

the Corinthians had been "fornicators, adulterers, thieves, drunkards," previous to their embracing the Gospel; but now they were "washed, sanctified and justified." (1 Cor. vi: 11.) Peter speaks of some of the converts as having once been "walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." (1 Peter iv: 3.) But these sinners, who lived in a dissolute age and under the worst of governments, became converted because of being eminent in virtue above their fellow-men.

This eminence is acknowledged by all unprejudiced writers of the age. Clement of Rome (A. D. 100) says, "Who did ever live among you that did not admire your sober and moderate piety and declare the greatness of your hospitality? You are humble and not proud, content with the daily bread which God supplies, hearing diligently His word, and enlarged in charity." Justin Martyr (A. D. 165), formerly a platonic philosopher, says: "We who formerly delighted in adultery now observe the strictest chastity; we who used the charms of magic have devoted ourselves to the true God, and we who valued money and gain above all things now cast what we have in common, and distribute to every man according to his necessities." It has been supposed that the United Order of which we read, and which was founded in Jerusalem at the commencement of the Church, very soon collapsed. But, judging from this expression of justice, it appears that that order still worked more than 100 years after Christ. Minucius Felix, to a heathen opponent, says: "You punish wickedness when it is committed. We think it sinful to indulge in a sinful thought. It is with your party that the prisons are crowded, but not a single Christian is there, except it be as a confessor or apostate."

The influence of the Gospel was gradually felt among the heathen nations who heard it. In Greece, men like Lycurgus and Solon had encouraged impurities. At Rome they were openly practiced and approved; and nearly all ancient nations are said to have commended self-murder. Human sacrifices and the exposure of children were allowed. But wherever the Gospel was preached and believed all such practices were condemned and finally destroyed. That this was not the work of civilization, but of the Gospel, may be gathered from the fact that it was nations far above the humble Christians in refinement and education who committed the greatest outrages. Suppression of sin never keeps pace with the progress of civilization, but with the triumph of the Gospel.

Another effect of the Gospel was the many charitable institutions that always followed in its track. The relief of distress and the care of the poor are peculiar to Christianity. The Gospel, if rightly understood, would have already abolished the horrors of war, prevented slavery, put down feudal oppression, made all men brethren. For such are its

doctrines, that when once understood and practiced they will naturally exterminate all miseries of the human family.

These effects are truly wonderful, and may justly be appealed to as evidences of the truth of the Gospel.

But are such effects less strong evidence of the divine origin of the message of Joseph the Prophet when it can be proved that they invariably follow the acceptance of this message? We think not. Here are facts open to the inspection of everybody. We need not refer to a bygone antiquity to ascertain the effects of this message upon the people who have accepted it. The Latter-day Saints live today and their works may be scanned by all. Every honest investigator will find that the fruits produced today, as seen among the Latter-day Saints, are precisely the same as those which were seen among the early Christians, and to which I have above briefly referred.

We do not say that everyone who professes to be a Latter-day Saint is an evidence of the divinity of the Gospel. Nor was every individual who professed Christianity an evidence of its truth. On the contrary, many, even in the apostolic age, showed by their deeds that they were nothing but professors; and it is clearly not the profession that is the main feature. A man may profess to be what he is not.

Nor do we contend that the Latter-day Saints, considered as a religious community, are the best people on the earth. This is not for us to decide; nor is that our present question. The Saints may be the best people, taken as a whole, or they may not; yet in their present stage of development they have reached a high standard of excellence that is most desirable. This, however, does not affect our present argument.

What we do contend, and what we urgently invite everybody to ascertain for themselves, is this: that the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet, when accepted and honestly carried out in practice, has a tendency to change men for the better and produce fruits of faith, hope and charity, thus proving its divine origin by its fruits; for no deceptive fraud could produce these fruits. This is what we contend. Facts speak for themselves.

We live in an age when social questions threaten to blast society to its very foundations. Where in the whole world have these questions found their only possible solution to the satisfaction of all parties concerned? Not among the various religious bodies of the world; nor among the capitalists, nor among the anarchists, communists, socialists, or nihilists, but among the Saints. Over the thresholds of their peaceful homes these troublesome questions—ghosts at the appearance of which the world trembles—cannot enter. In the valleys of the mountains they are unknown, and must remain so as long as the Gospel is being preached.

Again, who has solved the question of the true relation between the sexes at once assigning to marriage

its divinity of origin and eternal importance, thereby checking the waves of sin which inundate the world, and securing happiness to all? We answer: The Latter-day Saints. One of the first fruits seen as the result of their doctrines is absolute purity.

Further, who fills the prisons as criminals? Not the Latter-day Saints, but outsiders, those who habitually speak of the degradation of the "Mormons;" those Christian associates give the stuff that contributes to the filling up of the prisons—a fact which of itself ought to be enough to convince the whole world of the divine origin of the message delivered through Joseph the Prophet. It is clear that doctrines which are strong enough to keep humanity from committing crimes—to which every human heart is more or less inclined—must be from God.

It may be asked who fills the saloons and gambling hells? Who swears and lies and slanders? Who is proud and vain, lazy and filthy? No one who has accepted the Gospel in reality—no Latter-day Saint. The Saints are, as such, temperate, industrious, humble, clean, loving, forbearing, long-suffering, rejoicing, fearing God; in short, bearing the fruits of righteousness. Such virtues the Gospel enjoins, and such fruits always accompany its real acceptance.

Could we speak of all the cases where men who were in every respect worldly, walking in sin, accepted the Gospel and became changed in every respect, this evidence would, indeed, amount to demonstration. Thousands are our witnesses to these facts—men who were fallen, on their way down to ruin and hell—families who have been happy by the restoration of their fallen ones to virtue, to society and to God.

Finally, has the world exhibited any nobler examples of self-sacrificing faith, of firmness and endurance under suffering and persecution than have many of those despised followers of the martyred prophet?

True, persecution has been raging against the Saints; but, like the palm tree, which is said to grow all the higher the more weight there is placed thereon, they have stood firm; in persecution they have been patiently enduring, knowing that, after all, God is the Supreme Ruler, and with this knowledge they have faced all adversity calmly and risen through their faith and hope far above the plots of those who know not God.

Such, then, are the efforts of the message under consideration. Well may we ask, Is it possible that such noble fruits of faith, hope and charity could be produced from anything that men could invent? An honest inquirer must answer in the negative. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v: 22, 23), and it is evident, therefore, that where these are found the Spirit of God is manifested.

Here, then, we again arrive at the