

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAINTS' HERALD.

LAMONI, IOWA, APRIL 1, 1893.

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

SERMON BY ELDER JOSEPH LUFF,

DELIVERED AT

THE GENERAL CHURCH REUNION, LOGAN, IOWA, OCTOBER, 16, 1892.

Subject, THE WAY CALLED HERESY.

"BUT this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."—Acts 24: 14-16.

The Apostle Paul, when he uttered the words I have selected, was in rather a peculiar position. He stood before Felix to answer to charges that had been laid against him; and when we consider the nature of those charges and the profession of the individuals urging them, we find, by making comparison with the condition of affairs existing at the present time, that history now being made will show, when written, that it is but a repetition of itself. The persons who laid charges against the Apostle Paul should have been the first to have sustained or upheld him in the work he sought to perform, yet you find him making a frank confession of heresy, if he was to be judged according to their traditions, in these words: "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they [mine accusers] call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers." And in giving a brief definition of the character of the heresy to which he plead guilty, he said: "I believe all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." The people preferring and urging the charges against him had already announced themselves as believers in the law and in the prophets, and yet when the Apostle appeared in their midst bringing the record containing these things which they professed to so sacredly revere, they found fault with him, not because he professed to believe in their Scriptures, but because he did not believe them their way.

There were then, as now, at least two ways of believing the Scriptures; one was an acceptance of them in the light of such interpretation as the priests might place upon them Sabbath after Sabbath, without any particular reference to the details of the law or of the prophets; the other, that of first opening the book, taking no man's word for what it contained, reading carefully what was found within it, page after page, making application of what was found revealed therein in governing the individual life and develop-

ing the individual character, and so far as might be possible, furnishing a living illustration to the world of the potency of that which was claimed as divine in association with it. This second manner of believing the Scriptures they were unacquainted with; and when the Apostle Paul came as a believer after this order, he so clearly and directly came in contact with anything they had been accustomed to, that they were led at the very outset to pronounce him a heretic; and yet we find him defining his heresy by declaring himself a believer in all things that were written in the law and in the prophets, substantially inviting them, or, in other words, challenging them to bring from out the law or the prophets that they themselves had placed before him and asked that he should acknowledge, anything that by legitimate construction or application could be made to tell to any degree against him or the attitude he had assumed and was there seeking to maintain.

Further explaining himself before Felix, he adds: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Now the apostle meant, as I understand him, that their law and the prophets had been furnished in the wisdom of God for the education of the human conscience. He had made reference in detail to their contents, and had made the discovery that certain things with which he had not thoroughly acquainted himself in time past were true. Instantly his conscience under the new education, made an appeal to him. That appeal required of him, in answering it faithfully, that he should apply within his life, that he should turn to good account within himself the force of the divine testimony therein borne. The difference, therefore, between him and those who were his accusers on the day referred to in my text was, that he found himself in answering to that conscience under the necessity of "exercising" himself daily in carrying out that law, instead of simply making the announcement, as they had done, that mentally he assented to its truth.

It may appear a little strange to some of you if I make the announcement this afternoon that as a servant of Jesus Christ I find myself in very much the same attitude as the Apostle Paul. He brought no new Scriptures to them, but pointed to those already fur-

nished him by them; and like those who had preceded him, he had required of them that they search the Scriptures, for in them, as the Savior said, they believed they had eternal life, and they were they that testified of Christ, and by a judgment properly rendered thereon or therefrom he was willing to abide. I bring no other Bible to you this afternoon than that edition, a copy of which rests on your center tables at home. Taking a copy of it in my hand, I find all the representation that I need as a minister of the faith of the church of which I stand a member and a representative to-day; yet, as in the Apostle's day, I find myself surrounded by a people, some of whom, before I was born, engaged in the work of publishing and asking the world to believe the Bible. It dropped as a consequence into my hands. I look, as the apostle had done, to find what is recorded in it, and discovering what I have been looking for, I begin to proclaim its contents and make the announcement that to enjoy such benefits as flow from a belief therein is the common privilege of the brotherhood of man, the children of God everywhere. But no sooner have I made this announcement than the very individuals who placed this Bible in my hand and asked that I should believe its contents, call upon me to give a reason and a defense for believing what is in it. That is the anomaly of the situation; for I solemnly aver this afternoon that I have subscribed to no branch of philosophy, no point of doctrine that I am aware of, that has not its authority and sanction in this word. And while here this afternoon, my purpose will not be to strike out on any new line, branch out in any direction that has not been canvassed by the speakers on the platform the last two weeks, but to try and call your attention to a few of the reasons why I believe some of the things that they have proclaimed.

