

the general belief in many circles, and among people who, on other subjects, are well informed. They have an idea that we are a very peculiar people, and that our peculiarities have their origin in those books. Of course, among people who have read the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants these ideas do not prevail, because such persons are aware that those books corroborate the Bible, and are witness of the truth of the great principles contained in the Old and New Testaments, and teach precisely the same.

The peculiarities, if such they may be called, which distinguish us from other people, have their origin in our implicit faith in the Scriptures. There is no principle nor doctrine of our faith that we are not willing to have tested by the revelations and teachings contained in King James's translation of the Bible; and our elders have gone forth taking that as their text-book, preaching from it the principles which those now called Latter-day Saints have embraced and which caused them to gather together from the nations of the earth, to the State of Ohio, then to Missouri, then to Illinois and then to these valleys.

This statement may sound strangely to the ears of many. I have heard people express considerable surprise upon hearing it. I recollect in my early experience as an Elder meeting and having considerable conversation upon our principles with a clergyman. I left with him the work called "The Voice of Warning" and when I called upon him again after a lapse of a few days, he expressed his surprise at there being any diversity between the Latter-day Saints and the orthodox sects. "For," said he, "see that you base your faith upon and draw your arguments from the New Testament." I admitted that it was strange, but remarked to him that it was because we received the New Testament literally, and believed that the teachings contained in that book were intended to be understood as they were written; and that when God made a declaration, or His authorized servants preached the gospel, or made certain plain and positive promises, the design was that the children of men should rely upon those promises and believe the principles of that Gospel with the most unwavering faith and expect their fulfillment to the very letter, if they would only comply with the conditions connected therewith.

This is the great difficulty to-day; this is the cause of the diversity of beliefs in the Christian world. Instead of taking the word of the Lord as it is, they wish to place their own construction on that word so as to suit their own peculiar ideas and views; and having thus interpreted it, they frame their belief in accordance with that interpretation. But it is very plain, from words contained in the New Testament, that the Lord expected His children to believe the Gospel and to carry it out in their practice, as it was delivered anciently. For instance: Paul, on one occasion, when writing to the Galatians, said:

"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

And, as if to make this so positive that it could not be misunderstood, he repeated the language. Here an anathema is pronounced upon the head of any individual who should attempt to preach any other gospel than that which the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles had declared; even if an angel from Heaven were to declare anything opposed to or differing from it he was to be accursed.

It is highly important that mankind should understand what was the nature of that gospel, and whether the creeds to which they have rendered obedience in these days agree with the principles preached by the Apostles; if they do not, they who preach them are exposed to the anathema pronounced by Paul, or his words are not to be relied upon. It is a very easy matter to find out what the Apostles did preach; there need be no difficulty about this if people will receive the teachings contained in the New Testament, for there we have a record of their labors and an epitome of the doctrines they taught and administered to the people.

If we refer to the first discourse that was preached after the ascension of Jesus into heaven we shall find what the Apostles taught on that occasion, when inspired by the Holy Ghost, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The people were excited over the strange event that had taken place in their midst; for men of various nations had gathered together to the Holy City and the apostles stood up in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost and declared to the people there assembled, the startling intelligence that Jesus, whom they had so recently crucified as an impostor, was indeed the Lord of life and glory and was the veritable Son of God, the Messiah, of which the prophets had spoken and for whose coming they had so long and anxiously looked. This was unexpected intelligence to them; but the arguments of the Apostles, on this matter were so convincing, and the power of God so apparent,—each man hearing the gospel in his own tongue, that they were pricked to the heart and were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and they cried out "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is very reasonable to suppose that when the Apostles answered this question, made under such extraordinary circumstances, they would declare the doctrines and requirements which would be binding on all the inhabitants of the earth under similar circumstances. To

imagine anything else would be to suppose that which would be contrary to reason and common sense. To think that they would tell something that was not necessary and essential to salvation on such an important occasion, when so many were pricked to their hearts, is to suppose something that is not consistent with the character of the Apostles and the nature of their mission to the children of men. Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Thus, he set before them in simplicity and in the greatest plainness, the requirements with which they must comply in order to receive that which they desired.

It was not necessary for him to say unto them Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for they did already believe, having been convinced through the testimony of the Apostles. Peter, therefore, said unto them, "repent,"—that being the next principle they had to obey,—"repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." He did not say unto them "here is an anxious bench," or "come and throw yourselves at the foot of the cross, and seek with prayer before the Lord until He remits your sins." He did not tell them to do any such thing, but he told them to repent of their sins, that is to forsake them, and to be baptized for the remission of them, promising them that they should receive the Holy Ghost, for, said he, "the promise is unto you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

How many did the Lord call? Why He has called all. He commanded the Apostles to go and preach the gospel to every creature, therefore every human being on the face of the earth was called by the Lord; and the promise was unto the multitude there assembled and to all afar off; hence, it is quite clear that all the inhabitants of the earth had a claim on this promise on complying with the conditions prescribed,—namely, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance of their sins, being baptized for their remission, and having hands laid upon them for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

This was the gospel which Peter preached unto the people on the day of Pentecost, and several thousands of them went forth and were baptized on that occasion. We find, by examining the "Acts of the Apostles," that this was the nature of their teaching on every occasion when preaching to the people, and we also find that when the people did comply with these requirements the Holy Ghost did rest upon them.

