

The Philosophical Basis of "MORMONISM"

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY INVITATION
BEFORE THE CONGRESS OF RELIGIOUS
PHILOSOPHIES HELD IN CONNECTION
WITH THE PANAMA-PACIFIC INTERNA-
TIONAL EXPOSITION

San Francisco, California,

July 29, 1915



BY

JAMES E. TALMAGE

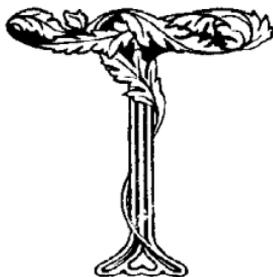
D. Sc., F. R. S. E.

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FOREWORD

In connection with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, a Congress of Religious Philosophies was held in San Francisco, California, July 29th to 31st, 1915.

At this Congress the philosophical claims of the principal religious systems of the world were presented by specialists and able expositors of the several faiths.

The first day of the session was named distinctively "Christian Day," the second, "Hindu Day," and the third, "Oriental Day." Of the systems of religion based on Christianity, only three were given place on the program of the Congress, *viz.* Catholicism, Protestantism (treated by a representative of Episcopalianism), and "Mormonism."

The presiding authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints responded to the courteous invitation to be represented at the Congress by delegating Dr. James E. Talmage to address the body on the philosophy of "Mormonism."

Time limitations imposed the necessity of brevity in treatment. Dr. Talmage's concise address is given in full in the following pages.

The Publishers.

The **Philosophical Basis of "Mormonism"**

Permit me to explain that the term "Mormon," with its several derivatives, is no part of the name of the Church with which it is usually associated. It was first applied to the Church as a convenient nickname, and had reference to an early publication, "The Book of Mormon;" but the appellation is now so generally current that Church and people answer readily to its call. The proper designation of the so-called "Mormon" Church is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. The philosophy of its religious system is largely expressed in its name.

The philosophical foundation of "Mormonism" is constructed upon the following outline of facts and premises:

1. The eternal existence of a living personal God; and the preexistence and eternal duration of mankind as His literal offspring.

2. The placing of man upon the earth as an embodied spirit to undergo the experiences of an intermediate probation.

3. The transgression and fall of the first parents of the race, by which man became mortal, or in other words was doomed to suffer a separation of spirit and body through death.

4. The absolute need of a Redeemer, empowered to overcome death, and thereby provide for a reunion of the spirits and bodies of mankind through a material resurrection from death to immortality.

5. The providing of a definite plan of salvation, by obedience to which man may obtain remission of his sins, and be enabled to advance by effort and righteous achievement throughout eternity.

6. The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ in the "meridian of time," by the personal ministry and atoning death of the foreordained Redeemer and Savior of mankind, and the proclamation of His saving Gospel

through the ministry of the Holy Priesthood during the apostolic period and for a season thereafter.

7. The general "falling away" from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by which the world degenerated into a state of apostasy, and the Holy Priesthood ceased to be operative in the organization of sects and churches designed and effected by the authority of man.

8. The restoration of the Gospel in the current age, the reestablishment of the Church of Jesus Christ by the bestowal of the Holy Priesthood through Divine revelation.

9. The appointed mission of the restored Church of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof amongst all nations, in preparation for the near advent of our Savior Jesus Christ, who shall reign on earth as Lord and King.

1.

The eternal existence of a living personal God; and the pre-existence and eternal duration of mankind as His literal offspring.

As its principal cornerstone "Mormonism" affirms the existence of the true and the living God; the Supreme Being, in whose image and likeness man has been created in the flesh.

We hold it to be reasonable, scriptural and true, that man's period of earth-life is but one stage in the general plan of the soul's progression; and that birth is no more the beginning than is death the close of individual existence. God created all things spiritually before they were created temporally upon the earth; and the spirits of all men lived as intelligent beings, endowed with the capacity of choice and the rights of free agency, before they were born in flesh. They were the spirit-children of God. It was their Divine Father's purpose to provide a means by which they could be trained and developed, with opportunity to meet, combat, and overcome evil, and thus gain strength, power and skill, as means of yet further development through the eternities of the endless future. For this purpose was the earth created, whereon,

as on other worlds, spirits might take upon themselves bodies, living in probation as candidates for a higher and more glorious future.

These unembodied spirits were of varied qualifications, some of them noble and great, fit for leadership and emprise of the highest order, others suited rather to be followers, but all capacitated to advance in righteous achievement if they would.

No one professing a belief in Christianity can consistently accept the Holy Scriptures as genuine and deny the preexistence of the Christ, or doubt that before the birth of the Holy One as Mary's Babe in Bethlehem of Judea, He had lived with the Father as an unembodied spirit, the Firstborn of the Father's children. So lived or live the hosts of spirits who have taken or yet shall take bodies of flesh and bones. Christ while a man among men repeatedly affirmed the fact of His antemortal life—that He came forth from the Father, and would return to the Father on the completion of His mission in mortality.

John the Revelator was shown in vision some of the scenes that had occurred in the world of unembodied spirits even before the beginning of human history. He saw the spirits that rebelled against God, under the leadership of Lucifer, a son of the morning, later known as Satan, the dragon; and he witnessed the struggle between those rebellious hosts and the army of loyal and obedient spirits who fought under the banner of Michael the archangel. We read that there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon and his angels fought. The victory was with Michael and his hosts, who by their allegiance and valor made good their title as victors in their "first estate," referred to by Jude, while Satan and his defeated followers, who "kept not their first estate," were cast out upon the earth and became the devil and his angels, forever denied the privileges of mortal existence with its possibilities of eternal advancement.

The cause of the great antemortal "war in heaven" was the rebellion of Lucifer following the rejection of his

plan whereby it was proposed that mankind be saved from the dangers and sins of their future mortality, not through the merit of struggle and endeavor against evil, but by compulsion. Satan sought to destroy the free agency of man; and in the primeval council of the angels and the Gods he was discredited; while the offer of the Well Beloved Son, Jehovah, afterwards Jesus the Christ to insure the free agency of man in the mortal state, and to give Himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the race, was accepted, and was made the basis of the plan of salvation.

The spirits who kept their first estate were to be advanced to the second, or mortal state, to be further tested and proved, withal, and to demonstrate whether they would observe and keep the commandments which the Lord their God should give them, with the assurance and promise that all who fill the measure of their second estate "shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever."

2.

The placing of man upon the earth as an embodied spirit to undergo the experiences of an intermediate probation.

The advancement of the spirit-children of God from their first to their second estate was inaugurated by the creation of man upon the earth, whereby the individual spirit was clothed in a body of flesh and bones, consisting of the elements of earth, or as stated in Genesis, made of the dust of the earth. With the ways and means by which this creation was wrought we are not especially concerned at this point. The spirit of the first man, Adam, was tabernacled in a body of earthly material; and his remembrance of an earlier existence and of his former place amongst the unembodied was suspended, so that a thick veil of forgetfulness fell between his earth-life and his past. Man and woman thus became tenants of earth, and received from their Creator power and dominion over all inferior creations.

They were given commandment and law, with freedom of action and agency of choice. In a measure, they

were left to themselves to choose the good or the evil, to be obedient or disobedient to the laws governing their second estate, or embodied condition. Experiences unknown in the preexistent state crowded upon the first parents of the race in their changed condition and new environment; and they were subjected to test and trial. Such was the purpose of their existence on earth. To them as also to their unnumbered posterity—the entire race of mankind—this present life is a connecting link, an intermediate and probationary state, uniting the eternity of the past with that of the future. We, the human family, literally the sons and daughters of Divine Parents, the spiritual progeny of God our Eternal Father, and of our God Mother, are away from home for a season, studying and working as pupils duly matriculated in the University of Mortality, honorable graduation from which great institution means an exalted and enlarged sphere of activity and endeavor beyond.