For five years, beginning when but eighteen years of age, I preached in one of the most popular churches in the city of Toronto, in Upper Canada. I was as honest at that time as I claim to be now. My heart's chief desire was to glorify God, but all I knew in regard to the will of God was what was conveyed to me by the church of which I was a member. When in my twenty-second year a little pamphlet or tract reached me, having come by mail a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, the nearest point where any Latter Day Saint lived. I read carefully what was upon its face, setting forth as it purported to do, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. The instant I read that pamphlet or leaflet I made the discovery that there was something in it that was materially different from the doctrine I had been subscribing to, and for a time I paid no particular attention to it because of that. The thought had never yet entered my head that anything in the line of religion could be right that was contrary to what my mother had taught me. Another letter came a month or two afterward, and another leaflet, and upon examining it the fact was made clear to my mind that possibly there might be some good in another church, even though its doctrines were in some sense antagonistic to those of the church I was in.

After reading the two leaflets carefully, I noticed first, particularly, that every point of doctrine enunciated therein had appended to it a reference. I then, according to the references given, made appeal to the New Testament Scriptures and in consequence of so doing the conclusion was forced upon my mind that not only what was set forth in these leaflets differed materially from the faith I had been subscribing to as an individual, but it agreed in all its particulars with the New Testament; and you know what the other conclusion naturally was—that my former faith could not therefore be in agreement with the New Testament. Of course this was in a measure painful to me. All the associations I had formed in life clustered around the religious institution I was connected with; parent, relatives, friends, and means of prosperity; everything upon which to base a calculation looking to benefits in this life clustered around my identity with that church. After awhile, as a result of continued investigation, one thing forced itself upon my mind, and it was this; that in order to be true to God and to my conscience, the latter newly educated by the word of God as contained in the New Testament Scriptures, I must step out of the religious organization where all my hopes had been centered. I could not "exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men," by remaining there.

Without detailing my proceedings subsequent to that time, you have one main result of that investigation in the fact of my being found here to-day representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; and the point I call your attention to is this, that there has been in consequence of this change no renunciation of any truth that ever came to me through the medium of the other and more popular religious organization. There is, in my appearing before you to-day, the evidence (if I may interpret it fairly) in demonstration of the fact, that, according to my judgment, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as it has an existence upon the earth to-day, gives a clearer, more direct exposition of the divine purpose, holds out to man the force which shall more directly bring about in human character the possibilities of humanity, and extend to man the means by which he may be brought into closer relationship and more direct contact with the Christ, than any other institution I know of under the heavens. That is the reason I am where I am.

Now for some of the points in detail. I was taught yonder that it was necessary for me to believe in Jesus. After I left the church of my boyhood, the minister in charge of the circuit, and with whom I had been associated in Toronto City, visited me, and said he regretted very much the step I had taken, and felt extremely sorry for me. I appealed to him, saying, "Brother, will you please give me some reason for that?" He said, "To think that you would cut loose from the old ship, and allow yourself to drift away, God only knows where." "But," said I, "sir, thank God, God does know where." After he had ventilated his feeling somewhat, I

