

[COMMUNICATED.]

THE SACRED PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL.

Whether in these times of belligerency any topic save that of war will command either reading or reflection is almost questionable. The general mind is so wrought up, so absorbed as it were over "a storm in a teapot," that literati and illiterate, priest and people, are all on the qui vive for that "and nothing more." Yet the interests of humanity are still as varied, as deep and broad as at any period of greater or less excitement and some would no doubt question whether wisdom could become so infatuated as to subordinate the greater to the less, the eternal to the transitory, or the quarrels of nations—whether intoxicated with a hundred years' success, or blase with patrician excesses and in dotage after centuries of rule and wealth have "vanished like a dream of the night." The conservative, well balanced, intelligent observer sees that there is a director of the storm, that beyond the fleeting passions of man (right or wrong) there is control, and that the "unexpected which happens" to the clearer vision is but the shifting scenes here and there in the great drama of humanity, which move forever onward toward a certain consummation, "whether men hear or whether they forbear."

That this age is to be strangely prolific in changes and events seems to be universally conceded. Men of all shades of opinion, religious to fanaticism and skeptical to a fault, have forebodings that surely bespeak cataclysm and may be chaos, unless the elements of insubordination are checked by a power seen or unseen, acknowledged or otherwise as the case may be. To the former, faith finds its own solution for the exigency; to the latter, human strategy, human wisdom, wealth, might, rule, are the only weapons. These with an innate natural(?) conservatism are all that can be depended upon when the whirlwind rages and institutions go down with the crash of thunder, until destruction, as in history (sacred and profane) satiated by excess and reft of possessed and maddened element there comes retirement from sheer exhaustion and despair.

Among the striking phenomena of our age, indeed the most astonishing, were those manifestations of profound and continued divine interest in man with which this age and century opened. As a lad, born and reared in a religious home and subject to modern religious dogma and organization, we were continually reminded that we were "living in the full blaze of Gospel day." Years of experience have proved that this was only "a figure of speech," that spiritual and religious darkness was intense; that clouds of surmise, tradition, criticism, superstition befogged the earth; that "light had (once) come into the world, but that the light had been rejected inasmuch as some loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil;" that the record of that light was all that was left to man, save the measure of good which is left to him—as the proof of his divine origin and that glimmering of "true light" which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Two days of celestial time elapsed and again the lost or hidden light streamed forth; "truth—eternal truth," was once more declared—not at once, or men only half used to twilight might have been blinded by its effulgence, but soft and gentle as day breaks upon the earth, a brief intimation by angelic visitation, then, the simple manifestation of "the Father and the Son," demonstrating that "they lived," and by this, sweeping away the theological

superstructure of ages, with all its abstruse, technical, contradictory and impossible theories as the cobwebs are swept from the darkened chamber by "a master workman who needed not to be ashamed." To those who received this glorious light before its full development, it was the key of knowledge; God lives, revealed the secret of ages; it was a demonstration, often imagined, hoped for, prayed for, believed in, but deemed unproved and unprovable by religion and only inferred by science. The grandeur and magnitude of that revelation is hardly comprehended by the Latter-day Saints; and like the "little leaven" barely beginning to work in that "harrel of meal," the world; it is a glorious theme for the poet and prophet, for the spiritual man and the moralist, for the student of human nature and its philosophy and value; and for the seer who would pierce the mysteries of Providence and the destiny of earth and its associated myriads; it is the entering wedge which when driven home by future revelation and almighty power, can only explain and make comprehensible the universe of God.

