

SERMON BY ELDER M. M. TURPEN,

At Lamoni, Iowa, February 25, 1894.

Subject, KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH BY REVELATION.

I WILL read for our evening lesson a portion of the twelfth chapter of John:—

“He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came as one sent not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. Therefore he came offering to the sons of men a science, and that science was that that he said had been proclaimed or foreordained from the foundation or before the foundation of the world for the salvation of the sons of men. Hence we ask ourselves the question, Can we prove by the statements of Jesus that the science which he taught was a divine one? And when we take into consideration the various phases of doctrine that are taught to-day, “Lo, here is Christ, and lo there,” also the religions that are in the world claiming to point men unto a better life and hope beyond the grave, is it possible, I say, that we can prove the mission of the Lord Jesus

Christ unto us, and that he spake as never man spake? His statement here in the forty-sixth verse says: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” It is evident from this statement that he intended to impart something to the very souls and minds of men that would bestow intelligence and make them wise pertaining to the things that he spake and pertaining to the commandments that he gave for our guidance. And we say from these words, the doctrine of continued revelation to the sons of men is plainly pointed out. “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” We see from these words that the Lord intended that we should receive light, that our minds should be illuminated by the divine light.

We turn to other passages of Scripture, and we learn from an examination of them that the Lord intended that all that obeyed his commands might attain unto this light or this knowledge, receive that divine Spirit from the Father that would illuminate their minds, quicken their understandings, and enable them to comprehend the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us examine a portion of the Scripture that we find recorded in Isaiah fifth chapter:—

“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. And the

mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled; but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: that say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"—Verses 13–21.

We take in connection with these words statements made by the Apostle Paul that "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;" and again, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."—1 Cor. 1: 26–29.

By connecting these sayings we are enabled to see and understand that there is a divine wisdom; that the Lord intended that we should know; that we should comprehend; that we should understand, and prove to us that if we have this wisdom it will illuminate our minds, quicken our understandings, and enable us to comprehend the great things of God. The Apostle Peter, speaking concerning the words of God as delivered in his day, tells us:—

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Peter 1: 20, 21.

This scripture gives us to understand that the servants of God in ancient times

were endowed with this Spirit, with this light by which the Lord Jesus promised to enlighten the world; hence, being under the influence of this Spirit, they bore witness of the time. And, when we turn to the prophets and open them we find Moses declaring concerning the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul also tells us that "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."—Heb. 11: 24–26.

What do we learn by this? We learn that Moses, a servant of God, had received the witness of the Spirit concerning the Messiah, concerning his Savior, his Lord, therefore he could bear testimony concerning him. We have not time, this evening, to call your attention to all the testimonies of God's prophets, but we wish to pass along through the Scriptures and bring before you some of the statements concerning the knowledge of Christ that the ancients had. In the nineteenth chapter of Job we hear the prophet break out in these words:—

"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."—Verses 23–25.

I have thought that Job must have had the same Spirit that has moved upon the men of God in this day to tell the world what they know. We are sometimes looked upon as being too positive. The world says that one of the great objections it has to the Church of Christ, and the members of the church, is that they continue to tell the people that they know that the work that they have embraced is of God. Why was it that this servant of God was so anxious that his words should be printed, that they should be graven with an iron pen and lead in a rock forever? He tells us that it was because he knew that his "Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

We turn again to the word and read a

portion of the testimony of the Prophet Isaiah:—

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”—Chap. 9: 6.

This is a wonderful statement made by the prophet of God concerning this revelation, and it is one that should thrill our hearts with joy when we contemplate that this servant of God who lived years, and hundreds of years before our Savior's first advent into the world, speaks as he does concerning his coming into the world, and that he should be the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and that his government should be everlasting. We turn now to the testimony of Simeon. When the babe, Christ, was brought into the temple, he blessed God, and said: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” Why? Because he had seen the Lord Christ. And so the Spirit bore witness to this servant of God that he should not taste death until he had seen the Savior, the Redeemer. And, by the power of that Holy Spirit he was enabled to bear witness of this glorious fact, that Jesus was the Son of God. And likewise the Prophetess Anna came into the temple at the same time, and the Holy Ghost spake to her concerning the child Jesus.

