

countenance was beautiful to behold. When Elder Tenney closed his remarks, he disappeared." We were naturally delighted and happy to know that the witness of the Holy Ghost and the power of the Lord do accompany the labors of our brethren and sisters.

I am sure that these manifestations are occurring everywhere, merely a sign of the favor of our Father to his servants.

It is a glorious privilege, my brethren and sisters, to be within the influence of such spiritual manifestations and blessings, and I count it not only an honor, but a joy and privilege to be thus favored. I am enjoying my labors. I have pleasure in reporting to you that all the missionaries, with one exception who are laboring in the Western States Mission at the present time, are quite well, and the one who is ill is recovering.

May the Lord bless you. May he bless you in your basket and in your store, that you will listen and heed the appeal that has been made to send us more missionaries, so that we can carry on the work of the Lord. This is my humble prayer, and I ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

LIBERTY'S PERFECT LAW

The Gospel of Christ is the Perfect Law of Liberty. So says James the Apostle. But liberty does not mean license, nor does the Gospel stand for antiquated tradition or for present-day speculation, religious or irreligious. It embraces all truth, whether in science, philosophy, art, or any other department of knowledge. God himself is its Author, its Fountainhead, and divine revelation is the channel through which it flows.

PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is a great system of laws, a code of eternal principles, whereby the omnipotent and all-wise Creator, our Father in Heaven, proposes to lift fallen mankind, his sons and daughters, and not only save them, but exalt them to his glorious presence, and so far as they prove worthy and capable, share with them the empire of the universe.

NO TYRANNY

Freedom is the Gospel's sign manual. Tyranny has no place therein. There is no room in all the Government of God for the exercise of unrighteous dominion.

ETERNITY'S CONSTITUTION

The God we worship is no respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of men's rights, and a guardian of them—a fact clearly shown in the heaven-inspired Constitution of our country, and in the Gospel itself, which might be termed the Constitution of Eternity.

A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Man's free agency, his right to worship as his conscience dictates, and to act in all things willingly and without compulsion—a principle handed down from the eternal past, where Lucifer was overthrown for seeking to destroy it—is an integral part of Liberty's Perfect Law. As such it found expression, a concrete illustration, and that by direct, divine command, when this Church was organized, one hundred years ago.

THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED

"Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." So says the Declaration of American Independence, and so says, in effect, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of common consent has been practiced in this Church from the beginning, and is shown forth in all the conferences and other important gatherings of the Lord's people. They are clearly within their rights when they vote for or against the officers nominated to preside over them, and when they approve or disapprove of any proposed measure vitally affecting their spiritual and temporal welfare.

JOSEPH AND OLIVER

The men who organized this Church, or who were most conspicuous in its organization, were Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Joseph had looked upon the face of God; had gazed upon the Father and the Son; had received from them instructions concerning the then existing churches, from which he was commanded to hold himself aloof, and await the coming of the true Church, which was about to reappear, and in the establishment of which he was to be the chief human instrument. Oliver had been with Joseph in the work of translating the Book of Mormon, assisting him as copyist or scribe. He had shared with the Prophet the honor of receiving the restored priesthoods—the Aaronic and the Melchizedek; the former under the hands of John the Baptist, the latter by the subsequent personal ministration of the Apostles, Peter, James and John. The foremost of these heavenly messengers, John the Baptist, had told Joseph and Oliver that they were to be, respectively, the First and Second Elders of the Church; and had directed them to baptize each other as a preliminary to other important proceedings soon to follow.

In the first, second and third chapters of the History of the Church, Volume One—Joseph Smith's autobiography—the Prophet tells his own story of these wonderful events; and they are also recorded in a more recently published Church History—the splendid product of the able pen of President B. H. Roberts.

AN AMERICAN CHURCH

Speaking of the word of the Lord that came to him and his co-laborer in the farmhouse of Peter Whitmer, Sr., at Fayette, Seneca County, N. Y., a word directing them to ordain each other to the office of Elder, the Prophet says:

"We were, however, commanded to defer this our ordination until such time as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together, when we *must have their sanction* to our thus proceeding to ordain each other, and have them *decide by vote* whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers, or not."

An American Church, truly, manifesting at the very hour of its birth the sublime democratic doctrine: "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." And truly did Joseph Smith, God's prophet, show himself a real and true American when, at a later period, in answer to a question put to him, as to how he managed to govern a community made up of so many different nationalities, with all their varied languages, customs and traditions, he replied: "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."

GOD AND THE PEOPLE

Let it not be supposed, however, that this recognition of "government of the people, by the people, for the people"—as Lincoln expressed it—shuts God out of the question. It may do so in the mind of a godless politician, or a pseudo, make-believe Christian, but not in the mind of a true Latter-day Saint or a Christian of genuine stamp. The United States is a republic, in which the people are looked upon as the one source of political power. The Church of Christ is a theodemocracy, in which God speaks and the people say amen! It is the Church of God and his people, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Obedient to the divine mandate spoken to them in Father Whitmer's humble home, Joseph and Oliver took steps to ascertain whether or not their brethren would sanction their ordination as Elders of the Church and were willing to come under their spiritual tutelage.