From this great central truth, radiates all collateral truths, yet so natural is their order, so harmonious their unity and beauty, so far-reaching their potency and influence, that the most profound thought must return through the eternities for contemplation. And yet their development is so consecutive, so gradual and simple, that to use an old expression "the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein." Bring home to a human soul or consciousness this fundamental truth, which testifies to its own secret feeling and deepest thought, and you turn the tides of life into richer channels. New aspirations and queries arise as to relationship with God and Christ, and faith springs to a comprehension that He is "the God who made the heavens and earth, the sea and the fountains of water;" that He is "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;" that He is the Creator—nay, "the Father of the spirits of all flesh;" and that this involves the responsibility of relationship; that this God is not only a God of personage—a living God, but a God who is interested, who can hear, who can answer—the God of individual man, as well as of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith grasps ardently this position, yet acknowledges discrepancy; and the thought of pre-existence steals in upon the mind, with all its associations, education, opportunities and knowledge. This life seen as a probation takes on new glory. It becomes a school, a mission, an avenue for experience, for trial. The idea of purpose, of exaltation, follows, for all analogy shows that "like begets like," that possibilities are enormous, but that "the flesh is weak;" that sin is the heritage of violated law; that Infinite Father's wisdom hath provided a remedy—a way of escape; that a Father's prescience will and does comprehend the situation. Thus faith, humility, inspiration, point out the stages of a spirit-influenced life.

Even bold reason would discern the order of revelation thus far at least. Faith and repentance are like "the Siamese twins," united together as the fruition of life by the ligament of spiritual thought, and to that thought there comes conception of order, system, purpose, power, such as is finally found in the mission, message and Gospel of Jesus Christ, who was "the One" associated with the Father in this exposition of salvation in the meridian dispensation of time as it was from them to the Prophet Joseph in "the dispensation of the fullness" thereof, as understood by all believers. In this systematized form, faith is seen to be a

principle of eternal potency; repentance from a sense of relationship and overpowering weakness takes on new features; sense of sin finds remission in the waters of baptism; cleansing in "the laver of regeneration, under new conditions, makes the humble convert" a new creature in Christ Jesus;" and to impart unto him special power there is communicated that monitor and friend, the indwelling Spirit that the excellency and power of the great salvation might be of God and not of man. When to this is superadded the organization of "the Church of God and Christ," with its advisory, corrective and restraining wisdom, with its gifts and blessings, its helps and governments, its Priesthood and supervision, what could be created or devised more worthy of being called "the everlasting Gospel" than that which has been restored to the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

How grandly these giant columns of eternal principle tower above the religious architecture of uninspired men! Beautiful, symmetrical, consecutive, natural and orderly, every truth in its place, nothing forced, nothing crowded in, nothing superfluous, nothing to be unlearned, nothing to be superseded or overthrown—they are certainly in their present stage exhibiting the affluence of divine wisdom; the essential genius of religion as found in unsophisticated man, rejoices in them; there is aliment for all, milk for the spiritual babes in Christ and strong meat for those of maturer years; truth easy of comprehension and graded lessons for the improvers, problems for the wise and solutions for the faithful, until by translating any task from day to day into actual, positive, rounded life we approximate through what can be learned and practiced here, unto "the Church of the firstborn and the spirit of just men made perfect."

FROM THE GEORGIA CONFERENCE.

Buchanan, Ga., April 2, 1898.

To the Editor:

Two Mormon Elders were seen coming into the city of Buchanan on the 25th day of March. They had been sent thither by Elias S. Kimball, President of the Southern States mission. They had been laboring in the South Alabama conference, one in Antauga county, and the other in Lee county.

They had been instructed to hold a two days' fast upon meeting, but as they met in Lee county, and there being no friends there, they were forced to start on their long journey without first holding their fast, but petitioning their Maker, on the way, to raise up a friend, where they might carry out this counsel. They continued on from day to day until near to their county, but as yet not having found a friend who would keep them longer than over night, they then concluded to fast one day and walk and ask the Lord to raise up a friend who would keep them. When within a day's walk of their county, they found friends who were willing to provide for them. They spent a most interesting time holding meetings and conversing with them on the Scriptures. They spent the greater part of two days conversing with a minister of the Congregational church, who made the time quite pleasant for them.

The Elders, after having finished their fast, went on their way rejoicing, and arrived at Buchanan as above stated, and proceeded at once to visit the mayor. He being very busy did not talk long with them, but after explaining briefly their business, they asked permission to canvass the city, which was granted. They also visited the ordinary or judge and asked permission to preach in the court house, which privilege was granted. But on account