

we have manifested upon this subject; but time is proving that we were right, and it is much better that we should learn the correctness of our policy and course as we do, than by dear-bought experience.

We have invested largely in helping our co-religionists to immigrate. There is no community on the continent, or in the world, which, for its numbers, has spent as much means in immigration as ours. The results of this policy appear more visibly to-day than they ever did before, and every year will add to their importance. Every industrious, prudent man, woman or child brought to this country is an increase of wealth to the commonwealth, and the benefit is felt to a greater or less extent by every citizen. Population of the right character is what is needed to make Utah Territory, as well as every other country similarly situated, great, prosperous and wealthy, and we are pleased to know that this kind of capital is being increased among us by every proper method.

THE GIFT ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

It has become very fashionable of late throughout the eastern States, when parties wish to obtain an extensive sale of some article which they desire to dispose of, to offer, as an inducement to purchasers, a gift of some kind. There are book stores in the eastern cities conducted upon this plan, where, if a person purchase a book, will receive with it, as a gift, a piece of jewelry of trifling value. But it is in the publication of news papers, magazines and other periodicals that the gift business flourishes. Great inducements are held out to persons to raise clubs, and though in many instances a person sending but two subscriptions will receive what is called a premium, it is those who send in a large amount who receive the large prizes or gifts. Almost every conceivable article is offered as a premium. Those sending small amounts are generally offered newspapers, magazines, books, engravings, plated knives and forks and spoons and cheap jewelry generally; while those who send larger amounts have articles of greater value offered to them, such as watches, sewing machines, pianos, organs, melodeons, reapers and mowers, ploughs, &c. The person who gets up the club, and sends on the names, receives the premium, and in some neighborhoods these people who, tempted by the offer of the premium, desire to get up these clubs become great bores, through pestering families to subscribe for the periodicals which they wish to circulate. They get all the advantage, while the subscriber only receives his paper, or magazine, or whatever he may subscribe for.

It is no more than right that agents who secure subscribers for a paper or magazine should get pay for their labor; but the premiums offered by publications who have recourse to this method exceed in value the mere pay for the work performed. If these premiums merely paid men for their labor, there would not be so many engage in getting up clubs; but they are tempting because of their value, and they induce persons to exert themselves to canvass their neighborhoods.

The practice is an incorrect one, and it is really unjust to the mass of the subscribers. It is upon the principle of a raffle, or a lottery. A number of persons combine together, and subscribe small sums each, which in the aggregate amount to considerable, each animated by the hope that he will draw the prize. He is willing to gamble that amount for the chance; and if he should be so lucky as to win and draw the prize, he obtains an article for which he paid no fair equivalent, but which the unlucky ones have more than paid for. That is the case with a lottery or a raffle. Our Legislature has wisely stamped such transactions as illegal.

The premium business for periodicals is not conducted exactly in this manner, yet it amounts, in fact, to the same thing. Valuable premiums are given which the men who raise the clubs do not legitimately earn; but which the subscribers really pay for. The fairer way would be to put the price of the periodical down to a living rate.

These remarks have been called forth by the recent announcement that every holder of a ticket for a lecture which is to be delivered in this city on Wednesday evening will be entitled to an article of some kind, the most valuable of which will be a silver plated tea set. We do not like to see this practice adopted here. From the ability of the lecturer we think such a method of securing an audience unne-

cessary. Better far to reduce the price of admission, and let the value of these articles be equally divided among the patrons of the lecture by charging a lower price for tickets. We are convinced that this would meet with more general favor.

DISCOURSE

By Elder JOHN TAYLOR, delivered in the Old Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, March 14th, 1869.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

We meet together from time to time to hear of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God on the earth. We have our own peculiar views in relation to many things that occupy the minds of men, and we have been in the habit of investigating the principles of the gospel, and our minds are more or less occupied with affairs connected with the welfare of humanity whether associated with the present life or that which is to come.