said to him, "Brother, I want to know why you are sorry. Do you think I am in danger?" "Yes sir, I do." "Well, I will ask you a question or two. Do you believe, brother, just what you have been preaching for years in my hearing, and what I when associated with you preached for years; viz., that if a man will simply believe with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, he will be saved, and that is all that is needful unto salvation?" He answered, "Yes; I do believe that or I would not preach it." I turned to him then and said: "Sir, have you any reason, because of what you have seen in me in the last week or two for believing that I no longer believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world?" "No," said he, "I don't know that I have any reason for such thought as that." "Then, sir, I certify to you, and hope you will give me credit for truth and honesty, that I have at least a dozen times more reason for believing that Jesus is the world's Savior than I ever had when I was associated with you. Will not that faith still abiding in my heart stand me as much in hand and as much to my credit outside of the church that you are in as it would if I still remained within? Have you a monopoly upon faith? Have you a particular right by which you hold it and under which you exempt all other people from the benefit of that faith?" "No sir," he said. "Now sir," I said, "I turn to the Bible and read: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' I find further, that Jesus authorized his ministers to teach not only that men should believe, but that they should be baptized. Accepting the statement as correct, and Jesus Christ as being the best representative of the philosophy he came to announce to the world, I have moved forward and been obedient; I have received baptism by immersion at the hands of one who has been called, as he believes, in these last days to officiate in this rite. Now sir, you have often told me that by what is found in this book we are to be judged in the last days, and this book requires this ordinance at my hands. Will you please tell me, sir, whether or not you believe that Jesus Christ will damn Joseph Luff because he has been baptized according to the scriptural requirement, if Joseph Luff still believes with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ and the only Savior of the world?" He said, "No, I don't think he will condemn you for being baptized." "Sir," I said, (and here I referred to two or three passages of Scripture setting forth the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit,) "according to my understanding of this scriptural requirement, I have permitted the minister who baptized me, in association with others, to place his hands upon my head and confirm me a member of the Church of Christ; and I am of the opinion, sir, that I have received the Holy Ghost. Now sir, if the Scriptures are to judge me at the last day, and I am seeking to regulate my life by them now, and I have received the laying on of hands because they teach it, please tell me, will God Almighty and Jesus Christ damn me simply because I allowed these men to place their hands

upon my head, notwithstanding I still believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world?" He said, "No sir." I said, "There are a great many strange things being taught in this world; you believe in a kind of semi-divinity of some books such as 'The Prince of the House of David,' and others, and you say that the acceptance of the idea that there was inspiration associated with them does not, in your way of thinking, discount the Scriptures for a moment. 'Now sir,' I said, 'I have been led to believe that there is a degree of inspiration (both as to its origin, contents, and bringing forth) in the Book of Mormon. I believe that Joseph Smith, who was instrumental in producing that work, was directed by the counsel of God. Do you suppose that if I still believe that Jesus is the only Savior of the world, that God will damn me because, as an honest man, I accepted what in my heart I was compelled to believe upon the evidence that came to me? Will he condemn me because I believe Joseph Smith was an inspired man, because I believe there was an authority of inspiration about the Book of Mormon, if I still believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world?' He said, "No sir, I don't think he will; the salvation work depends simply upon your belief in Jesus Christ." "Then," said I, "instead of your being sorry for me, it seems to me it is my turn to express sorrow for you. If, as you have virtually admitted, the Bible teaches the laying on of hands, and the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins, and you don't teach them in your church, I am in the safer position of the two. Now I believe them, you do not. You say God will not damn me for these extra points in my faith if I still believe that Jesus is the Christ. Hence, according to your idea, your church doctrine, I am saved anyhow because I believe with all my heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. Now, if in the day of accounts the great God shall bring up this record, as he said he would, and judge me by the things that Jesus Christ said when he was upon the earth, and I find that he said baptism should be observed,—and I find that he taught and practiced the laying on of hands,—will you in that day be as safe as me? Will you please carry out the thought that you have now in your mind, that I as a believer in Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world, cannot be condemned for obeying what Jesus has commanded in this Bible? Your doctrine being true, I am saved; but supposing mine be true, will you please tell me where you will stand in the light of this new revelation to you in that day—not new in the sense of their being unrevealed of God before, but new in the sense of your having been unwilling in life to open the book and read it, and 'exercise' yourself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men,' by observing it?" I said to him, "Sir, it is *my* place to be sorry, and I am sorry for *you*. If your doctrine is right, I am saved; and if mine is right, I am saved; but if mine should eventually prove to be right and yours to be wrong, you are on the unsafe side."

