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DISCOURSE

Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, January 23rd, 1898, by

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I will read to you a portion of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. After his salutation to the Church in Corinth, the Apostle said:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."

"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

"I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

"Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."

"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God

chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

"That no flesh should glory in His presence."

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Unfortunately some clumsy hand has here closed this chapter. The opening verses of the second chapter properly belong to the words I have just read, hence I continue:

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God."

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

It is not always that we preface our remarks by reading a chapter from the Scriptures; it is not always that we take a text which we desire to expound; but I thought it proper on this occasion to read this Scripture to you, and I think it proper now to call your attention to one or two verses that perhaps may be regarded as a text for that which I desire in my heart to say:

"Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

"Is Christ divided?"

This was the great question which the Apostle of the Gentiles propounded to those Saints in Corinth, among whom divisions began to appear. These divisions, however, were incipient as compared with those that exist in Christendom today; and if those divisions existing in the primitive Church at Corinth called forth this stern reproof from the great Apostle of the Gentiles, I sometimes wonder what he would say to torn, distracted Christendom of today! Would he not with increased emphasis demand of this Babel that exists now in Christendom an answer to the question, "Is Christ divided?"

The plain inference of this Scripture, of course, is that Christ is not to be divided; that men are under condemnation who say that they are of Paul, or of Cephas, or of Apollos. It plainly declares that the Church of Christ is to be one. Yet, as men look upon Christendom in its divided condition today, they very naturally find themselves somewhat perplexed with this confusion that exists concerning the Christian religion; and it looks exceedingly like bigotry for anyone to stand up and condemn this section or that section of this so-called Christianity.

I am reminded at this point of a cir-

cumstance that happened within my own experience. About a year ago, in company with a number of friends, I attended a service at the Catholic cathedral in New York, and listened to a minister of that faith preach a most excellent discourse. He was a man of fervent spirit, a man of complete confidence, I take it, in the rightfulness of the claims of his own great church; and his testimony concerning the truth of what he taught was so fervent that it created an impression upon the minds of our party. As we left the cathedral, one of the members of our party (a sister by the way) asked me the question, "Who is to say that that man is not right and his religion not true? Who can say that he is mistaken in regard to the claims of the great Catholic church? I should like to know what man can sit in judgment upon him and his faith." To which, she recently informed me, I made this answer:

"No man ought to do it; no man is competent to do it. But God has the right to do it. He may say which is right and which is wrong; for He is competent to judge the matter. And He has done it. He revealed the great truth to Joseph Smith that all were wrong." And this is the message which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has to proclaim to the world; a message which God has given to us upon this particular subject.

It is recorded by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in a sketch which he wrote of his own life, that when a youth he was much distressed over the confusion existing among religious sects, to which I have made reference, and he sought for light and direction on the subject at the Source of all knowledge and power—he sought wisdom of God. 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"—was like the voice of God to him; and straightway he gave heed to the counsel, and prayed to know which of all the contending sects of religion was the true Church of Christ. In response to this inquiry on his part, the heavens were opened, God revealed Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ unto him; and in answer to the question, which of all these sects is Thy Church and which must I join? he informs us that he was commanded to 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. They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

This was the condemnation which God—not man—pronounced upon the world; and such are the evidences to us of the truth of this revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith that there remains no question about it. With one splendid sweep of His majestic arm God swept aside all the accumulations