NOT YET QUALIFIED

What!—exclaims one. After these men had communed with heavenly beings and received from them commandments for their guidance; after receiving divine authority to preach the Gospel, administer its ordinances, and establish once more on earth the long absent Church of Christ! After all this must they go before the people and ask their consent to organize them and preside over them as a religious body? Yes, that was precisely the situation. Notwithstanding all those glorious manifestations, they were not yet fully qualified to hold the high positions unto which they had been divinely called. One element was lacking—the consent of the people. Until that consent was given, there could be no church with these people as its members and those men as its presiding authorities. The Great Ruler of all never did and never will foist upon any of his people, in branch, ward, stake or Church capacity, a presiding officer whom they are not willing to accept and uphold.

Happily for all concerned, the brethren associated with Joseph and Oliver on that memorable sixth of April of the year 1830, did

sanction their ordination, did "decide by vote" to accept them as their "spiritual teachers."

GOD THE GIVER

But suppose it had been otherwise. Suppose the brethren in question had not been willing to accept the men whom the Lord had chosen, but had lifted their hands against instead of for them. What would have been the result? Would such action have taken from Joseph and Oliver their Priesthood or their gifts and powers as seers, prophets and revelators of the Most High? No. Any more than it would have blotted out the fact that Joseph had seen God, and that he and Oliver had communed with angels sent from Heaven to ordain them. Their brethren had not given them the Priesthood, had not made them prophets and seers, and they would have remained such regardless of any adverse action on the part of their associates. The Gospel, the Priesthood, the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are not within the gift of the membership of the Church. They are bestowed by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, in person or by proxy, and without his consent no power on earth or under the earth could take them away.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE RESULTED

But if the vote had been unfavorable, this would have resulted: The brethren and sisters who were waiting to be admitted into the Church would have closed the door in their own faces, would have cut themselves off from a most precious privilege, would have deprived themselves of the inestimable benefits flowing from the exercise of the gifts and powers possessed by the men divinely commissioned to inaugurate this great Latter-day Work; and they could have gone elsewhere, and, under divine direction, have organized the Church of Christ among any people worthy to constitute its membership and willing that these men should be their leaders. But the vote was in their favor, thank the Lord! and we who are here today are among the beneficiaries of that act of faith and humility.

A DIVINE NECESSITY

Never, since this Church was organized, has it been without a divinely inspired Priesthood, with seers, prophets and revelators at its head; and it never will be without them. They are a divine necessity. Wanting such guides, such pilots, inspired from above, we would be floundering in the same troubled sea of doubt and uncertainty respecting religion, its sacred obligations and its vital problems, as are the peoples of the world around us. Without the gift of the Holy Ghost, to interpret the Scriptures and make manifest the things of God, we also would be putting our own private interpretations upon the revelations of divine truth, and be lost and wandering, as others are, in a maze of superstition and error.

LONGING FOR LIGHT

The churches of men are built upon books and traditions, handed

down from the dubious past—what God said to other peoples in other times, under circumstances vastly different from our own. And mixed with these things are other things that God is said to have said—but never did say—and they are palmed upon the world as utterances of divine authority. In many lands God's children, millions of them, are yearning and longing for the Light, hungering and thirsting for pure Gospel truth, which they find not in man-made religions and philosophies; and blind leaders of the blind, turning their backs upon New Revelation, are endeavoring to feed a spiritually starving world with the mutilated menu card of a banquet ages old.

POWER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

No book, however good; no tradition, however venerable, is a sufficient guide for a progressive people on their way to the Celestial Kingdom. We have something better than books—far better than the best of them. We have divine authority, which constitutes the men holding it agents and representatives of the Almighty; and whatsoever they do by virtue of that authority, and under the inspiration of the spirit of their holy calling, is just as valid and binding and just as acceptable to God, as though he were present in person saying and doing what his servants say and do for him. That is what it means to bear the Priesthood.

THE PURE FAITH

We have the pure, primitive Christian Faith, and the spirit that interprets its sacred mysteries. Without that Spirit no man, whatever his intelligence, whatever his education and culture, can comprehend the Gospel or know Him whom to know is life eternal.

GOD'S WORK AND GLORY

This Church is not the work of man. Had it been man's creation it would have succumbed long ago to the assaults made upon it by the adversary of souls. It is not built upon the sand of ancient tradition or of modern theorization. It is founded upon the rock—Divine Revelation—God's gracious will and the glad consent of his people. Therefore is it destined to endure and to withstand every shock. The hosts of evil may hurl themselves against it, but they cannot prevail against it, nor shake the firm foundation upon which it stands as immovable and immutable as the throne of Him who sitteth in the midst of Eternity, and who has said in words that can never die: "My work and my glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man!" Amen.

The hymn, "O Ye Mountains High," was sung by the congregation. The closing prayer was offered by Elder Joseph Christenson. Conference adjourned until 10 o'clock Saturday morning.