There is a common tendency in the minds of men generally, to take very little trouble in relation to religious matters; and men of all nations seem more disposed to let others think and act for them in such matters than to do so for themselves; hence, those who are disposed to prey upon the credulous, have every opportunity to accomplish their ends. Another point upon which men do not reflect much, is the fact that between this and the spirit world there is a veil drawn, which can only be penetrated through the medium which the Scriptures unfold. There we are told that "no man can understand the things of God but by the Spirit of God;" hence, though men may reason upon natural principles, and speak logically on most of the common affairs of life, when they attempt to investigate the principles of religion and the nature of our relationship to God they seem to be at a loss; and not being willing on the one hand, to acknowledge their own weakness, ignorance and imperfection; nor on the other hand to acknowledge the hand of the Almighty, they know not what course to pursue. On account of these various feelings in the world a great many errors of every kind have crept in and have led the human mind astray. The Christian portion of the world are apt to look with contempt upon what is called the heathen, and wonder how men possessing any degree of intelligence can be led to worship stocks and stones and gods of their own making. Yet millions, under the influence of priestcraft do this, and they think they are right and that they are on the high road to Heaven. The Christian world too feel that it is all right with them in reference to a future life; in fact, they feel, in respect to religious matters, about as the Athenians did about the goddess Dana—that she had descended from Heaven and that all the world knew it. The various sects of the Christian world—Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Church of Rome and others, no matter what their peculiar creeds or forms of worship may be, entertain the idea that they are all on the highway to heaven. They build magnificent churches and pay thousands of ministers; they are also very zealous in missionary labors and contribute largely for the support of charitable institutions. But it is very few of them who reflect upon first principles; they do not like to trouble themselves on such matters.

I have traveled a great deal and have come in contact with professors of every creed; but they almost invariably like to assume, without contradiction, that they are right and that their fathers before them were. They do not like the idea to be entertained for a moment that the principles, doctrine and ordinances they believe in and obey may be wrong, or that there is any possibility of the whole so-called Christian church having departed from the faith and ordinances as laid down in the gospel by Jesus Christ.

The Methodists, for instance, could not for a moment suppose that John Wesley was not competent to judge all matters pertaining to salvation. Wesleyan ministers will hardly permit his doctrines to be questioned; they must be swallowed without investigation. In fact I have heard some of them say that he was a man of such erudition, talent and piety that they would not have his doctrines questioned in their hearing. The Protestant Germans and a great many others are just the same with regard to Luther; yet in some of his ideas and principles the great Re-

former was as foolish as any other man. The Scotch are a good deal so with John Knox: they think that he was everything good, praiseworthy and amiable and, in fact, that he was the pink of perfection. The Roman Catholics will not for a moment admit that they are not the true church; and they will maintain that they have held the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven from the days of Peter until now, and that they still have the pure doctrines of the gospel and have power to bind on earth and in heaven and to loose on earth and in heaven. You may ask a great many who have seceded from the Church of Rome and you would find that they have similar ideas about their own infallibility, only they are a little better than those from whom they seceded; they have made some improvements and are a little nearer the celestial kingdom.

Feelings of this kind obtain not only among religionists but also among philosophers, for some Christian philosophers have brought in philosophy to their aid in order to prove the truth of the Christian religion. Paley and Dick, very prominent Christian philosophers, have examined the works of nature and have endeavored to prove that the God of nature who controlled all these things must be a Being full of love, intelligence and power. In their investigations they have examined the anatomical and visceral systems of man, beasts, birds and insects and have deduced therefrom many arguments which are interesting and incontrovertible. But when they apply their reasoning to the Christian religion they swallow it at one gulp without investigation. Their arguments go to prove the existence of a Supreme Being, a God; but they do not prove the truth or falsity of the Christian or any other system of religion, they have nothing at all to do with them.

People generally are apt to accept the various religious systems of the day without reasoning or investigation. When I was a little boy I used to ponder over such things; and I do so still. Finding myself an inhabitant of the world surrounded by ten thousand conflicting opinions on religious subjects, I want to know "what is truth?" Who has it in his possession? Where shall we find it? If I were among the heathen and had been taught to worship an alligator I should not think it right to worship a cat; and if it was right to worship a cat, it would not be to worship a bull; and if a bull it would not be to worship a snake; and if a snake it would not be to worship a monkey; and if a monkey it would not be to worship sun, moon or stars. Were I among the Christians I would think if the Baptists are right the Presbyterians are not; if the Presbyterians are right then the Baptists are not. If the Church of England is right then the others are wrong; if the Roman Catholics are right then others are wrong; and if any of the others are right the Roman Catholics are wrong. I cannot conceive of two ways to go to heaven and both right. I cannot think of a God of intelligence, who has created the whole human family, and who has organized every living thing and adapted them to the varied positions which they occupy, being the author of the confusion that exists in the world in relation to the forms of worship. But if God is not the author of it, who is? Where did it come from? I know that men generally are not inclined to investigate these subjects.

