

THE GODHEAD.

A Lecture Recently Delivered in the Logan Temple, by Elder J. Z. Stewart.

My brethren and sisters: In presenting myself before you this afternoon, I do not do so expecting to tell you anything new with regard to the principles of the Gospel, for I believe I am right in taking it for granted that you are all Latter-day Saints, and if you are, this study is your theme by day and by night; for you prize it more than you do all things else on earth, or even life itself.

The Savior said: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also;" and if this Gospel is your treasure, you have studied it and loved it, in prosperity as well as during trials and adversity, and I therefore can only expect to call your attention to a few subjects in the unlimited science of theology, and refresh your minds upon things which you doubtless have often meditated upon. I humbly trust that in attempting to do this, I shall be guided by that spirit which guideth into all truth and sheweth things to come, that our hearts may be caused to rejoice, and our faith be strengthened in the great work which God has commenced in the latter days.

THE SUBJECT

To which I wish more particularly to call your attention this afternoon, is the Godhead, and I desire to examine some things found in our sacred writings regarding the matter.

In John xvii: 3, we find the following:

"And this is life eternal, to know the only true and living God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent."

From the above quotation it must be evident to all, how necessary it is that we should, as far as possible, make ourselves acquainted with the attributes of our Heavenly Father and of His Son Jesus Christ, for without some knowledge of them, it would be impossible for us to be saved in the Kingdom of God.

We could not love a God of whom we have no knowledge; we could not exercise faith in a being with regard to whose attributes we are entirely ignorant, and we certainly could have no correct idea of the proper way to do Him reverence if we were ignorant with regard to Him and His laws.

It is therefore our duty to inform ourselves concerning the Godhead, that we may be

MORE INTELLIGENTLY WORSHIP

our Heavenly Father, that we may properly render that gratitude to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which we should, and that we may ever seek intelligently for the Holy Spirit to guide us in all we do and say in life.

In 1 John, 3rd chap., 2nd verse, we read the following expressive sentence:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

While this passage is very clear, it is not generally understood, and many who seem to understand it, do not comprehend it fully, not being able to see, in its true sense, why or how we are the sons of God.

The belief in the mythical god of Christendom, without body, parts or passions, has blinded people generally to such an extent that they cannot conceive of a material God, notwithstanding that He is clearly described in the Scriptures. They read in the Scriptures, of Jesus Christ, and recognize Him as the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; that He was like other men in general appearance, form, size and shape; that He ate the same kind of food as other men; that He like them was susceptible to pain, sorrow and joy; that He was persecuted and finally taken by wicked men and tried, condemned, and even crucified by them; that His lifeless body was laid in the tomb for three days, after which the spirit again entered that same body and the Savior of the world again stood among men, a resurrected being, having all power given Him, both in Heaven and on earth.

This person is viewed by all Christendom as

A HEAVENLY BEING.

It is believed that He is at the right hand of God. That He has a body, they have no room for doubt, for He appeared to His disciples with the same body He had before His crucifixion; it even retained the marks of the nails that had cruelly been driven through His hands and feet. He ate and conversed with them, and most thoroughly convinced them all of His resurrection, and that He had a body of flesh and bones; for when they at first thought that a spirit had appeared to them, He said:

"Handle me and see; a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have."

Now, if it were expedient that the body of Jesus should rise from the tomb, that He might have a body of "flesh and bones," is it inconsistent to believe that His Father, God, should also have a similar body? And if we, also, are sons of God, does it not appear quite reasonable that we should be like Him in form and general appearance?

The Scriptures inform us that

ENOCH WALKED AND TALKED

with God for three hundred years, which expression would lead any one to believe that God was in the form of man. Abraham saw God on the plains of Mamre. Abraham was sitting near

his tent door in the heat of the day, when he saw three men approaching. Mark you, Abraham saw three men approaching him; so say the Scriptures; and it would appear that he had seen at least one of them before, for he ran to meet them and bowed himself to the ground, for he recognized that one of them was God.

Here there is another evidence that God has a body, the same as man has. In the 22nd chapter of Genesis we learn that Jacob wrestled with a man until the break of day, and that Jacob found favor with Him, and He changed Jacob's name, giving him the name of Israel, which means a prince, because he had prevailed with God. Here, again, we are given to understand that God has a body like unto that of man.

The ten commandments were written on tables of stone by the finger of God, and we are given to understand that He has hands, arms, feet and all the parts of the body the same as man has.

He has said also that He is a jealous God, that He cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance, but that He loves His Saints, and that it is His good will to give them the kingdom. This shows us that He is endowed with all the faculties with which man is, the only difference being that man is imperfect and mortal, while God is perfect in all things.