3.

The transgression and fall of the first parents of the race, by which man became mortal, or in other words was doomed to suffer a separation of spirit and body through death.

Prominent among the commandments given to the parents of the race in Eden was that forbidding their eating of food unsuited to their condition. The natural and inevitable result of disobedience in this particular was set before them as a penalty—that, should they incorporate into their bodies the foreign substances of earth contained in the food against which they were solemnly cautioned, they would surely die. True, they could not fail by violation of this restriction to gain experience and knowledge; and the forbidden food is expressively designated as the fruit “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

They disobeyed the commandment of God, and thus was brought about the Fall of Man. The bodies of both woman and man, which when created were perfect in

form and function, now became degenerate, liable to the ever physical ailments and weaknesses to which flesh has since been heir, and subjects for eventual dissolution or death.

The arch-tempter through whose sophistries, half-truths, and infamous falsehoods Eve had been beguiled, was none other than Satan, or Lucifer, that rebellious and fallen "son of the morning," whose proposal involving the destruction of man's liberty had been rejected in the council of the heavens, and who had been "cast out into the earth," he and all his angels as unembodied spirits, never to be tabernacled in bodies of their own. As an act of diabolic reprisal following his rejection, his defeat by Michael and the heavenly hosts, and his ignominious expulsion from heaven, Satan planned to destroy the bodies in which the faithful spirits—those who had kept their first estate—would be born; and his beguilement of Eve was but an early stage of that infernal scheme.

Death has come to be the universal heritage; it may claim its victim in infancy or youth, in the period of life's prime, or its summons may be deferred until the snows of age have gathered upon the hoary head; it may befall as the result of accident or disease, by violence, or as we say, through natural causes; but come it must, as Satan well knows; and in this knowledge is his present though but temporary triumph. But the purposes of God, as they ever have been and ever shall be, are infinitely superior to the deepest designs of men or devils; and the Satanic machinations to make death inevitable, perpetual and supreme were provided against even before the first man had been created in the flesh. The Atonement to be wrought by Jesus the Christ was ordained to overcome death and to provide a means of ransom from the power of Satan.

4.

The absolute need of a Redeemer empowered to overcome death and thereby provide for a reunion of the spirits and bodies of mankind through a material resurrection from death to immortality.

From what has been said it is evident that "Mor-

monism" accepts the scriptural account of the creation of man and that of the Fall. We hold that the Fall was a process of physical degeneracy, whereby the body of man lost its power to withstand malady and death, and that with sin death entered into the world. We hold that the Fall was foreseen of God, and that it was by Divine wisdom turned to account as the means by which His embodied children would be subjected to the foreappointed test and trial through which the way to advancement, otherwise impossible, would be opened to them.

Let it not be assumed, however, that the fact of God's foreknowledge as to what *would be* under any given conditions, is a determining cause that such *must be*. Omnipotent though He be, He permits much that is contrary to His will. We cannot believe that vice and crime, injustice, intolerance, and unrighteous domination of the weak by the strong, the oppression of the poor by the rich, exist by the will and determination of God. It is not His design or wish that even one soul be lost; on the contrary, it was and is His work and glory "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." So also, it is not God's purpose to interfere with, far less to annul, the free agency of His children, even though those children prostitute their Divine birthright of freedom to the accomplishment of evil and the condemnation of their souls.

Before man was created in the flesh the Eternal Father foresaw that in the school of life some of His children would succeed and others fail, some would be faithful and others false; some would elect to tread the path of righteousness while others would follow the road to destruction. He further foresaw that death would enter the world, and that the possession of bodies by His children would be of but brief individual duration. He saw that His commandments would be disobeyed and His law violated; and that men, shut out from His presence and left to themselves, would sink rather than rise, would retrograde rather than advance, and would be lost to the heavens. It was necessary that a means of redemption be provided, whereby erring man might make

amends, and by compliance with established law achieve salvation and eventual exaltation in the eternal worlds. The power of death was to be overcome, so that, though men would of necessity die, they would live anew, their spirits clothed with immortalized bodies over which death could not again prevail.

While recognizing the transgression of Adam as an event by which the race has been brought under the penalty of death we hold that none but Adam shall be held accountable for his disobedience. True, the penalty incident to that transgression is operative upon all flesh, and upon the earth and all the elements thereof; but in the great reckoning, which men call the judgment, the environment and determining conditions under which each soul has lived, the handicap in the race of mortal strife and endeavor shall be taken into due account. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: * * * Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5: 12,18.)

We affirm that man stands in absolute need of a Redeemer, for by self-effort alone he is utterly incapable of lifting himself from the lower to a higher plane. Even as lifeless mineral particles can be incorporated into the tissues of plants only as the plant reaches down into the lower world and through its own life processes raises the mineral to its own plane, or as vegetable substance may be woven into the body of the animal only as the animal by the exercise of its own vital functions assimilates the vegetable, so man may be lifted from his fallen earthly state characterized by human weaknesses, bodily frailties, and a persistent tendency to sink into the quagmire of sin, only as a power above that of humanity reaches down and helps him to rise. We affirm as a fundamental principle of Christian philosophy the *Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ*; and we accept in its literal simplicity the scriptural doctrine thereof. Through the Atonement the bonds of death are broken, and a way is provided for the

annulment of the effects of individual sin. We hold that Jesus Christ was the one and only Being fitted to become the Savior and Redeemer of the world, for the following reasons:

(1) He is the only sinless Man who has ever walked the earth.

(2) He is the Only Begotten of the Eternal Father in the flesh, and therefore the only Being born to earth possessing in their fulness the attributes and powers of both Godhood and manhood.

(3) He is the One who had been chosen in the primeval council of the Gods and foreordained to this service.

No other man has lived without sin, and therefore wholly free from the domination of Satan. Jesus Christ was the one Being to whom death, the natural wage of sin, was not due. Christ's sinlessness rendered Him eligible as the subject of the atoning sacrifice whereby propitiation could be made for the sins of all men.

No other man has possessed the power to hold death in abeyance and to die only as he willed so to do. We accept in their literalness and simplicity the scriptural declarations to the effect that Jesus Christ possessed within Himself power over death. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" we read (John 5:26); and again "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:17, 18).

This unique condition was the natural heritage of Jesus the Christ, He being in His embodied state the Son of a mortal mother and of an immortal Sire. No mortal man was His father. From Mary He inherited the attributes of a mortal being, including the capacity to die; from His immortal Father He derived the power to live in the flesh indefinitely, immune to death except as He submitted voluntarily thereto.

No other being has been born to earth with such investiture of preappointment and foreordination to

lay down his life as a propitiatory atonement for the race. Prominent among the teachings of Jesus Christ in the course of His earthly ministry was the reiterated avowal that He had come down from heaven not to do His own will but the will of Him by whom He had been sent.

The Atonement accomplished by the Savior was a vicarious service for mankind, all of whom had become estranged from God through sin; and by that sacrifice of propitiation, a way has been opened for reconciliation whereby man may be brought again into communion with God, and be made able to live and advance as a resurrected being in the eternal worlds. This fundamental conception is strikingly expressed in our English word "atonement," which, as its syllables attest is "at-one-ment," "denoting reconciliation, or the bringing into agreement of those who had been estranged."

