

During the time I was there, I baptized sixteen persons, viz:—one in Oakland, nine in San Francisco and six in Sacramento; ordained two Elders, organized two branches and two Sunday Schools; had Elders in Sacramento, and also in Southern California, and succeeded in getting Elders F. M. Lyman and B. H. Roberts to come to the southern part of the state to assist the Elders there for a short time during the early part of 1894.

This communication is a little lengthy, but I have been as brief as I could, and I hope you may give it a place in your valuable paper.

JOHN L. DALTON.

GIFT OF REVELATION.

In all ages and dispensations when the Church of God has been on the earth, the gift of revelation has been one of the most important gifts of the Spirit. It is essential to the very existence of the Church; for without it, the Church would become as lifeless as the human body without food, drink, or air. As the mortal body would die and become disorganized without these necessary elements, so the body of Christ—the Church—would die, become disorganized, and cease to exist on the earth, if this essential spiritual gift were taken from it. The gift of revelation is the spiritual food and drink, and the very life of the Church. Without it, God never has accepted nor even will recognize any church, as His own, in any age or generation, or among any people, nation or tongue.

The gift of revelation is necessary in the Church to reveal doctrine. Many in good principles have been revealed, in different ages, relating to the doctrine of salvation, which have been recorded for the benefit of man. But these recorded principles were never intended to supersede the necessity of the revelations of the Spirit in regard to the same subjects. Because the spirit revealed the doctrine of faith and repentance to the antediluvians, that was no reason why successive revelators, after the flood, should not have the same good principles revealed to them. Because faith and repentance were revealed in the books of Moses, that was no reason why the same should not be revealed anew in the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and in many other inspired writings of the Old Testament. Because Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were inspired to write doctrine, that did not hinder Peter, Paul, James and Jude from being inspired also to write upon the same. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of inspiration, that the same doctrine is often revealed, over and over again, in successive ages, by successive revelators. The reason why there is a repetition of revelations on the same subject is, not because such subject is wholly unknown, but because there are many other principles connected with it, which are of importance to be revealed, and which could not be manifested with the same good effect, if isolated from principles which were formerly revealed.

Another reason why the same doctrine is revealed over again in successive generations, is because it may not be as plain to the generations following as when first revealed; the latter being wholly unacquainted with the circumstances under which it was given. To remove this obscurity, God reveals the same doctrine to successive ages with

such explanations as are necessary to make it plain to the understanding of all. Language is sometimes ambiguous and very imperfect; and especially where sacred writings have been translated from one language to another by uninspired men. The real meaning of the revelator is not always clearly understood; hence arises differences of opinion and great divisions. To remove these evils, the gift of revelation is necessary, to reveal the doctrine over again in language that can be understood; and thus to unite the views of the Saints and make them one.

The gift of revelation is necessary in the Church, not only to reveal in greater plainness what has become partially obscure, by tradition and many other causes combined but to make manifest doctrine that has been nearly or entirely lost; such as marriage for eternity; the multiplication of the human species after the resurrection; the pre-existence of the spirits of all flesh; the redemption of spirits from prison by the preaching of the Gospel to them; baptism for the dead; the redemption and immortality of the animal creation; and a great variety of other doctrines which have evidently once been understood, as the scriptures, by references, more or less obscure, indicated. The gift of revelation will therefore reveal and make plain such doctrines as have been lost to the world for ages.

In different dispensations there are generally some doctrines entirely new, such as have not been revealed to any former age. The gift of revelation therefore, is necessary to point out what doctrines are intended to be peculiar to the dispensation in which they are given. Circumcision was peculiar from Abraham till Christ; the passover and many of the laws and ordinances of Israel, were peculiar during the Mosaic dispensation; the sacrament of the Lord's supper was peculiar to the Christian dispensation; the gathering of all things in one, in heaven and on earth, which are in Christ, is peculiar to the great and last dispensation of the fulness of times. The gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel. The building of the old and the new Jerusalem, and the preparations for the second advent will include many doctrines, ordinances, statutes, commands, and institutions, peculiar to the last dispensation. Therefore, the gift of revelation is necessary to bring forth things both new and old.

The gift of revelation is necessary to make known the callings of God unto men. There are many appointments in the Church; such as those of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Bishops, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, and Deacons. Without revelation it could not be known whom the Spirits selected to fill these responsible stations. Therefore, with out revelation there could be no legal authorities ordained; hence the Church would necessarily cease from the earth when the last ones, ordained by revelation, left or departed this life. It is admitted by both Catholics and Protestants, and by nearly the whole of Christendom, that there have been no revelations since the first century of the Christian era; consequently, there could have been no callings to the ministry after that period; therefore, when the ministers who lived at the close of the first century died, the authority and the Church must have ceased from the eastern hemisphere.

The gift of revelation is also necessary to make known the duties of the official members of the Church. In the Christian Church in ancient times, ministers were set apart for missions to various countries, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost; they were also dictated by revelation in their daily duties; they were forbidden by revelation to visit certain places which they intended to visit, and commanded to visit certain countries where they had no intention of going. Without revelation, they could neither be called to the ministry, nor act in the same, even if they could have been called. Therefore, take away this one spiritual gift, and the Church would necessarily cease from the earth.

ORSON PRATT.

MARYLAND CONFERENCE.

ROCKVILLE, Montgomery, Co., Maryland, December 31, 1896.

At our last conference held at Metz, West Virginia, I was appointed to labor with Elder E. Tanner, Jr. We left Metz and attended the conference held at Pratt, Maryland. While there we had a good time and received valuable instructions from our president, Elder Samuel G. Spencer. From there we came on to this place and went to work according to instructions, without purse or scrip. We went to see the mayor and got permission to distribute our tracts in the city, and then went to the board of education to see if we could get schoolhouses to hold meetings in, but were refused. We met with kind people who took us in and administered to our wants. On the 16th of October, Elder Heber Hogan and Nathan Thomas, from Cache County, Utah, arrived here. E. Tanner and Heber Hogan went into Harford County to labor.

We find a very hospitable people in this county and I think we have made a great many friends, although we cannot get many houses to hold meetings in. We travel from house to house distributing tracts, selling many copies of the Voice of Warning, and talking with the people wherever they invite us into their houses. We went into a small town called the Great Falls on Saturday night; went to the man that had charge of the hall and got the privilege of holding meetings there on Sunday. We then went to the hotel and told the proprietor who we were and how we traveled, and he took us in and treated us very kindly. This place is a pleasure resort for the rich people, and on Sunday they came pouring in on bicycles and in carriages to spend the Sabbath in pleasure. But we held our meetings and had a good turnout at both of them, and we were invited to spend Monday with a family at this place. There we found some honest souls seeking after the truth. They had many questions to ask us, which were all answered to their satisfaction, and on their request we held a meeting at their house in the evening. A few of the neighbors came in and we had a good time. All felt well paid for coming out to hear us. On Tuesday morning we blessed their baby and bade them good-bye.

Leaving there we went down the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, by which is transported coal from Cumberland to Washington by means of large boats which are drawn by two or three mules; their travel was very slow. We went to Washington the other day, and while