But let us examine a few more references from the Scriptures. Paul says, Romans, 8th chapter:

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs with God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Again in Hebrews, 12th chapter we find the following:

"We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits?"

THE LORD ASKED JOB

the following question:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

From these quotations it must be clear to all that God is our Father, being the Father of our spirits; that we had a pre-existence; that we, like Job, were present, when the morning stars sang together, and probably united with the others of the sons of God in shouting for joy when the corner stones of this earth were laid.

It would appear that the rejoicing at the time referred to, was because an earth was being formed, upon which the sons of God would be permitted to take upon themselves a tabernacle of flesh and bones; enter upon their second estate, and gain that experience which is necessary, and prove themselves, that they may receive according to their integrity and worthiness before the Lord.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 132, we find the following:

"For these angels did not abide my law, therefore they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity, and from henceforth are not Gods, but are angels of God, for ever and ever."

In speaking of those who obey the

CELESTIAL LAW,

the 90th verse says:

"Then shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be Gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them."

In the 37th verse, the Lord, in speaking of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, says:

"And because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels, but are Gods."

Now this throws a flood of light upon this subject, and we understand what John meant in the quotation we have made, and also what Paul meant, when he says that we are the children of God, a fact that is set forth in many places in the Scriptures.

This reminds us of an explanation given by Apostle Parley P. Pratt, which is as follows:

"Gods, angels and men are all of one species, one race, one great family, widely diffused among the planetary systems, as colonies, kingdoms, nations, etc. The great distinguishing difference between one part of this race and another, consists in the varied grades of intelligence and purity, and also in the variety of spheres occupied by each, in the series of progressive being."

"An immortal man, possessing a perfect organization of spirit, flesh and bones, and perfected in his attributes, in all the fullness of celestial glory, is called a God."

"An immortal man, in process of perfection, or quickened with a lesser degree of glory, is called an angel."

"An immortal spirit of man, not united with a fleshly tabernacle, is called a spirit."

"An immortal man, clothed with a mortal tabernacle, is called a man."

It may then consistently enough be said, that there are, in a subordinate sense,

A PLURALITY OF GODS,

or rather of the sons of God; although there is one Supreme Head, who is over all, and through all, and in all His sons, by the power of His Spirit.

Jesus Christ and His Father are two persons, in the same sense as John and Peter are two persons. Each of them has an organized, individual tabernacle, embodied in material form, and

composed of material substance, in the likeness of man, and possessing every organ, limb and physical part that man possesses. There oneness consists of a oneness of spirit, intelligence, attributes, knowledge or power. All men who ever attain to the immortal life, having their fleshly tabernacles quickened by a fullness of celestial life and light, intelligence and power, may be said to be one even as the Father and the Son are one, and all who attain to this perfection are Gods, or sons of God, but over them all is a Presidency or Grand Head, who is the Father of all, and next to Him is Jesus Christ, He being the firstborn of many brethren in the spiritual world.

Adam did what he did knowingly and understandingly, and for a purpose, which purpose was this: "Adam felt that man might be." He was not deceived, but did just what he had contemplated doing "when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy," an occurrence referred to in the Book of Job.

The Pearl of Great Price throws considerable light upon this subject. We will quote one paragraph:

"The Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and good ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and He stood in the midst of them, and He said: These will I make my rulers; for He stood among those that were spirits, and He saw that they were good; and He said unto me, Abraham, thou art one of them, thou wast chosen before thou wast born. And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him, We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials and we will

MAKE AN EARTH,

whereupon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; and they who keep their first estate, shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate, shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate, and they who keep their second estate, shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever."

Here then is set forth one great and glorious fact: Man is a son of God, placed here on this earth to prove himself, to educate himself, to have a taste of the bitter that he may know how to appreciate the sweet, to give him an opportunity to ascend in the scale of intelligence, knowledge and power. Of what occurred in the

GARDEN OF EDEN,

we find the following, in the Book of Mormon, 11 Nephi, 2: 10-25:

"Satan said unto Eve: Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil."

"And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth."

"And they have brought forth children; even ye, the family of all the earth."

"And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened according to the commandment which the Lord God gave unto the children of men. For he gave commandment that all men must repent; for he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents."

"And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created, must have remained in the same state which they were, after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end."

"And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin."

"But, behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things. Adam felt that man might be; and men are, that they might have joy."

