

every evil, according to the requirements of the book, there would be no harm in that; if I should go forth and be baptized, by those having authority, for the remission of sins, I see no harm in that. If I should have hands laid upon my head, by those messengers, for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, I should see no harm in this outward performance. If I did not receive the forgiveness of my sins, and did not receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, I should think there was no divinity in the book, or else that there was some fault on my part, one or the other. And if I examined myself and found that I had sincerely repented of my sins, that I had lacked nothing on my part, and did really receive the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, as they did in ancient days, then I should have a testimony for myself, independently of these twelve witnesses, and independently of the correctness of the doctrine contained in the book, as compared with the Bible; independently of these external evidences, I should have a testimony from God myself, by the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, that the book was true.

"But," inquires one, "how are we to know when we receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost?" I think that every person may know this, for there are certain manifestations that accompany the Holy Ghost, that are of such a nature that they can not be mistaken. I will mention some of them. I do not mean those manifestations we sometimes hear of under the name of "spirit rappers," "table turners," "writing mediums," &c., but I mean those genuine, real manifestations, as recorded in the Bible. To one is given, says Paul to the Corinthians, the word of Wisdom by the Spirit, to another is given the word of Knowledge by the Spirit, to another is given the discerning of spirits by the same Spirit; to another is given the working of miracles, to another is given the gift of prophecy, to another is given the healing of the sick, speaking with tongues, the interpretation of tongues, &c. All these come by the selfsame Spirit, being given to every man, not to one or two, not merely to the witnesses, but to every man in the church, according as the Spirit will.

Now then, if I receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, or if my brethren receive it, I should expect that we would receive the manifestations of these gifts, one receiving one gift and another another, according to the Bible pattern. If we did not receive these gifts then we might doubt that we had received the Holy Spirit. We are commanded in the Scriptures to try the spirits, for there are many spirits who are gone abroad into the world who are false spirits. Try them, by what rule? Try them by the written word, and see if we have the gifts as recorded in the New Testament. If we have them, we may be assured that the Holy Ghost has been given to us. For instance, if a person receives the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, and the heavens are opened to him he is not mistaken. If the Lord inspires him to lay hands upon a sick child or a sick person, and he commands the disease to be removed, he knows that God is with him, and that he hearkens to the supplications and prayers which he offers in the name of Jesus in behalf of the sick. If a person has the vision of his mind opened to behold the future and to know that which will shortly come to pass, and he sees these things fulfilled, from time to time, he has every reason to believe that he has really received the Holy Ghost. So in regard to speaking in tongues. If an illiterate uneducated man, who never understood any language but his mother tongue, is inspired at the very moment to rise and testify in an unknown tongue and to proclaim the wonderful works of God, he knows whether his tongue has been used by a supernatural power, or whether it is merely gibberish out of his own heart. He knows it very well for himself; and so we might continue throughout all the gifts mentioned in the Bible. If he beholds angels, and they descend before him in their glory, and he hears the sound of their voices, beholds the light of their countenances and the glory that radiates from their personages, he knows for himself, consequently this constitutes him a witness as well as those who proclaimed this gospel before him.