A great many have had the idea that the Holy Ghost was only bestowed upon those who were called to act as officers in the churches; but an investigation of the labors of the Apostles will prove that this was not the case, and will establish the fact that every individual, whether male or female, who was baptized by the servants of God for the remission of sins, received the laying on of hands, and also the Holy Ghost. You recollect, doubtless, the record contained in the 8th chapter of Acts, which contains an account of Philip preaching the gospel in Samaria and baptizing some believers. Philip, it seems, had only the authority that John the Baptist had, holding the same priesthood as he did. It is written of John that he said "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." John never presumed to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; he had not the authority. He was a priest after the order of Aaron; he held the Aaronic priesthood, to which priesthood belongs not the authority to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. To do this it requires a priest after the Order of Melchizedec, which Jesus and His Apostles held. Philip, after leaving Samaria, baptized the Eunuch, but we do not read that he laid his hands upon him, evidently proving that he held only the priesthood of Aaron. When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, through Philip, they sent unto them Peter and John, two of the Apostles, who, when they came unto them, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, and they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. It did not rest upon them previous to this ordinance being attended to; for the Testament says the Holy Ghost had not as yet fallen upon any of them, although they had been baptized. This shows that, not only is it necessary for men to believe in Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and be baptized for the remission of them, but that they must receive the laying on of hands of those who have authority, or they could neither claim nor enjoy the Holy Ghost; but when they did have hands laid upon them, wonderful to relate in this age of unbelief, the Holy Ghost rested down upon them and they were filled therewith, and they were bound and united together and they knew the things of God and enjoyed the gifts of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

On one occasion Paul met with a number of disciples at Ephesus and he enquired of them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. They told him they had not so much as heard whether there be

any Holy Ghost. He then enquired unto what then were they baptized. They replied they were baptized unto John's baptism. Paul baptized them anew, and laid hands upon them, and, we are told, they received the Holy Ghost and spake with tongues and prophesied. Paul had authority; he held the Melchizedec priesthood, in which was included the authority to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

This is the manner in which the Apostles preached the gospel; there is no record of their doing it in any other way. We do not read of their teaching the people the plan of salvation in any other way.

A great many, to prove that baptism and laying on hands are not necessary, have cited the case of Cornelius, who, though he was not baptized, received the Holy Ghost. The case of Cornelius is the only case of the kind on record, and there were strong reasons why it should be as it was with him. The gospel and its ordinances were administered only to the Jews; Cornelius was a Gentile, and between the two races strong prejudices existed, the Jews looking upon the Gentiles as far inferior to them. Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles to whom the gospel was preached, they received it, and the Lord, to show to the Apostles that the Gentiles were entitled to the ordinances of salvation as well as the Jews, if they were willing to comply with the requirements of the gospel, conferred the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his family. When Peter saw this family he said "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." And when, afterwards, he heard them speak with tongues and magnify God, he said, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Peter did not say, Cornelius, you have received the Holy Ghost as well as we have, and there is no necessity for you to obey any further ordinances, which, under the circumstances, if he had considered baptism or the laying on of hands non-essential, he would have been very likely to do; but instead of that he commanded them to be baptized. Peter took this, as the Lord intended it, as an evidence that the Gentiles as well as the House of Israel were entitled to the gospel. And he had them baptized, and without doubt laid his hands upon them to confirm upon them the gift they had received. Had Cornelius, at that hour, stood upon his dignity and said There is no necessity for me to be baptized for the remission of my sins, God having given me the Holy Ghost without obeying that ordinance; and having already received the Holy Ghost, I have no need to have hands laid upon me, there is not a doubt in my mind but what that precious and inestimable gift would have been withdrawn from him, and he would not have enjoyed it after. It could only be continued to him on condition of his obeying the ordinances which God had placed in His church and which He required all the inhabitants of the earth to submit to without hesitation; and without doubt, Cornelius wisely went forward and obeyed those ordinances.

This was the manner in which the Apostles preached the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth in those days. They did not say to the people "you must seek the Holy Ghost and probably the Lord will give it to you if you will only exercise faith enough;" but they told the people plainly, and positively, without the least hesitation, that if they would comply with certain requirements they should receive the Holy Ghost. The only condition was their sincerity and faithfulness in obeying the requirements.

What were the fruits of this preaching? Wherever the Apostles went and the people received their testimony the Spirit of God rested upon them and their hearts were united, and they enjoyed the gifts of prophecy, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, wisdom, knowledge and all the varied gifts of the gospel necessary for their growth and development in the things of God. This was not the case at Jerusalem alone, but in far off Ephesus and in the various cities of Asia Minor where Paul preached; and throughout the length and breadth of the earth wherever the Apostles traveled these peculiar gifts and manifestations were enjoyed.