As already indicated the effect of the Atonement is twofold:

(1) The universal redemption of the human race from death, which was invoked by the transgression of our first earthly parents; and

(2) Salvation, whereby relief is offered from the effects of individual sin.

The victory over death was inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who had been crucified and slain. He was the first to rise from death to immortality and is therefore rightly called "the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20); "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18); "the first begotten of the dead" (Rev. 1:5). Instances of the raising of the dead to life are of record as antedating the death and resurrection of Christ; but such were cases of restoration to mortal existence; and that the subjects of such miraculous reanimation had to die again is certain.

Immediately following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, many of the righteous dead were resurrected, and appeared in their material bodies of tangible flesh and bones. The Holy Bible affirms such instances on the eastern hemisphere, and the Book of Mormon records analogous occurrences in the western world. The resur-

rection of the dead is to be universal, extending alike to all who have tabernacled in flesh upon the earth, irrespective of their state, whether of righteousness or of sin; but all shall be called from the state of death in order, according to their condition. So taught the Master, when He said, following His avouchment that the Gospel should be preached even to those already dead: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29.) As part of a Divine revelation given in modern times we read: "They who have done good in the resurrection of the just, and they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:17.)

The assured resurrection of all who have lived and died on earth is a foundation stone in the structure of "Mormon" philosophy. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6).

5.

The providing of a definite plan of salvation by obedience to which man may obtain remission of his sins, and be enabled to advance by effort and righteous achievement throughout eternity.

In addition to the inestimable boon of redemption from death and the grave, the Atonement effected by Jesus Christ is universally operative in bringing a measure of salvation—what may be called general salvation—to the entire posterity of Adam, in that all men are thereby exonerated from the direct effects of the Fall in so far as such effects have been the cause of evil in their lives. Man is individually answerable for his own transgressions alone—the sins for which he, as a free agent, capacitated and empowered to choose for himself, commits culpably and on his own account or volition.

As an essential corollary of this fundamental principle, it follows that all children who die before they reach the age of accountability are not alone redeemed from death through resurrection to an endless life, with spirits and bodies inseparably united, but also from any possible effect of inherited tendency to sin. It will be admitted, without disputation, I take it, that children are born heirs to the inescapable birthright of heredity. Tendencies either good or evil, blessings and curses are transmitted from generation to generation. While heredity is to be regarded as tendency or capability only, and not as assurance and absolute predestination, nevertheless all children are born subject to the algebraic sum of the traits and tendencies of their ancestors, combined with their own specific and personal characteristics by which they were distinguished while yet unembodied spirits. From this heritage of sinward tendency all children are redeemed through the Atonement of Christ; and justly so, for the debt came to them as a legacy and is paid for them. They require no baptismal cleansing nor other ordinance of admittance into the Kingdom of God; for being incapable of repentance, and not having attained unto the condition of accountability, they are innocent in the sight of God, and will be counted among the redeemed and the sanctified.

But there is a special or individual effect of the Atonement, by which every soul that has lived in the flesh to the age and condition of responsibility and accountability may place himself within the reach of Divine mercy, and obtain absolution for personal sin by compliance with the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, as prescribed and decreed by the Author of the plan of salvation. The indispensable conditions of individual salvation are: (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, acceptance of His Gospel and allegiance to His commandments, and to Him as the one and only Savior of men. (2) Repentance, embracing genuine contrition for the sins of the past, and a resolute turning away therefrom, with a determination to avoid, by all possible effort, future sin. (3) Baptism by immersion in water, for the remission

of sins, the ordinance to be administered by one having the authority of the Priesthood, that is to say the right and commission to thus officiate in the name of Deity. (4) The higher baptism of the Spirit or bestowal of the Holy Ghost by the authorized imposition of hands by one holding the requisite authority—that of the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. To insure the salvation to which compliance with these fundamental principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes the repentant believer eligible, a life of continued resistance to sin and observance of the laws of righteousness is requisite.

We hold that salvation from sin is obtainable only through obedience, and that while the door to the Kingdom of God has been opened by the sacrificial death and the resurrection of our Lord the Christ, no man may enter there except by his personal and voluntary application expressed in terms of obedience to the prescribed laws and ordinances of the Gospel. Christ “became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). And further: God “will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, * * * For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Romans 2:6-11.)

“Mormon” philosophy holds that salvation, thus made accessible to all through faith and works, implies no uniformity of condition as to future happiness and glory, any more than does condemnation of the soul mean the same state of disappointment, remorse and misery to all who incur that dread but natural penalty. We reject the unscriptural dogma that for resurrected souls there are but two places or states of eternal existence—heaven and hell—to the one or the other of which each shall be assigned according to the record of his deeds, whether good or bad, and however narrow the margin may appear on the balance sheet of his mortal life. “In my Father’s house are many mansions:” said the embodied Christ to

His apostles, and "if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:1, 2.)

The life we are to experience hereafter will be in righteous strictness the result of the life we lead in this world; and as here men exhibit infinite gradations of faithful adherence to the truth, and of servility to sin, so in the world beyond the grave shall gradations exist. Salvation grades into exaltation, and every soul shall find place and condition as befits him. "Mormonism" affirms, on the basis of direct revelation from God, that graded degrees of glory are prepared for the souls of men, and that these comprise in decreasing order the Celestial, the Terrestrial, and the Telesstial kingdoms of glory, within each of which are orders or grades innumerable. These several glories—Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telesstial—are comparable to the sun, the moon and the stars, in their beauty, worth and splendor. Such a condition was revealed to an apostle of olden time: "there are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:40-42.) Thus is it provided in the economy of God, that to progression there is no end.

As a necessary consequence, man may advance by effort and by obedience to higher and yet higher laws as he may learn them through the eternities to come, until he attains the rank and status of Godship. "Mormonism" is so bold as to declare that such is the possible destiny of the human soul. And why not? Is this possibility unreasonable? Would not the contrary be opposed to what we recognize as natural law? Man is of the lineage of the Gods. He is the spirit-offspring of the Eternal One, and by the inviolable law that living beings perpetuate after their kind, the children of God may become like unto their Parents in kind if not in degree. The human soul is a God *in embryo*; even as the crawling caterpillar or the corpse-like chrysalis embodies the

potential possibilities of the matured and glorified imago. We assert that there was more than figurative simile, and instead thereof the assured possibility of actual attainment in the Master's words: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

The fact of man's eternal progression in nowise indicates a state of eventual equality on however exalted a plane; nor does it imply that the progressive soul must in the eternal eons overtake those once far ahead of him in achievement. Advancement is not a characteristic of inferior status alone; indeed, the increment of progress may be vastly greater in the higher spheres of activity. This conception leads to the inevitable deduction that God Himself, Elohim, the Very Eternal Father, is a progressive Being, eternally advancing from one perfection to another, possessed as He is of that distinguishing attribute, which shall be the endowment of all who attain celestial exaltation—the power of eternal increase.

6.

The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ in the "meridian of time," by the personal ministry and atoning death of the foreordained Redeemer and Savior of mankind, and the proclamation of His saving Gospel through the ministry of the Holy Priesthood during the apostolic period and for a season thereafter.

"Mormonism" incorporates as an essential part of its philosophy the scriptural account of the earthly birth, life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ; and affirms the fulfilment of prophecy in all the events of the Savior's earthly existence and works. The time of His birth has been made a dividing line in the history of the ages; it was veritably the "meridian of time." Early in His ministry on earth He declared, and throughout His subsequent years repeatedly affirmed that He had come in pursuance of foreordained plan and purpose—not to do His own will but that of the Father who sent Him.

