

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAINTS' HERALD.

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[Reported for the HERALD by Belle B. Robinson.]

SERMON BY ELDER JOSEPH LUFF,

DELIVERED AT

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, LAMONI, IOWA, APRIL 11, 1893.

Subject, **THE LAW OF GOD THE ONLY RULE IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT.**

FROM the twenty-eighth chapter of the second book of Chronicles, I select the twenty-third verse: "For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel." Also 1 Corinthians 10: 11, 12: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

This same apostle when writing to the Galatians, and contrasting the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus with the law of sin and death, tried to impress upon those to whom the letter was addressed the thought that a mistake was being made by a great many of them, in supposing that they could by the help of the law of Moses better a condition that had been brought into existence through the operation of the law of Christ, and after counseling for some length of time, he uses these significant words, which will be found in the third verse of the third chapter of that letter: "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" It is my opinion that before using this language, or writing thus, the apostle had carefully considered and studied the situation in which people were found, and that inspiration was given him in measure sufficient to enable him to express not only his feeling, but the feeling of Him who had commissioned him in regard to the matter.

There remains as much of truth and wisdom in the thought therein embodied to-day as at any time in the past. And to-night I do not make selection of any of these particular portions of Scripture with a view to applying them directly as their writers intended they should be applied, but with a view, simply, of extracting

from them an idea which may be wisely applied under circumstances that confront us. The grand thought I gather from the passage of Scripture I have quoted from Paul's letter to the Galatians is, that a man makes a mistake when he undertakes to improve upon God's work, by bringing human influence to modify it, or in any sense as a substitute for it; that sooner or later the mistake he has made will be discovered by him; but if at the outset the mistake is discernible by others and he is willing to be counseled with reference to it, he may be saved from such evil consequences as it may possibly entail upon him were the advice not given.

Now to reach the thought I have in mind as directly as possible, I will state that in my opinion no cause can be permanently advantaged by any attempt on the part of its would-be supporters to bolster up its mistakes or to defend its weaknesses. I take it for granted that God has more respect for an honest man outside of any church than for a coward or a hypocrite within one; and I apprehend after stating this, that you will admit that I am pledged further to the belief that he who in the Church of Christ claims, by right of the position assigned him of God, the right to understand not only the importance of his calling, but the privilege of taking, within his survey the entire range of territory over which his authority is to extend, will come under the head of a coward if, in order to avoid the kind of criticism his faithful conduct might invite, he shirks duties that are plainly and distinctly incumbent upon him. And I further make the statement that when a minister obtains sanction of the body to represent it, he takes with him the understanding that its confidence is reposed in him and its confidence is also reposed in God, that provided the individual shall keep himself within the line of the law ordained for his regulation, God will confer upon him the essential power or equipment unto the discharge

of every duty that is attached to the office that he has entered upon.

Going forth with this understanding, and also with the law as contained in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants in my hand as placed there by the church, I have been confronted on various occasions with statements made upon the authority of men, as I understood it, especially in the Western country; for you know when I was but a baby in the church—not three years old in the church—I was sent to Utah on a mission. In order to make myself safe, I accepted on those occasions the advice given me before I started, to use that statement contained in Isaiah's prediction: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." And when some of the people in the Valleys came to me with, "I know all about it, for I heard Joseph say it in Nauvoo," I have invariably turned to them and said, "I have the utmost respect for Joseph while in the line of duty, but I lift my hat to no man as a minister, as expressive of my respect for him in the assumption of any position that involves a departure from the law." Was I right or wrong in that?

A man on one occasion met me in the streets of Salt Lake City, and after starting a dialogue, gathered quite a little crowd around us on the streets, and finally made the announcement before me that certain things he had stated must be observed by me without any question on my part. I turned to him and said: "Sir, do you pretend that you would have this people to believe that God has endowed you with brains to do my thinking?" "No," he said, "but he has given me his Spirit." "Then, sir," said I, "would you have this people believe that God gave you his Spirit to regulate my course?" "Yes, sir," he said. "Then, sir," I said, "you will please hand your Spirit back to him, with my compliments, and tell him if he does not know my residence, that I am living on Second South Street, back of the Josephite church, and I can be found there at any time he wants me."

Now some of you would indorse that position, but if I were to maintain that attitude in the presence of some other men than the ones who were in my presence at that particular time, I question whether I would receive so ready indorsement. That which that man was trying to impress upon me convinced me by its very character when announced that it was a departure from the standards furnished of heaven.