Paul, who had been separated from the rest of the Apostles for a number of years, found, when he came to Jerusalem and was united with them, that he had precisely the same knowledge concerning the gospel of Christ that they had; the Holy Ghost had taught it to him the same as it had to Peter, James, John, Andrew and the rest of the Apostles. And had they been permitted to continue their labors the inhabitants of the earth, if they had received the gospel, would have been united together as one in the things of God.

Does anybody wonder that there is division now in Christendom? Does anybody wonder that, instead of there being "one lord, one faith and one baptism," as recorded in the words I have read in your hearing, there are, it may be said, many lords, many faiths and many baptisms? Does anybody wonder at this? I can not when I see how men have strayed from the path that Jesus marked out; when I hear men say that baptism is non-essential. What a wide difference between such persons and the Lord Jesus Christ! You will remember that when John came baptizing

in the wilderness Jesus applied to him for baptism, and, in answer to the remonstrance of John, who seemed to think that he had more need to be baptized by the Savior than for the Savior to be baptized by him, Jesus said:

"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The wonder is that there is a remnant of faith in Jesus left in the world when we see how widely men have diverged from the paths in which the Apostles walked, and from the doctrines which they taught.

We must always bear in mind that which Paul said,—"though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." We must bear this in mind when we investigate the nature of the Apostles' teachings and the ordinances and doctrines which they administered and taught. If they who profess to be preachers of the gospel diverge in the least from the doctrines and principles taught by the Apostles they place themselves in a position to receive the condemnation which Paul invoked.

I have endeavored in these remarks to bring your minds to the faith the Saints once enjoyed, and to the teachings which the Apostles, in their day, laid before the people, and called upon them, in all earnestness, to obey. I have done this in order that you may be prepared for that which we teach, for we teach precisely the same principles that they did. Men wonder and say, "How is it that you Latter-day Saints can live together as you do? How is it that you are so united?" The secret lies in the fact that we have the same principles to teach to the people that were taught by the ancient Apostles, and the same results follow in our case as in theirs.

It has been frequently remarked to the elders, when abroad, "What necessity was there for an angel to come from Heaven to earth to bring, as you say he did, the everlasting gospel when we have the Bible and Christian organizations and Christian churches all through the land?" This is a very important question, and one to which I will try and give a satisfactory answer. There would have been no necessity of any such thing if the churches at the time Joseph Smith sought for knowledge, had taught the same principles the Apostles declared, and if believers in these days had enjoyed the same gifts and blessings that they did in theirs. But if there was such a church at that time history has failed to record the fact. There was no man on the face of the earth, of whom we have heard, who declared to the people that if they would believe in Jesus and repent of their sins and be baptized for the remission of them, they should receive the Holy Ghost. On the contrary, the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, as anciently, with its gifts and powers, was denied by the whole Christian world. They declared that these gifts were not for this generation, but were bestowed upon the primitive church for the whole and sole purpose of establishing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that when that was accomplished there was no longer any need for them. That was the belief in Christendom then, and that is the belief there now; you may hear it expressed on every hand when conversing on these subjects. They will declare that there is no necessity for these gifts in this age, as if the Holy Ghost could be enjoyed by man and these gifts not manifested! Such a thing is impossible! There would have been no necessity for the restoration of the gospel to the earth by an angel if the keys and priesthood by which the ancient Apostles officiated had not been taken from the earth. It is true that the Catholic church claims direct succession from the Apostles; other churches claim the same; and all, claiming any authority whatever, endeavor to trace it back to them. They all base their claims to authority on the fact that the Apostles received it. The Catholic church, especially, claim uninterrupted descent from Peter and the last of the Apostles. But, while so doing, they ignore the fact that as long as there was a man on the earth who laid claim to authority direct from God the inhabitants of the earth warred against him, until they had succeeded in killing him, as they had all others. This fact, though as familiar as any fact, to the student of history, is lost sight of by the Catholic church. So long as the Apostles lived, and so long as any man lived who had been associated with them in their labors, there was an incessant persecution carried on against them. And it is recorded that every one of them, except John, died a violent death. They tried to kill John: they immersed him in a cauldron of boiling oil and sent him to the Isle of Patmos to work in the lead mines, and persecuted him in various ways; but, owing to the promise of God, they could not kill him. Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards, not considering himself worthy to be crucified as his Lord had been. Paul was beheaded in Rome; the other Apostles were killed in various ways, every one of them suffering an ignominious death because of their belief in Jesus; because they believed God was a God of revelation, and because they laid claim to authority from Jesus to administer the ordinances of His church. This was the course pursued by the inhabitants of the earth until the Apostles and every man having authority had been killed, and the gifts and blessings had entirely disappeared from the earth. After this men took to themselves doctrines to accommodate themselves, the rites and many of the doctrines of Paganism and portions of existing insti-