I am a believer in Jesus Christ to-day so far

as theory is concerned, because the announcement is here made that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" further, because of the announcement made, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." I believe it is necessary because it is stated that "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If I turn to you and ask you why you admit this feature of my faith as a point in your doctrinal theory, you will tell me as I have told you, "Because the Scriptures teach it." Here, then, we agree.

I pass on to the next feature and say I believe in the necessity for repentance, because turning to the Scriptures I find language of this kind in the twentieth chapter of Acts, that in times past God had winked at their ignorance, but now he commands "all men everywhere to repent;" again, because Jesus authorized his servants to declare that men should "repent and believe the gospel." And when I have moved this far forward you tell me you are still at a perfect agreement with me. I then ask why, when Latter Day Saints approach the subject of baptism as being essential unto salvation equally with faith and with repentance, you are unwilling to shake hands with us and still move forward? Is it because there is no scripture to support it? Is it because the book is not equally plain in regard to its necessity? If the language of Christ is worth anything, it is worth everything where he stated to Nicodemus, as recorded in the third chapter of John, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot [now you write it down, he cannot,—he CANNOT] enter into the kingdom of God." It matters but little how many men may rise up in this or in subsequent generations and say he can; God has uttered it, "he cannot;" and let me tell you, if I take your advice as a righteous people, I am compelled to allow God and Christ to be true, though by so doing I prove every man to be a liar. That is the advice I got from you, and paying heed to this advice I find myself under the necessity of antagonizing some features of faith that are cherished in the world the instant I apply it to this portion of Scripture. I would like this afternoon, if I was expert in that direction, to just draw a line across a blackboard and point out to you some of the reasons why I believe that baptism is necessary to salvation. I want to give you some reasons why I find myself committed to the idea that baptism is necessary to salvation. I write (or Brother Gomer Wells will write for me) clear across the top of the blackboard, in large letters, the word *Baptism*. Then draw a line under it. Next, form two columns under it by drawing a vertical line down the center of the board. As a subheading, at the top of the first column write, *For the Remission of Sins*. At the top of the other column write, *Not for the Remission of Sins*. Now, under the first column heading write the names of witnesses, as I shall give them to you, who testify as to baptism being necessary. I shall call your attention as I go along, to places in the Scrip-

tures where I find them: In the first chapter of the record of St. Luke there is an account furnished in regard to the birth of John the Baptist. Associated therewith and preceding it, of the visitation of an angel to Zacharias. This Zacharias was serving his course in the priest's office and was visited by an angel who told him that his wife should give birth to a son, told him the name of that son should be John, and what the nature of his work should be. Zacharias had some doubts in his mind because of the age of his companion, and he expressed that doubt in the hearing of the angel and asked a sign. The angel said his power of speech should be taken from him until the fulfillment of that which had been declared, and from that very hour Zacharias remained dumb until the accomplishment of what was there declared. In due time the child was born. On the eighth day, as was the custom, the people gathered together to name the child. While in conversation they agreed among themselves to call him Zacharias, but when the mother of the child heard of it she said, No; "his name shall be called John." They asked why she named him thus, as none of her kindred had a name that sounded like it. Instantly they referred to Zacharias, who had come in, and made signs to him. He learned what they wanted, and, not being able to speak, called for a writing desk and wrote, "His name is John;" and they were all surprised. However, the child was so named, and right in connection with that work the Spirit of the Lord rested upon Zacharias, and turning to the child he said: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." Now, I did not put that in the Bible. I take another translation and I read, "By baptism for the remission of sins." I do this simply to call your attention to what John did by way of bringing remission of sins to the people, and you will all agree that he baptized them in water for the remission of sins, hence either translation will do. Zacharias declared that John's mission work was to bring to the people means for the remission of sins, and John afterwards did it by baptism. Now, is there any man or woman in the tent who will not give me the right to have the letters written down, *Z-a-c-h-a-r-i-a-s*, as a witness testifying to the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins?

