

condition of things without having his heart filled with joyous feelings. It is a source of wonder and gratitude to contemplate the fact that, a few years ago, a few apparently insignificant and illiterate men went forth bearing testimony that God had again spoken from the heavens, and had revealed the everlasting gospel in its ancient purity and power, and that through this testimony thousands, from the various nations of the earth and the islands of the sea, have been gathered to these valleys, and are able to bear the same testimony. When I contemplate these facts my mind is swallowed up with admiration, and my heart is filled with gratitude and praise to our Heavenly Father for the great work which He has founded and carried on successfully in the midst of the most determined opposition, and I feel that we, of all people now living, should thank and praise our Father and God that our lot has been cast upon the earth when these great events are in progress.

I know that the cry of "delusion" and "false prophets" is raised on every hand, and that the people, generally say, and have been saying for years, that "the Latter-day Saints are deceived, and that their organization will speedily come to an end." Yet, despite these sayings, the work of God still goes on and is making rapid strides towards the fulfillment of that high destiny which its Author has predicted concerning it. When you compare this work with the work that was done by Christ and His apostles you will find a great analogy between the two. If we are every where spoken against and our names cast out as evil, they were served the same way; if we are hated, so were they; if we are despised and condemned, they were not considered worthy the society of their contemporaries, many of whom thought they were doing God service by killing them. If we were the first whose names have been cast out as evil, or if this generation were the first that had hated the truth, our case would be pitiable indeed; but in every age, from the days of Noah down to the age of the apostles, this has been invariably the case. Every man to whom the heavens have been opened and who has received revelations from God has been hated by his fellows; his life has been sought, and he has had no peace on the earth. No matter how numerous such persons have been they have been hunted and driven. So true is this that Stephen the martyr, when being stoned to death, taunted the Jews with their unbelief and the acts of their ancestors. Said he "which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One."

Most of the prophets that ever lived on the earth, of whom we have any account, have suffered martyrdom. And not only has this been the case with the prophets, but also with Jesus himself, that Being who came to the earth clothed with the power and authority of the Godhead—although His glory was hid from men. He who spake as never man spake, and labored as never man labored in the midst of the children of men, performing mighty miracles and doing wonderful works, but what kind of treatment did He receive? He was hated, spit upon, cast out from among men, and finally killed; and His disciples and apostles after Him shared the same fate.

We have a glorious array of predecessors; and it is a source of consolation and encouragement that we do not stand alone in this respect, and that in former times, men have been hated and despised as we are hated and despised, to-day, and for no other cause than for preaching the truth in its purity and standing up in defence of holy and pure principles revealed from Heaven. In fact the persecutions and hatred the Latter-day Saints have been called to pass through, instead of being an evidence against, are an evidence in favor of the truth of the work they are engaged in. Jesus says "woe unto you when all men speak well of you." He warned his disciples of danger when their names were honored and when all men spoke well of them.

I have said that the Lord has blessed His servants in sending them forth to preach the gospel. The same results have followed their preaching as followed the preaching of the Apostles of Jesus anciently. Those who obeyed their teachings were united, so are the Latter-day Saints. I have seen them, and so have you, coming from the four quarters of the earth, mingling together, not knowing each other's language, nor familiar with each other—baptized by men whom they had never before seen—men who had never gathered to Zion nor associated with the heads of the Church; but who, like Paul, had received it away from the centre stake or place where the authorities resided;

and yet they could all testify in their own languages, to one another, that they had received the gospel of Jesus, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in consequence of their obedience to the form of doctrine taught unto them; and they are able to dwell together here in this Territory in peace, love and union, although, as I have said, brought up in different countries, and trained in different creeds. What more could the gospel have done when preached by the Apostles? What more did it do when preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost? The results which Jesus prayed for have been fully realized in the day in which we live, and in the midst of the people to which we belong.

It may be asked why should not these results be realized by this people? I have told you that God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; I have told you that the Spirit of God produces the same results and the same testimony all the world over. And why should it not? Is there anything strange about that? It would be strange if it did not do so. If there be anything strange, wonderful or worthy of remark it is that among those professing to be the followers of Christ and claiming to be His ministers, there is not that love, union and knowledge in these days which were possessed by those who believed in Him anciently. It is strange that men professing to be followers of Jesus to-day do not enjoy the same manifestations and blessings as they did who believed in Him anciently.