On another occasion I went into the city

of Provo, in Utah, and I was informed that the Methodist minister there was willing that any of our ministers should occupy his church. I hied me away to his house and told him my business, asking permission to use the house. He began at once to tell me how willing he was that I should occupy it upon certain conditions, and he said the conditions are these: "That you shall as freely as you desire attack the evils of Brighamism, as you term it, but you shall refrain from the advocacy of any of those peculiar principles that are antagonistic to what is understood to be evangelical Christianity." He went on to mention some of the details under this head, and after he had gotten through, I turned to him and said: "Brother, if you will permit me to translate that into English, it reads like this to me: 'You are permitted to attack evil and corruption, or sin, not because it is evil, or corrupt, or sinful but because it happens to be located in the Brighamite Church; but if you find evil as such, corruption as such, sin as such anywhere else, especially in evangelical churches, you must not open your mouth about it; you must pass over that.' Now, sir," said I, "you will understand from me that you are at liberty to shoot the bolt on the door of your church and keep it fast until the day of judgment. I would not enter on such conditions." And when he found that I thought more of my liberty as a man—that it was larger in my estimation than his house—he said: "O Brother Luff, I wouldn't offend you in any way. I prefer that you use the house and I will trust you in the exercise of your own idea of what is proper." So I went in a free man.

Now the thought that I have in mind in mentioning this is, that the business of the minister for Jesus Christ is to antagonize wrong, be it found under the crown of a king or within the hut of a beggar; whether it be found in churches opposed to his theory, or whether it be found right within the very society he himself represents. Sin as sin should be antagonized and wrong as wrong should be denounced, regardless of its whereabouts or its peculiar surroundings, or what kind of an indorsement it meets at the hands of the populace. I know that in times past when I have expressed myself thus liberally, I have at once created the suspicion within the minds of some that Brother Luff was on the high road to apostasy, and it may be that he is, God only knows; but let it be distinctly understood, that so long as there shall be found resident in this Bible representation of the character of Jesus Christ that which is grand and admirable, so long I propose to worship

him; and wherever and whenever I shall make the discovery, either within myself or others, or in theories or philosophies existing in the world, that which appeals to my understanding as being at variance with or in contrast with the Spirit, the genius, the character as revealed in the Son of God, I shall feel myself at liberty to say that I do not approve of it.

I heard Apostle John Henry Smith, about eighteen months ago, in the church house at Provo, make a statement that to me was significant. He said, first: "Many of you [addressing his associates in gospel work there] have supposed that our work in foreign nations was about at an end. My opinion is that it has scarcely begun." He said, "An immense barrier has been erected between our missionaries and those fields of labor, but thank God that barrier has been removed." Now, mark you, an apostle made a statement of this kind, and evidently referred to polygamy, from the simple fact that in connection with it he made a defense of the President of the church for writing and publishing the Manifesto claiming polygamy to be a thing of the past. He added these words: "The fact is, brethren, we have been drifting step by step backward toward that condition of existence which has, so to speak, tied the hands of God Almighty and prevented him from accomplishing his declared purpose through us." Now I could not have told it better if I had tried for a month to prepare a sentence; and I naturally enough, in my mind, when revolving it, asked where was the first step taken in drifting backward; and I was necessarily forced as a result of my thought to locate it, not in Utah, not at Winter Quarters, but back of that period, perhaps a little farther back than some who are here to-night would be willing to locate it, but where my honest conviction forced me to locate it. And when I denounced it out there as being a sin, I was instantly antagonized by certain statements that I was not prepared to deny, not having the evidence right at my command; but it impressed me with the thought that all the defense a great many of them seemed to desire or feel any necessity for, was some word that a certain man had happened to say, that man being Joseph the Seer.

I turned to these individuals and made a statement to this effect, that, "If what you say be true, it does not alter my position in regard to the question;" and one man, calling out to me in public, said: "Brother Luff, I ask you as a representative of the Reorganized Church to answer me the question: Did or did not Joseph Smith practice polygamy?" I rose up so that I might appear just as large as pos-

sible for me to look, under those circumstances, and said to him, "Sir, I do not know." "Well, sir," he said, "I know he did." I said, "Sir, I am sorry to hear you make the statement, for I had a better opinion of the man. The question is not, however, whether that man practiced it or did not practice it, but what is the attitude of God as revealed through the law in regard to it. If he spoke not nor acted in accordance with the law, it was because there was no light in him." That is the answer I made to him, and, "Sir," I said, "if your statement be true, he has gone to the judgment seat of the Almighty to reap the condemnation that he deserved for breaking both the law of God and of man." Did I do wrong in that? Did I misrepresent the Reorganization in the answer I gave? If I did, I have failed to understand the position of the Reorganization.

