

spoke briefly upon the importance of education. The school and fireside are the two great levers of education. He desired parents to throng around their children the environment of the Gospel.

The General and Stake authorities were presented and unanimously sustained and home missionaries were called to labor during the next three months. The choir under the leadership of Professor Durrans aided much in the success of the conference by rendering the songs of Zion in a very appreciative manner. Benediction by Elder Edward Stevenson.

JAMES GILLESPIE,
State Clerk.

FROM LAYMAN TO PREACHER.

STRUGES, Oktibbeah County, Miss.,
May 13, 1896.

An open letter to Rev. Mr. Sargeant, and any others whom it may concern:

Dear Sir—You are scriptorian enough, reasonable enough, and have honesty of purpose enough, to take the scriptures for what they say, and I hope you are liberal enough to accord to others, what you doubtless claim for yourself.

We are answerable to God for the manner in which we conduct ourselves here in this line; and we should be able to give a reason for the hope within us. This, I now propose to do, in as humble, meek way as I can.

The eternal truths of God are binding on His creatures, it matters not how, or by whom they are imparted. This, I am sure you will admit. In other words, these truths do not depend on the character of those who present them. But it is not likely that a notoriously corrupt set of men would propagate an exact pattern of the Gospel as taught by the Savior, and practiced by His immediate followers; that not one scriptural argument can be used successfully against it. It seems strange that any one can overlook as plain declarations as are found all along through the New Testament, that are parts and parcels of the Gospel, and if any of it is binding on us, surely the whole of it is.

As to apostles, prophets, etc., see the twenty-eighth verse, twelfth chapter of first Corinthians which reads thus: "And God hath set some in the Church; first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." In the foregoing part of this chapter these elements are compared to the members of a man's body. As every member of the body is necessary to its completeness, so also, are these elements which God placed in the Church, necessary to its completeness. If the human body was robbed of its seeing, hearing, reasoning; and minus a leg, and an arm; what remained, would be a mere wreck, and a burden on any community. So, in like manner, when the Church is shorn of apostles, prophets, miracles, gifts of healings, and diversities of tongues; only teachers, helps and governments remain. The five most potent elements being gone, what are to keep teachers, helps and governments in place? Absolutely nothing but human wisdom.

We have all seen, and are constantly seeing that human wisdom is so frail, and uncertain, that the wisest of earth

differ as widely as the poles, when dealing with the Church and its ordinances; and hence, the diversity of opinion and creeds among men. No two denominations agree, and yet all profess to be guided by the same book! It is quite an easy matter for one talented individual to prove another wrong in some of his tenets, and equally easy for the second to prove the first wrong in some of his. Indeed, a close observer will see, that no two leading minds of the same sect agree all the way through, while not a few, have no opinion of their own, and are carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Jesus said, after commanding His apostles to go out and preach, that certain signs should follow the believer, as a confirmation of its truths. But our sectarian friends, finding themselves destitute of these manifestations, gravely tell us that they were only given in that day and age to establish the Gospel in the minds of the people, and when that was done they were no longer necessary. The fallacy of this supposition will be apparent when we reflect that the generations of men that succeeded the apostolic age would be just as unbelieving; and it would take just as much testimony to convince them of the truths of Christianity as it did their ancestors. It is true, they had the written word, but unless the Holy Ghost were given to guide them into all truth, and keep them in the unity of the faith by the same miraculous manifestations, they would split asunder, divide, and subdivide, as we see the world of Christendom today. In the absence of that potent power displayed by the office work of the Holy Ghost, men are left to grovel in darkness, guided by human wisdom alone.

God did not have one plan of salvation then and another now. We are taught that He is the same yesterday, today and forever, without variableness or shadow of turning, and man is the same sinful, unbelieving creature he ever was. To put the matter forever at rest, the Apostle Paul says: Ephesians 4:11-14. "And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers." And if we ask why this was done, the twelfth verse answers: "For the perfecting of the Saints," (are the Saints perfect? If not then these officers are still necessary,) "for the work of the ministry," (are the ministry all working in line? If not, these officers are still necessary,) "for the edifying of the body of Christ," (if the body of Christ—the Church—is properly edified, why this wrangling among the various sects?) And if it be further asked, how long these apostles, prophets, etc., are to continue; the next verse answers; "Till we all come in the unity of the faith," etc. Has that been accomplished? If not, then these potent elements of strength that God placed in the Church are necessary there.

The disagreement and strife over the doctrines of the Bible, by the world of Christendom, has done, and is doing, more to make infidels and skeptics than all other causes combined. No man, by human wisdom alone, however great his ability, ever did, or ever can understand his whole duty as to the plan of life and salvation, because the natural man cannot conceive them, for they are spiritually discerned. The Holy Ghost alone can do this office work.

Our Savior promised that He—the

Holy Ghost—would guide into all truth, and show things to come. You will perhaps say, that the world of Christendom is in possession of the Spirit. If so how comes it that all differ so widely in doctrine? Something is radically wrong somewhere. What is it? I think you are discreet enough not to charge these diversities of opinions to the office work of the Holy Spirit. No, a thousand times no! The fault is in man. Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," etc. Do you know the doctrine you propagate to be the mind and will of God? The Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics and the hundreds of other sects, would be likely to give about the same answer to their opinions as you would to yours. If the reflective mind could take in all these conflicting theories, he would stand aghast with amazement; and the more so when told that all professed to be guided by the same book!

The world of Christendom say that no communication from heaven has been given for the last eighteen hundred years, and gravely assert that it is not necessary; that the Bible contains all that is necessary for man's salvation, etc. If this were the case, all would see eye to eye, and speak the same thing; but as this is not the case, it is evident that the written word alone is not sufficient. The office work of the Holy Ghost is to guide into all truth, and in making known to the people in some tangible, unmistakable way, what is their whole duty. This must be done by revelation, because it cannot be done in any other way, and hence the necessity of prophets in the Church; and a careful reading of the New Testament, and especially the epistle of Paul; will show that prophets were as common in the Church in those days, as any other officers. The Savior said to the scribes and Pharisees upon whom, for their wickedness, He had been pronouncing woes, as the children of them that killed the prophets. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets," etc. Matthew, 23:34. Indeed, the spirit of Christ is the spirit of prophecy. And the Savior said, "If a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Hence we find numerous instances of prophets in the New Testament. Men, not well versed in its teachings, sometimes quote the following, to prove that prophets are no longer necessary. "The law and the prophets were until John," etc. This, evidently means under the law dispensation, when prophets were indispensably necessary to point to the Gospel dispensation; and after that dispensation was ushered in, by the coming of Christ, prophets were still necessary; else they would not have been given. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied; etc. Luke 1:67. Paul prophesied, Peter prophesied, and, in fact, all the apostles had the spirit of prophecy, and often exercised that gift. Agabus was a prophet; see Acts 21:10-11. In the last days, both men and women were to prophecy. See Acts 2:17, 18. Judas and Silas were prophets. Acts 15:32. The Apostle Paul often, in his epistles speaks of prophets; see first Corinthians 12:10, 28. Also 14:1, 5, 24, 30, 31, 32, 39. The above quotations are surely enough to show to any reader of the New Testament that prophets were as common in the primitive Church as any other Church officer. To forever settle the