From the days of Moses down to the advent of Christ

the people of Israel, who constituted the only nation professing to know and worship the true and the living God—"Jehovah worshippers" as they were distinctively called—had lived under the law of carnal commandments comprised in the Mosaic code. To Israel the law and the prophets were the scriptures of life, however much the people may have departed therefrom through traditional alterations and misconstruction. Christ came not to destroy the Law—for it was He who gave the Law—amidst the awful glory of Sinai—but to fulfil and supersede the Law by the Gospel. Aside from the transcendent work of Atonement, Jesus Christ taught the principles of the Gospel, and laid down in plainness the laws and ordinances essential to the salvation of mankind. He made clear the fact that the Law of Moses had been given as a preparation for the Gospel which He gave to Israel.

He chose men for the work of the ministry; in a special sense He chose twelve, whom He ordained and called Apostles. To them He committed power and authority not alone to preach and teach, to heal the sick, rebuke and cast out demons, but to build up the Church as a divinely established institution. These men were assured that through the Holy Ghost even after the Lord's ascension they would be kept in communion and communication with Christ and the Father; and that upon the foundation of such close relationship, *viz.*, direct revelation from God to man, would the Church of Jesus Christ be reared. That the apostles realized the actuality of their authority, and that of the responsibility resting upon them by virtue of their ordination to the Holy Priesthood, is evidenced by their prompt action following the Ascension, in filling the vacancy existing in the body as a consequence of Iscariot's apostasy and suicide, and in other administrative acts.

When the Holy Ghost was given unto the Twelve, at the memorable time of Pentecost, the gifts, graces and powers of the Holy Priesthood were manifested through those men as never had been before; and the proof of their wondrous investiture of actual power and inherent authority continued throughout their lives. The apostles

carried the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every known nation establishing church communities or branches of the Church wherever possible. For each of these branches, the requisite officers were chosen and ordained, such as high priests, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons; while for more general supervision evangelists and pastors were commissioned with the powers of priesthood. So zealous and efficient were the apostles in their particular ministry, that the Gospel of salvation was known to Jew and Gentile. Paul, writing approximately thirty years after the Ascension, declared that then the Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (Col. 1:23), which assertion we may reasonably construe as meaning that the Gospel message had been proclaimed so widely that all who desired might learn of it.

The purpose of establishing the several graded offices of authority in the Church, and of installing therein men duly ordained to the requisite order of priesthood, has been impressively stated as "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12.) So necessary were the several offices to the proper administration of the affairs of the Church, that they were aptly compared to the several organs of a perfect human body (see I Cor. 12), all essential to a fulness of efficiency, and no one justified in saying to the other, "I have no need of thee."

7.

The general "falling away" from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by which the world degenerated into a state of apostasy, and the Holy Priesthood ceased to be operative in the organizations of sects and churches designed and effected by the authority of man.

The apostolic ministry continued in the Primitive Church for about sixty years after the death of Christ, or nearly to the end of the first century of the Christian era. For some time thereafter the Church existed as a unified body, officered by men duly invested by ordi-

nation in the authority of the Holy Priesthood, though, even during the lifetime of some of the apostles, the leaven of apostasy and disintegration had been working. Indeed, hardly had the Gospel seed been sown when the enemy of all righteousness had started assiduously to sow tares in the field; and so closely intimate was the growth of the two that any forcible attempt to extirpate the tares would have imperiled the wheat. The evidences of spiritual decline were observed with anguish by the apostles who, however, recognized the fulfilment of earlier prophecy in the declension, and added their own inspired testimony to the effect that even a greater falling away was impending.

The apostasy progressed rapidly, in consequence of a co-operation of disrupting forces without and within the Church. The dreadful persecution to which the early Christians were subjected, particularly from the reign of Nero to that of Diocletian, both inclusive, drove great numbers of Christians to renounce their allegiance to Christianity, thus causing a widespread *apostasy from the Church*. But far more destructive was the contagion of evil that spread within the body, manifesting its effects mainly in the following developments:

(1) The corrupting of the simple principles of the Gospel of Christ by admixture with the so-called philosophical systems of the times.

(2) Unauthorized additions to the rites of the Church, and the introduction of vital changes in essential ordinances.

(3) Unauthorized changes in Church organization and government.

The result of the degeneracy so produced was to bring about an actual *apostasy of the entire Church*.

In the early part of the fourth century, Constantine cast about the Church the mantle of state recognition and governmental protection. Though unbaptized and therefore no member of the Church, he proclaimed himself the head of the Church of Christ, and distributed at his pleasure the titles of office in the Holy Priesthood. Churchly dignity was more sought after than military

distinction or honors of state. A bishop was more esteemed than a general, and an archbishop than a prince. Soon the Church laid claim to temporal power, and in the course of the centuries became the supreme potentate over all earthly governments.

Revolt was inevitable, and early in the sixteenth century the Reformation was begun. One notable effect of this epoch-making movement was the establishment of the Church of England as an immediate result of a disagreement between Henry VIII and the Pope. By Act of Parliament the king was proclaimed the supreme head of the Church within his realm. The Church as an organization, whether Papal or Protestant, had become an institution of men. The Holy Priesthood, to which men were of old called of God and ordained thereto by those having authority through prior ordination, no longer existed among men. The name but not the authority of priesthood and priestly office remained. Bishops, priests, and deacons—so-called—were made or unmade at the will of kings. The awful fact of the universal apostasy, and the absence of Divine authority from the earth was observed and frankly admitted by many earnest and conscientious theologians. The Church of England, in her "Homily Against Peril of Idolatry" (Homily xiv) officially affirmed the state of general degeneracy as follows: "So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom—an horrible and most dreadful thing to think—have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man; and that by the space of eight hundred years and more." The Book of Homilies dates from about the middle of the sixteenth century, and in it is thus officially set forth, that the so-called Church and in fact the entire religious world had been utterly apostate for eight centuries or more prior to the establishment of the Church of England.

The apostasy had been divinely predicted; its actuality is attested by a reasonable interpretation of history.

8.

The restoration of the Gospel in the current age, and the re-establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ by the bestowal of the Holy Priesthood through Divine revelation.

From the time of the Reformation, sects and churches have multiplied apace. On every side has been heard the cry "Lo, here is Christ," or, "Lo, there." As the present speaker has written elsewhere: There are churches named from the circumstances of their origin—as the Church of England; others after their famous founders or promoters—as Lutheran, Calvinist, Wesleyan; some are known by peculiarities of doctrine or plan of administration—as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist; but down to the third decade of the nineteenth century there was no church on earth affirming name or title as the Church of Jesus Christ. The only organization called a church existing at that time and venturing to assert claim to authority by succession was the Catholic Church, which for centuries had been apostate, and wholly bereft of Divine authority or recognition. If the "Mother Church" be without a valid priesthood, and devoid of spiritual power, how can her offspring derive from her the right to officiate in the things of God? Who would dare to affirm that man can originate a priesthood which God is bound to honor and acknowledge?

Granted that men may and do create among themselves societies, associations, sects, and even "churches" if they choose so to designate their religious organizations; granted that they may prescribe rules, formulate laws, and devise plans of operation, discipline, and government, and that all such laws, rules, and schemes of administration are binding upon those who assume membership—granted all these rights and powers—whence can such human institutions derive the authority of the Holy Priesthood, without which there can be no Church of Christ?