I turn to the testimony of Luke, beginning at the first chapter, and read: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things." Now he stated he had had a "perfect knowledge" from the beginning. What does he testify? Right in the third chapter he testifies that John came "preaching the baptism of repent-

ance for the remission of sins." Luke said he had a perfect knowledge, and was an eyewitness of these things from the beginning. Will you have any objection to my authorizing the brother to mark down the name of Luke, as a competent eyewitness certifying to the fact that John preached and practiced baptism for the remission of sins?

I will turn now to what is recorded in this third chapter of Luke, also in the first chapter of Mark, and the third chapter of Matthew, certifying in each place that John came into the region of country about Judea and "did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Will anyone object to my asking the brother to write down the name of John the Baptist as a competent witness, bearing testimony in teaching and practice that baptism is for the remission of sins?

I turn to the ninth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth chapters of Acts, and in each of these places I find an account of the journey of a man named Saul to the city of Damascus, carrying with him letters of authority, on the strength of which he was going to persecute the members of the infant Christian Church. He was visited on the way by Christ; a light shone upon him, and destroyed his power of natural sight for the time being. A voice from heaven called him and asked him why he had been persecuting him. Saul answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" and Jesus said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest;" "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Then the question from Saul's lips was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Hear the answer: "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Hastening on as fast as he could upon this direction to the city, he is visited by a man named Ananias. This man had been authorized to come to him, and to tell him what he should do; to give him instruction according to Christ's command, what he *must* do to be saved. This Ananias said to him, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Ananias, instructed of God, a special messenger or apostle, if you will; I ask the brother to write his name down as one authorized of God in this direction, testifying that baptism is to wash away sin.

Now I turn to the second chapter of the Acts and when turning there I find a brief account of what occurred and what has been made memorable as the day of Pentecost. A multitude of people witnessed the manifestation of strange power that they did not know how to account for, and afterward (by explanation of the apostles) they had learned that Jesus was the Christ, they asked the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" For answer to that question you turn to the fourteenth verse, and from that read on to the end of the chapter, and you have this announcement, that Peter and the rest of the eleven rose up and testified that they should repent and be baptized, every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Hence I ask the brother to please write the name of Peter and the rest of the eleven

as testifying on Pentecost that baptism was for the remission of sins.

Are there enough? For fear some of you will think this is not sufficient of competent authority, I will ask you to consider further. Answer, if you can, who authorized these men on the day of Pentecost to say that baptism was for the remission of sins? Remember that Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem and not go forth until they were endowed with power from on high. They waited, and on this memorable day "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting," and "cloven tongues like as of fire . . . sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thirteen places are there enumerated from whence people had come and in their own language, under the authority of the Divine Spirit, moving upon men who were filled with it, they heard that baptism was for the remission of sins; the Holy Spirit moved upon the speakers to testify of this. These men were thus authorized and thus acted. Will you have any objection to my asking this brother to write down "The Holy Ghost" as a witness that baptism is for the remission of sins?

I ask you, Who sent that Holy Ghost? Jesus says, "If I depart, I will send him unto you;" and, "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." I ask you, Who sent Ananias to Saul in the city of Damascus? Who sent him? When he came to Saul he put his hands upon him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me," etc. Jesus told him to tell Saul to be baptized to wash away his sins. Please write down the name of "Jesus Christ" there as teaching and authorizing men to teach that baptism is for the remission of sins.

I again ask you a question: When Jesus had himself submitted to this rite or ordinance at the hands of John in the river of Jordan, whose voice was it that rent the atmosphere, pealing forth from the heavens and saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Who was it that uttered those words? It was the eternal Father. With what was he pleased? He was pleased with the fact that his Son, Jesus Christ, had not considered himself above submission to the ordinance for the remission of sins that he himself had sent John to preach and practice. Next I ask, Who sent John to baptize for the remission of sins? He said, when speaking of Christ, "He that sent me to baptize with water said unto me," etc. The book says, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." If God sent him to do that work; if God, honoring the appointment of Jesus Christ, afterward sent the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; if Jesus spoke the truth when he says, This Holy Ghost when it comes shall take of the things of God and show them unto you; then baptism for the remission of sins was one of the things to be shown unto them of God that was shown on the day of Pentecost. If the Pharisees and lawyers rejected God's counsel by refusing John's baptism (see Luke

7: 30), then God must have counselled it. Will you object to my asking the brother to write down, Jehovah, the eternal God, authorizing the doctrine and practice of baptism for the remission of sins?

