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DISCOURSES

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

ELDER CHARLES W. PENROSE.

In arising before this large assembly to address them on the principles of the Gospel as understood by the Latter-day Saints, or "Mormons," as they are commonly called, I earnestly desire that the Spirit of Almighty God will rest upon this congregation, and especially upon me, that I may be able, under its influence, to make clear to those who are gathered in this house tonight, some of the doctrines and principles which we have received from the Almighty for the benefit of the human family. We are glad to meet with our friends who come to us from various parts of the United States, and who are believers in God and in Jesus Christ, and are united together in an endeavor to do good, to promote good feeling and good conduct among the people of the world. We rejoice when we see our fellow creatures engaging in any work that is good, that will promote the welfare of mankind, and that will help to stem the tide of skepticism and infidelity which is rushing over the world. We believe that it is our mission to stand up in the latter days for God, and for Christ, and for the truths revealed from heaven in former days for the salvation of man. We have no other desire in our hearts than to promote the welfare of our brethren and sisters in all the world, and to lead them in the path of salvation.

The doctrines and principles which we hold dear, and which we are ready to promulgate whenever called upon, without pay and without reward, we have received by direct revelation from God, in the nineteenth century. The religion of the Latter-day Saints has not been taken from books. It has not been arranged as a creed by any man or men. The organization to which we belong—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—has been set up by direct commandment from God, through Jesus Christ; and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ supervise and direct this Church in all its branches and all its affairs. It is organized on the same pattern and plan by which Jesus Christ organized His Church when He was upon the earth in the flesh. The ordinances which we believe are necessary for people to obey have also been revealed from heaven, and they are performed under authority from heaven. The authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel as we understand it, has not come down

through the various denominations of religion which are extant, but has been sent down from heaven direct in our own time. And it is the same authority that was held by the ancient apostles and ministers sent forth by our Lord Jesus Christ when He was upon the earth—the same authority, the same apostleship, the same doctrines, the same ordinances, and they are attended by the same gifts and blessings, and by the pouring out of the same power that attended the ministrations of the inspired servants of God, whose words are recorded in the book called the Bible. We hold that God is the same yesterday, today and forever; that He does not change; that He is just as willing and just as able in the nineteenth century to reveal His will and to bestow His power as He was in the first century of the Christian era, and as He was in times before that, when He revealed himself to the prophets.

The idea has prevailed in what is called the "Christian" world, that the voice of revelation was hushed, and that it ceased when John, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, obtained that glorious vision which is recorded in the book called the Book of Revelation, and which is placed last in the collection of books known as the New Testament. In consequence of that notion, when God revealed himself in the latter days, the cry was raised, both among the clergy and among the laity, in the Christian world, that there was to be no more revelation from God, and that the Bible contained the whole word of God; that there was no need for any more revelation, and that there was a prohibition against further revelation, contained in the last chapter in that volume.

An angel came to John while he was on the Isle of Patmos and revealed to him a number of things that were shortly to come to pass. In the 4th chapter of the Revelation and the 1st verse, John says:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

At the close of the revelation, John fell at the feet of the angel who had showed him these things, to worship him, and the angel said:

See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God; chap. xxii; v. 9.

Then the word was given by the Apostle John:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book; v. 18.

Now, the idea has prevailed that this was the word of God declaring that there would be no more revelation to men. But a close reading of this Scripture will show that no such idea is conveyed. That has been inferred by men who were not inspired of God to declare His word. The word says that no man is to add to the words of the book. God gave a similar prohibition in the time of Moses, when the law was given, that no one should add to or diminish from the things then revealed. That is what God requires always. Whenever He gives a revelation to man, He wants man to receive that revelation as it is. It is not for man to add to His word, nor for man to take away from it in any degree. The revelation is to stand as delivered. And that is all there is to it in what the Apostle John said concerning this. No man is to add to that which God reveals. This same book of Revelation, which says that man is not to add to what God reveals, shows very clearly, in several places, that there was to be further revelation from God. John himself received a mission to go out and prophesy to many nations, and many kings, and many tongues. This was given him in the form of a book that he was to eat in the vision, and the angel explained to him the meaning of it. That was a mission for him to prophesy before many nations, and many kings, and many tribes, and many tongues; and if he prophesied, it would be the word of the Lord spoken by the Holy Ghost. Whatever John might say under the influence of the Holy Ghost would be the word of the Lord to the people, just the same as what the prophets had said in olden times under the same Spirit. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost," and that became Scripture. And whenever a man of God, having authority from God to speak in His name, writes or speaks by the power of God, that is the word of God, and when it is written it is Scripture, just as much as though it were written thousands of years ago. In the fourteenth chapter of that book and the sixth and seventh verses, we read this:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters.

That is what John saw and heard in that heavenly vision. I want to call