I will ask the Latter-day Saints—those now sitting before me throughout this large audience, how did you know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God when you dwelt in England and had never seen the man? How did you know in Sweden, in Denmark, in Norway, Switzerland, Italy, Australia and in the various parts of the earth from which you emigrated? How did you know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God before you crossed the mighty ocean and came to this land? You learned this fact by a knowledge imparted to you by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost in your own native countries. There you have been healed, and have seen the manifestation of the power of God in healing the sick from time to time. There you have had the vision of your minds opened to behold heavenly things. There you have heard the voice of the Almighty speaking to you by revelation and testifying to you of the things of heaven. Many of you have experienced those great and blessed gifts, that are mentioned in the New Testament, before you emigrated to this land. You came here then, not to obtain a knowledge of the truth of this work, but because you already had a knowledge of it, and to be more thoroughly perfected in the ways of God, and to be taught more fully in the things pertaining to eternal life and happiness, than you could be in your own lands. Hence you are not dependent now upon the testimony of two or three witnesses, or upon the twelve witnesses in the Book of Mormon; but we have a vast cloud of witnesses raised up among all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people to whom this work has been sent. They are flocking from the ends of the earth to these mountains, as doves to the windows, all bearing the same testimony—that God has spoken and that the Book of Mormon is true, for the Lord has revealed it to them. Moreover, in the early rise of this church, the Lord said to his servants—"Go forth and bear testimony to the Book of Mormon and the doctrines contained therein, and I will back up your testimony by signs, by the gifts," &c. Supposing this promise had not been fulfilled would there be any tabernacle in this desert today? Not any at all. Would this desert be inhabited now by a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand people? Not at all. Would there now be a great highway cast up across this continent from ocean to ocean? Not at all. It is because God has confirmed the promise that he made to us in the early rise of this church, that these great events have been accomplished. No people would have had the fortitude, courage and enterprise to come fourteen hundred miles from civilization, so-called, to these mountain wastes and deserts, to cultivate the land and perform the work that has been wrought by this people, unless they had a knowledge from heaven, concerning the truth of this great work. God fulfilled his promise when he said to his servants—"In the name of Jesus you shall heal the sick, you shall open the eyes of the blind, you shall unstop the ears of the deaf." It is because of the fulfillment of this promise, that you have been gathered and accomplished the work that has been wrought out here in this country, and because of this stepping stone between the two great oceans, a halfway house as it were, others have ventured to come into these mountain wilds, and the territory and regions round about are beginning to be settled. Through these facilities no doubt the railroad has been constructed something like a quarter of a century sooner than it would have been otherwise.

When we contrast the evidence which we have concerning the divinity of the Book of Mormon, with the evidence which this generation have of the Bible, we discern that the Book of Mormon contains a vast amount of evidence, thousands and thousands of witnesses of its divinity, to where the Christian world have one of the divinity of the Bible. "How so?" you may inquire. These very elders and missionaries who have gone to the nations have kept their journals, and have recorded the miracles which God has wrought by their hands. These are living witnesses. Those who saw these miracles are still alive. Now, how many witnesses have you that miracles were wrought in the days of our Savior or in the days of his apostles who succeeded him? You have no person outside the church only those

who, like Josephus, bore their testimony from hearsay. Within the church you have six witnesses. There are eight writers in the New Testament, but only six of these eight have borne any testimony concerning the performing of miracles, but you believe it on their testimony. The Book of Mormon, I presume, has more than six thousand, if not sixty thousand witnesses to its divinity and to the miracles that have been wrought in these latter days. Which is the greatest? Has anyone you have ever seen at the present day had an angel sent to him, who held up before him the tables on which the law of Moses was written, commanding him to bear testimony to the divinity of that law? No; no one in the Christian world makes any pretension to anything of this kind. Then is not the testimony in favor of the Book of Mormon superior to that which you possess in favor of the law of Moses? Yes. We can show you witnesses, men still living, to whom an angel appeared and told them that the Book of Mormon was a divine record. The Christian world have no such evidence as this in favor of the Bible, and they can not, by any living witness, substantiate the divinity of the Bible. Moreover, we have another advantage; the Book of Mormon was translated directly from the original. Now, have you, either in the Old or New Testaments, a book that was translated directly from the original? Not one. Is there one that was translated from a secondhand copy even? Not one. I presume there is not a book compiled in the Bible but what went through many hundreds of transformations before it fell into the hands of King James's translators. How do you know that these copyists copied correctly? You have no access to the originals. It is true that you have Hebrew Bibles, but they are not originals; they are only copies. They were multiplied, before the art of printing was invented, for many generations, and the copies that were in possession of King James's translators had perhaps been handed down through a thousand other copies of older date, and how can you be sure that they were correct? We are told by some of our archbishops and learned men, who spent their whole lives in collecting copies of ancient manuscripts from which to translate the Bible, that they at last despaired of obtaining a correct copy of the work. One archbishop, mentioned in the encyclopedias, had collected a vast number of copies of the Bible in Hebrew, as ancient as he could possibly get hold of them. But when he came to compare them he found about thirty thousand different readings. Almost every text would read different in one copy from what it would in another. Finally he gave up the idea of making a translation at all, none of his copies being original; and consequently when the translators of the English Bible performed that work they did it according to the best judgment they had, and they no doubt did it well as far as human wisdom could, under the circumstances. Now then, the difference between the Bible of the West—the Book of Mormon—and the Bible of the East—the Old and New Testament, is that one was taken directly from the original, the other from a multitude of manuscripts which differed almost in every text. It would seem, then, that when God saw the human family in this great state of uncertainty and darkness with regard to divine revelation, it would be nothing more than consistent to suppose that he would bring forth, by his own power, as he has done, revelation suited and adapted to the circumstances, revelation on which we could depend, being substantiated by witnesses raised up especially to bear testimony thereto, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses or as many as seemed him good, every word might be established, that the children of men might have no excuse in relation to these matters.

