

the Prophets of the Almighty in various dispensations, and they have left on record their teachings in relation to this great principle, it has been the tendency of mankind from the beginning to stray away from the revelations of God; and as their recollection or their knowledge grew dim in regard to the things which He had spoken, they have adopted, instead of the revelations of God, the traditions of their fathers and the teachings of uninspired men. Consequently, although these things and many more have been taught in the Holy Scriptures in various ages, the world, sixty years ago, had arrived at a condition when it denied them, and there are many people who deny even today many of the things which God has spoken through His Prophets and left on record in the Holy Bible which Christians profess to believe and accept as inspired and divine.

We are taught that we were the "morning stars" that "sang together," that we were the sons of God who "shouted for joy" when the foundations of the earth were laid, as recorded in the Book of Job; that we then dwelt in the immediate presence of our Father, seeing Him eye to eye, and in the intelligence of our free and untrammelled spirit life, recognizing and appreciating to a greater extent than we now do some of the noble purposes of God in our creation. This was at a time when "the foundations of the earth were laid"—when although all things had been created in the spirit, nothing had yet assumed a temporal form, when all that lives, moves and has a being, as pertaining to this earth, existed in the spirit before it existed in the mortal body.

Why did the "morning stars" sing and shout for joy? Because the foundations of the earth were laid; because it was being made possible for the children of God to leave that home of peace, of happiness and joy and come down into this world of trouble, tribulation, pain and sorrow, to take up mortal bodies that are subject to pain, disease and death. They foresaw this; yet they "shouted for joy" and "sang together."

We do not now shout for joy at such a prospect. When the heavens gather blackness, when the billowing surge of persecution rolls towards us, when it seems as though the very mouth of hell was gaping open to engulf the work which God has declared shall stand forever, many knees are quaking, many hands are trembling, for fear the word of God will come to nought, for fear that "Mormonism" is doomed and the Kingdom of God destined to destruction. When we see before us the prospects of suffering physical pain or mental torture, or of being oppressed and afflicted in any way, we do not feel in this life, very often at least, to rejoice and sing songs of joy. But we can so feel when we take the spiritual view of things, then we lose our grasp of earth and soar above its groveling cares and temptations and look at

things as we did in that former life, not as they seem, but as they really are. Then we were brave and strong; now we are weak and cowardly. In our spiritual estate, with this prospect before us, of pain, of tribulation, and persecution—we sang together and shouted for joy—at the thought of plunging in the tide of sorrow and of trouble, that we might gain that great and precious experience of which the Lord spake to the Prophet Joseph; like strong swimmers buffeting the fierce waves, in order to become stronger by reaching the farther shore.

Some people seem to think that all which brings them pain, sorrow, difficulty and trial is not from God, because, forsooth, God is not delighted with the suffering of His children. Shallow philosophers! They brand as false anything which calls upon man to humble himself, to crucify the flesh, to conquer self and lust, to rise up out of himself, and to allow his spiritual nature to assert itself. But anything that ministers to a base and carnal appetite, that appeals to the earthly feelings, to the mortal senses, and gives pleasure to the flesh, they claim is from God, because He is delighted with the happiness of His children. Shallow philosophers!

When Christ came He came to deny self, not to assert it—to teach man how to crucify the flesh, how to deny himself pleasure for principle's sake, and bear pain, trials and sorrows patiently; descending Himself below all things in order that He might comprehend all things and rise and reign above all things. But man teaches to gratify self, to crucify and put to death the spiritual nature. And how do we do this? By neglecting to cultivate it. By transgressing God's laws. By breaking the Sabbath day and staying away from our meetings, instead of coming here and partaking of the Sacrament and refreshing the spiritual half of our natures.

When we love the things of this world more than the things of God, and bow down and worship Mammon instead of Jehovah, we put to death our spiritual natures, crucify the God within us, and allow ourselves to wither away like trees in the garden, bearing only leaves per chance, but no fruit, and so preparing ourselves for the curse that shall finally remove us.

Christ also taught that we should not judge men and things by their outward appearance, but to gaze into the heart of things and see them as they are. Even Samuel the Prophet, when sent to anoint the future king of Israel, for the moment was tempted to take the carnal view and lose sight of the spiritual. But the stalwart sons of Jesse, fair and beautiful as they were to the natural eye, were passed by of the Spirit, and David, the shepherd lad, "a man after God's own heart," was chosen king instead.

The test of faith comes when we are required to believe in that which we have not seen, and which is not appreciated by means of the

grosser senses. In illustration of this the speaker instanced the view taken by the twelve apostles, as to the death of the Redeemer, in the meridian of time. They had trusted, as long as they could see Him, that He would redeem Israel, but when He was dead they went back to their nets, thinking the work of God was at an end. No wonder it should have been called a "dark and benighted generation," when even the Apostles reasoned as they did among themselves, after our Lord was crucified, forgetting all He had taught them during the three years of His mortal ministry. But Jesus had compassion on them, none knowing better than He the circumstances by which they were surrounded, the environment of weakness and temptation which hedged them about. He had felt the weakness of mortality Himself, He had gained His experience and He felt pity and compassion for them. He therefore showed Himself to them, convinced them that His death, which seemed defeat, was in reality a great victory, and taught them the principle that it was more blessed to believe and not see than to believe because they had seen.

Latter-day Saints, are we as a people, as exemplary in these respects as we should be? Having been chosen out of the world as "the salt of the earth," whereby the rest of the world might be saved, having been made the standard-bearers of a great spiritual movement for the regeneration of the race, are we today fulfilling our mission, putting earthly things under our feet, rising above the flesh, "making heaven our throne and earth our footstool?" It is only by putting under our feet the things of this world, our own selfish feelings, that we can make heaven the throne upon which we will sit. We are expected to exemplify this and teach other men to do likewise.

Many of this people are perhaps preparing themselves, by following after the world in its mad race for wealth and pleasure, to go down with Babylon when she crumbles and falls; but I know that there is a people, in the heart's core of this people, that will arise in their majesty in a day that is near at hand, and push spiritual things to the front; a people who will stand up for God, fearing not man nor what man can do, but believing, as the Prophet Joseph says, that all things we suffer are for our best good, and that God will stand by us for ever and ever.

The choir sang the anthem:

"The nations bow to Satan's thrall."

Benediction by Elder Charles W. Penrose.

Pride, like the magnet, constantly points to one object, self; but, unlike the magnet, it has no attractive pole, but at all points repels.

Believe nothing against another but on good authority; nor report what may hurt another, unless it be a greater hurt to another to conceal it.