

The Elders of Israel, or of the Church of Jesus Christ, are called to labor for the welfare of the children of men. Their mission is to do good in the world, to impart the knowledge they have, through the testimony of the Holy Spirit, to those who are not acquainted with this work, and to strengthen those who have not received the testimony which the Elders have. It is the duty of every Elder, every man having the holy Priesthood, to learn to understand the doctrines of the Gospel and to seek to know whether they be of God or of man. It is necessary for men who are called to preach the Gospel of Christ to be able to bear testimony that it is the word of God.

We differ from most of the denominations of the world in this respect, that they do not make the same claims as we do. They teach what they have learnt from books in their colleges and seminaries; they preach because they have been so taught in their schools. The Elders of Israel are not, as a rule, college men. They are not educated for the purpose of preaching the Gospel. They have had no course of training to qualify them to become ministers of the Gospel to the world. But they are called from their daily avocations of life, some being youths or almost children. Without any previous preparation, they are sent forth to testify to all men concerning the knowledge they have, and they go out entirely dependent on the Lord. They cannot rely on their previous training, or on their own knowledge, their own wisdom and understanding, because they have received no preparation, as the world takes it. They rely on the guidance of the Almighty to expound and declare the plan of salvation, whereby mankind is to receive life eternal.

The question has been asked, "How is it possible to teach anybody the way of life, without having had any training for this purpose?"

True, when we look at it from the standpoint of the world, it is an almost impossible task. Yet, when we contemplate the instructions which were given by our Lord and Master Jesus Christ to His disciples we can perceive its consistency and the reasons for it. The Lord told his disciples to go out and preach the Gospel and, "Freely ye have received: freely give." They were called to this great work in order that the Lord might thereby prove the world.

But, says some, the Apostles had had a long experience, a long training during the time they were with Christ; they were educated by Him and were well prepared for their great work. Yes, it is true that they had followed Jesus while He was with them, and had entirely relied on Him, but, strange as it may seem to some of us, they had been walking with their great Teacher without having received any special inspiration for the work which they were, afterwards, sent to perform. So little were the Apostles prepared for their great mission, that they, when Christ was crucified, began to murmur among themselves. They had hoped that He was the one who should redeem Israel; but now, He was dead and laid away in the grave, and they thought they could do nothing better than take up their

former occupations. Had nothing else transpired, than the death of Christ on the cross, He would soon have been forgotten; His very name might have slept for ever in the tomb, as far as they were concerned. For they were so little prepared, had so little wisdom with regard to the great work to be done by the Redeemer, or His mission on the earth; they understood so little of the principles of the Gospel, that when He was out of sight, they ceased to labor in the work. Is this not according to the history? When Christ, after His resurrection, met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He found them full of grief and sorrow and doubt concerning the things that had transpired. So ignorant were they. Can we not easily perceive that with all their training, they were entirely unprepared for the work, they had to do?

If we read the Scriptures, we can easily see that the training which the Apostles had while walking with Christ was by no means complete. Something more was needed. Why, Peter, one of the chief Apostles, when the Master was a prisoner, denied Him repeatedly. This was the disciple who previously had testified that he knew Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. And yet, in the hour of temptation, he denied Christ, denied that he knew Him, and added a curse thereto. Was he in the condition to go forth and preach the Gospel of Christ? Was there any of the Apostles better qualified? No, not one. With all the training some think they had, they had not been qualified to be the messengers of God to the world.

The fact is, that while they were walking with Christ, they walked by sight and not by faith. Jesus was with them, and they walked by His light and administered by His authority. But when He was gone, the light was gone too, and they were left in the dark like the rest of mankind. They were almost without knowledge. Had the religion of Christ ended with His death, the world would not have been better off than it was before He came. The speaker wished to impress on his hearers the fact, that at the death of Christ, the great work of salvation had just begun. Only the foundation had been laid. The word Jesus had preached, the organization He had effected with Apostles, Prophets, etc., were only preparations for the power that was to come afterwards. It was the body. But it was lifeless until that came, which was necessary to bring it to life.

Christ's mission therefore, had only commenced, at the time of His death. The living power was yet to come. What was it? The Savior was prepared to lay down His life as a sacrifice but what more was necessary? One part of the great work had been accomplished—the "bodily part" of it, but the spiritual remained, and that was the resurrection from the dead. This had to be added to it. Christ had to break the bonds of the tomb and give liberty to the captives. This was to be accomplished by the resurrection which may, therefore, be said to be greater and more important than the death, if we can speak of any difference as to importance between the two events. Both are necessary. Christ had to die in or-

der to rise. But if He died only; if His death, as some teach, were the all-important event, then we would have been where we were before. His death would have been of no more use to us than the death of any other man. But He came with power in Himself to rise again, a power which no man ever has, except Christ bestows it on him. He had power to lay down His life and to take it again. No man could take it, but He gave it that he might open the way for the children of men to life and immortality; that He should remove the curse of death from all flesh. No one will suffer for the transgression of our first parents, but every one has been placed on his own free agency. By His death, Christ atoned for the sin of Adam, and we have all been released from the consequences of it, no matter whether we believe or not, whether we be Christian or pagan; white, red or black; all have been redeemed, so far, by the death of Christ. But we must also be redeemed from the consequences of our transgressions. While we are not held responsible for the sin of Adam, we are certainly responsible for our own. Hence, Christ not only atoned for the transgression of our first parents, but He also prepared the way for us, that we may be free from our own personal sins and transgressions and placed in a position to do good. But, as sure as God lives, we will be held responsible for our own acts.

When Christ tore the bonds of the grave, conquered death, and rose from mortality to immortality, He brought life to every human creature. All will be resurrected, no matter what they have done while living on the earth.

The disciples did not understand this principle. More than human mind is needed to comprehend it. It cannot be understood except through inspiration from on high. But when Christ had risen He appeared to His disciples, and then the great truth He had taught them began to dawn on their minds. They saw Him and were filled with joy. Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with them when the risen Savior first appeared, and he expressed his doubt. He said he would not believe unless he could place his hand in the wounded side. When Jesus came again Thomas was there, and Jesus permitted him to do as he had desired, whereupon the doubting disciple exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." Then he knew his Master, and was prepared for the instruction which followed: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Reading the Scriptures we find further, that Jesus laid His hands on the disciples and breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This was another great principle. It was the key to knowledge and understanding. But their minds were not fully prepared until they had been endowed with power from on high. For the Lord told them to tarry in Jerusalem until thus endowed, and the Holy Ghost came upon them as tongues of fire. Then their minds were opened that they could see Christ as the Savior of the world. Not until this event had transpired were they qualified to preach the Gospel of the Son of God, though they had walked with Christ