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REMARKS

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, May 25, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I HAVE a few remarks to make to those who do not understand the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints. Forty-three years have passed away since this church was organized, in Fayette, Seneca County, in the State of New York; and for over-one forty years, according to the ability which God has given me, I have travelled and preached enough to extend this gospel to the door of every hamlet on this continent if the people had been willing to receive it; yea more—I have taught the gospel of life and salvation to the human family sufficiently, if all had been honest to receive it and willing to carry it to their neighbors, to evangelize the whole earth, and there need not have been, to-day, one person, heathen or Christian, ignorant of its principles. But now, I learn from day to day, from week to week and from time to time, that very many people in our own land do not understand our doctrines, and I am frequently asked the question while conversing with people—"Do you believe the Bible?" "Do you receive the Bible as the word of the Lord?" "Then, you acknowledge the Bible?" &c. This astonishes me, and the cause of such questions being asked I leave every person to judge for himself, just as I do with regard to the course of the children of men in other matters, such as truth, error, religion, politics, &c. If we were to enquire of strangers, who have lived twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or sixty years on the continent of America, and even in the United States, how it is that they do not know better than to suppose that the Latter-day Saints reject and do not believe in the Bible, they would reply, "We do not know, only we have heard so." If you go to the professed infidel, of any class, and ask him, "Do the 'Mormons' believe in the Bible?" "Why yes, I have heard them preach, and they believe the Bible more than the whole Christian world do." Well, where and through whom does this influence come, which leads people to believe to the contrary? I will not spend time to answer this, but I will say that the Latter-day Saints believe more of the Bible than any other people that live on the face of the earth that we have any knowledge of.

What does the Bible teach us with regard to the Christian religion, faith in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ, who was sent in the meridian of time to redeem the earth, and all things pertaining to it? I will not take up the negative side of the question, or tell what others believe; but let me tell what we believe. In the first place I will take up the sayings of Jesus to his disciples on a certain occasion. Said he—"Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." I shall not attempt to go into the meaning of this saying in every particular—time will not permit—suffice it to say that he that believes, and is baptized will be saved, and he that believeth not will be cast off. What promise did Jesus give to his disciples when he sent them out two by two, to preach? What inducement was there, when the Savior was upon the earth, to believe in him and his doctrine? We can all read, it would take too much time to tell. His disciples went out and preached without purse and scrip; and when they returned, they testified to Jesus that they had lacked for nothing. Jesus promised, to those who believed, powers and advantages which unbelievers could not enjoy. We read of certain men and women in Samaria who had been taught the gospel under the authority of John the Baptist, but they had not received the Holy Ghost; and we are told that certain apostles went down from Jerusalem to lay their hands on these Samaritan believers. There was a man called Simon, a sorcerer, who had bewitched the people, and seeing that the power which the apostles bestowed upon the by the laying on of hands was far above his power—although he could deceive, betray and frighten the people, and do many things just as the magicians of Pharaoh's court did when Moses went to deliver the children of Israel, said he, "I will give you money if you will bestow that power on me." The Apostle said to him, "You and your money perish together." The Apostles laid their hands upon those persons who had been baptized in John's baptism, and they received the Holy Ghost. Believers in those days had the power which Jesus promised. They might take up serpents and they would not bite them; if they drank any deadly thing it would not hurt them; if they laid hands on the sick, the sick would recover. They spake with tongues, they prophesied, they had the discernment of spirits, and all the various gifts of the gospel of Christ; and all of these were beyond the reach of the sorcerer, yet he was far in advance of the common people in powers of deception. But Jesus promised his disciples more than any man could possess by a spirit of divination. When we consider this, and realize, if we can realize, that through the restoration of the gospel in our day all these gifts can be again enjoyed, it is worthy the attention of every person on the face of the earth who is capable of receiving truth for truth, light for light, and intelligence upon intelligence.