The Saints have exalted ideas regarding the destiny of man, ideas which should impress us with the importance of our mission on earth, the heights to which the faithful will ascend; and how great will be the loss of those who disobey God, and regard not His laws and commandments. When we contemplate the future of the one and compare it with that of the other, who does not feel that no sacrifice is too great for us to make in order to enjoy such great blessings?

CONFERENCE IN TENNESSEE.

Joyful Re-union of Saints and Missionaries.

BAIRD'S MILLS, Wilson Co.,

Tennessee, Oct. 11, 1887.

Editor Deseret News:

On Saturday and Sunday, October 8th and 9th, the Elders of this, the East Tennessee Conference, held their annual two-days' meeting at the above place, in the Saints' meeting-house; and, as the event was truly an enjoyable one for the Elders and Saints, I will proceed to give a brief synopsis of the same.

There were present, Elder John Morgan, President of the Southern States Mission, Elias S. Wright, president of the West Tennessee conference, Heber K. Perkins, president of this conference, and traveling Elders, J. W. Barnes, Willard Carroll, William Daybell, Jesse N. Perkins, Joseph Houston, Ira W. Hatch, Joseph Cameron, John V. Bluth, Willard Hatch and S. H. Head.

On Saturday at 10 a. m. meeting was called to order, and after singing a hymn, prayer was offered by Elder J. W. Barnes, singing "Joy to the World." President Perkins then spoke a few minutes, expressing his pleasure in

meeting all the elders of this conference, and so many of the Saints. He explained in regard to the duties of those assembled, and extended to all a hearty welcome.

Elder Cameron followed on the importance of believing in and practicing the same principles as were enunciated by Jesus and His apostles. Said nothing short of obedience to the same would save mankind in the

ETERNAL WORLD.

Quotations from the Bible were given proving his assertions.

Elder Bluth, the next speaker, dwelt for some length of time upon the great necessity of the Saints watching themselves in small offenses. The speaker made use of the illustration that an adept in masonry would not, in building a house for durability and symmetry, use the largest stones, but rather the smaller ones, which would be carefully hewn and placed in the structure with skill. And, as these small stones put together form a large and beautiful dwelling, so also will small faults if not checked they grow into a mountain of sin, which, in time, will completely wreck the individual. Where there is a fault or weakness, overcome it, and do not permit it to govern you. Prayer is the most potent agent we can employ in shaping ourselves for a life of usefulness, and we should never neglect this duty and privilege.

ELDER IRA W. HATCH

followed, bearing testimony to the Gospel which Joseph Smith, the great Prophet of the nineteenth century, was the instrument in the hands of God of re-establishing on earth. None can escape the judgments of an offended God but by rendering obedience to the same, for the principles of the Gospel are eternal and unchangeable, and they afford the only avenue of escape for mortal man.

These principles cannot be understood but by the enlightening influences which come from God, for "what man knoweth the things of God but by the Spirit of God?" And in order to obtain the Holy Ghost, which was and is to guide into the way of all truth, man must submit to the ordinances upon which this blessing is predicated.

ELDER JESSE N. PERKINS,

the next speaker, felt thankful for the good circumstances and pleasant surroundings of the Elders and Saints at the present time. Spoke of the importance of all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "letting their light shine" that others thereby may be made partakers of the heaven-born principles of the everlasting Gospel, and of setting an example in faithfulness and moral courage.

President John Morgan delivered a very interesting and instructive address on the proclamation of the Elders of Israel and the result following the acceptance or rejection of their divine message. The speaker quoted from the Gospel according to St. Mark, 16th chapter and 16th verse: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Said God is no respecter of persons and it is within the reach of every individual born on the earth to save or condemn himself. One cannot save or damn another. In regard to religious belief and worship, man is

RESPONSIBLE TO GOD ALONE.

We have our agency in these matters, but the Author of our being will hold us responsible for the actions committed here on this planet. "He that obeys the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be saved," is only a part of the decree of an All-wise Creator. The remainder is this: "He that believeth not shall be damned." It is as necessary to heed the latter proclamation as the former, as by our unbelief we are damned, or cut short of blessings, because without belief there is nothing to incite us to action. Thus our progress is stopped by unbelief.

Conference was dismissed by Elder S. H. Head.

At 2 p. m. conference was again called to order. Elder Carroll was the first speaker. His remarks were confined to the importance of the Saints obeying the Word of Wisdom as given through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Elder Houston, the next speaker, quoted 2 John, verse ix, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." Said there is but one Gospel, and that is the power of God unto salvation to every one that will submit to the laws and ordinances therein contained. The speaker referred to the testimonies which had been borne by the Elders that had spoken previously, and asked the hearers to prayerfully consider them and what had been spoken.

