

Vol. 12

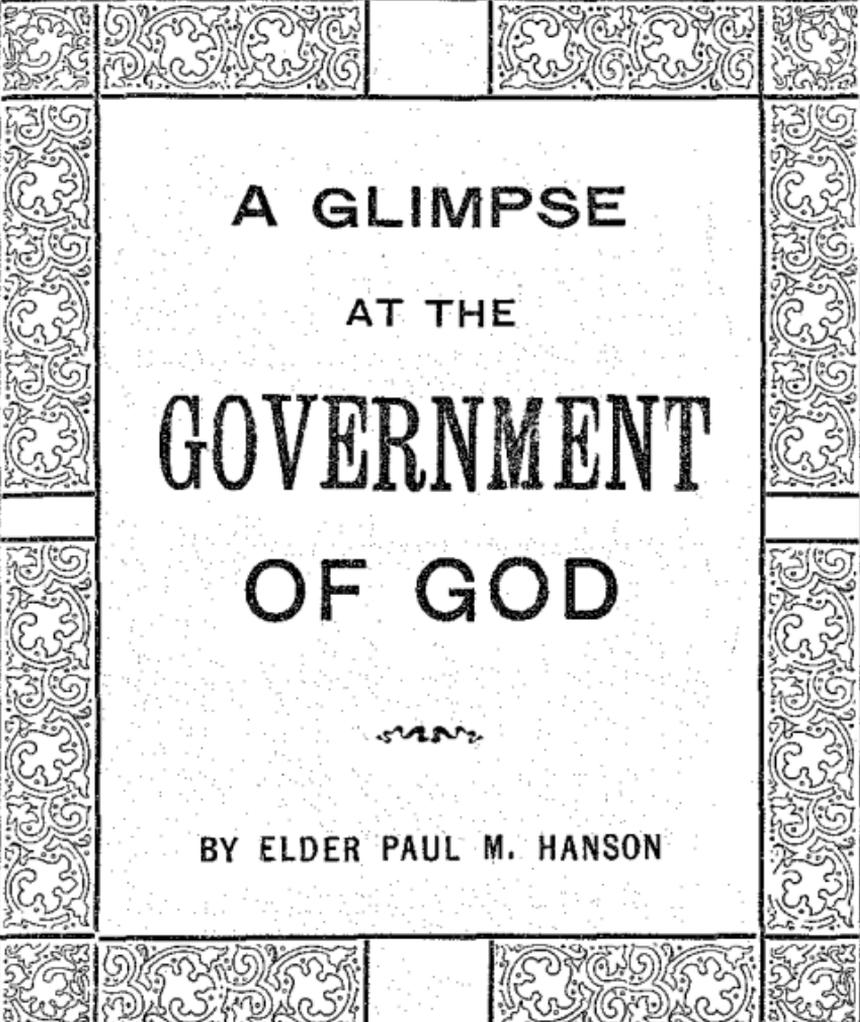
No. 1

THE GOSPEL BANNER

January, 1904

SUBSCRIPTION,

15C PER YEAR



A GLIMPSE
AT THE
GOVERNMENT
OF GOD

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Issued Quarterly by the Ensign Publishing House, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo.

Entered at the Independence, Mo., Post Office as Second Class Mail Matter.



ELDER PAUL M. HANSON

A GLIMPSE AT THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD BY A "LATTER DAY SAINT."

ELDER PAUL M. HANSON.

The silver-tongued prophet, Isaiah, by inspiration said:

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 justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.—Isa. 9:6, 7.

In those words three facts are plainly declared to which attention is invited. A child was to be born. The government should be upon his shoulder. Of the increase of that government there should be no end.

The "child" was evidently Christ; for his name was to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." No other child but Jesus has been worthy to be called the Lord.

The prophet in speaking of the "government" that was to have "no end" and be "established" from

“henceforth even forever,” evidently alludes to the divine system of affairs instituted by Christ, viz., his church, laws, and promises for such were “not of this world” and therefore must be lasting or unending as God himself.

GOD WORKS BY LAW.

The material universe is governed by the power of God manifested through inflexible law; the spiritual universe is no less governed. The law of cause and effect is as true in spiritual as in material things. If salvation is not the result of action—perfect action—why was a perfect plan given by the Lord to be obeyed? Salvation, a condition of perfection: redemption from sin and from liability to eternal death, is an effect and must have its adequate active cause.