Let me hasten along, and refer to the organization of the ancient church. According to the testimony of the Apostle, God set in the church firstly apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then pastors, and so forth. You strangers may ask your divines, when you return home, what they believe about God setting in the church apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, helps, gifts, divers kinds of tongues, and so on, for the perfecting of the Saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ until all come to a unity of faith and knowledge in Christ Jesus our Lord; and let them answer the question, then you can judge who it is that throws dust into the eyes of the people, and is continually telling them that "the Latter-day Saints deny the Bible;" "the Latter-day Saints are a bad people;" "the Latter-day Saints are aliens to the government;" "the Latter-day Saints are rebellious." Ask the divines, "Do you believe in prophesying, do you believe in apostles, in baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and in the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost?" Do you believe in breaking bread continually as Jesus commanded his disciples at the last supper, when he broke the bread and blessed it, and blessed the wine and gave it to all to eat and drink, saying "Do this until I come again, for I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom?" What do the world—Christian, Jew and Pagan—believe about these things? Inquire for yourselves. We Latter-day Saints believe in apostles and prophets. We believe in the Melchisedec priesthood and in the Aaronic priesthood, which God bestowed upon his servants long ago. Moses had all these doctrines and both these priesthoods in his possession, and also the organization of the church; and with all his power he strove to bring the children of Israel to a knowledge of the gospel, but they would not have Christ.

I pause here. I was brought up a Christian, very strictly, and was taught to read the Bible, consequently it is natural for me to believe it—it is according to my traditions, and also from the spirit of revelation from God unto myself. In all my teachings, I have taught the gospel from the Old and New Testaments. I found therein every doctrine and the proof of every doctrine the Latter-day Saints believe in, as far as I know, therefore I do not refer to the Book of Mormon as often as I otherwise should. There may be some doctrines about which little is said in the Bible, but they are all couched therein, and I believe the doctrines because they are true, and I have taught them because they are calculated to save the children of men.

It is said by the Christian world, by governments, philosophers, statesmen, politicians and ministers, that there is no harm in believing anything if we do not practice it. But let me ask how can we believe in Jesus Christ—taking his own words for it—unless we do the works that he did? Go and read his words for yourselves—"He that believeth in me will do the works that I do." Did he not say this? How then can we believe in him without doing his works? Did he inspire his apostles? Did he inspire him whom we call St. Paul? Did he inspire John upon the Isle of Patmos? The Christian world will not deny that he did. While John was upon Patmos he had many visions and revelations. He compiled these after he returned from the Island and left them in possession of his friends; and the Council which compiled this book—the Bible—brought his revelations into the catalogue of sacred books. If you will read the Book of Revelations you will find that John predicts many things regarding these latter days. He saw the conduct and doings of the seven angels; and then he says, "I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, saying, 'Fear God and give glory to him who made the heavens, the earth, the seas and the fountains of water.'"

By reading the Bible we find that the gospel is contained not only in the New Testament, but also in the Old. Moses and the prophets saw and predicted the apostacy of the church. They saw that the Lord would strive with the children of men from time to time, that he would deliver to them the truth and the priesthood; they also saw that through the wickedness of the people they would change his ordinances, break the covenants, and transgress his laws, until the priesthood would be taken from the earth, and its inhabitants be left in apostacy and darkness.