We might continue this subject and show you the fulfillment of many of the prophecies in the Book of Mormon. It has been printed now for upwards of forty-three years. During this time very many of the prophecies it contains have been fulfilled; prophecies, too, that no human sagacity could have perceived beforehand. Whoever would have thought that, in this very country of ours, under American institutions, where religious freedom has prevailed from one end of the country to the other; who would

have thought, when the Book of Mormon was printed, that the blood of the Saints would cry from the ground of this free American soil, because of their persecutors? And yet it was all foretold in the Book of Mormon. Other sects had risen and multiplied by hundreds on the face of this land, some of whom experienced a little persecution; but who ever heard of their being butchered in cold blood as scores and scores of this people have been since the Book of Mormon was printed? We were told by revelation, forty-three years ago, when this church was organized, that its members would be persecuted, and hunted from city to city and from synagogue to synagogue, and that the blood of the Saints would cry from the ground for vengeance upon the heads of their murderers. Has it come to pass? It has. We were told in the Book of Mormon, which was printed many years before it came to pass, that, if this nation would not receive this divine message when God should bring it forth in the latter days, he would bring the fullness of his gospel and his priesthood from among the nation. We did not know how this would be fulfilled, during the first seventeen years after the book was printed. We could read the prophecy, but how God would ever bring it to pass we did not know, until the time of its accomplishment had arrived, then it was revealed that this people should flee and leave the nation to whom they had delivered their testimony for many years. When we came here the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Thus we might go on and relate prophecy after prophecy that has been fulfilled in confirmation of the divinity of this latter-day work. The same testimony accompanies the Bible. We believe it to be true because of the prophecies therein that have been fulfilled.

Many other prophecies contained in the Book of Mormon, hereafter to be fulfilled, are as great and marvelous as any that have been fulfilled. One of the prophecies contained in the Book of Mormon, delivered before there was a Latter-day Saint Church in existence, which has been remarkably fulfilled, was that the servants of God should go forth with this book to all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, and gather out from among those nations a great people. That has been fulfilled, and the inhabitants of this Territory are a witness to the truth of this prediction or prophecy. If Joseph Smith was an impostor, how did he know this work would go beyond his own neighborhood? How did he know it would ever live to be proclaimed to the different parts of the State where it originated, or where the plates were found? How did he know that it would be preached to the inhabitants of this great government, and then cross the waters, to other nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues. Such a prophecy uttered by an impostor, would be very unlikely to come to pass. Yet such a prophecy was uttered; such a prophecy has been fulfilled, and the nations of the earth, as well as the Latter-day Saints, are witnesses to its fulfillment. We have seen this people come forth year after year, crossing the ocean, first in sailing vessels, then in steamers, by hundreds and by thousands, until they are now almost a little nation here in the tops of the mountains. Amen.