There is one thing worthy of note in this connection, and that is, that when Joseph Smith first proclaimed to the people that God had spoken from the heavens and sent His holy angels to minister to him, and bestowed upon him the knowledge and authority necessary to build up the Church, he met with opposition and ridicule on every hand. Scarcely a man whom he met would acknowledge that such a thing was possible or at all consistent with God's mode of dealing with the children of men in these days. It is true that he was successful in convincing a few that he had the testimony of Jesus. They obeyed God's doctrine taught to them and received the testimony; but for years after he started out to make this proclamation he had this kind of opposition to contend with. But he said the time would come when there would be strong delusion and lying spirits permitted to come forth among the people. He declared that God had restored the priesthood to the earth, and the ordinances of the gospel, and had established His Church in its purity; and that those who did not believe the testimony of the servants of God and obey it, would be given over to hardness of heart and become subject to evil influences that were known nothing of previous to the establishing of the Church and the restoration of the priesthood.

Years elapsed before this prediction was fulfilled, but it was eventually verified. I recollect very well the first time I got any intimation of it. I was on the Sandwich Islands on a mission; I had stepped into the house of a man who afterwards became a member of the church. I happened to pick up a book, upon examining which, I found a good many things that struck me as being very strange. I thought, at first that it must be a work written by the Latter-day Saints; but I soon found that it was not. The argument of the writer was in favor of communication with the spirit world through the ministering of angels, being as possible in these days as at former times. He used precisely similar arguments to those used by the elders of this church; and quoted largely from the Bible to prove that it had been quite common for men in ancient days to have such communications and to possess the gift of prophecy and the spirit of revelation, and he argued in favor of these modes of communication in these days. I was very much surprised at seeing such principles advocated by this book; but immediately the recollection of Joseph's predictions flashed across my mind. I was but young at the time he made the remark, but I recollected it. I have had opportunities of watching the growth and development of this movement from that day to the present time. I have come in contact with many who profess to believe in spiritual communication; and in traveling through the United States at the present time you will find a great many individuals who entertain this belief. What has produced this change? Why, it is the very thing which Paul said would come. The people in his day would not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved, "therefore" said he, "for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe

a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." They would not believe the testimony of the servants of God, therefore they were given up to hardness of heart and spiritual blindness. When these things overtake them they are ready to fall in with any spirit or influence that will manifest itself amongst them in an extraordinary manner.

For years after the truth was revealed men would continue to ask for a sign. "If you are the men you profess to be," they would say, "give us some miracle,—cause the blind to see, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, or the lame to walk, that we may know you are sent of God." How many thousands of times have the elders been urged to give some exhibition of power that men might know they were sent of God! Thousands and thousands of times have professed ministers of the gospel made this request of them. They would not believe the words of Jesus that "these signs shall follow them that believe;" but they wanted the elders to give signs to prove that Jesus told the truth. You know what Jesus says respecting those who wanted signs,—"It is a wicked and adulterous generation that seek a sign, but no sign shall be given them."

The elders of this church have proved the truth of the words of Jesus, that it is a wicked and adulterous generation that seek for a sign. You will generally find that they are wicked men who ask for this kind of evidence. A wicked man is not satisfied with the truth or with the testimony of the servants of God, nor with the calm, heavenly influence of the spirit of God which rests down upon those who receive the truth in honesty. No, such a man wants a sign; he wants to hear somebody speak in tongues, or to see the eyes of the blind opened, or the deaf made to hear, the dumb to speak the lame to walk, or the dead raised to life. Something of this kind he must have; the testimony of the truth, though borne with angel's power, has no effect on such a heart. He wants something to convince his outward senses. Thousands of such have rejected the gospel of life and salvation as they did in the days of Jesus. They then rejected the testimony of the servants of God, and they hardened their hearts against it. But as soon as something came along that gratified them in the way they wanted,—something that could tip a table or give some other singular manifestation of power, such as feeling invisible hands laid upon them, or hearing music played by invisible performers, or something of this character, they were convinced immediately that it was possible for spiritual beings to communicate with mortals and now the Spiritualists number their converts by millions; they probably number more than any other denomination, if they can be called a denomination. They boast of their success.