Now again; some individuals have come to me—they did there, and some of them did in the neighborhood where I was residing at a certain time—and asked me very carefully, very earnestly, to join the Masonic order; and when I said I had no use whatever for it, that the gospel of Jesus Christ was a circle sufficiently large to comprehend all my moral and spiritual as well as physical necessities, and provide for them, one of the brethren of the church stepped up and said, "Do you know, Brother Luff, that Brother Joseph was a Mason, that Brother Hyrum was a Mason?" I said, "Sir, I do not know, but I have been credibly informed that such was the case." They assured me that it was a fact, and I made answer to the individual, that if the thing was right in itself, it would not be injured nor benefited by his association with it; if it was wrong the fact of his putting his hand in it would not sanctify the wrong and make it right, and I apprehended that his spirit would be corrupted just in the same proportion as any other man's nature or spirit would be corrupted by association with anything that would not be right or proper.

Now I take the records and read; for instance, I take the *Millennial Star* and in it I read that at a certain time the corner stones of that great temple were laid, and I read considerable there in regard to display of a military character, etc. And when I was in the West a Mr. Carter came up to me and put one of those photographs in my hand, as a present, in which the Seer was pictured in the military uniform it was supposed he had worn. I turned to the *Times and Seasons*, and in reading through it I found at the head of the editorial column in a number of its issues, "JOSEPH SMITH FOR PRESIDENT OF

the UNITED STATES, and SIDNEY RIGDON for VICE PRESIDENT," and as I read these things and thought of the calling of these men, do you know that the cold chills ran down my back and I wished to God they were not there! "Why," said some one, "do you mean to say it was not their legitimate right to move in these circles?" I make the statement that if you put me on the common level with him or any other man as a citizen of the United States, there is no wrong in my aspiring to any place within the gift of the nation; but if you ask me to open the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and to represent its spirit to the world, as a minister for Christ, I must, if obedient, lay down many human aspirations and surrender much ambition as a citizen. I must represent a spiritual philosophy. My weapons are no longer to be carnal. I must teach (and my practice must be consistent) that God will fight your battles. I must stand in Christ's stead and decline the symbols of human slaughter and teach the conquest of the Spirit. Such was the calling of these men. When I begin to number my soldiers as did David, I shall expect to offend heaven; and when I aspire after worldly honor, I shall expect to proportionately lose my spiritual prestige and my hold upon God.

Just where these movements occurred in the church, I locate the initial steps that led the minds of men away from the simple trust in God upon which their success depended. A decline in spiritual power was but a natural consequence. The line of march away from right was first toward the world, next the flesh, and then the Devil, as it finally developed in Utah.

I do not say that these people entered secret orders merely to gratify selfish whims; I am prepared to grant that they hoped thereby to secure prestige for the church, both in attracting certain classes to them and in protecting the ministry abroad. I believe that by means of a military organization they hoped to make the church carry the semblance of independence and self-protection—a readiness to resent attacks from without. I grant that these men did not expect to be made chief magistrates of the nation; but, men were sent out to support this idea—men whom God had called to the ministry of the Spirit of life. It was, perhaps, an effort to secure recognition and to obtain agreements and concessions from other candidates in favor of the church. In short, these were but tactics employed, as men of the world would do, in the hope of bringing benefit to the object of their chief interest—the church. They said: "Masonry helps the Gentiles: the militia protects other cities

and people: political aspiration gives prominence to other men and secures for them national recognition, and why may we not employ them?"

The fact is, they knew these were the gods of the world that had persecuted them; but to put it in strictly Bible language, as my text has it: They sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote them: and they said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will we sacrifice to them, that they may help us; but it was the ruin of them and of all Israel.

