of whom the Lamanites, or the American Indians, are descendants. They have dwindled in unbelief and in many respects have become degraded. They have fallen from the high place they once occupied in the civilization of ancient America.

The title page of the Book of Mormon gives some idea of the character of the Book. It follows:

"The Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon upon Plates taken from the Plates of Nephi.

"Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

"An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ."

The history of the people of Nephi began about six hundred years before Christ and ended four hundred and twenty years after Christ, covering a period of about one thousand years. It is a remarkable history and was hidden up by commandment of God, hidden in the earth to come forth at a later time. It has come forth. An angel came down from on high and appeared to a young man by the name of Joseph Smith and delivered to him this record which was taken out of the earth.

ANCIENT PREDICTIONS FULFILLED

The circumstance is referred to in the Bible, strange as it may seem. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of the matter and he alludes to it in an interesting way. If you will consult the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah you will find words to this effect:

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

"Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

"And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust."

Now that is remarkable language, the speaking of something that shall come out of the ground, a voice, a message from the dead. It fits exactly the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, although the prophecy was uttered centuries before the book was revealed to the world.

The Lord speaks of the condition of the world at the time the book was destined to come forth. He says:

"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

So Isaiah predicts that by reason of these whisperings that come out of the ground, the Lord will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder in that day. Well, fortunately, the Latter-day Saints by the will of God have come into possession of this wonderful record, the

Book of Mormon, and there is much evidence that goes with the record to show that it is a true work of God, and was translated by his marvelous power. There were four witnesses who saw the angel and who handled the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated by divine power, and there were eight witnesses who did not see the angel, but they did see the plates and handled them and testified of the matter in a most solemn way. The testimonies of the eleven witnesses are published in the fore part of the Book.

So far as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is concerned we have more real testimonies of the truth of the Book of Mormon than we have of the Bible, yet we accept the Bible as the word of God and we believe in it.

THE THIRD WITNESS

The third witness, which is known as the Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, contains numerous revelations of God given to his people through Joseph Smith the Prophet, for truly he was a prophet of God, and these revelations bear the stamp of divine approval upon them. There is a spirit and a power that go with this book that is very impressive indeed, and to many people very convincing. It is a testimony to the world that the Latter-day Saints do believe in the principle of revelation and that we cannot very well see how the Church of God can be established upon the earth and how his purposes can be accomplished unless he speaks to his people. It is his Church. It is called by his name, called the Church of Jesus Christ, and it would seem highly important that he being the President of the Church should speak to his people, otherwise they would be left without proper direction. We must look to him for wisdom and understanding and inspiration. I testify to the world that the Book of Doctrine and Covenants throws very much light indeed upon the plan of salvation.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

The Pearl of Great Price, the fourth witness, like the other three sacred witnesses corresponds with them exactly in its teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no variation except that it gives one a little fuller and clearer understanding of those teachings. The title page and contents read as follows: "The Pearl of Great Price, A Selection From the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith, First Prophet, Seer and Revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints."

Contents: The Book of Moses—8 chapters. The Book of Abraham—5 chapters. Writings of Joseph Smith. The Articles of Faith.

WITNESSES WHOSE TESTIMONIES AGREE

I state without hesitation that these four testimonies agree perfectly in respect to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of redemption

which he instituted for the salvation of men. There is a difference of course in the history of the people who were responsible for these wonderful records, but no difference whatever in the plan of salvation therein set forth. For instance, the Holy Bible teaches with clearness, we think, that the first principles of the Gospel are faith, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. These constitute the fundamental principles of the Gospel.

The Book of Mormon certifies to the fact and agrees perfectly with the Bible in this matter, as do the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. The organization of the Church as instituted by the Savior himself and which was composed in the main of apostles, prophets, evangelists, high priests, seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers and deacons, which constituted the Melchizedek priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood, is emphasized. This organization is strongly emphasized in the Bible as it is in the Book of Mormon, and as it is set forth also in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

So we have these four witnesses that agree perfectly in respect to this matter, and, so far as we know, and so far as our history has gone and our experience, the testimony of the Three Witnesses as well as that of the Eight Witnesses has not been overthrown. The world will be judged by the evidence set forth in these precious records.

INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY

I testify to you, my brethren and sisters, and rejoice in the knowledge, that I do know that this is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that Christ was the Savior of the world, that he suffered by atonement for the sins of the world, and that we must look to him, and as Latter-day Saints we do look to him, for salvation through our good works and by our faith.

I testify to you that I do know, as I know that I am standing here and speaking, that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, that he accomplished a mighty work, that he is better known and better understood by his people today than he was in the days when he lived upon the earth. I think we know him better than most anyone else, and we are just as close to him as any people ever were when he lived upon the earth. This is the Church and Kingdom of God seen by Daniel of old that was to be set up and should never be thrown down or given to other people, but must go on until the will of the Lord is accomplished and the world is saved by repentance and by faith. This is my testimony and I humbly bear it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

I am very grateful to our Heavenly Father for membership in his Church. I am thankful for the privilege I have had of attending