How unconvincing the claim of some that they are “saved” when at the same time they ignore the means ordained of God to bring about that end!

It is necessary to *set in motion* the cause leading to the effect.

Be not deceived, no effect can be greater than its cause—“whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” —(Gal. 6:7.)

He who rejects any part of the gospel is that far *unsaved*, for the

gospel is the instrument God uses to accomplish salvation.

CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT TO HAVE
"NO END."

In dealing with the government that should rest upon the shoulder of the child, Jesus, we deal with an institution whose Architect is God. Christianity did not come to be superseded by another religion—it came to "increase," and therefore should not be regarded in the same light as Mohammedanism, Confucianism, and other religions which have not had their origin in the infinite God. Man's productions are not lasting—even the pyramids waste away, and so do all religions which have human wisdom for their foundation. The governments of men, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are faulty—imperfection and changeability are stamped upon their founder's brow. Man is permitted to change and offer amendments to what has been done by his predecessors but who shall change the ways or attempt to improve upon the government of the Lord?

The Lord *started right* in the founding of his government and since he is unchangeable he must continue as he started; so, whatever he has founded must of necessity increase, not deteriorate, until it

“covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

Christianity is perfect, and therefore the final religion. It did not come to live like a flower and wither and die. To this Paul bore witness when he said to the Galatians:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.—Gal. 1: 6, 9.

Jesus said:

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.—John 12:48.

Moses, hundreds of years before the birth of the “Prince of Peace” wrote of the everlasting character of his work in these words:

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.—Deut. 18:18, 19.

Christianity is, then, what christianity *was*. Christ’s form of government was not given to be “done away” with as was the Mosaic system, for the latter was “added

because of transgression;" the former, according to Bible witnesses, came to stay. The Mosaic system was to be temporary, the government of Christ "everlasting."

The gospel was given to save "everyone that believeth," and so long as there are people to "believe" and be saved that long there will be a necessity for the gospel in its *entirety*.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ALL GOVERNMENTS.

All governments have the right to make their own laws and state the terms by which foreigners may be admitted to citizenship in their realms. For instance, the United States has the right to enact its own laws and no foreign power has the right to make them void. To all governments belong the right to make their own laws and to every government belongs the right to state what foreigners must do to obtain citizenship in their country and protection under their flag.

The right to enact laws and say what must be done to obtain citizenship belongs to the government or kingdom of God, as well as to all governments of men. In the matter of every government being supreme in its own sphere there must be no exception.

If one would ignore or bid defiance to the naturalization laws of America or of any other country, our judgment in his case would be that he should then take the consequences of his own actions and remain outside the realms of the government whose laws he spurned. The government must not be overthrown by advocates of no order and no law.

Should less be said when dealing with the kingdom of heaven than if men ignore or bid defiance to the kingdom's laws they must take the consequences of their actions? Why have any law in earth or in heaven if one can honor it if he wishes, or reject it if he pleases, and still be an heir of glory?

HOW WE BECOME SUBJECTS OF CHRIST'S GOVERNMENT.

There is a true ground of man's acceptance with God. It is the duty of man to find that ground, both for the safety of himself and the "little ones" whom God may have given to his charge.

We need only learn what christianity was to know what our relationship with God should be now. Transport yourselves to the days of the apostles and Christ—cast your eyes about, open your ears, see and hear—and your duty under the

government of heaven will be made clear.

If men are not on the true ground of acceptance with God they are off of it, and if off of it, they are on dangerous ground. For the "establishing" of a government by God and placing it upon the shoulder of Christ was no farce; therefore he who bids defiance to or treats lightly the laws of that government must take the consequences of his own action in harmony with what was spoken by Moses, "I will require it of him."

The Jews extolled the law and rejected Christ. Let not the christian sing of Christ as the "Counsellor, the mighty God," and then put his law at a discount. Had the Jews believed in "Moses and the Prophets" they would have believed in Christ, for the prophets spoke of the Messiah; and he who now believes in Christ will believe his words.

The patient who refuses to have a prescription compounded shows to that extent his lack of faith and confidence in the physician who prescribed. He who refuses to do what Christ commanded shows that far his lack of faith in the Lord.

When the legislatures of the different states enact laws they do so because of a need for them, and when

enacted they are in force *until repealed*. The laws of God need no repealing as do the laws of men, for the source of the one is infinitude; the fountain of the other is humanity.