In this manner the nations of the earth are being subjected to strong delusions; and you will find that as the kingdom of God increases, and as the work spreads abroad and the priesthood gains power and influence in the earth, these systems will gain power and influence, and that strong delusion will increase and spread among the inhabitants of the earth. They did not make their appearance until this church was organized and the testimony of its truth had been borne; but as soon as the genuine priesthood was restored the bogus or counterfeit made its appearance; and as this work increases in strength and potency in the earth, so will these delusions of which I speak, until those who reject the truth will be bound up in strong delusion and delivered over to hardness of heart. It is written that "the spirit of God will not always strive with man," and when the truth is offered to men and they reject it, that spirit will be withdrawn and another influence and spirit will take possession of them, and they will be led captive by the Adversary.

But this is not the case with the work of God; the testimony of those who have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ is different in this respect. It is as it was of old,—"line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." God has revealed to His people according to their strength to receive. He has given to them knowledge just as wise parents give it to their children. He has not bestowed upon them something that would destroy them; but He has given to them light upon light and knowledge upon knowledge in order to lead them along and train them in the path of righteousness which will ultimately lead them back into his presence. What joy,

peace, love and union have been bestowed upon those who have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ! What light has been shed upon their minds in relation to the Scriptures! No sooner have they gone forth into the waters of baptism for the remission of their sins and had hands laid upon them for the Holy Ghost than it has seemed as though a Heavenly peace has taken possession of them. Who, that can recollect anything about the time they entered the Church and their subsequent experience, cannot say that they felt unspeakable gratitude to God for the blessings they received? It has been "like the dew from Heaven descending." It has descended upon the people and filled them with peace, and has knit their hearts together in love, and they have rejoiced in the power which God has manifested in their behalf. But they have not had these wonderful manifestations of which we read among the Spiritualists; there has been no necessity for them.

There is something remarkable in the growth and development of Spiritualism. When Joseph declared that angels had come from Heaven and had manifested themselves to him in bodily presence, and had laid their hands upon him, his testimony was rejected, the people declaring him to be an imposter, a false prophet, and not worthy to live; and they were not satisfied until they had killed him. But how changed has all become since then! What advancement the world has made in beliefs of this kind! You may tell almost anything about spiritual manifestations, and the people are ready to believe it,—that is, if it is outside of the priesthood and does not come from the Latter-day Saints; their statements are received with as much incredulity and scorn as ever.

Well, the difference between the two systems is apparent. The Latter-day Saints are united, just as Jesus Christ prayed that His followers might be. It is true that we are not yet one as the Father and the Son are one; but we are approximating thereto. The principle of oneness is in our midst and is continually growing. But how is it with those who are the base imitators of the servants of God? Why a thousand vagaries are indulged in by them. There is no form of belief in which they unite; there is no union amongst them. They are divided and separated into thousands of fragments, all having their own peculiar ideas and views. Is the work of God rolled forth by them? Are the inhabitants of the earth benefitted by them? Is the earth made better, more beautiful or lovely by their labors, or by the revelations they receive? No, there are no fruits of this kind to be witnessed among them; but all is division, confusion and chaos. There is nothing to cement them together or make them one. But the work God has established is rolling forth with giant strides and accomplishing great results. It is bringing thousands of the poor and ignorant from the nations of the earth and emancipating them from the poverty, thralldom and bondage under which they and their fathers before them have groaned for generations; and it is revealing to them the gospel of peace, the plan of salvation and planting them in a land of freedom, and bestowing upon them every blessing which the heart of man desires. In addition to this it is producing mental results of a wonderful and elevating character. It bestows upon those who obey its precepts Heavenly knowledge, makes them wise in all things, causing them to become an infinitely better people than they were before. Who can not see, if he will open his eyes to the evidence that God has caused to accompany His work, which is God's work and which is the Adversary's?

In speaking in this strain I am speaking of what I know. I am not telling you what John, Peter or Paul said 1800 years ago, and what Moses left on record. I stand here as a witness, corroborating what they have written. I know for myself that God has spoken from the heavens and restored the everlasting gospel in its purity to the earth; that He has ordained His servants and given them the power and authority which were held and enjoyed in ancient days. I know that He has restored to the earth the ordinances of the gospel and the Holy Ghost with its gifts and blessings. These things I have received and have enjoyed them myself, hence I know they are true. I know God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever and bestows His blessings upon all who will humble themselves before Him, and seek unto Him in the name of Jesus.

May God help us all to live so as to secure and preserve this testimony is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.