

men did not believe in these things. They did not want them. Confusion followed and divisions into sects and parties, all professing to have the Bible as a foundation for their faith. The sacred volume became, as one expresses it, like an old fiddle, capable of rendering any tune one might choose to play on it.

But this was not the condition of the Church of Christ. The followers of Jesus were united. They taught one doctrine, were animated with one Spirit, having the Holy Ghost, who was recognized by all as the true guide. In accordance with this, the Latter-day Saints proclaim that it was necessary that an angel should come again and restore the Gospel. The testimony about this, when first borne, startled the people. The world is not quite so startled at it now, because spiritualism has to a certain degree familiarized the minds of men with spiritual manifestations. But at first the idea was new. How else could the Gospel be restored, if the position taken by us, that the Priesthood had been taken away, is correct? No man held the authority; no one could say, I have a command from God.

Angels came and restored once more the authority to baptize and to lay the hands on for the reception of the Holy Ghost. And when the Elders made this statement, they said: "If you will repent of your sins and be baptized by one having authority to perform the ordinance, we testify to you, that you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and know for yourselves whether these doctrines be from God or of man." This has been the promise, and it constitutes the great strength of this work. None is asked to believe on the testimony of man alone. The supposition is among men of the world that the leaders of the Church are "shrewd fellows," and that the people follow them blindly. Nothing can be farther from the truth than this. It is a most erroneous idea. I would not give anything for converts gained on that principle. A church of such members would not be worth a straw. It would be like a rope of sand. Our strength is to obey the Gospel and to seek a testimony for ourselves. From this rule we have never deviated. People are urged to examine for themselves and to know that those who seek a testimony shall have it, and having obtained a testimony they will be a help to the cause of God, whatever their circumstances may be, for they are standing on the firm rock and are not having their faith pinned to anybody else.

This is the promise God has given to all who will receive His doctrines, that they shall be visited by the Holy Ghost. Suppose I were to call upon this congregation to give testimony, there would be hundreds, perhaps thousands, should the time permit, who would state that they know for themselves that this is true; not because some Elder has told them so, but because God has manifested it to them. They know that they have had their sins remitted and that they have received the Holy Ghost.

This, as has been said, constitutes our strength and is the difference between us and all others. This Church is the Church of God, or it is nothing. It is either all it professes to be, having

all the gifts and blessings claimed for it, or it is nothing. There is no half way. It is either a divine truth and must be received by everybody, or it is nothing at all. And this I would impress on the young minds.

Are there then no good men outside the Church? Yes, thousands. Does the Spirit of God work on men who do not belong to us? Yes. No good word has ever been uttered, no good invention has ever taken place without the operation of the Spirit. God blesses all His children. Even among the heathen, there are those who are acceptable to Him and who will receive their reward. This is the condemnation, that the light has come; but men loved the darkness more than the light. Those who shun the light when it is presented to them are condemned, but those who have not much light will be rewarded, if faithful, in their sphere. Those who know the will of our heavenly Father, but refuse to do it, shall be beaten with many stripes.

One of the grandest revelations given to the Prophet Joseph is the one now found in Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. lxxvi, concerning the glories to be bestowed upon the children of God. The old idea was that there were only two places to go to after this life, viz. heaven and hell, and that everyone had to go to one of these places immediately after death. Now this revelation came and conferred upon us a blessing in giving us better knowledge about our future state. It shows us the truth expressed by Paul that there are different glories in the resurrection. He teaches plainly that there are a variety of places. Ministers now commence to admit openly that there is a possibility of progressive sanctification after death. Dr. Briggs says that there is a foundation in the Scriptures for this doctrine. In the Scriptures we are plainly told that men will be rewarded according to their works, but no one seems to have comprehended the significance of this truth. How would it be possible to reward everybody according to his works, if all were thrown pell-mell either into hell or heaven? Joseph Smith taught that a man who would obey the Gospel would have the privilege of dwelling with the Father and receive the reward which, according to Paul, is typified by the glory of the sun. And as the moon receives her light from the sun, so others would receive a reflex of the glory from the first, which is the second degree of happiness. Then, as Paul expresses it, as one star surpasseth another in glory, so will it be in the resurrection.

Joseph taught also that all men, except the "sons of perdition," those who have had the testimony and again crucify the Son of God, like Judas for instance, will sooner or later be redeemed by the atoning blood of Christ. They will all be brought forth, after having received their punishment, and partake in the work of redemption. There is no such thing as the consignment of a soul, excepting the sons of perdition, to eternal damnation. Punishment is eternal, because it is God's punishment, and He is eternal, but those who suffer the wrath of God will finally be redeemed. The sinner will have to pay the penalty of breaking the commandments of

God, but the promise is that the sins shall be blotted out by repentance. This, however, does not consist in simply expressing a regret, but in abandoning the sins.

Now, these are the glad tidings of salvation, that sin shall be blotted out through the atoning blood of Jesus. And if we continue in well-doing and live holy lives we shall receive the blessings in store for us. By repenting of our sins and baptism we shall obtain the Holy Ghost and He will be a living power within us. If we will love our neighbors as ourselves and carry out in our lives the principles we profess to believe in, we shall be living witnesses to our fellowmen that we have entered upon a new life. Then we will never do any wrong without repenting of it. This is the life we should live as Latter-day Saints. Do we live so, and do we have the testimony within ourselves that we are doing that which is right? Then we are happy.

People sometimes talk of trials and feel discouraged. The saloons are open every day, and some say even on the Sabbath. Evils multiply, and it looks to some as if God had forgotten Zion. But he has not. God is with us. He is still guarding His Zion. I would not give much for a man's religion which cannot preserve him from breaking the Sabbath, or keep him from the saloons or from whoredom. Such a religion does not amount to much. We shall be a tried people and we must be tested in every direction. Hundreds of our missionaries have gone out in the world and returned pure as angels. They have not yielded to any sin of this character, nor done anything they are not willing to let their families know. You have lived your religion abroad and come back pure. Some have fallen, we know, but they are comparatively few. Is it not possible, then, for us, for our sons and daughters to live pure lives here? I say, it is possible. If we love sin and that which is evil better than our religion we sell this. If we take to profanity, or drinking, or whoredoms, we sell virtue and the love of God, sacrificing these to our appetites. Even the temptations that surround us will be for our good, for the Lord will overrule them. We are to be a pure people, and our God will protect us as He did the children in the burning furnace.

But you parents have a great responsibility. It is for you to teach your children the principles of religion. It is a great blessing to have children, but it brings with it care and anxiety and responsibility. They should be instructed and talked with, prayed with, but not wearied with long prayers. Fathers can pray in secret, but they should not inflict long prayers on their families. Pray to the point with them, and let the members of the family pray, too. Young men are often wearied with long prayers, whereas, religious exercises should be a pleasure and not something to be dreaded.

I pray God to bless you, that the Spirit may rest on us, till we are led back to the presence of God.

The choir sang the anthem entitled  
Life and Death.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder E. B. Tripp.