Laws once enacted are in force until repealed. Perfect laws need no repealing. Therefore the laws—*all of them*—instituted by Christ are binding now. I do not see why anyone should want the laws of Christ, *our Lord*, repealed, made void or done away—have not perfect laws a perfect tendency?

The laws of nineteen hundred years ago by which men were made citizens of the kingdom of God are the laws and *only laws* by which men may now enter into the kingdom of heaven. There can be no error in the legislation of heaven; for that reason the kingdom of God will not now enact laws different from those nineteen hundred years ago.

If one will not comply with the laws of a government he should not complain if he is not granted full citizenship, no matter whether the government which refuses him is of God or man.

Jesus, whom we call our "Savior," has said:

Verily, verily, [or in other words, truly, truly], I say unto thee, Except a man be

born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—John 3:5.

Had Jesus simply said, “He that is born of water and of the Spirit can enter into the kingdom of God,” it would hardly have been so strong as that which is written. As it is, we are informed that he who wishes to enter the kingdom of God *must* be born of water and of the Spirit; and unless he is born of those elements he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God. If we are in the kingdom of God we are where God wants us; else why say, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand?”

If a man has not sworn allegiance to the United States, observed certain laws, and respected certain men, and as a result has no citizenship, would the United States, if he were unlawfully seized by Russia, come to his rescue and say to that power, “Release that man, he is one of our citizens; he has obeyed our laws; set him free?”

If we have no citizenship in the kingdom of God by reason of our not honoring the Lord’s servants and respecting his laws, should we then expect when we are grasped by a foreign power that God will come to our rescue and say to Satan, “This is my subject; he has obeyed my laws; set him free?” Do we expect

God to do that? What government contends for those who are not her subjects and who disregard law?

The courts of earth do not place law breakers in palaces, neither will the courts of heaven place those in "mansions" who have scorned the "King" and disregarded his laws. Neither will the King say to the transgressors: "For your disobedience and repudiating my laws I give you celestial life;" nor will he say, "Enter the Holy City." But what government will not contend for her loyal ones?

It is an extreme position to affirm that entrance can be effected into the kingdom of God by water alone, and equally as extreme a view to entertain that one can be inducted into the kingdom of God *without* water—just by the Spirit alone. Both are extreme views and both are false—some one is legislating contrary to the constitution of heaven, and they who do that have neither God nor Christ on their side. Both the water and the Spirit make the one birth; both are necessary to man's entrance into the kingdom of God, for *Jesus* has so affirmed.

The water precedes the Spirit and to this the writers of the Holy Bible testify. If they have testified anything contradictory to this, they

have crossed themselves. Of Jesus, our undeniable example, we read:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.—Matt. 3:16.

First the water, then the Spirit. He practiced in harmony with his teaching. With his voice he declared the necessity of being born of water and of the Spirit and by his action he gave us an “example” of the way.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the vast multitude who heard him preach:

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.—Acts 2:38.

First the water, then the Spirit. Peter made the above teaching apply to “every one.” So did the Head One of the government when he said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The water is spoken of as much as the Spirit and the Spirit as much as the water; and both are spoken of by God as binding upon man (any one).

The Spirit of God will not dwell in unholy temples. Peter says that “baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is for the remission of sins.” We now see why water should precede

the Spirit; the temple should be cleansed for the reception of the Holy Spirit of God. It should be remembered, however, that baptism to be of any worth must be accompanied by *faith in God* and *repentance*. (Mark 16:16; Acts 8: 36-38; 2:38). Baptism is commanded and "remission of sins" is to be derived from obedience to the command upon the same principle as Naaman was healed of his leprosy by dipping himself in the river Jordan. The virtue was not in the water, yet *without the water* he would not have been cleansed. When Naaman "dipped" himself "according to the saying of the man of God," he was "clean." (2 Kings 5).

Philip, while at Samaria, baptized both men and women after they believed his preaching concerning the kingdom of God. The apostles Peter and John then came from Jerusalem and

Prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.—Acts 8: 14-17.

First the water, then the Spirit. Why will not men open their eyes, unstop their ears, and see and hear.

In the 19th chapter of Acts in the "Book of God" we read:

Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.—vs. 1-6.

