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BISHOP WHITNEY'S LECTURE.

WE are pleased to be enabled to present to our readers, in this issue of the DESERET WEEKLY, the interesting lecture by Bishop Orson F. Whitney, entitled, "Zion and Her Redemption." We have received letters from different parts of the Territory enquiring for it. Owing to the interest it has created we concluded to make it a special feature of our weekly issue, as the best way of preserving it.

THE BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH.

YESTERDAY, December 23rd, was the 84th anniversary of the birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the founder under God of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the "Mormon" Church. Tens of thousands are able to testify that he was raised up by Divine power for a special purpose connected with the salvation and destiny of mankind.

As all his master Jesus—whom he followed, even to the lying down of his life, thus sealing his testimony with his blood—he has created a great stir in the earth. He is variously regarded by his fellowmen. Those who believe in the authenticity of his mission love and revere his memory. This affection and regard are so deep-seated that they are not susceptible of obliteration from the hearts of the faithful. By the world generally he is regarded as a rank impostor, while not a few almost hiss hatred at the bare mention of his name. His fame has spread throughout the earth among all people. This condition harmonizes with the announcement made through him when the work he established was in its incipient stages—that his name would be had for good or evil among all people.

No evidence, however potential it may be, in favor of the divinity of the mission of Joseph Smith, has any weight upon those who wilfully

steel their hearts against it. They conclude without searching to repudiate him; and that ends the matter with them. His prophecies and their exact fulfillment in detail have no convincing effect. His setting up, by commandment of God, of an organization—the Church of Christ—the most complete of any association on the face of the earth, accompanied by the powers and gifts of the Gospel, is regarded as a matter of mere human ingenuity, void of an inspirational basis.

Others who have become familiar, through obedience, with the truths enunciated by Joseph, and then from some cause, hidden or apparent, have turned against the system he inaugurated, have sought by various subtleties of reasoning, to convince themselves that "Mormonism" was not true. Many—perhaps the great majority—of that class have failed in attaining that point, not a few having been frank enough to confess their inability. Indeed the impressions and conditions that have arisen through the advent of the marvelous work established by the leading latter-day Prophet are wonderful in intensity as well as variety.

It was appropriate, especially under existing conditions, that the anniversary of the birthday of this great and remarkable man should be observed in the way in which it was celebrated yesterday. It was set apart as a day of fasting and prayer; a season for humiliation before the Lord; a time of repentance and renewal of spiritual determination; a time of supplication for Divine aid to lift the clouds that seem to be gathering over the heads of the Saints.

The response to the call appeared to be all that could be desired, speaking of the people as a whole and without taking note of individual exceptions, which were comparatively few. On the preceding day (the Sabbath) the approaching fast was the leading theme in public meetings and in private converse. Little children expressed their determination to participate in the holy sacrament which had been appointed. At an early hour in the morning families gathered around the domestic altar; songs of praise and worship, and petitions to the God of Israel ascended to the Throne of Grace from the habitations of the people of Zion. In answer, the Spirit of sweetness, peace and union descended like the gentle dew of heaven, filling the hearts of

the worshippers with unspeakable joy.

Imbued with this sweet influence the people gathered around the altars in holy places, and in public assemblies. The result was a marked manifestation of the power of God. The meeting houses were, so far as report has reached us, filled to overflowing. The prayers, discourses and exhortations were characterized by the spirit of humility, repentance and moderation. Associated with the presentation of the wrongs that were being heaped upon the people and the injustice with which they were still threatened, there was no call for the Lord to inflict vengeance upon those inflicting the injuries. The trend of what was spoken was in the form of a desire that the eyes of the executive, law-making, judicial and other officials of the nation, and those of the people at large, might be opened, that they may see the Latter-day Saints in their true light, and their hearts be inclined to do them justice; that they might believe the truth concerning them and refuse to accept as true the lies and slanders that are circulated for the purpose of defaming this community. The Lord was asked to bestow a witness to the effect that He had not forgotten and would not neglect Zion, and the testimony came by the still small voice of the Spirit, speaking peace, comfort and strong assurance to the souls of the worshippers.

Bishop Joseph S. Black, of Deseret, who emerged yesterday morning from the penitentiary, after having served a term for breach of the Edmunds act, was at one of the meetings, where he stated that the brethren in that institution had petitioned the warden for the privilege of engaging in prayer during the day. The request was granted, and the fast was kept by those who are incarcerated in prison.

The spectacle of a devoted, God-fearing people, including men, women and children, devoting a day to such a purpose as that for which yesterday was set apart was of a nature to move with sympathy even the hearts of those who have occupied the place of the scoffer. Many of the worshippers shed tears of joy under the melting influence that prevailed. The prayers that were offered entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, who listened to the cry of the people and assured them by the voice of the Spirit that He had not forgotten Zion, neither would He neglect her in the hour of peril.