

his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—an intelligent being. All people received that spirit naturally at birth; but there was a higher endowment given afterward by the Almighty to those who received His word and obeyed His commandments. It was called the gift of the Holy Ghost, and it was by that gift and power that the Prophets spake in ancient times and wrote the books contained in the Old Testament—by which the Apostles wrote the things that were inspired contained in the New Testament.

Of course the Prophets here spoken of were the Hebrew Prophets. But, he asked, had the manifestations of the Almighty been confined to one race of people? He did not believe they had. He recognized the fact that God chose Israel specially and their Prophets to be His oracles; but he believed that God had regard to His children in other parts of the world besides Palestine, and had raised up good men through whom he had manifested His light and truth for the benefit of the people among whom they lived—not always in the same degree of power and intelligence, but according to the condition, circumstances, capabilities, and necessities of the people in various ages and parts of the world.

He believed that all the religions which had had force in the world, which had swayed the minds of millions of the human family, were in the beginning the revelations of God—not that those revelations had come down to later generations in their purity; but in the beginning God raised up great men, whom He inspired, in whom He put His Spirit, and that they brought forth truth according to the circumstances and needs of the people to whom they were sent; and the people had been blessed and benefited by hearkening to their voice. But as in the case of all other religions, in the beginning they were pure, in after years they became corrupted, and the ideas and notions of men had been mingled with them. So it was with the sayings of the ancient Prophets; so with the doctrines they promulgated. Jesus Christ came into the world at the time appointed and brought from God to the people truths that were revealed in the earlier ages of the world, but which had been lost from among men through their darkness, transgressions and lack of faith, and these in their turn had been perverted by human opinions.

Jesus of Nazareth came as the Son of God, representing the Almighty Father. He was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." This taught us that God is a person, not a diffused spirit or something that could not be comprehended at all; but an individual, a personality, and Jesus was His express image—the brightness of His glory—His first-begotten in the spirit in the eternal world, and all mankind, He said, were His brethren. God was the Father of us all; the spirits of men were His offspring. This was what the Apostle meant when he said "We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live?"—Hebrews xii, 9. If we were obedient to the fathers of our flesh, how much more should

we be obedient to Him who is the Father of our spirits—immortal because they were the offspring of an immortal Being? The idea that God was a phantom "without body, parts or passions, whose centre was everywhere and His circumference nowhere," was a something which men had evolved out of their own minds, but which God Himself had not communicated in any age of the world. Jesus said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He and the Father were one—that was, one in sentiment, in spirit but not in personality. He prayed that all His disciples might become one, even as He and the Father were one.

It was a very singular thing that people who professed to believe in the Bible, who sang:

"Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine,"

and would pretend to believe that God spake in ancient days in divers ways and at sundry times, would not believe that He would or could speak to man in modern times. It was a marvel to him, but that was a doctrine of modern Christendom, which taught that the Bible was the only Word of God, and that "whatsoever was not in accordance therewith, and could not be proved thereby, was not to be received, as an article of faith." He would like to know where either in the Old or New Testament it was declared that the time when the word of the Lord should come to the people of the earth was limited. Where could we find within the lids of the Bible any declaration that God would nevermore speak to mankind? Nowhere. Why should it be so? Why should God suddenly cease to speak to the inhabitants of the earth, seal up the heavens as brass and close up all communication from on high? The speaker could see no reason for it, and certainly there was no revelation for it. On the contrary, some of those men through whom God spake in ancient times declared that the time would come when all people living would have the knowledge of God, should know Him from the least even unto the greatest. Could man find out God by his own researches? No, it was not in his power. The only way whereby man could learn of God, his Father, was by revelation; he could not tear away the covering which hid the Almighty from his gaze. "Men by searching cannot find out God," we were told in holy writ. But Jesus said: "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast kept these things hid from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," etc.

"And no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

The only way whereby man could learn of God, then, was by revelation from Him, and if it required revelation one or two thousand years ago to enable mankind to understand Him, it would take revelation to do so in the nineteenth century. But people had come to be so wondrously wise in their own conceit, that they thought they did not need revelation now. He would admit that there had been wonderful developments of knowledge in this nineteenth century in various departments; that science had

made rapid strides; that God had been pleased to enlighten the minds of men so that great truths had been brought forth. He believed that all this had come from God—that all the inventions, so called, which had been made in this age had been brought forth by the power of God for the benefit of mankind. But notwithstanding the wisdom and developments of the present century, the wise men of the age had not been able to explain to the people who or what God is, nor declare anything which would unite them in their religious views and worship. Indeed, the more they preached by "the enticing words of man's wisdom" and brought forth the results of their learning, study, and researches, the more did they becloud the minds of men in regard to theology, and bring in "confusion worse confounded."

The attempts made by the learned of the age to describe God were supremely ridiculous and contradictory. From the time when Athanasius devised his creed until now all such attempts had proved utter failures. All mankind could learn of God if He would reveal Himself to them; and what was there to hinder it? Why should He not reveal Himself today just as much as in former days? We read that He does not change, but was the same yesterday, today and forever"—that His ways are one eternal round.

A little over half a century ago a young man, a native of this land, declared that God had revealed Himself to him that the Father and the Son had appeared unto him in the day time—not in a dream of the night—and that the Father, pointing to the Son, said, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him." He was an unlearned youth, and he prayed to God in the simplicity of his heart desiring to know the truth. He had read in the Epistle of James: "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," etc. He prayed in faith to God to manifest to him which was the true religion; he believed that God would answer him. But how many people when they said their prayers nowadays ever thought or believed that God would answer them? How many of the divines of the nineteenth century who with folded hands and eyes rolled up to heaven, and in sanctified tones repeated the prayers which had been written for them, Sunday after Sunday, expected to get a direct answer from God? Not many, if any. This boy, believing that God would answer him, prayed in faith and received this divine manifestation, and he bore testimony to the world to the vision which he had seen. Then he was hooted at and scoffed by the most "religious" people of the time, in the neighborhood in which he lived. Why? Because the very idea that God would manifest himself in the nineteenth century was absolutely absurd in their eyes. Revelation had ceased, according to modern "Christian" doctrine. The "awful voice of prophecy," to use a quotation from one of the most noted divines, "was silenced for ever." The canon of Scripture was full. Revelation was finished with the Bible, according to their ideas. So when Joseph Smith came and bore testimony to this vision they declared it