First the baptism of the water, then the Spirit. What wonderful blending of teaching and practice of Jesus and John the Baptist, who said:

There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.—Mark 1:7, 8.

The "you" who had been baptized with water were to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and Peter and Philip and Paul, Jesus the "Son of God" in the lead, and heaven-sent men in the wake, faithfully following on.

HAS ANY ONE THE RIGHT TO BAPTIZE?

Why did Jesus go to John to attend to his baptism—why did he not go to the Pharisees or Scribes, or Cornelius? Because John was a duly authorized servant of God, and Jesus knew his acts would be legal

and would be so considered throughout the divine realms. When agents duly authorized properly represent the firm which sent them, their acts are considered legal by the firm and by the law. Heaven, the greatest "firm" of all, will not ignore the acts of those to whom the "keys of the kingdom" have been given, but will seal in heaven that which their actions bind on earth. Jesus knew there could be a baptism from heaven and a *baptism of men*, for he asked those who came to him inquiring concerning his authority whether the "baptism of John" was from heaven or of men. Jesus wished to be baptized with the "baptism from heaven," therefore he went to John who was "sent of God." Can a baptism administered by one not "sent of God" be from heaven? If so, what makes a "baptism of men?"

Were I to go to Germany as an ambassador of the United States my acts would not be acts of the United States, because the United States did not send me; and if Germany received me as an ambassador she must suffer the consequences of the imposition. It was her business to inquire as to my credentials.

Paul was enabled to know that those twelve disciples of whom we read in Acts 19 were not baptized

by a servant of the Lord, and he finding their baptism to be not "from heaven," baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus" or by the *authority of Jesus Christ*. These disciples, though they had been baptized "unto John's baptism," were evidently not baptized by John, for if they had been Paul would have recognized the baptisms as legal, and would not have repudiated the acts of a man "sent of God." They were not baptized by John, for John taught that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost, those whom he had baptized with water; and of the Holy Ghost these men were so ignorant that they had not so much as heard "whether there be any Holy Ghost." They had been baptized by some one not "sent of God;" so Paul baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus." It was not until after a baptism by a man sent of God that the Holy Spirit came.

If the Holy Spirit follows (as is often claimed) the mere immersion of an individual under the hands of any one, and without the ordinance of the "laying on of hands," why did not these twelve men who had been "baptized unto John's baptism" receive the Holy Spirit? And if simple immersion under the hands of *any one* is sufficient Paul did

wrong in not honoring their "baptism."

Paul's question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" may with propriety be propounded seriously to every one who believes himself a citizen of God's kingdom. The "children of the kingdom" in days of old were entitled to that holy blessing, and so are the citizens of the kingdom today; for God's government—system of affairs—was to have "no end." That question should come home with force to those who have been simply baptized (immersed), but have not received the Holy Ghost and consequently do not so much as know "whether there be any Holy Ghost;" for it was to that class Paul addressed this question 1900 years ago. When Paul learned these twelve men had not received the Holy Ghost he said, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" Paul should not have asked such a question if it *makes no difference who baptizes*. If a "baptism of men" is a sufficient passport into the presence of God, Jesus would never have spoken of a "baptism from heaven." We know that christianity was pure 1900 years ago—let us draw near to those days.

AUTHORITY NECESSARY TO REPRESENT GOD OR MAN.

The right of certain men to act

for God will not be disputed by Bible students. When we turn to Mosaic times, the Mosaic system being a "shadow" or type of "good things to come, *i. e.*, the government of Christ, we are forced to believe that certain men will, under the present rule of Christ, stand in offices designated by God and whose official acts will, therefore, be legal. Otherwise the Mosaic system was not a *true* "shadow" or "type" of what was to come. If the law had inspired men to expound it, and the gospel now has *uninspired* men to teach it, the gospel is the "shadow" of the "good things" of the past. Many may claim that the representatives of the kingdom of God "are taking too much honor upon themselves," the same with which Moses was charged in the time of the "shadow," but their contending against God's way will not make their own unofficial deeds official. If there is no such thing as a priesthood in the church, *i. e.*, the right to act for God—why did Paul completely repudiate the action of some one who baptized those twelve men?

In Acts 19: 13-16 we read:

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were

seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

These men "took upon themselves" to stand as ambassadors of God, and heaven did not countenance their unauthorized deeds. Christ was authorized of God to represent him, and Christ's ministry held the priesthood, for Christ said unto them:

As my Father hath sent me, EVEN SO send I you.—John 20: 21.