But the world was not to be forever bereft of the Church of Jesus Christ, nor of the authority of the Holy

Priesthood. As surely as had been predicted the birth of the Messiah, and the great falling away from the Church of His founding, was the restoration of the Gospel foretold as a characteristic feature of the last days, the dispensation of the fulness of times. John, the apostle and revelator, saw in vision the foreappointed reopening of the windows of heaven in the last days, and thus affirmed: "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." (Rev. 14:6, 7.)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is founded upon the literal fulfilment of this prediction—for prophecy it was, though worded as a record of what the prophet and revelator saw—an event of a then future but now past time.

"Mormonism" as a religious system would be incomplete, inconsistent, and consequently without philosophical basis, but for its solemn avouchment that the Gospel has been restored to earth and that the Church of Jesus Christ has been reestablished among men. The Church today affirms to the world, that in A. D. 1820 there was manifested to Joseph Smith a theophany such as never before had been vouchsafed to man. He was but a youth at the time, living with his parents in the State of New York. Being confused and puzzled by the "war of words and tumult of opinions" by which the many contending sects were divided, and realizing that not all could be right, he acted upon the admonition of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.)

In answer to the young man's earnest prayer as to which, if any, of the discordant sects of the day was the Church of Christ, as he solemnly avows, both the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to him in visible form, as distinct and glorified Personages; and the

One, pointing to the Other, said: "*This is my Beloved Son, hear Him!*" The Son of God, Jesus Christ, directed the young man to ally himself with none of the sects or churches of the day, for all of them were wrong and their creeds were an abomination in His sight, in that they drew near to Him with their lips while their hearts were far from Him, and because they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. Thus was broken, by the voices of Eternal Beings, the long silence that had lain between the heavens and the earth incident to the apostasy of mankind. In 1820 there stood upon this globe one person who knew beyond doubt or peradventure, that the "orthodox" conception of Deity as an incorporeal essence devoid of definite shape and tangible substance, was utterly false. Joseph Smith knew that both the Eternal Father and His glorified Son, Jesus Christ, were in form and stature like unto perfect men; and that in Their physical image and likeness mankind had been created in the flesh. He knew further that Father and Son were individual Personages—a fact abundantly averred by the Lord Jesus during His life on earth, but which had been obscured by the sophistries of men.

Somewhat more than three years after the glorious appearing of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith, the young revelator was visited by a heavenly personage, who revealed to him the place where lay the ancient record which since has been translated through the gift and power of God and published to the world as the Book of Mormon. This volume contains a history of a division of the House of Israel, which had been led to the western continent centuries before the time of Christ. It is the ancient scripture of the western continent as the Holy Bible is the record of the dealings of God with His people on the eastern hemisphere. The Book of Mormon contains the Gospel of Christ in its fulness as given to the ancient inhabitants of this continent; and in its restoration, through the personal ministry of an angel sent from the presence of God, was fulfilled in part the vision-prophecy of John the Revelator of old.

The Holy Priesthood, having been lost to mankind through the universal apostasy, could be made again operative and valid only by a restoration or rebestowal from the heavens.

We affirm that the Lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, including the Levitical order, was conferred upon Joseph Smith and his companion in the ministry, Oliver Cowdery, through personal ordination under the hands of John, known of old as the Baptist, who appeared to the two men as a resurrected being, and transmitted to them the authority by which he had ministered while in mortality. That order of Priesthood—the Aaronic—as John the Baptist declared, holds the keys of the Gospel of repentance and of baptism for the remission of sins.

We affirm that the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by ordination under the hands of those who, in the ancient apostolic period, held the keys of the Holy Apostleship, *viz.*, Peter, James and John.

Under the authority so bestowed, the Church of Jesus Christ has been reestablished upon the earth. To distinguish it from the Church as it existed in ancient apostolic days it has been named—and this also through direct revelation—*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

As an institution among men, as a body corporate, it dates from April 6, 1830, on which day the Church was legally organized at Fayette, Seneca county, New York, under the laws of the State. Only six persons figured as actual participants in the formal procedure of organization and incorporation, that number being the minimum required by law in such an undertaking.

Whatever may be the opinions of individuals, or the concensus of belief, respecting the genuineness and validity of the claims set forth by the restored Church as to the source of the Priesthood it professes to hold, none can reasonably prefer the charge of incongruity or inconsistency on scriptural grounds. It is axiomatic to say that no man can give or transmit an authority he does not himself possess. The authority of the Priest-

hood of Aaron was restored to earth by the being who held the keys of that power in the earlier dispensation—John the Baptist. The Holy Apostleship, comprising all the powers inherent in the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, was restored by those who held the presidency of that Priesthood prior to the apostasy, *viz.*, Peter, James and John.

We further affirm, that in 1836 there appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Temple at Kirtland, Ohio, other ancient prophets, each of whom authoritatively bestowed upon the two mortal prophets, seers, and revelators, the keys of the power by which he had ministered in the long past dispensation in which he had officiated. Thus came Moses and committed to the modern prophets the keys of the gathering of Israel after their long dispersion. Elias came, and gave the authority that had been operative in the dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham. Elijah followed, in literal fulfilment of Malachi's portentous prediction, and committed the authority of vicarious labor for the dead, by which the hearts of the departed fathers shall be turned toward their yet living descendants, and the hearts of the children be turned toward the fathers, which labor, as affirmed by Malachi, is a necessary antecedent to the dawn of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, as otherwise the earth would be smitten with a curse at His coming.

9.

The appointed mission of the restored Church of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof amongst all nations, in preparation for the near advent of our Savior Jesus Christ, who shall reign on earth as Lord and King.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, claiming to be all that its name expresses or logically implies, holds that its special mission in the world is to officiate in the authority of the Holy Priesthood by proclaiming the Gospel and administering in the ordinances thereof amongst all nations, and this in preparation for

the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall soon appear and assume His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Besides its missionary labor among the living, the Church, true to the commission laid upon it through Elijah, is continuously engaged in vicarious service for the dead, administering the ordinances of salvation to the living in behalf of their departed progenitors. Largely for this purpose the Church constructs Temples, and maintains therein the requisite ministry in behalf of the dead.

In the carrying out of the work committed to it, the Church is tolerant of all sects and parties, claiming for itself no right or privilege which it would deny to individuals or other organizations. It affirms itself to be *The Church* of old, established anew. Its message to the world is that of peace and good will—the invitation to come and partake of the blessings incident to the new and everlasting covenant between God and His children. Its warning voice is heard in all lands and climes: *Repent ye! Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is a hand.*

Such in scant outline is the philosophical basis of "Mormonism."

The Latter-day Gospel Recognized as a Distinctive Religion

*Address Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday, October 10th, 1915.*

By Elder James E. Talmage, Council of the Twelve.

(Reported by Clyde Rasmussen.)

My brethren, sisters and other friends present who are not identified with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I greet you at this hour of worship in the name of the Lord, and earnestly pray that the spirit of truth may direct and dominate all that is done in this assembly, according to the opening supplication offered in this meeting.

We are gathered in the hope of receiving encouragement and instruction in matters most vital to our well-being; for assuredly the duties and privileges of worship are, of all activities of mind and spirit, the farthest reaching in their effects upon the human soul.

It was a stroke of supreme wisdom on the part of Deity, who understood and understands the character and capacity of human nature far better than man himself can compass it or comprehend, to set apart a specified time—one day in every seven—for the contemplation of things spiritual, for the putting aside of matters of business and affairs connected with secular pursuits in general, the day to be sacred to spiritual devotion and to study concerning the things of God. It is true that man may worship singly and alone, and this personal and solitary communion between the creature and his Maker is enjoined in holy writ and has been required by the Master Himself of all who have taken upon themselves His name. Nevertheless, we are commanded to meet at

frequent intervals for congregational worship, and in this requirement the tendencies, cravings and demands of the human soul are recognized and provided for. Man is by nature a social being, a gregarious being he has been called, not intended for solitary existence but fitted for companionship and mutual association. To facilitate compliance with this command and satisfaction of this yearning of the soul, men are organized into bodies, associations, societies and churches for religious purposes.