But how are we to understand this angel referred to by John, when he comes along? This is an important question. In the language of Scripture, are we to know the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of a stranger? Can any person answer this question? I can, it is very easy. To every philosopher upon the earth, I say "Your eye can be deceived, so can mine; your ear can be deceived, so can mine; your taste can be deceived, so can mine; the touch of your hand can be deceived, so can mine, but the Spirit of God filling the creature with revelation and the light of eternity cannot be mistaken—the revelation which comes from God is never mistaken. It is the spirit of truth, and it testifies of Jesus, of his Father, of the things which God has done for the children of men, and that which he is now doing. No man upon the earth can be mistaken when he sees by the eye of revelation, when Jesus shines upon his understanding by the light of his Spirit. Now then, how are we going to know the voice of the Good Shepherd from the voice of a stranger? Take the words of Jesus. He says, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, a stranger they will not follow." Why? "Because they know not the voice of a stranger." When an individual, filled with the spirit of God, declares the word of heaven, the sheep hear that, the Spirit of the Lord pierces their inmost souls and sinks deep into their hearts; by the testimony of the Holy Ghost light springs up within them, and they see and understand for themselves. This is the way the gospel should be preached by every elder in Israel, and by all men, every man should hear and know for himself the voice of the Good Shepherd, "saying, I live so that the Spirit of the Lord can flow in my hearts. I have said to the Latter-day Saints, I have said to the world, I have said to every man and woman I have met, and I say to them now, live your religion, that the Spirit of God may be within you like a well of water springing up to everlasting life. Suppose I were to give way to the spirit of the enemy and leave the spirit of the gospel, that, if you were not prepared to judge between the voice of the Good Shepherd and the voice of the stranger, I could lead you to ruin. Be prepared that you may know the voice when it comes through the servants of God, then you can say and declare for yourselves, "This is the word of the Lord." My caution and counsel to the Latter-day Saints, and to all the inhabitants of the earth is, Live so that you will know truth from error.

But do all the Latter-day Saints live so? Oh no, they cannot. Many fall into error and finally leave the Church. They are not those who are led astray, but they become subject to the ten thousand spirits that have gone forth into the world, and they are deceived in this, that and the other thing, and like the rest of the world, the do not know how to govern themselves. They are deceived in their own organization and with respect to themselves and therein so pass that can know God unless he knows God, and he can not know God unless he knows himself. The children of men give heed to the deceiving spirits, and are misled, and that is the cause of the ten thousand errors, wrongs, sins and divisions which are in the world, and for this reason the multitude are unable to distinguish between the voice of the Good Shepherd and the voice of the stranger. But I will say that if the Lord has not sent that angel of which John speaks, he will send him as surely as we live.

Let me refer to another saying of John. After telling about the Angel flying through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to be restored to the children of men, he tells us that his disciples shall be and all true, "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This was a proclamation to God's people, scattered as they are among all the nations of the earth; the blood of Ephraim is mixed with the blood of all the earth. Abraham's seed is mingled with the rebellious until through the wickedness of mankind, and John saw that a command would go forth warning the righteous to flee from Babylon, and that command was, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached to heaven, and so forth. This is a stumbling block to the religious world of Christendom. They cannot see the necessity of the gathering, they claim that believers in Jesus can live their religion and serve God where they are, well scattered and enslaved, and that, in time, by the preaching of the various sects, the world will be evangelized. The Latter-day Saints believe that all their efforts in this direction in the future will be as they have been in the past—useless; and that the so-called Christian religion is a delusion, so far as the world is concerned. Let the world of mankind look at Jerusalem for an illustration of its efforts. In that city various Christian sects have erected churches, and many make yearly pilgrimages to the places made sacred by the life, death and burial of the Redeemer. But the Christians in Jerusalem manifest that love, charity and forbearance toward each other which always characterize the true servants and followers of the Lord Jesus. No, no! It will not do for the world to attempt to evangelize mankind each other every day. That is the effect the principles which they profess have upon them. Ask any of your divines if the Christian world is converted. Most more. Its leaders and professors say, "Come to Jesus, Come to the Lord," and so they and do that but where do we find such things taught in the Bible? They are not there. Who among the writers of the Scriptures believed that God has taken apostles and prophets, and priests and teachers to Himself to be a peculiar people in his church? Not one. Is there any declaration of revelation or inspiration to the effect that God will gather all the world into one church? No. Men have left them, they have wandered from and partaken the fall of Christ, they have transgressed the laws of God, they have broken the everlasting covenant which God, in early ages, made with the children of men.

Let me say to my hearers, not that I wish to be the author of Christ's Mission, but that I will tell you what God and Christ have revealed unto me, and what I believe upon the subject, and, in accordance with the teachings of Moses, who is acting under the direction of God, and then the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the author of our salvation, and who is the author of our religion, and who is the author of our salvation, and who is the author of our religion, and who is the author of our salvation, and who is the author of our religion, and