Now, I ask you to consider that from the Bible I have the authority for having written here, Zacharias, and Luke, and John the Baptist, and Ananias, and Peter, and the rest of the eleven, the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ, and Jehovah. When I get above and stand before the judgment seat I will be perfectly willing to take any one or all of these names as authority for the testimony that affected my life and the counsel under which I acted when I was baptized for the remission of sins.

Next column now: Baptism *not* for the remission of sins. Somebody please give me the name of a man who is willing to put his name there, as against the others? Let us hear from him. Put D. D. to it, if you want to; put L. L. D. at the end; put all you want to in order to make it sound important or give it the tone of authority. Name any man that you ever heard of that you will be willing to place there and whom you will be ready to accept as your backer at the day of judgment when you have to meet all these testimonies to the contrary. Please name the first man. Why, if one won't do, name two, or I will take three. I will ask the brother to assist me to fill out that column and we will turn the board over and fill up the other side, and then if that is not enough, we will get another board down, and if that is not enough, we will try and get a canvas as big as the tent and fill it with names, if it is possible, and if that won't do, we will try and get a canvas that will wrap up the universe, and fill that with names, and then tell me which you had rather have in the day of judgment for your backing. Look now again at this array of witnesses and decide for eternity:—

BAPTISM.

FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.	NOT FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.
Zacharias.	
Luke.	
John the Baptist.	
Ananias.	
Peter and the rest of the eleven.	
The Holy Spirit.	
Jesus Christ.	
Jehovah, the Eternal God.	

I am figuring in religion for the eternal years; for friendship with Christ, who said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." I simply ask of you, then, as honest men and women, will you not then strike hands with me to-day and say,—whatever your own judgment may be as to what you ought to do,—"I believe that man, according to his own way of presenting that matter, had every reason for making the change that he did make, when dropping out of the church that would not allow him to accept these witnesses instead of their clergy,

and entering into a church that did allow it; and not only that, but everything that those inspired men had said he had a right to believe?" If you will admit this, will you think of the words of my text and of the fact that I am, like the Apostle Paul, compelled to stand under the brand of heresy in this world simply because I believe "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" and I am exercising myself daily "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men"? This question is too serious to be trifled with.

I had thought to present another idea here; this passage that others have called your attention to, about the signs following those that believe, and the other passages of Scripture that bear witness of strange things that your ears have been unaccustomed to hearing but which have all been in that Bible before it came to us. We are of the opinion that whatever God authorized as gospel privileges for humanity at one period, he has designed for all periods when human necessity demands the same; and if these passages of Scripture came with divine authority, we have the right as messengers appointed of the Master to ask you not only to consider them, but to ascribe honor and glory to God by subscribing to them in practice.

When I came through Canada they refused to take one of our American dollars for a dollar's worth of goods that I bought, and I called their attention to the fact that on its face was "one dollar." They said it was at a discount there. I remembered that I was under a different government there; but if I had come back to the United States and somebody had refused to accept that dollar for a hundred cents' worth of goods, I would have been surprised. "But," you ask, "what does this signify in this argument?" It signifies just this; that if I was to go into what was proclaimed by the infidels as a hellfire club where they were traducing or denouncing all Scripture doctrine, and I wanted to put some scripture before them, I would expect of course that they would seek to discount it, and that very heavily; but when I come into a building that has its steeple pointing up to heaven and on the front of it the words, "This is the Lord's house," that it is under his government, I expect that when I offer a dollar or that which has on its face the representation of that value, they will honor it for all its face calls for; but, unfortunately, they will not, and I am compelled to reach the conclusion that they are not under the divine government, or else the old government uttered false coin: it was not worth all it was claimed to be worth. When I go into these places and they will not allow me to use this coin, or they seek to discount it, I feel that I am under a different government from that which Jesus Christ brought into existence. Of course it is but natural that such will discount it if they want to. But it bears the image and superscription of Christ notwithstanding, and he will honor it here and hereafter, and honor those who honored it.