The evil spirits knew Christ; they knew Paul; they knew the seventy, of whom it is written:

They returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.—Luke 10: 17.

But to those who "took upon themselves" to act for God they pertinently said, "Who are ye?"

Where would order be, if in the governments of men every one stepped into offices without appointments—without authority? Earthly governments have their representatives who are appointed by the ones whom they represent. The government or kingdom of God has its representatives, and they are appointed by the One whom they represent. The power is with men to send men to represent them—the power is with God to send men to represent him. Men should not

appoint representatives to represent another government, earthly or heavenly. If God appoints his own representatives such action will be in harmony with principles of truth, with which we are acquainted. We contend for the true and ancient way—it appeals to our reason.

HOW ARE WE TO KNOW SERVANTS OF GOD?

It may be asked, "How are we to know a servant of God since myriads claim that honor?" Are we at a loss to know who are officers of the United States government? Are we at a loss to know who are God's servants when the Scriptures say, "He that is sent of God speaketh the words of God."

If then the claim salutes our ears that one can enter into the kingdom of God without the baptism of the water, or without the baptism of the Spirit; or that a baptism of men is as good as a "baptism from heaven," we know that he who makes that claim is not speaking the "words of God," and according to our guide is not "sent of God." And when we read that in the government which was to be "established" there were apostles, prophets, seventies, evangelists, elders, teachers and deacons, are we at a loss to know what offices God's servants will hold? (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; Luke 10; 1 Tim. 3.)

A seventy did not hold the same office as an apostle, or the Lord would have appointed all seventies or all apostles. And so of all the other officers; they had their special duties to perform—the same as the various officers of the state have their respective duties to perform. When the republic of the United States was founded provision was made for Senators, Representatives, etc. It has never advanced beyond a necessity for them. The divine government has never advanced beyond a necessity for the officers “God set in the church.” In fact it is no more complete with simply deacons, elders and evangelists than the United States government would be with Justices of the Peace, Constables and Postmasters!

To do away with apostles it has been said, “Apostles anciently worked miracles, and if we have apostles now they should possess the same powers.” True! But *evangelists* anciently worked miracles, so, if we have evangelists today they should possess the same powers. (Acts 8:13; 21:8). And *elders* anciently worked miracles, so, if we have elders today they should possess the same powers. (Jas. 5:14). Then all the evangelists and elders of today should possess the power to work miracles! The Jews denounced the apostles and

prophets of 1900 years ago—not the “children of the kingdom.” On whose side—the Jews or the people of God—are those who now say, “Away with him?” It is hard to believe that a lapse of 1900 years transforms the sin of the “away with him” in the mouth of a Jew into a virtue, when placed in the mouth of a christian.

The teachings of Christ are *true*, the form of government he established is *sound*; therefore whatever assails or contradicts either, is not true, no matter whether the opposition comes from infidels or from those in flowing gowns. Jesus said:

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.— Luke 11: 23.

He who contends for the “faith once delivered to the saints” is *of God*. He who endeavors to keep the laws of any government, divine or human, from being enforced, is not on the side of the government, but *against* it.

A THOUGHT ON INFIDELITY.

Infidelity consists of more than disbelieving what God has said; it may consist in believing that God will do what he has said he will not do. If we say we cannot get into the kingdom of God by being born of water and of the Spirit, we disbelieve the Scriptures; and if we say we *can* get into the kingdom *without*

the water or *without* the Spirit, we disbelieve God. If we disbelieve God or believe we can do what he has said we cannot do, we are *compounding infidelity*.

THE COMFORTER PROMISED BY CHRIST

The necessity of being born "of the Spirit" is emphasized by the saying of Paul that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12). Then, if one has not received the Holy Ghost he does not *know* that Jesus is the Lord.

God is infinite in "wisdom;" he is a "God of knowledge;" "through faith" he framed the worlds; he "heals;" he knows the "end from the beginning" and is acquainted with laws we do not understand. He knows the "spirits of devils" and every "tongue" that was ever spoken and its equivalent in the spoken languages of today. (Rom. 16:27; 1 Sam. 2:3; Heb. 11:3; Deut. 32:39; Isa. 46:10). Since Christ said (John 16:13-15) the Comforter or Holy Ghost would take the "things of the Father [some of the things referred to] and show them to his people," Paul was right in saying to the church:

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the

working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues —1 Cor. 12:8-10.