The Church Widely Known.

The Church under whose auspices we are here assembled, though young in years as reckoned from the date of its re-establishment upon the earth in the present or last dispensation, is known by name and fame throughout the civilized world and among many semi-cultured peoples. By general concensus the Church is regarded as occupying a unique status. It is not welcomed as a church among churches, nor does it find itself fraternally recognized as a sect among sects. I need not cite you evidence in support of this statement. The principal daily papers of our city, in common with the great papers of the United States, give very generously of their valuable space from week to week to church announcements and to notices of church services; and for this I am sure the public generally, and all the sects and churches concerned are very grateful. But in the columns devoted to these church announcements, you do not find the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints named as one among the rest. We do not complain of lack of courtesy, for our local papers are very liberal in their treatment of this Church and give us a full share of attention and space, both in the matter of announcements and in reporting church proceedings; and for this we are grateful and appreciative; but they distinguish us by setting us apart from the others. I do not know just what motives have operated in the editorial or the managerial mind in so directing matters, but whatever the purpose may have been it has brought good results; for, as a matter of fact, that is the proper course to pursue, and we are rather

pleased to find that we are thus recognized as possessing unique characteristics in relation to the other religious organizations of the world. Far from criticizing that action unfavorably we commend the wisdom of those who so direct in newspaper affairs.

The Congress of Religious Philosophies.

The particular peculiarity, by which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is distinguished, is now very generally conceded by theologians and by the unbiased thinkers and writers of the day. Only recently, in the closing days of July, 1915, a notable religious gathering was held in the city of San Francisco in connection with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. It was known as the Congress of Religious Philosophies. The proceedings of that body will soon be before the world in a volume to be known as the "Transactions of the Congress of Religious Philosophies," and all the addresses there delivered will be published for general reading. It may be interesting and instructive to call your attention to one or two notable features by which the Congress of Religious Philosophies was characterized. The proceedings occupied three days, and three sessions were held on each day. The days were designated respectively, "Christian Day," "Hindu Day," and "Oriental Day." It was the plan of the organizers to invite to the platform representatives of any and all religious organizations claiming a distinctive status, or professing a philosophical basis for their belief such as would give them a distinct identity.

Many Subjects Discussed.

To show the scope and very liberal courtesy extended to these bodies I venture to cite some items named upon the official program which was issued in advance of the meetings. On Oriental Day, for example, representatives were heard speaking in support of the following topics: Mohammedanism Philosophically Considered; Sufi Philosophy; The Underlying Principles of the Bahai Faith;

Taoist Philosophy; Confucian Philosophy; The Philosophy of Shinto; The Fundamentals of Buddhist Philosophy; Theosophy as a Religion, a Science and a Philosophy. On Hindu Day addresses were delivered upon these subjects: The Philosophy of the Vedas; The Universality of Hinduism; The Vedic Conception of the Soul; The Philosophy of the Brahmo-Somaj; The Philosophy of Zoroastrianism; The Philosophy of Yoga, and The Philosophical Aspects of the Sikh Religion.

On each of those two days the program was so full that protracted sessions had to be held, and it was difficult then to cover all the subjects announced, and some papers had to be presented by synopsis only. In striking contrast stands the program prepared for Christian Day, for which but very few topics were scheduled. Indeed, but one full session and part of the second were occupied in presenting the subjects connected with The Philosophy of Christianity, and the evening session was given up to other subjects which stand in contrast with the main spirit of the day. For example, at night, The Philosophy of Judaism was presented and, strange to say, The Philosophy of Atheism; but during the two daylight meetings representatives, duly chosen, accredited and sent, were heard in elucidating the philosophies of Catholicism, Protestantism and "Mormonism." These three and no more.

Catholicism Represented.

It is true that for the presentation of Catholicism the freedom of the platform was extended to a representative of the Roman Catholic church and also to one who spoke for the Greek Catholic church, the organizers of the Congress recognizing the fact, as was apparent from the program and made very sure to me in personal consultation with the officials of the organization later, that the great division in the Catholic church has some claim upon public attention because of its time honored status and venerable age. You know it was in the fourth century when difficulties arose between the eastern and the western branches of the Catholic church, when thi

Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of state and selected Byzantium as his capital, and renamed that city in honor of himself, Constantinople, the present capital of Turkey, and a city toward which the eyes of the world are turned at the present moment because of its very important position and significance in connection with the dreadful world war now in progress. Claim was made by the bishop of that city to recognition on a basis of equality with the bishop of Rome. The dispute thus started embittered the Catholic church for many centuries. In the ninth century, to be specific, in the year 855, a formal severance of all relations between the Eastern or Greek Catholic and the Western or Roman Catholic church was effected. It may be remarked in passing that the accredited representative of the Roman Catholic church, the Vicar-General of New York, was not present, to the great disappointment of the members of the Congress; but it is expected that his paper concerning *The Philosophy of Roman Catholicism* will appear in the published Transactions of the Congress. The address of the representative of the Greek Catholic church, who was announced as an Archimandrite of the Orthodox Eastern church, was mainly a plea for union with the Roman Catholic church, a plea that the schism of the past be forgotten, that the chasm be bridged, and that the Greek Catholics come back into the fold and acknowledge the Pope as their common shepherd. The address of the representative of Protestantism was a plea for church unity. He argued in favor of demolishing the barriers or erasing the lines of demarcation by which the many Protestant organizations of the day are now divided.

Distinct Philosophical Basis.

I speak advisedly and after mature consideration when I say that the "Mormon" Church was the only Christian organization there present that had a definite, distinct and unqualified philosophical basis to proclaim. I questioned the organizing officials of the Congress afterward, first, as to their reasons for extending to us so cordial an invitation to be represented, and second, as

to why Christian sects generally were not given a place upon the program. The answer was to the effect that a program providing for the presentation of the philosophies of Christian organizations would be incomplete were "Mormonism" left out. I agreed with that statement and replied that the program would have been a thing of rags and tatters if "Mormonism" had been ignored. In answer to the second question I was informed that the organizers of the Congress regarded these various so-called Christian churches as sectarian divisions not characterized by any distinctive philosophical claims, and that if all that they asserted be admitted as true, their claims would not entitle them to recognition in such a gathering. Now I speak this without any animus or even feeling of unfavorable criticism regarding my fellow-Christians who profess membership in the so-called Christian churches of the day aside from those that were represented upon the program. We can not doubt, I take it, that the Church of Jesus Christ must be something more than an organization effected by men. It would be blasphemy to use the name of Jesus Christ as a designation of a purely man-made system; and it is a very remarkable fact that at the time of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, while there were churches upon the earth in great number, some named after men, some named after principles, some named after practise or custom, there was not a religious body existent upon the earth bearing the name of Jesus Christ.

Claims of Authority.

The Roman Catholic church, to which I refer with deference—I am not desirous of finding fault with the beliefs of my fellowmen—but I state as a matter of fact that the Roman Catholic church lays claim to the possession of the holy priesthood today, basing that claim upon the assumption of unbroken succession from the days of the apostles of old down to the present. No other church now existent even makes a semblance of such claim. The Church of England, which, as we know, had its beginning in the reign of Henry VIII, was created by

act of parliament, and the king was made the head of the church by the vote of members of parliament, a most astounding contrast with the way in which the Lord chose those who should officiate in His name and exercise the authority of the holy priesthood. Later under Edward VI, what may be called a permanent constitution was established for the government of the Church of England.