I come again to the thought that God was interested in man in early years, and that he expressed his interest by making provisions

of the character I have referred to; and I have no reason to-day for believing that God has ever gone out of the original business that engaged his attention; I have no reason for believing that angels have changed their business; for believing that the Holy Ghost is engaged in any other enterprise than that in which it embarked centuries ago; and consequently when these thoughts come to my mind I must naturally enough believe that the Almighty, who is declared to be unchangeable and impartial, if he remains in the same business and has the same kind of people to deal with, will magnify, under all circumstances, that which was issued by him—will make it honorable in the estimation and in the opinion of all obedient men. As a consequence I take this record, believe it as it is, subscribe to it in my life, and thus exercise myself to "have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."

Whatever conclusions you may reach as to the correctness of my premises and arguments, there is not a man or woman who will go away with the conclusion that Bro. Luff was not free in his speech, to say the least. Now suppose some of you with this thought in your mind would hear that I was going off into Missouri, or Dakota, or some other State, and that you were anxious that your friends there should hear me as you had heard me; you would write them and give them some kind of an account of what you had heard here, and they would accept your counsel, and appear at the schoolhouse; but they hear nothing such as you claim to have heard here. Before leaving this place I announce to you that I would be back here in five years and I would still remain the same man in every respect, and I return at the end of five years, and instead of stepping up nimbly as I did here to-day, some one should march me up here, and I would stand as a piece of statuary, not a word out of me. You came and began to ply me with questions, urge me to answer about some things that are engaging your thought and your attention; but I remain without a movement of hand, or feet, or features in any shape. By and by, by some extraordinary pressure, I am induced to wink an eye, or to shake a fist, or to stamp my feet, or to make some kind of a gesture that is a little strange in itself. One man here would say, "I know what he meant;" he would turn around and explain to the people just what I meant. Another man over there would begin, and another somewhere else, and there would be any amount of interpretations of these strange movements on the part of this piece of statuary before you. Now, though you might divide on all these points of interpretation, there is one thing you would be agreed upon, and that is, that Elder Luff had changed, and very materially, too. Before he was talkative, now he is dumb; before he was willing to express his feelings, now there is nothing but a gesture here, and only a movement there, that nobody can do any better than guess at.

I want you in this connection to think of the important fact that in the years gone by when God was in the business of saving men, when angels were connected with him in the work,

and he talked with men, he gave visions, revelations, and instructions to men, upon the sole condition that they would observe this law that I have been calling your attention to; and he said he would always remain the same, unchangeable, impartial Jehovah; and we hear of him eighteen hundred years later. Does he talk like he used to? O no! If anybody says that God talks now, set him down as a Mormon or a fool. Does he give any visions now by the intervention of his Spirit? Ah no! Nobody claims that but fanatics or maniacs. What is there then about him by which we shall identify this God with the God of the former times? One of the poets has written, and people keep quoting it frequently in regard to the poor Indian,—

"Like the evanescent dream
Of the sunlight's fading beam—
Like all things that soon decay
Pass the Indian tribes away."

They say of these Indians that they only "see God in storms and hear him in the winds;" but what I want to get at is, where the Christian, who is pitying the Indian, sees God or hears him? Where? Is it in the thunder-storm? Does he have any better right to interpret God in these gestures or movements than the Indian has? I want to know where is the difference between the Indian who is pitied and the one who pities him? If God Almighty gives nothing to-day, as he formerly gave it, it is a serious question; and I sum it up in this way: Just as it would be hard for you to believe that I had not changed if I had acted in the way I have represented, so it ought to be hard for you to believe that the great God who for four thousand years never stopped talking when there was an occasion for him to talk, never stopped communicating his will where there was a church or proper members of the church ready to receive that will is now dumb, but still remains the unchangeable God. I want to know how you can escape the conclusion that the Almighty who talked for about four thousand years has changed if he talks no more? Latter Day Saints are denounced and pronounced heretics because they believe he is the God of revelation to-day, that "I AM" hath sent us unto you.