I believe that human hands were "put forth to steady the ark"—that that which was "begun in the Spirit" was being supported "by the flesh." I do not believe that the spirituality of the church was heightened or purified thereby. I believe these things occurred "for ensamples and are written for our admonition," therefore, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

He who thinks that these things were blessed of God to the sanctification of the church, may so state. He who thinks that heaven drew nearer and the sermons of those affected became more divinely humble and beautiful thereafter, and that these things had nothing to do with the after-developments at Nauvoo and elsewhere, may with free conscience so proclaim; but while I cheerfully extend this right to him, I must forever decline being concluded in his judgment. I must also be left to apply the lesson I learn from the sequel of these things to the conditions that confront me. With all the reverence that I feel for the age and experience of others, I alone must stand at last for myself, unless you can produce one to testify and convince me that that man's conscience will either condemn or liberate me at the judgment day by its convictions. If you cannot assure me of that, then to the bar of my own conscience I must answer; and like the Apostle Paul, I must exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense, first towards God, then toward all men, by accepting the things contained in the law and in the prophets, regardless of any departure from or any adherence thereto on the part of individuals who were considered the custodians of the spiritual interests of that law in the past or in the present.

Now we have but little given us of church history; and as the brother splendidly presented, I thought, last night, the idea of growth within the church, there was a time when the church was but in its formative stage, and when there would arise some new condition that they had not been thinking of, they could run

and ask Joseph about it, and if an answer was obtained the man would go on record, as the memory of certain individuals preserved the answer that he gave; and so we have history made. And now bear in mind that the last particle that we have of the history of Joseph Smith as written by himself contained in the *Times and Seasons*, that was published in the days of Joseph himself, ended with the year 1831, and if you go to the *Millennial Star* for the same and refer to what is contained therein, every single line of it was published under the instigation of the church under the leadership of President Brigham Young.

Now what will we do with it? I turn to the history and when conditions confront me where there is a necessity for me to make a decision as to the action that I shall take in regard to certain matters, the prophecy from Isaiah steps up and says, If it is not according to the law, it is because there is no light in it; and the Apostle Paul says, If you begin in the Spirit, do you expect to be made perfect by the flesh? Have you started out under the auspices of the law, why depart from the law, and seek to perfect your work by substituting a purely human counsel? I heard the President of the Reorganization make the statement publicly, (and there is no breach of confidence in repeating a man's public statement) at a conference, that he had been led to conclude in regard to latter times about as the history informed him concerning former times, and his statement in enlarging upon this was: "The Book informs me that David, though chosen of God, was not permitted to build the temple of God, because, as the Book says, he was a man of blood; and I am persuaded that one reason why the early elders of this church were not permitted to build the temple as promised was because they were men of blood." Now I am not the author of it. Do you know that such statements as these after they salute my ears, stay there till I can examine them, and in view of coming events I feel myself under the necessity of making use of them as expressive of the wisdom that has been attained or acquired by men who have carefully observed the lines and the marks of history that have come under their notice. To-night, with a statement like this before me, I ask myself the question, If it be true, if this individual was warranted in making a statement of the kind referred to, is it not just possible that while we are crying down the weaknesses of the earlier centuries, we as individuals may be moving right in the same lines that we condemn them for walking in?

Now when I was in Utah about seven years ago, they were, both in their paper and in the pulpit, proclaiming the necessity for the "Moses man" or the "man like unto Moses" to come and deliver them; and as I listened and read, I wondered if these people would be willing to accept of the son of the prophet as the individual referred to who was qualified of God to lead them out of the bondage they acknowledged themselves to be in. In conversation with some of them I was told that he was a dumb prophet; that he did not even have grit enough in his composition to resent insult; that you could say what you pleased to him, and pour all manner of insults or innuendos into his ear and he just took it meekly, patiently, as though he was not to any extent disturbed thereby; and they laughed me to scorn, or tried to, for presenting to them the thought that this dumb, lamblike Son of the Seer should ever become a leader of that wondrous and mighty people out yonder. Now these same people were crying down the Jews of earlier times for rejecting Jesus. They said in their sermons that the mistake made by the Jews was in misinterpreting the Scriptures; that in their anxiety for their deliverer and Messiah to take them out from under the yoke of their enemies, they passed by the initial stages or features of his work, and when he appeared among them as a meek Lamb, enduring torture, they made the serious blunder of rejecting him. Now these same individuals, while they were occupying their time crying down the Jews of the past for making a mistake, were, unknown to themselves, following along in the footsteps of these very men. I ask you to-night, as I have asked them in the past out there, What is there, what was there in the character of Jesus Christ that made him the grandest type of might and of strength that this world ever had? And if you have studied him carefully you will be ready to answer, as I have answered in the past, It was manifest in the fact that he, above all other men in this world, had learned to rule his own spirit; he had made manifest or exemplified the truth of the statement that "he that ruleth his spirit" is greater "than he that taketh a city," and that "he that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