Many of the dissenting churches claim to be the offspring of the Church of England; others are honest enough and frank enough to proclaim themselves as organizations that have been brought into being through the voluntary associations of men. Students of church history and of current events may remember that as late as 1896 there was a very serious agitation together with much discussion and some heated debate concerning the question of the validity of the so-called priesthood or the priestly orders belonging to the Church of England; and in that year Lord Halifax, who was chairman of the Church Union organization, conferred with the Vatican authorities, inquiring as to the possibilities of a union being effected between the mother church of Rome and the English Episcopal Church, or the Established Church as it was and is called. The question naturally arises, if the Church of England felt that it had the authority of the Holy Priesthood why should it have thus appealed, directly or indirectly, to the Pope of Rome, for official recognition? The movement was favored in the interests of unity and peace by the English premier, Mr. Gladstone, and the Pope—the acknowledged head of the Church of Rome and the self-styled Vicar of Christ—appointed committees and boards of investigation, composed of learned men, to review the history of previous applications of the sort, and of earlier pontifical action; and as a result Pope Leo XIII issued an apostolic letter dated September 13, 1896, under the title of "Anglican Orders" in which, after reviewing in very careful manner the matters leading up to the question at issue, and after considering the reports that had been made by the committees and other organizations appoint-

ed to investigate the subject, he presents this decision:

Ordinances Pronounced Void.

"Wherefore, strictly adhering in this matter to the decrees of the pontiffs, our predecessors, and affirming them most fully, and, as it were, renewing them by our authority of our own motion and certain knowledge, we pronounce and declare that ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been and are absolutely null and utterly void."

I have quoted exactly from page 405 of the "Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII.," issued by Reverend John J. Wynne and published by the "Printers to the Holy Apostolic See" in 1903. It is very evident that the Church of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church as it exists today, could take no other course and be consistent with its claims. Had it recognized the validity of the ordination of deacons, priests and bishops in the English church, it would have been untrue to its profession. We must give to the Church of Rome credit for consistency and fearless procedure in thus declaring the English church apostate, as it had so before declared through the utterances of earlier popes. Restricting the term "Church" to an organization which at least claims to possess the Holy Priesthood and to exercise divine authority, without stopping to inquire as to the validity of those claims, there are upon the face of the earth today but two churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

What then regarding these many other religious denominations? As was emphatically declared by the Organizing Secretary of the Congress of Religious Philosophies, they are what they profess to be, sects. Let me pause here to say that the term "sect" and its derivatives "sectarian," "sectary," and "sectarianism," have been used sometimes with a tinge of opprobrious meaning, and with derogatory intent. I do not use the term in that sense at all. We have outgrown to a very great extent that biased connotation of the word. By derivation it means a division, a section, an off-shoot; and I think that

even the most technical critic can not affirm that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an offshoot of any other religious organization now existing or ever existent upon the face of the earth. This church is no sect. It does not belong in any sectarian classification. It stands apart in the sense of being the one and only Church upon the earth today professing to possess the Holy Priesthood through direct bestowal and restoration in the dispensation now current.

Unbounded Toleration.

One of the cardinal tenets of this Church is that of unbounded toleration for the beliefs and religious practices of others. We believe that the Presbyterian and Methodist and Catholic and Congregationalist and every other sectary or sectarian has a perfect right to his belief and a perfect right to worship God according to what he considers the proper mode. But, without casting any obloquy upon these organizations, we affirm in solemn and respectful confidence that we stand as the Church of Jesus Christ, with the authority of the Holy Priesthood operative today as truly as it was operative in the days of the apostles of old, or during the period of the Lord's own personal ministry in the flesh.

We admit the rights of men to form organizations of their own, any kind of an organization not opposed to law and order and therefore not in conflict with the constitutional law of the United States and of the states and the laws of the communities in which these men may live. We who are assembled here at this hour could, if we would unite with one purpose, band ourselves together into an association; and we could name that association as we chose. We could call it a society, a club, or we could call it a church if we desired, since that word is not pre-empted nor patented or protected against common usage, and we could prescribe rules and regulations for the government of the members of this new organization. We could go so far as to require immersion in water as a means of initiation into this new body; we could say that no man could become a member unless he enters water

and is immersed by one who shall be appointed and empowered by the organization; but who of us would risk his reputation for sanity by saying that such immersion in water is to be a means of gaining remission of sins and is to be recognized by the powers of Heaven beyond the grave?

Requirements for Salvation.

Let men who are contented with the organizations of men enjoy their rights and privileges and bask in all the light that can possibly be obtained through such an organization; but men who have faith in the word of God must know that certain requirements have been made without which men can not enter the Kingdom of God. These requirements have not been formulated by men. They have been given of God. The fundamental principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are the same today as they were when He taught them Himself as He moved among men in a tabernacle of flesh—faith in the Lord as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, repentance of sins, not merely a negative repentance but a positive, active repentance which shall impel to good works; baptism by immersion by one divinely commissioned; and the reception of the Holy Ghost through its bestowal under the hands of men officiating in the authority of the Higher Priesthood as established of God. The message which this Church proclaims to the world today is definite. It is not couched in ambiguous phrases. It is stripped of mystery. It is so plain and simple that the child of tender years may comprehend it, that the illiterate may know, and if he will, obey and win eternal riches.

At the gathering referred to, in the brief address invited by the organizers of the Congress of Religious Philosophies, the philosophical basis of "Mormonism" was set forth under the following synopsis:

Foundation of "Mormonism."

"The philosophical foundation of 'Mormonism' is constructed upon the following outline of facts and premises:

"1. The eternal existence of a living personal God; and the preexistence and eternal duration of mankind as His literal offspring.

"2. The placing of man upon the earth as an embodied spirit to undergo the experiences of an intermediate probation.

"3. The transgression and fall of the first parents of the race, by which man became mortal, or in other words was doomed to suffer a separation of spirit and body through death.

"4. The absolute need of a Redeemer empowered to overcome death and thereby provide for a reunion of the spirits and bodies of mankind through a material resurrection from death to immortality.

"5. The providing of a definite plan of salvation, by obedience to which man may obtain remission of his sins, and be enabled to advance by effort and righteous achievement throughout eternity.

"6. The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ in the 'meridian of time' by the personal ministry and atoning death of the foreordained Redeemer and Savior of mankind, and the proclamation of His saving Gospel through the ministry of the Holy Priesthood during the apostolic period and for a season thereafter.

"7. The general 'falling away' from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by which the world degenerated into a state of apostasy, and the Holy Priesthood ceased to be operative in the organizations of sects and churches designed and effected by the authority of man.

"8. The restoration of the Gospel in the current age, and the reestablishment of the Church of Jesus Christ by the bestowal of the Holy Priesthood through Divine revelation.

"9. The appointed mission of the restored Church of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof amongst all nations, in preparation for the near advent of our Savior Jesus Christ, who shall reign on earth as Lord and King."

I do not think that anyone can claim ambiguity or uncertainty in this proclamation of the fundamental

principles upon which the Church of Jesus Christ rests. We affirm that man here upon earth is a being endowed with the right to act for himself in matters pertaining to his individual life, with the inevitable result that he must take the consequences of his acts in every particular.

No Conflict with Others.