I leave this matter, therefore, with this declaration, that while in the kindness of God I was favored of him so long as I walked in the light that came to me through the medium of another church, while I received blessing upon blessing until I could willingly have knelt and worn my garments threadbare in begging that God would grant similar favor to the rest of the children of men; yet I say to you to-day, that notwithstanding all that, if all the experience I ever had in the entire tale of these years was told, it would not be worth a comparison with a single month or week of such experience as has come to me since I have accepted the truth on the testimony of these men who have written to you, and such as has come to me to make glad this heart and certify to me of my acceptance with God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Whatever there may be about us that is strange to you, let me tell you that our sole object in bearing testimony of this kind is to

emphasize within your mind the important thought that salvation for man to-day means all that it ever meant, and that every son and daughter of Adam who feels disposed in heart to subscribe to what was enjoined eighteen hundred years ago, may live eighteen hundred years ago so far as the experiences of that day are concerned; that is, may have a repetition of them in that day in which we live and rejoice therein. Our united testimony as a church is in this direction; and some day when we get above, we want to have ourselves so adjusted, our characters so developed, so that if there was a disposition on the part of the Ruler to condemn us, he would not be able to turn to anything in the law, or the prophets, or in the New Testament scriptures to fix that condemnation; and that in order to condemn us he would have to climb over his own word and get it behind him to do that kind of work. We propose to be in harmony with the law, with the testimony given in that day, and then if the Almighty can afford, by and by, to turn his back upon the law that he gave to govern us, that is his business; but we do not feel safe to-day in taking chances upon any such speculation as that.

May God help you as he has helped others to do what is your duty; and those of you who are halting in regard to this matter, those of you who have thought within your minds in the last few days that perhaps you would go forth and receive of this ordinance of baptism and enter into fellowship with this people, make up your minds that you will have to

bear the brand of "heretic" if you do, and bear it at the hands of the very ones who should be first to support you, because you stand with the word of God, and that your name will be cast out as evil. Prepare to go forward willing to sacrifice personal influence and earthly interests, and if you are prepared to take this risk, we are prepared to say to you on the authority of the great God who caused it to be recorded in this word and authorized us to supplement it by our testimony, that God will be in you, and by virtue of that manifestation of himself in you, will certify to you as to your safety; and so long as you remain in that condition, you will never have occasion to regret the step forward you took when you were initiated into his church and kingdom on earth.

I urge upon you to accept of the truth. I may not be permitted again to address you, and may not be permitted again to see you until I, with you, have to answer before the bar of the Eternal, and these witnesses that we have called your attention to shall confront me; but I leave my testimony with you that these men spoke the truth, and that they had abundant reason for knowing that which they bore witness of to you. You have, therefore, the testimony of those who are dead, and of those who are living; and we tell you that it will stand you in hand as honest, faithful men and women to accept it, to submit the matter to test, and learn for yourselves. May God give you courage.

A RHYME OF THOMAS THE DOUBTER.

When the Master had finished the story
Of the sower and the seed,
And had shown his disciples the lesson
Of rock and wayside and weed,

Then up spoke Thomas the Doubter,
And his brow was heavy with thought—
We had seen a darker problem
In the lesson that was taught.

"Master," said Thomas the Doubter,
"When the seed sown is the word,
I can see the meaning right plainly
Of the parable we have heard.

"But, Master, say that the sower
Were God and the seed were men,
And some of them fell by the wayside,
What were the lesson, then?"

"For I see men daily, my brothers,
Like the seed of which you spoke,

And among the thorns fall many,
And the thorns spring up and choke.

"And some of them, good Master,
Fall where the soil is scant,
And perish there for the absence
Of the life for which they pant.

"It is easy," said Thomas the Doubter,
"For those on good soil cast,
For they have their joy of living
And the harvest at the last.

"But those who fall by the wayside,
In thorns and on stony ground,
Are they like the seed-grain scattered
By a careless hand around?"

But the Master was silent and mournful,
And his brow was furrowed with thought,
And there lay on his soul a burden
Which Thomas the Doubter had wrought.