We follow the Scriptures and find the apostles of the Lord chosen and sent out to preach the gospel among the Jews. They were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But after our Savior's resurrection from the dead he called his apostles together and sent them out to preach the gospel in all the world. But, mark you, he says to them, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” Why this tarrying? It does seem to me that if there ever was a class of individuals that could have represented Jesus Christ without the revelation of the Spirit, it was these twelve apostles, because they were

with him in his ministry, they saw him after his resurrection. But notwithstanding all they saw and heard they needed an endowment from on high, they needed the divine Spirit to enable them to properly represent him and to make them proper witnesses of the Savior of the world. Hence they were commanded to tarry until they had received this light from on high, this abiding Spirit to illuminate their minds, quicken their understandings, to bring the words of God that he spake to them in other days, at other times, to their minds.

After this we find the apostles waiting for this endowment. And when the time came the Holy Spirit rested upon them; they felt to teach and preach the wonderful things of the kingdom of God, and bear testimony of the great and glorious work of Jesus Christ. And, in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and the thirty-second verse the Apostle Peter speaking concerning this class says, “And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” You see, then, that it is by this Holy Ghost, this Spirit of God, that was promised to us by the Lord himself, that we are enabled to know that Jesus is the Christ.

We might ask, “How shall we obtain this Spirit?” and the answer is in the statement here that God gives his Spirit to all them that obey him. And again the Christ, speaking to one Judas who said to the Lord, “How it is that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” replies thus:—

“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”—John 14: 23-25.

Here, then, we find how it was that these servants of God were to receive the divine Spirit, that that would enlighten their minds and enable them to know concerning the things of God. It was

because they loved him and kept his commandments. In the eleventh chapter of Matthew we have this prayer of the Savior:—

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.”

Now, the difference between the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrines and commandments of men can be easily seen right here. They tell you to take the yoke of Christ upon you and *believe* in him; and, if you are only honest in your conviction and belief it is all right. You must not expect to attain unto that divine certainty that the apostles and the church of God attained unto in ages that are past and gone. You must *believe* that you are right, *hope* you are right, and it will be all right with you in that sweet bye and bye. O how different is the language of the Lord Jesus Christ:—

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.”

We should understand and comprehend something about the glorious gospel of the Son of God. He wants us to be intelligent men and women, he wants us to grow in grace and in the further knowledge of the truth as it exists in the Christ. We might make this plainer to the minds of some by way of comparison: Suppose that your speaker desired to become acquainted with the Latin language, and there was a German school over here in Ringgold county. Does it look reasonable that I would go to that school to learn the Latin language, if I knew before I started that they only taught German there? “Why,” says one, “you would not go there. If you desired to understand the Latin language you would go to a Latin school.” And this everybody can see plainly. If we wish to

learn the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ will we go to his teachings, or to Robert G. Ingersoll? Will we hunt up the teachings of Thomas Paine and other men who reject him? No, my friends. But if we desire to know concerning the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, and whether or no the gospel of Christ can be demonstrated beyond successful contradiction, we must go to Christ, we must obey his gospel, for the Savior said:—

“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”

We see from this, that the gospel of Christ is susceptible of demonstration; that we can make an application of the divine law to ourselves and strive to become purified thereby, we can make ourselves fit temples for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of Christ rests upon us, it will take of the things of the Father and show them unto us. It will enable us to know concerning the great and glorious mission of the Son of God.

