

out father or mother, without beginning or end of days?"

Now, let me say first, that I cannot but admire the simplicity and directness of these questions and the candor with which they are asked. This Elder evidently recognizes that these questions demand rational answers, and that although an Elder can "get out of them," as many do, by quibbles and sophistry more or less ingenious, the difficulties remain still. He also feels an assurance that there is a rational explanation for them. Whether my answers will be an improvement upon his own, remains to be seen. I feel to apologize that other work crowding upon me has left his letter so long unanswered.

First, then as to the passages, "God is a Spirit," and a "Spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." It is no evidence of astuteness to set passages of Scripture in opposition to one another. Nothing is easier. Nor does this apply to the Bible alone. I venture to say that there is no work in science, philosophy, or law, but will yield quibbles in the same way. In the case of law, or science, or philosophy, the man who thus takes advantage of individual passages is recognized as a quibbler, and is treated with the contempt that his ignorance merits. But in the case of Bible doctrine or things divine, the man becomes the founder of a new sect.

Many examples of this truth will come to mind with a little reflection. For instance, a sect was formed in Virginia on the passage in Acts ii: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." To prove that the words italicized are the right words to be used in the formula of baptism and not "*in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*," the only example in Scripture of either is quoted: (Acts 19:5) "And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Reflect a moment how inconsistent it is to put faith in men who prove one passage of Scripture false in order to prove another true. If in this case the Savior's words (Matt 28:18) be proven false, how much respect can we have for Peter's? (Acts 2:38.) Is it not plainly the duty of the preacher to reconcile these passages? And if he cannot do it, is it not plainly his duty to acknowledge his blindness, and cease trying to lead the blind? Nothing seems more rational. And if men would apply the same reasoning to preachers that they do to mechanics, these pretenders to divine wisdom would soon be sat down upon. Witness how beautifully in our formula of baptism these passages are reconciled.

I use this illustration to indicate with what attitude our Elders should meet such quibblers. Let them make the people see that he who tries to set God's word against itself is not worthy to be listened to, no matter how ingenious and plausible may be his theories.

"God is a Spirit." This is sufficient for such men. It coincides with a preconceived philosophy. "I hear the winds sighing: God is there. I go into my garden. Wha a transformation since last night! The flowers flash in the sunlight every hue of the rain-bow, and I know God is there. My children run to me with a smile, and when their loving arms close about my neck, I know God dwells in them. I go out into the starry night, and gaze upon the spangled universe, and a voice of awe

comes to me Lo, God is there. God is a Spirit, and lives where ever there is life and motion," etc. This is the God of sectarians. It is the universal God Pan of Oriental nations and of the Greeks. It was one of the first evidences of the great apostacy, that this vague, indefinite entity took the place of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was not the Savior's words as quoted by St. John, "God is a Spirit," which led to the sectarian idea of a being "without body, parts, and passions." But it is this remark which gives color and support to the idea.

What did John mean, then? He surely had read Genesis, and knew that man is made in the image of God. He had heard our Savior say "Who hath seen me hath seen the Father." He knew that Christ was the "brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person." In short he knew that our Father is a perfected, glorified Man. Did he then intend to set the entire burden of Scripture at naught and proclaim a new being—"made of such stuff as dreams are?"

"But," asks the Elder, "Are we to ignore this passage, and hold to the tenor of all the other Scriptures? Certainly not: To ignore it, or by other passages try to prove it false, would be as contemptible in a Latter-day Saint as for the sectarians on the other hand to accept it as true, and ignore or hold false what opposes the idea they get from it: They are both true, and the sect that cannot reconcile them is unworthy of human following.

The passage may mean two things. 1. It may mean God the Holy Ghost is a Spirit. In this case there can be no difficulty about the passage. It is literally true. In this aspect God manifests himself in all His works. God is nature in this sense, all that lives and moves and has a being, exists by virtue of this supreme power. "If God should withdraw this spirit all flesh would crumble into dust." Spencer, the prince of agnostics, recognizes God in this aspect. "In the midst of all mysteries and uncertainties one thing is absolutely certain: We are ever in the presence of the infinite and eternal energy whence all things proceed." It is in this capacity that we can speak of God as everywhere present.

2. It may refer to God the Father. In this case it is figuratively true. For instance, John also says: "God is love." Isaiah says: "Justice and judgment are the habitants (i. e. sit in, or occupy) Thy throne." This figure of speech, wherein a quality is made to take the place of the possessor of that quality, is called metonymy. No figure is more common in scripture. Just as justice and judgment cannot in fact be habitants of a throne, but are qualities of Him who sits upon the throne, so love is a quality, so spirit is a quality. We can with the same figure say man is a spirit—and would it not be true? Take his spirit away and what is left is nothing but clay.

This, I take it, is the true meaning of the passage. The preceding verse, (John 4: 23) refers to the Father who is shortly to be worshipped in a different fashion from the material way in which the Jews worshipped Him viz: "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth"—that is, by the enlightened power of the Holy Ghost, as opposed to the cold formalism

of the law of Moses. Then follows the passage: "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." That is, God is immortal, of the nature of spirit, and must be worshipped by a way analogous to His own nature, and not in a way that would gratify a mortal being.

The other questions will be considered in due time. N. L. N.

SUNDAY SERVICES.

Religious services of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were held at the Tabernacle, Sunday, November 25th, Elder Joseph E. Taylor of the Stake presidency presiding.

The choir sang:

Author of faith, eternal word,
Whose spirit breathes the active flame;
Faith, like its Finisher and Lord,
Today as yesterday the same.

Prayer was offered by Elder Barlow Ferguson.

Singing by the choir:

Glory to God on high
Let heaven and earth reply.
Praise ye his name.

Bishop William B. Preston addressed the meeting. He rejoiced in the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed from heaven again for the salvation of mankind. The Prophet Joseph Smith was the humble instrument in the hands of God of bringing to pass His purposes or the redemption of the living and the dead. As a people we should rejoice exceedingly for the great privileges and blessings we enjoy through obedience to the principles of truth, and if we do not rejoice as we should do we ourselves are to blame. Our minds in too many instances are so taken up with the things of this life that very many of us seem to forget who we are, and the object of our coming here to these valleys in obedience to the revelation: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." We are now so mixed up with Babylon and the world that it seems that we are a part of the world, and appear to have forgotten the great example of the Lord Jesus Christ, wherein He said in His day: "I have chosen ye out of the world." We have patterned so much after the world and adopted their ways and formed association and entered into business with the world to that extent that when Babylon does fall, as will surely come to pass in the due time of the Lord, if we do not fall with her we will be greatly shaken up unless we forsake her and her ways.

Are we magnifying our callings in the Priesthood? Are we magnifying our callings as servants of the Most High? Are we keeping His commandments that we may have a claim on the blessings promised in the Gospel? If not then it is time we were doing this. It is within our reach to obtain eternal life in the celestial kingdom of our Heavenly Father, but we can only attain unto this in the Lord's appointed way. It is our great privilege to enjoy every blessing which our Heavenly Father has in store for the faithful. We can so live as to enjoy the gift of faith to that degree that we can rebuke the destroyer when it comes into our families and he will stand rebuked; that we can have faith and power to