When I was a boy I used to be connected with the Church of England. Theirs is a pleasant kind of religion. I liked it very well when I was connected with it. They pay the parson for preaching and pay the clerk for saying "amen." No difficulty about the matter, everything moved along pleasantly. Nobody thought of questioning the parson. They considered the whole system correct and that they were all on the way to Heaven. The Roman Catholics feel a good deal the same way, only their religion is not quite so easy. They have to do penance sometimes; if they do wrong they may get absolution, but they have to pay for it.

In talking with Church of England ministers I have sometimes asked them where they got their authority from. That is a kind of question they hardly deem admissible, but they would say, "well if we must confess, we got it from the Roman Catholics." Where did they get it from? "From Peter." But unfortunately you Episcopalians say that the Roman Catholics are in error. "Yes, they are in error." Well, if that be the case, how could they confer power upon you? Do not the scriptures say if a tree is bad its fruits will be bad? "Oh," say they, "they might retain

their power even if they had lost their virtue." O, indeed! you admit that much. Well, if they had power to bind on earth and to bind in heaven, they had power to loose on earth and to loose in heaven; and if they had power to give the priesthood they had power to take it away, and if they cut you off you have no authority. They do not like to reason upon these things; but I do. I like to know the "whys" and "wherefores" in all such things, and to understand their foundation, especially in matters pertaining to man's eternal welfare. I have generally taken the liberty of applying the word of God to principles of religion whether taught by the Methodists, Church of England, Roman Catholics or any others; and when "Mormonism" was presented to me my first inquiry was "is it scriptural? is it reasonable and philosophical?" This is the principle I would act upon to day. No matter how popular the theories or dogmas preached might be I would not accept them unless they were strictly in accordance with the scriptures, reason and common sense.

I used to be told when investigating religious principles that it was dangerous to do so, and I had better let them alone; but I did not think so. I believe it is good to investigate and prove all principles that come before me. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good, and reject that which is evil, no matter what guise it may come in. I think if we, as "Mormons," hold principles that can not be sustained by the scriptures and by good sound reason and philosophy, the quicker we part with them the better, no matter who believes in them or who does not. In every principle presented to us our first inquiry should be, "Is it true?" "Does it emanate from God?" If He is its Author it can be sustained just as much as any other truth in natural philosophy; if false it should be opposed and exposed just as much as any other error. Hence upon all such matters we wish to go back to first principles.

If I am a man, where did I come from, and what is the nature of my existence and being here? I want information on these points if anybody can give it. If I had an existence before I came here I want to know something about it. If there is a God and anybody on the earth ever knew anything about Him I want to know something about Him. If there are wise, intelligent and learned men anywhere who can tell me anything about Him, about my own existence and future destiny, I want to know it. These desires are reasonable; why should they not be gratified? You go to the heathen and inquire about God, and they have thousands of them in every form. Go to the Christians and they have one God, but He has neither body, parts nor passions; His presence is everywhere, but he exists nowhere. They have never heard nor seen Him, and they do not know anybody who ever did, not even their ministers, whom, they claim, are sent of God. They are equally as ignorant in relation to their own existence and the ends of their creation. They say they are going to heaven, but all they can tell you about it is that it is beyond the bounds of time and space.

This kind of doctrine does not suit me. I can read in the scriptures that men used to converse with God, and that angels conversed with them; that others had visions and could read the purposes of God as they were unfolded before them. But come to the present day when, according to their own account, the most intelligent people that ever were upon the earth are now in existence, and they know nothing about God or His purposes. I care nothing about such knowledge and wisdom. In the language of the old prophet I say, "My soul, enter not thou into their secret." I want something that is intellectual and true, and that will bear investigation.

When I turn to the gospel as taught by Jesus I find that he sent his disciples into all the world and commanded them to preach the gospel to every creature, saying "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." This gospel was no pliant thing, as in this day, that men could receive or refuse as they pleased, or that they could tinker to suit their own notions; but when preached, it involved the salvation or damnation of those who heard it.

When the apostles commenced to preach the gospel Jesus said it was necessary for Him to go away, for if He went away He would send them the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—which should call all things to their remembrance and show them things to come. This was something very important; a religion that would do this was a religion fit for immortal men. Why should