The Utah people, in their eagerness to have some mighty one come and deliver them, were quoting the language of that revelation given through the prophet and contained in the letter written by him to William W. Phelps, in which the statement was made: "Thus saith the still

small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things and oftentimes it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest, saying: And it shall come to pass that I the Lord God will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, *eternal words*," etc. O, how loud that word "eternal" sounded as they uttered it! Whose bowels were literally to be "a fountain of truth," and somebody that was to be mighty and strong. The trouble was they had not yet learned that no more eternal words could ever be uttered either by angel, or man, or God, or Christ, than those that shall "never pass away," which Jesus had already uttered. They ought to have known that no one could be created of God and sent among them whose "bowels" would be a "fountain of truth," that would stand for a moment in comparison with Jesus Christ, who was the embodiment of truth and righteousness itself. They ought to have understood that Jesus was the strongest character, the mightiest individual and gave the grandest exhibition of "strength" and "might" that had ever been furnished the world. He did not do it by martial or military force in order to defend himself, for he said on one occasion, when virtually a challenge was thrown in his face, I could bring twelve legions of angels to my aid, but my kingdom is not of this world. If that is true, then every man who is to represent Jesus and who undertakes to do it rightly, must represent the fact that the kingdom is not of this world, and that its defenses are to be spiritual and mighty in the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan, and not in the use of carnal weapons with a view to the slaughter of men who undertake to antagonize it. To me, every man who lifts the sword in that way manifests a failure on his part to trust in the God who said when he sent him, "I will fight your battles." The Utah people rejected "Young Joseph" because his conduct too closely resembled that of Christ.

If there is anything to be gathered from the history of ancient Israel, and if the apostle was wise in the fact of his calling attention to that history, and adding the words, "These things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," may that counsel not be as heavily freighted with eternal truth and wisdom to-day and as justly applicable to conditions under which we live, in view of the surroundings that make up our environ-

ments, as at any time in the history of the past? I believe what was declared by the President of the Church some years ago, that there is not danger—especial danger—of this church falling into the exact lines of those who went to Utah, that is, by the practice of polygamy itself. However, I do not take it for granted that because they may not fall in that line that also the spirit that pioneered the early stages of that departure may not influence those who are members of the Reorganization to-day. I do believe there is a danger to-day of men accepting as a law that which has no authority back of it save the judgment of the human individual who uttered it.

I have been asked in the past if I believed that that revelation on polygamy as set forth and published in Utah and contained in their Book of Covenants was received by Joseph the Seer, and I have answered plainly that I did not believe anything of the kind; but when I answered that way I knew that I subjected myself to criticism that might come from them, if I indorsed the history they had prepared in their *Millennial Star*, because all was prepared by the same institution. I find, for instance, if I turn to the *Millennial Star*, revelations here and there in it that are not found in the Doctrine and Covenants; that never saw daylight in print until 1854, and that were inserted when individuals were in certain positions that had been assumed by them that made it necessary for them to get some kind of documentary support for the course they were pursuing. If they made one "Thus saith the Lord," it is easy for me to suppose they made another one to suit these emergencies, and if I indorse the history containing one, I could not easily reject the other, which was professedly preserved by the same hands. As a natural consequence I believed the language of Elder Blair, and it was impressed upon my mind and acted as a bulwark upon my soul when I first went to Utah in 1879. I refer to the language contained in the *Advocate* for January, 1879, where, after he makes comparison of the portion of the history of Joseph Smith as contained in the *Times and Seasons* published before the Martyr's death with the republication of it in the *Millennial Star*, he proves that they had mutilated it and corrupted it miserably, and he comes out with the broad question: "If the Utah leaders have had the unblushing audacity to change and corrupt the original documents of the church as they were published in the accredited organs of the church in the lifetime of the Seer, what assurance have we that they have published anything correctly that purports to have been designed for the church by the Seer, or that is claimed by them to be church history or doctrine? If they are convicted of having corrupted matters published before the great apostasy in 1844, is it not probable, highly probable, that they have corrupted other church documents since?"