REMARKS

BY

President GEORGE A. SMITH,
DELIVERED
In the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at the Semi-Annual Conference, October 6th, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

LAST October Conference I asked permission to take a journey to visit the land of Palestine, and some other portions of the old world, expecting that I should be absent, probably, about eleven months. I was accompanied on that journey by President Lorenzo Snow and several others, the party including eight. We visited Palestine and many other countries, a portion of us calling at the Fair in Vienna. But in consequence of my selection, by the Conference last April, to do the duties of trustee-in-trust, I returned home a little sooner than I anticipated, though we were all well satisfied with our journey and visit,

and with every interview we had on the entire journey, and were very thankful to our heavenly Father that we had the means given us, through his mercy, and I individually, through the kindness of my friends, to make such a journey. We feel that the results will be felt and realized hereafter, as having done much good. I feel, individually, to return my thanks and blessings to all those who contributed to aid me on that journey, and to all those who desired to but had not the means. I feel that the blessing of the Lord which we invoked on the Mount of Olives will rest upon his people, and that the time is not very far distant when God will fulfill his promises concerning Israel; though, so far as we saw of the remnants of Judah their hearts are very hard, and it will require the exercise of great power on his part to soften them. But as his word will not fail, and his promises are sure, we look forward to their fulfillment with regard to Israel. In the meantime we, with all our hearts, might, mind and strength, should take warning by the example of Israel and not fall into the same snares. They neglected their tithes and offerings, violated the Sabbath, forgot their prayers and worshipped other gods, and for these things God cursed them and scattered them to the four winds of heaven, and the curses rest on the land, and, as was predicted by the prophet, the rain has been turned into dust.

We, as Latter-day Saints, having had revelation from the Lord, and the fullness of the priesthood revealed unto us, should be exceedingly careful that we do not neglect the gospel, turn from our duties, neglect our tithes and offerings, Sabbaths and prayers, forsake the Lord and go astray after other gods, lest peradventure the curse of the Almighty fall upon us, and the kingdom be rent from us and given to another people. I feel that the desolation, waste and barrenness of Palestine, and the degradation of its people should be a lasting and permanent lesson to us in all things, to keep the faith and obey the commandments, to remember our tithes and offerings, to be friends to the poor, to remember our prayers, to remember the faith which God has revealed unto us, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, that we may have and enjoy all its blessings.

We have had a glorious season, an abundant harvest and a good time to gather it. The weather has been fine and agreeable, and now, brethren and sisters, let us gather together a few days to talk with and strengthen each other upon the principles of the gospel of peace. The elders can bear testimony, for I know that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that God has revealed it to us for our salvation; and our covetousness, and disposition to make a display in the world should not interfere in any way whatever, with us in devoting our time, talents, energies and our all to the upbuilding of his kingdom, for that is the greatest interest and glory, and the grandest speculation there is on the face of the earth.

These are my sentiments and views, I wish all persons in the congregation, when they see a man rise to speak, to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer that the Lord will have mercy upon us and fill that man with the power of the Spirit, that he may speak to us directly by revelation from heaven, that every voice that is elevated may be elevated by the power of the Almighty.

DIED.

In Smithfield, Cache Co., Utah, Oct. 16th, at the residence of L. O. Littlefield, after an illness of three months, LOUISA THEODORA, daughter of Mr. A. J. and Mrs. Candace C. Cunningham, aged 10 months and 17 days.

At St. George, Oct. 10, THOMAS JOHN, son of Thomas and Ann Hughes Hall. Deceased was born Oct. 18th, 1846, at St. Louis, Mo., just after the expulsion of his parents from Nauvoo; was a very promising young man, and always faithful in the discharge of his duties; his sickness was short but severe; in his feelings he felt quite resigned to meet the dispensations of Providence. Shortly before his death he bade his father and friends good-bye. His intimate friends and the public generally did all in their power for his recovery. He leaves a young wife, who gave birth to a son as the remains of husband and father were being conveyed to the Third Ward school-house, where the funeral services were held, a very large concourse of the citizens attending.—Com.