The Church today has no fight with any other religious organization. It is not in intolerant conflict with Catholics or Protestants. It is not in conflict with men of any denomination. Its adversary is sin. The object of its attack is evil. The Church is not built with bricks and stones obtained by tearing down the walls of other structures. It did not separate itself from any existent organization, but came into being through the direction of its Divine Head, our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. It was established because without it mankind would have gone to destruction. It was restored because through the wickedness of man it had been driven from the earth. The fact that the priesthood was not existent among men and that therefore no Church of Jesus Christ could possibly be in existence upon the earth was declared by the Lord Himself in that wonderful manifestation made to Joseph Smith, a manifestation which shall yet be known and recognized as the greatest theophany of the ages, when both Father and Son appeared to him, each in His resurrected body, a body of parts and definite stature, and declared unto him the Divine will in answer to his prayer. I read you the words of the prophet himself:

"My object," he says, "in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw

near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.' ”

Meaning of Power of Godliness.

The power of godliness is the authority to officiate in the name of God. It is the Holy Priesthood which had been denied because it was not then operative upon the earth. In accordance with the predictions of old the world had been left for centuries without the ministry of the priesthood, and without its saving authority; but also in accordance with prediction the priesthood was to be restored, and has been restored, and only through the power of that priesthood can any ordinances be administered upon the earth that can possibly be even conceived of as valid beyond the grave. The Lord has been particularly plain, explicit and simple in His explanation of that principle. In a revelation given in July, 1843, relating to this restored Church of Jesus Christ, and to the authority of the Holy Priesthood operative therein, He said to the prophet:

“And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof, must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

“And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these:—All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made, and entered into, and sealed, by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time, on whom this power and the keys of this Priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue or force, in and after the resurrection from the dead; for

all contracts that are not made unto this end, have an end when men are dead.

"Behold! mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name! Or, will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed! And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was! I am the Lord thy God, and I give unto you this commandment, that no man shall come unto the Father but by me, or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord."

Comparison Invited.

I invite you to compare that declaration with the words of the Lord, the same Being, Jesus Christ, while He labored in a body of flesh. Is it not consistent with the doctrines which He then taught? Is it not reasonable? Men who consider this life their all in all and who are satisfied with the things thereof may perhaps be content with organizations that are effected by human power and authority. They have a right to be so content if they will; but we proclaim unto the world this doctrine of the Kingdom, that the God of Israel has spoken and is speaking in these days as He spoke of old, and that not a jot or tittle of His word shall fail, that the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth to rule and reign over the material kingdoms of the earth in a literal sense, not in any figurative or metaphorical conception, but in strict literalness, is near at hand, nearer than the world is willing to believe. You know how difficult it is for the human mind to open itself to the reception of that which it does not want to believe. I need but cite you an instance. Read of the teachings of Christ to His apostles of old. Whenever He touched upon the subject of His approaching death, whenever He repeated to them the assurance that it was in accordance with the plan of salvation that He should be given over into the hands of His enemies, they could not or would not understand it; they did not want to

believe it. It appeared to them to be so terrible, so tragic and so opposed to their conception of the mission of the Messiah, that they remained in wilful ignorance. They could not and would not open their hearts and minds to a full understanding; and it was only after the death of Christ was an accomplished fact, only after they had seen Him in His resurrected body and had felt of His hands and His feet and knew that He stood before them, a Being who had laid down His life, and taken it up again, that they comprehended the meaning of His earlier utterances. And so it is with the majority of mankind today. They are prone to close their ears to the warning message that is sounded to them.

Prepare for the Second Advent.

The mission of the Church is to prepare for the coming of the Christ, for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, which has not yet been set up upon the earth. Modern revelation makes plain the fact that there is a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven as we use or should use the terms. It is very true that through faulty translation, our earlier scripture, notably the Holy Bible, makes no distinction between those terms and confuses rather than clarifies the meaning. The Kingdom of God has been established upon the earth. The seed from which it has sprung is the Church of Jesus Christ, and all who comply with the ordinances requisite for naturalization in that kingdom may become citizens thereof with all the privileges and blessings pertaining to that blessed status. But we have been taught still to pray that the Kingdom of Heaven shall come, and the Lord has made plain that the Kingdom of Heaven shall come and be made one with the Kingdom of God, which latter is already set up upon the earth.

I rejoice in the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am very glad that its saving truths have not been reserved only for the erudite and the learned. I am very glad that no long training of the mind is necessary to a comprehension of its principles. I rejoice that the pure in heart can receive and can com-

prehend the meaning of the word of God. Hence in sending out missionaries bearing the Holy Priesthood, authorized, empowered and instructed to proclaim this saving Gospel of the Kingdom, we do not look specifically for college graduates or acknowledged scholastics. They are welcome. Their higher training ought to give them greater influence and power and should increase their efficiency, but this Gospel is so simple that not only can the unlearned understand it, but those who are counted in a measure untrained in the scholasticism of the age can preach it, and preach it convincingly and in simplicity. In simplicity strength is oftentimes most strikingly manifest. And so I say again, I rejoice in belonging to a Church that stands upon the rock of revelation, in belonging to a Church that has the right to use the name of Jesus Christ as part of its designation, in belonging to a Church that is no sect, no sectarian division, no part, portion or fragment of any other religious organization, past or present.

Preparatory for Gospel Seed.

For long centuries the Lord has been preparing the soil in the heart of man for the implanting of the seed of the Gospel. Think you that the affairs of nations just happen and come by chance, without plan or purpose? Think you that there is only growth in the world, and not development? Long before Christ was born as the Babe of Bethlehem the Lord revealed to His holy prophets, prophets who stood upon this western hemisphere, that in days far distant, the time whereof was indicated in general, there should come from the eastern world a man upon whom the Spirit of the Lord was working, and that man should discover anew this western continent; and that following him others should come fleeing from those who had oppressed them and who had robbed them of the right and opportunity to worship God freely; that they should establish themselves upon this land; that from that beginning should rise a great and powerful nation, and that that nation should stand for liberty and freedom and there should be no king to harass and oppress them.

The centuries unfolded themselves and the purposes of God were developed one by one. God raised up mighty men who pledged their lives in defense of those principles of liberty. The men who framed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were men who acted as they did because the Spirit of God was operative upon them. It was not fitting that the virile seed of the eternal Gospel should be cast into the soil that was hard and unfertile through prejudice and tyranny. It was the plan of God that it should be sown in soil dedicated to liberty and to freedom of conscience. In such soil it was planted.

Loyalty Inculcated.

This nation has been directed from the first by the overruling power of God, and though at times there have been internal troubles, though some have allowed partisan preferences and prejudices to becloud their view and shut out for the time being the greater purposes and objects beyond, yet in time the Lord has brought out all things well. And we as a Church and as individual members of the Church feel it to be a part of our religion and part of our duty to our God to be loyal to the nation of which we form a part. Let that loyalty be expressed in our united support of those in whose hands the Lord has entrusted the affairs of this nation. In every Latter-day Saint home prayer should be made for the President of the United States, for his cabinet, for the national congress, for all officers of this nation, that they may be led to do that which shall further the purposes of God in the advancement of this people. I pray for the President of this Republic though I have never professed membership in the political party to which he belongs. He is to me no member of a political party but the president of the nation; and he requires the assistance and direction and inspiration of the Lord that he may accomplish the purposes which God intends to have accomplished in the leading of this nation to its glorious destiny.

And when the Kingdom of Heaven shall come it will be established in the midst of this nation and upon

this glorious land of Zion, the American continent, and out of Zion shall go forth the law, and other nations shall be governed by the laws of righteousness and the better part of human nature shall be developed and the millennium of peace shall be inaugurated. For this we are preparing. May our preparation be effective, may we be true to the right, to ourselves, to our fellowmen, and to our God, I reverently ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Master. Amen.

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