Elder Wright of the West Tennessee Conference, being present by invitation, said it was a pleasure to him to meet the elders and a few of the Saints of East Tennessee. He read from Luke 23d chapter, where

A DIALOGUE

took place between Jesus Christ and the thief on the cross. As the promise, "today shalt thou be with me in paradise," made by Jesus while on the cross to one of the malefactors, affords so much happiness to a class of baptism-deniers. The speaker dwelt on that point for some time, proving the fallacy of the belief that "the thief went straight to heaven."

President Morgan was the last speaker. Many people believe that death reforms the individual, but the speaker said this was an er-

roneous belief. Said the effects of habits contracted here will follow us beyond the grave unless repented of. When death separates the spirit and body separate, the former goes to the land of spirits, while the latter decomposes and returns to the mother earth. But while the body is here, and after the spirit has taken its flight, it cannot be tempted. The man may have been a thief and yet his body would not stem; or a drunkard and now the liquor, that would have been so tempting during the time the spirit inhabited the mortal part, is rejected. Thus we can see that it is the spirit-immortal part—of the drunkard that craves the drink. What we are here we shall be hereafter, unless a reformation takes place; therefore it is very necessary that evils should be corrected here.

Benediction by Elder Heber K. Perkins.

Sunday, October 9th.—Promptly at 10 a. m. conference convened. President Perkins was the first speaker. He said the Spirit of God is not manifested in contention but in peace, long-suffering and gentleness; therefore the Elders have not come here to rob you of your rights and liberties, but to unfold, in a God-fearing manner, the principles of the Gospel of Christ. The speaker's words were replete with the spirit of "peace and good will towards men."

Elder Daybell followed on the inconsistency of

"DEATH BED REPENTANCE."

proved by the "law and the testimony" that baptism was and is essential to salvation. Bore testimony to the truth of the Gospel as taught by the Latter-day Saints.

Elder Willard Hatch, the next speaker, said there is no way by which salvation can be attained except that which the Savior has pointed out, and they who seek to climb up any other way will be counted as thieves and robbers, and punished accordingly. Exhorted all to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.

President Morgan then addressed the congregation. He prefaced his discourse by reading the parable of the sower, Matthew, 13th chapter. The evils of prejudice were held up to view in a word-picture by the speaker, and the condition of the people in this, the Wilson County field of labor and the parable given were compared. By the glances exchanged among a number of the listeners we would say that Elder Morgan had "hit the nail on the head" in his illustration. The congregation then sang the hymn on page 165, "Do what is right let the consequence follow."

Prother Pierce Simmons pronounced the benediction.

At 2 p. m. the conference assembly was again called to order by President Perkins. Elder J. W. Barnes was then called to address the congregation. After touching on the initiatory ordinances of the Gospel, the speaker dwelt upon the great importance of having authority from God before our acts in His name would be acknowledged in the heavens. Jesus said to His apostles: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." This order has been somewhat changed by the Christian world, and now many men call themselves to the ministry. But what they seal on earth will not be sealed in heaven. Paul detected the imposture in the case of the Ephesian Saints (Acts 19) and they, as a consequence, were rebaptized. The promises made to Joseph, through Ephraim his son, were referred to, and a copious supply of Scripture was produced, proving the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

ELDER HEAD

was the next speaker. He read from Luke xvii, 26: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." The situation in the days of Noah was in part elucidated, and the condition of the nineteenth century was compared with the days immediately prior to the flood.

Singing.

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Wright.

Elders Wm. Daybell and John V. Bluth were released to return home, the former having been absent over 20 months, while the latter was released on account of poor health.

Five council meetings were held during the two days, and in them much profitable instruction was given by Presidents Morgan and Perkins. The conference is in a very good condition, and for this much credit is due Elder Perkins for his efficient labors as president over the same.

Another feature of the conference worthy of mention was the good treatment received by the Elders at the hands of the Saints and friends in the vicinity of Baird's Mills.

S. H. HEAD,
Clerk of Conference.

WANTED. Vanderbilt's \$400,000,000 book is ready. Something new. Big Wages made daily. Reminiscences of the two Vanderbilts, "Cornel and Bill," showing how they made \$10 a second day and night for 40 years; their huge jokes by land and sea, narrated for the first time without fear or favor; perfect photographic likenesses of Commodore Vanderbilt and family, taken for the author in 1863 and 1878; most humorous book ever issued; men, women and children can sell 100 a day; 15 cents gets a sample; county rights given. The Lloyd Publishing Co., Boston, Mass. d&w lto.