The Apostle Paul, in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, gives us to “understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

“Well, but,” says one, “I can say that Jesus is the Lord.” You can? Let us see. Can you bear testimony before any court in the land that you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?” “Well, I don’t know that I really could bear a faithful testimony to that fact, for I do not know that he is.” Evidently, the idea that the Apostle Paul wished to convey was, that no man could bear witness that Jesus Christ was the Son of God unless it had been revealed unto him by the divine Spirit. If men could not bear a faithful testimony that Jesus was the Christ in the day in which Paul lived unless they had the Holy Spirit, does it look reasonable, that men in this age of the world can bear a faithful testimony that Jesus is the Son of God unless they too have the witness within them. To our mind it is very clear that they cannot.

John the Revelator was about to fall down and worship an angel who appeared to him, and the angel said to him, “See

thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Considering these statements, how is it possible that an individual believing in this word can hold that revelation has ceased, and that when John wrote the last book in the New Testament the revelations of God to men were ended. Another thing that I wish to call your attention to is the present divided condition of Christianity. The many ways by which this word of God is interpreted by the divines of the day is to our mind, conclusive proof that there is a great necessity for the Divine Spirit to enable men to understand the things that have already been written for their instruction. You go to a popular church of the day, and you are told that you can be baptized by immersion, by sprinkling, or by pouring; that either is not essential to salvation. You go to another, and the minister will tell you that you must be baptized by immersion, and that it is but the answer of a good conscience. You go to still another, and you learn that you must be baptized by immersion, three times, face forward. You go to another very popular denomination and they will tell you that you must be baptized by immersion for the remission of sins. Now if the learned divines differ like this, our argument is: Since they all claim to found their teachings on the word of God, this is conclusive evidence that they need revelation, that they need the divine Spirit, to enable them to understand and comprehend the things of God. This calls to mind a quotation from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian brethren:—

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."—1 Cor. 2: 11, 12.

And we say that this is the only means by and through which we can understand the works that purport to be the works of God, and know the difference between the doctrines, and the teachings, and commandments of men, and the teachings and commandments of our

Lord Jesus Christ. Why, my friends, the prophet of God might stand up here this evening and declare to you in the name of the Lord, that certain things would come to pass in the future, say next year, or the next. Would you know that what he said was divine, would you know that it was the word of God, simply because a man claiming to be a prophet declared it unto you? No, my friends. Not unless you received of that same Spirit that moved upon that prophet to declare that word could you be enabled to know and understand that he was speaking in the name of the Lord. Neither can we testify that God is, intelligently, unless we have received that divine Spirit, that light that Jesus promised to lighten us, to lighten every man that cometh into the world, especially a light to lighten those that will obey his gospel. I call your attention now to the first two verses of the fifth chapter of Jeremiah:—

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely."

"And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely." How is this? Is it not because that those individuals did not know that God lived? They were not acquainted with him? They knew not that their God had created the heavens and the earth, lived and reigned there—without that knowledge. Why? Because that they failed to execute judgment, and did not seek the truth. Now this text is very forcible when we take it in connection with what Jesus said:—

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

And again, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Now by way of comparison let us suppose that there are evidences upon which the courts of the land may convict an individual here to-night of murder in the first degree and condemn him to forfeit his life. How much do you think that individual would give for the statements of ten thousand men that would say, "I

believe he is innocent; I hope he is innocent, and I believe with all my heart that that man is innocent."

"Why," says one, "I don't know as he would give anything."

"Why not?"

"Simply from the fact that the circumstances are such that unless he has positive proof, something that is clear and distinct, that will set aside all the allegations, this man sees that his life will be taken."

"What do you think that man would give, if he had it to give, if there could be brought two witnesses who could prove that he was innocent so that his life would be preserved?"

"Why, I should think that man would give all that he possessed in this life, though he possessed millions of dollars, he would give all, if he could prove by two individuals that he was an innocent man."

Now then, the comparison we wish to make is right here: Our life that now is, is but a brief span compared with eternity. If you felt to-night that you were without God in the world, and that if you should pass from this stage of existence that you would be lost in eternity, that you would lose your soul, how much would you give for ten thousand ministers that might come to you and tell you, "Dear brother, if you hope for life, and if you believe for life, it will be all right with you by and by. Go on, dear brother." How much would you give for such comfort as that?