Jesus, after his resurrection, said to his apostles:

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.—Mark 16: 15-18.

Mark, the speaker, in the 20th verse says:

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

It is evident the "signs" spoken of by Jesus were to follow the unbelieving "creatures" of the world who would "believe" when they heard the gospel preached. A simple analysis of the matter makes such conclusion very clear. Jesus said to the apostles:

Go ye [apostles] into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He [anyone] that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he [anyone] that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them [anyone] that believe, etc.

If the "signs" were to follow the apostles exclusively Jesus should have said, "And these signs shall follow *you* who believe," for he was speaking to them direct. But Jesus

does not say that. Jesus said to the apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Since the apostles are the antecedent of "ye" they cannot be the antecedent of "them," for "ye" is a personal pronoun of the second person, while "them" is a personal pronoun of the *third* person. The average reader knows that a pronoun should agree with its antecedent in *person* as well as in number and gender.

It was not necessary to tell the apostles if they believed, signs would follow them, for that *had been their experience.* (Luke 9:6). They believed the gospel at the time Jesus was speaking or they would not have been authorized to preach it to others. Since they were not unbelievers of the gospel they are not the ones referred to when Jesus said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe." When Jesus spoke those words the time was at hand when the Comforter would take the "things of the Father" and bestow them upon *anyone* who would believe the gospel and be baptized and *signs* would be the result. That is the reasonable and right conclusion from the fact that Paul in writing to the church, said:

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man.—1 Cor. 12:7.

Follow after charity and desire spiritual

gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.—1 Cor. 14: 1.

“Every man” in the church was entitled to the “manifestation of the Spirit” and “gifts” would be their heritage. When these “gifts” were exercised they became “signs.”

Christ’s promises are as true and applicable in one part of the gospel dispensation as in any other part and they are realized when the stipulations he gave are fulfilled.

If the promise of Christ concerning the spiritual gifts or “signs” was given in the gospel dispensation and was never repealed, and we are living in that dispensation, the promise is to us if we “believe.” If we cannot believe him in regard to that promise, how do we know we shall receive “eternal life?”

The promise was given in the christian dispensation. It was never repealed, for “heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” The glorious christian dispensation has not terminated, therefore the promise extends to us—it remains for us to “believe.” It is not a dismal thought that christianity *is*—not simply *was*.

WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Not “in the heart,” for men pressed “into” the kingdom in the days of Christ. (Luke 16:16). Jesus said to the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God is within you,” but when we

remember that Jesus denounced the Pharisees as "hypocrites" we understand the kingdom was "among them" (as the marginal rendering reads) and not "in their hearts."

The kingdom of God or church did not come down from Christ to our day unchanged. If it did, where is it? What church on earth when described is like the church of the Bible?

The church of 1900 years ago went into apostasy. Paul said, when speaking of the coming of the Lord:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.—2 Thess. 2:3.

If there was no apostasy, why did the Reformers start the Reformation? If the church of God was on earth they should have *united with it*—not start other churches. If it was not on earth the apostasy was complete.

Since the kingdom of God was to have "no end" it must arise and be seen after the "falling away." When it arises it will be like it was when founded. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints claims that the church has, by the power of God, been brought out of the "wilderness clear as the moon and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

It seems too much for some to believe that God appoints our ministers. "The idea!" some will

say. But does it not occur to everyone, upon reflection, that if there is no revelation from God in our day, not only the officers of the above church stand condemned, but *all the preachers* of christendom. For if they are not appointed of *God* they are by man. If there is no revelation from God, how is a man to know God wants him to represent Him? Christ commissioned his apostles to preach, but that commission does not extend to one in our age any more than the command of God to Noah to build an ark. Our belief and our knowledge are that God does now call men to his ministry and appoint them to offices in his government, and when they act according to his law and their calling whether it be in "laying on of hands" for the reception of the Holy Spirit, or for the healing of the sick, or in administering baptism, God sanctions and seals what has been done, for they are *his ministry*.

The disciples asked Jesus:

Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already.—Matt. 17: 10-12.