I believe the facts as staring us in the face prove that any kind of history they wanted

was made, bolstered up in a way that was false in its conception and as damnable in its tendency as anything that was ever unfolded to mortals. It never could have prevailed had it not been for the fact that men reposed confidence in their fellows rather than in God. When men came to them with false theories, stating, "This is what we should receive and this has been given for our government," they should have compared it with the law and said, "It is not according to the law and testimony, hence there is no light in it," and should have discredited it.

If that should have been the course, then the same fact stares me in the face now. I lift my hat in ministerial reverence as a clergyman representing the Reorganization to any man within this church, or without for that matter, who shall prove his position from the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, or the Bible, and ask that I subscribe to what is found therein. I shall say, "Sir, just as long as I stay within the realm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints I will subscribe to that;" but just as soon as the suggestion comes to me that because some feature in history occurs in certain places and there is nothing upon which I can base the conclusion that it is in harmony with the divine law that I must subscribe to that, I keep my hat on my head and notify the individual that I live in Independence, Missouri, and that the Lord has my number and at any time he wishes it he can call and acquaint me with his will in regard to such matters.

Now I speak thus plainly that no one need misunderstand me. We are at a certain point in our history both as individuals and as a body, when it seems to me there is a necessity, in order to guard the confidence of the people, that some of us shall state where we stand. You may not agree with me, but that is the conclusion I have reached; and I make the statement here with all candor and frankness that this is my position. If any individual differs from me ever so widely in regard to this, and he proposes to worship at any shrine or to perform anything and everything that God in his tolerance permits in order to gain prestige for himself, I have no objection to his indulging that pursuit for himself; but I simply put myself on record, that whether you continue or withdraw your confidence in me, you may at least know my attitude toward the matters referred to.

When they told me out yonder—a number of them—that they knew certain things, where they happened, and under what circumstances, and they insisted that I should be damned,—yes, I remember on one occasion they told me that I should be damned as low as it was possible for the power of God to damn me if I did not accept of polygamy,—after trying to reason with them, and failing, as it seemed, to convince them, I turned to them and said, "Gentlemen and friends, if what you say is true, accept from me my compliments for your good wishes, and also the statement that, if what you say be true, I prefer a clean damnation to a salvation so dirty as you offer."

The fact is, Saints, I am under obligation

that is not only imposed by you when your vote sends me out to represent the church, but divinely imposed, to stand between any individual and an insult to the divine law; and an individual may heap all the obloquy he pleases upon me, and I will use what discretion or wisdom I may have there to defend myself or resent that; but an individual must not attempt, so far as I am concerned, if he wishes to be my friend, to cast any reflections upon the divine law. The President said today that he would just as soon cut spiritual red tape as any other kind of red tape if there was a necessity for it, but he would not undertake to run contrary to the law. Thank God that he stands in this position, as we have always believed him to do, and that in standing and occupying that position he so far personifies the principle that I have referred to, and that I have received commission of God to project in all the world.

Anything and everything,—money, friendship, association, social standing, life itself to protect the divine law, but not a cent for compromise. Now, perhaps I will be put a little further on the line with the brother who addressed the people last night and, if so, I want to state here that I shall enjoy the position assigned me hugely, if I have not mistaken the brother. I make the statement here that to me the gospel of Jesus Christ is the grandest theme that ever engaged my spirit; there is in it that which furnishes guarantee after guarantee to me of its divine adaptation to the variety of human necessity. It comes with the kind of guarantee that forbids by its very character my supposing for a moment that it is fiendish, and by reason of its superior qualities over all that I find in this life with which to compare it, I am compelled to understand that it was not human in its origin, so I have but one other thought left in my mind in accounting for it, and that is that it is divine; and when application is made of it to the government of my life, I find the evidences of that divinity so clearly apparent that it gives me an exhibition of Jesus Christ such as makes him the worthiest of all worthy objects to be admired on earth, and teaches me that if I would be strong in the Christ sense, I shall rule this spirit that is within me for humanity's sake, and place absolute trust and confidence in the promises made by him. While I am engaged in his service I will try to attend to the business of my profession. When I vary from this rule in order to pursue that which offers carnal gratification, it will be because my confidence is not so strong in Christ as my former announcement to the world would make believe I was. I believe the Apostle Paul stated some things that the Spirit did not authorize him to state, for he said so, substantially. I believe, too, that on a certain time, Moses, the man of God, transgressed. God afterward called him to the top of the mountain that he should die, permitting him first to look over the river into the promised land. He told him he could not enter the land because he had transgressed against him; he charged him there with rebellion, unbelief, and trespass, and because of it he was not permitted to go into the promised land.