"Well," says one, "if the word of God that you have read this evening be true, I don't believe I would give very much, or that it would pay me to give anything."

How much would you give to have a man come to you clothed upon with the word of God, clothed upon with the light of the Spirit of the Almighty, pointing you to the glorious principles of everlasting light, telling you that you might obtain eternal life, and would also tell you that he knew how you could obtain it? It does seem to me that you ought to be willing at least to give away your sins, your imperfections, and your heart wanderings from God, and to repent of those sins and turn to him with full purpose of heart, that you might obtain that witness that the one who was witness to you,

bearing the word of God to you, had received. Notwithstanding the fact that there are going around among men those that have received testimony of the Spirit that they have a work to perform, that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is true, and are bearing witness to these facts among the sons of men, they are not received with a great deal of joy and gladness in many places, very many places where they go as they travel to and fro in the earth. Sometimes the people look upon them with scorn and disdain. And to have the people look upon them with such scorn and disdain is quite a trial to the servants of God, for they realize that if the people would but give them an opportunity they could teach them the glorious principles of life and eternal salvation; they could teach them how they could save their souls in eternity, and receive celestial glory.

Let us again examine the statement of Jeremiah, "Though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely." This is because they do not know that he lives. And if they should testify that the Lord lives when they do not know that he does live, would they not be testifying falsely? Most assuredly they would.

We again ask the question, How shall we obtain this blessed knowledge? We answer, By obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The Apostle Paul speaking of this salvation says that he had obeyed this same gospel, as you will find in the eighth chapter of Romans, second verse:—

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is evident from these words of the Apostle that he had obeyed that law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; hence it had made him free from the law of sin and death. And after having received that knowledge, that freedom, he was enabled to speak of and tell the people what he knew; and he said of the gospel

he received, that he received it not of man, neither was he taught it by men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. And in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesian brethren he tells them:—

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling; and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.”—Verses 15-18.

Here the apostle desires that these Ephesian brethren might know by revelation concerning the knowledge of the things of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They, evidently, were among those who had obeyed the principles of the gospel of Christ; therefore they were entitled to know. The Apostle John also writes on this same subject:—

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the

blood: and these three agree in one.”—1 John 5:5-8.

Therefore by obedience to the word of God we can obtain the Spirit of God, and that Spirit, says the word, will “bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and join heirs with Christ.” We learn from this the great necessity upon our part of yielding obedience to the glorious principles of the gospel; and Peter tells us, that we should add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, and such like, for “if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”—2 Peter 1:8-9.

So you see, my brethren, that there is a necessity for us to strive to keep ourselves in the true fold after having obeyed the true gospel; and continue to run with patience the race unto the end. That our light may not go out, but that it may grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day; that we may so live before God that we may finally reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ and receive from him at the last day the welcome plaudit, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” is my desire and prayer for you all in Jesus’ name. Amen.

(Reported for the *Herald* with the Edison phonograph by F. E. Cochran.)

INFLUENCE OF PURITANISM ON AMERICA.

PROF. M. M. MANGASARIAN before the Society for Ethical Culture on “The Puritan Spirit, and What it Has Done for America.” He said in part:—

History should be written and read without prejudice. The Puritan movement was to Protestantism what Jesuitism was to the Catholic Church. But there is a great difference between them. The one was a spirit, the other was a method. Let us speak of Puritanism without prejudice. The true liberal is

the man who not only expresses things as he sees them, but who also sees things as they really are.

However unlovely the Puritan may appear to us to-day, in the England of Queen Elizabeth he was the only man who had not bent his knees to false gods. The social and political corruption of the Elizabethan age is beyond belief. The bear baiting and bull fighting, as well as the other amusements of the people, were of the most degrading type. A corrupted