The disciples understood that he spake to them of "John the Baptist." Elias did come 1900 years ago, we know, but Jesus says, "Elias truly shall first come and restore all

things.” Since there was a “falling away” it was necessary for Elias to come *again*. Malachi completely agrees with Jesus when, in referring to the second coming of the Lord, he says:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple — Mal. 3: 1.

The coming of the Lord here spoken of is not the first coming, for he did not then come “suddenly to his temple.” Malachi goes on to say, “Who may abide the day of his coming!” (All men could abide the “day of his coming” when he came as a “babe”). “Who shall stand when he appeareth?” (All could stand when he came the first time). (Mal. 1: 2-5). Before the second coming of the Lord a “messenger,” an “Elias” was to come and “prepare” or “restore [bring back] all things.” We say “Elias” has come (he came in about the year 1830 as witnesses solemnly aver), and by reason of his coming the church we represent is not only sound in organic structure and doctrine, but also is in possession of the priesthood. The priesthood was one of the “things” that needed restoring, for it was lost in the corruptions of the middle ages. Will those who ridicule the source of our

authority explain where they got theirs?

It is well to know whether the institution we live in is of *divine* or human origin, for David said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." (Psa. 127:1). We conclude from that if the Lord did not *build* the church of the Saints it is not his church, and that rule applies to every other church on the whole earth. We claim He did build it, and we believe its organic structure of apostles, prophets, evangelists, seventies, elders, priests, teachers and deacons (all of which are provided for in the New Testament), its ordinances of faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands, and Lord's Supper, with our belief in the resurrection of the body and eternal judgment (which is that a man "shall be judged according to his deeds), *entitle our claim to consideration.*

If such a church, identical with the church of the Bible in organization, doctrine and practice, is not the church of Christ, is one which has a different organization from the one of the Bible, which teaches different doctrines and has no priesthood? The church of the Saints is called the Church of Jesus Christ because he built it—it is *his*. Is it not reasonable that if Christ has a

church on earth it will be called after him and not after *man*? Is it right to label a church built by man the *Church of Jesus Christ*? Can man build the Lord's church without *revelation* or direction from him? If so, why was not the church built that way 1900 years ago?

The church on the eastern hemisphere had its headquarters at Jerusalem, for it was there questions were brought for decision. (Acts 15). The church in the last days has its headquarters at Lamoni, Iowa—there the various congregational organizations of the church scattered throughout the United States and foreign lands are oftentimes represented by delegates and the business of the church transacted.

It would be far better if it were not necessary to refer to some who went out from us and located in the valleys of Utah, by the Great Salt Lake, and there taught that one could rightly have many wives. That is *their* doctrine, *not ours*. They did not take it with them from us, for the law governing us on that point was and is:

Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else.— Doctrine & Covenants 42: 7.

This is part of a revelation given to the church in 1831, one year after its founding. The revelation providing for plural marriage was pro-

claimed publicly for the first time in Salt Lake City, the home of Brigham Young, in 1852. The church, whose headquarters are at Lamoni, has no connection or affiliation whatever with the church of Salt Lake City, founded by Brigham Young—we send missionaries there to convert them. Stronger advocates of the monogamic law cannot be found than are in the ranks of the true Latter-day Saints.

In proof of our position that God has or would set up his work in our time the words of Jesus to his disciples are adduced when, upon the Mount of Olives, they came to him inquiring:

What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

In answering, Jesus mentions among other signs:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.—Matt. 24: 1, 14.

From this we gather that he who lives in the last days, or immediately preceding the coming of the Lord, will hear the same gospel as was preached in the days of Christ and his apostles. It will come “not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” It will come with the “signs” following the believers—proclaimed by men commissioned of God.

A gospel preached by uninspired men—sent of men—without the “signs” attending, or that differs in the least from that of 1900 years ago in ordinances, teaching or practice, is not the gospel spoken of by Jesus that should go forth to every nation as a sign of the end of the world.

When Jesus said:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come, he simply announced that christianity with all its powers, gifts and blessings as it existed in his day, would be on earth in the last days.

Why should it not be the same? Christianity is the production of an infinite mind—a perfect mind. If man alters or violates it—adds to or takes from—so far it becomes the production of *man* and consequently cannot safely be relied upon as the power of *God* unto the salvation of men.

The unchangeability of the divine plan as announced by Christ, the prophets and apostles, is in strict agreement with the *unchangeability* of God. That plan is a sufficient cause to bring about eternal life—glorious plan and true!