Because some individual chosen of God speaks at different times without the claim of inspiration or that which warrants me to believe there was inspiration, I am not necessarily committed to what is declared therein. That can be reasonably understood, and yet no man should have the right to run around with the conclusion that I believe the man chosen in the last dispensation had fallen. I believe it no more than I believe it of Moses. I believe that never has God in the history of bygone ages raised up a man more noble and beautiful in the towering grandeur of inspirational pursuits, and no seer ever blessed the earth with more good, save Jesus Christ, than the Palmyra Seer has done; and in that which comes to me through him as being furnished by the inspiration of God through him, there is a reflection of the Divine Mind so clearly cast that I may measure myself thereby, and learn of my fitness to inherit everlasting life and position in the kingdom of God; and with these thoughts and convictions forced in upon my mind, I must answer to that conscience that has been thus educated, and regulate myself with a view to meeting the conscience that shall confront me in the great day when I shall be summoned hence. And while I have no objection—none in the world—to individuals living still in Nauvoo and in 1845 and 1846, and even in 1844 and 1843, yet if I do not want to live then and there, they must not complain at my expressed unwillingness.

The idea is simply this, as stated on last evening, the church is giving evidence of its growth; and extreme as the ideas are that men are urging who have departed from the truth, still the truth remains as it has ever remained. Current literature is full of warnings against the course of certain individuals who were prominent in the church in the earlier times, and because of this advice and counsel regarding those who went into the dark, some people have run around with the idea that all men filling like offices afterwards must be under a constant suspicion for fear they will neglect or betray the trust imposed in them by the church. The Lord in the revelation given here in Lamoni a few years ago virtually complained at the church for not paying the proper respect to the counsel of those he placed in the church, and your speaker as an individual has felt keenly sometimes the painfulness of the situation, because those who professed great confidence in him before he was selected to fill the important position he is in, now have very little confidence in him, because he has entered into that position, not of his own choice, but because he had either to rebel against the dictation of God or else enter in and bear what was imposed upon him for Christ's sake and for humanity's good. As I love God I shall live to reverence his law. As I reverence it

I shall show a decent respect for the tradition that seems to me to be in harmony with it; but I shall always take the liberty of judging tradition by the law and not the law by tradition or doubtful history.

Now let me say, in conclusion; the sister here in all probability has reported about verbatim my remarks. They will perhaps be scattered broadcast and of course I have to take my chances, whether for censure or criticism in this church and elsewhere; but there is one thing above all others I thank God for, and that is that it is recorded somewhere else, and he who looks upon that record as it is made yonder, and also looks at the same time into this heart, knows whether this lip and this brain have slandered the heart or not, whether it is the voice of the inner spirit or whether it is simply a parade for the sake of entertaining individuals for the hour; and with this consolation, we wait until the time shall come when the wisdom of all judgment that has been rendered shall be passed upon in the light of that infinite wisdom that shall burst upon the Zion of God, and when God's divine encomium shall be passed upon that which is true and man's wisdom shall have perished. When creeds and traditions are dead, the gospel will still live, and it will be seen that he that has abided in the law had both the Father and the Son. At that day I hope to be known as one who exhibited his loyalty to God and his patriotism to truth by refusing any compromise with error, let it come from whatever source it may.

In the name of the God of Israel we go forth, and our charge is to be faithful in his service, and in protecting the interests of his work. May he help us so to be. May we be led in such a way that eventually he shall be disposed to extend favor unto us because of the integrity of our hearts, whatever may have been the follies or the mistakes that our faulty judgment has led us into while we were here. May he give us grace to abide the conditions surrounding us, and be ready for counsel from heaven as the hymn says,—

“Be not weary of exhorting,
Heed the lessons of each day;”

observing that which will be in harmony with his divine will as revealed in the Books given to the body, and at last when the question comes up to us at the last day as to the authority for our proceedings, we shall turn to the Doctrine and Covenants and cite page and paragraph, and say, “This is my authority,” or to the Bible or to the Book of Mormon, and say, “Did you authorize these Books? If you did, my life was consecrated to their defense,” and now I commit myself to such defense as they shall furnish me; and there I take my chances, and there I hope for life and vindication.