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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I think when strangers attend our meetings they must be struck with some astonishment at the request that is nearly always made by those who address the meeting that they may be sustained by the faith and by the prayers of the Saints, and that the Spirit of the Lord may prompt their utterances. I desire to call attention to the reason for this universal request on the part of those engaged in the work of ministry, that your minds may be refreshed with the reason why such a request is made. In a revelation given in 1831, in the month of November, the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph:

"My servant Orson Hyde was called by his ordinance to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, by the Spirit of the living God, from people to people, and from land to land, in the congregations of the wicked, in their synagogues, reasoning with, and expounding all scriptures unto them.

"And, behold, and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this Priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth;

"And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost,

"And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation;

"Behold this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants."

I think after listening to that splendid passage of scripture the Latter-day Saints will not be astonished that every Elder almost on every occasion expresses an earnest desire that he might speak under the influence of the Holy Ghost; and if the people understood the matter aright they would be just as anxious and earnest that this should be the case as the Elder, because when we come together we desire to be taught by a teacher who can instruct, who can warn, who can admonish, who can, if necessary, reprove, and bring by this reproof the wayward unto repentance. And of all the teachers that can best do this—indeed, the only teacher who can do it well, is God; and it should be the earnest desire of the people to be instructed of the Lord, that they might hear the word of the Lord, that they might hear His will, that there might be more scripture added to the volumes of scripture already in existence, and new truths brought from the great storehouse of God's knowledge to enrich the knowledge of the Saints of God. I can conceive, therefore, of nothing more desirable than that our teachers

should be moved upon by the Holy Spirit, when they stand up to teach the Saints.

I offer this as an explanation to thoughtless Latter-day Saints who may think that the Elders have drifted into a mere formality of asking an interest in their faith and in their prayers. I would remind them that there is substance in this desire, and that it is of highest importance that the people be taught of God. And the means appointed by which they may be so taught is that those that labor in the ministry shall speak as moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

The end of all preaching, of all instruction, as I understand it, is to beget faith in the hearts of the hearers, and the reason why it is of such great importance that faith be implanted in the hearts of the children of men is because faith is the incentive to all action, the foundation of all righteousness. Hence the labors of the servants of God in all ages of the world have been to implant faith in the hearts of the people. Faith is not the first principle of the Gospel merely on account of some conventional arrangement that has been made; it is the first principle of the Gospel because of the nature of the thing itself; from its nature it comes first, it being, as I have already stated, the incentive to all action, the driving force, the power which impels men to repentance and to every good word and work. In regard to this principle of faith I want to read a brief quotation from the third lecture on the subject of faith in the Doctrine and Covenants, delivered to a school of Elders in Kirtland in an early day of the Church, and I fear somewhat neglected by the Saints and perhaps by some of the Elders in these days. It is a very logical statement of the principles that enter into the subject of faith, and I want to address myself more especially to the youth who are present, upon this subject. The doctrine is stated as follows:

"Let us here observe that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

"First, the idea that He actually exists.

"Second, a correct idea of His character, perfections and attributes.

"Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to His will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive."

The first thing necessary to that faith that shall be sufficient to obtain life and salvation is the idea that God exists. It would not take long truly to demonstrate the truth of that doctrine. The force of it is very easily seen from the negative standpoint—by which I mean this: Why is it that men who claim to be atheists, men who do not believe in God—why is it that they do not repent of their sins? Why is it that they do not receive baptism for

the remission of sins? Why is it that they are not found trying to walk in harmony with the requirements of God's laws? It is all easily answered by saying they do not believe in the existence of God, and consequently do not consider themselves under any obligations whatsoever to keep His commandments or obey His ordinances. So we who have essayed to keep the commandments of God, if the idea of His existence had not been in our minds, we would be just like they are, we would not have come unto Him, we would not now be seeking to keep His commandments, because having the idea that He did not exist, of course it would follow that we would not have believed that He had given any commandments to be obeyed; hence the Prophet Paul, who perfectly understood this subject, I think, says in relation to it that "without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is" that is, that He exists; and he added further (and it would be well for us to hold it in mind as we go on) this statement: that He is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him.

Time will not permit me to undertake the pleasing yet the great task of pointing out to you the evidences that exist to establish faith in the hearts of men that God lives. I shall undertake merely to call your attention to the lines of evidence that may be followed to prove that fact. It is not difficult to understand how the idea of the existence of God first came into the world. You can easily trace it to its primary source; you can find it out by asking yourselves the question, How did the idea first occur to you? I undertake to say that the universal answer to that question would be that away back in the days of toddling childhood a mother drew you to her knee, and even while you could only lip the words of our language, taught you to address words of praise and thanksgiving unto a being whom she told you was God. You seized upon the idea right there, and as you received that idea so too did your parents before you, and the generation before them, and the generation which preceded that; and so you might continue from generation to generation till you reach a time and a place when this knowledge of the existence of God sprang into the knowledge of our world by reason of being delivered by those who knew of God's existence, and who perpetuated that truth along the lines of tradition.

A great many men of supposedly great intelligence are inclined to sneer at the evidence for the existence of God that comes along the line of tradition. They dismiss it with the scoffing remark, "Well, that is mere tradition." But I desire to call attention to the fact that this line of evidence is most trustworthy; that it is worthy of your esteem. I pray you, think for a moment what a strong hold it has taken upon humanity. It everywhere abounds. It matters not where you look, you shall find it. You may go to