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JOSEPH SMITH;

Was He a Prophet of God?

By Elder R. C. Evans.



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JOSEPH SMITH,
WAS HE A PROPHET OF
GOD?

SERMON BY ELDER R. C. EVANS.



Elder R. C. Evans.

Representing Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter Day Saints.

I am thankful for the opportunity afforded me of standing before you upon this occasion, and will give you a few reasons why I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. As a standpoint upon which I will base the remarks I may have to offer, I invite your attention to the 7th chapter of the gospel as written by Matthew, and will read from the 15th to the 20th verses, inclusive:

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thornes, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

The leading thoughts to which I desire to direct your attention, are:

First, That we should beware of false prophets.

Second, That they were to be known by their fruits.

Third, that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

I am persuaded that the general testimony of the world today evidences the fact that they disbelieve in the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith; when tried before the tribunal of popular opinion he at once is found guilty. But I ask you this morning, to throw aside your preconceived ideas, and give to Joseph Smith just the same kind of a trial that you would be willing to give to any other man claiming to be a servant of God, in this or any other age of the world. I am here to say that I do not believe this is a proper tribunal before which to try Joseph Smith, or any other man. But as the world tried him before this tribunal and found him guilty, I want to apply the same kind of a trial to others, who lived in the years ago. If is fair to try Joseph Smith by popular opinion, you will at once concede that it is fair to try any other man by this criterion.

We introduce to you the prophets of the long ago, but without going into a critical examination of all their trials, difficulties and persecution, we submit one small piece of evidence in the language of Stephen,

wherein he said, reviewing the past and how the servants of God had been treated when tried before the tribunal of public opinion: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One. Acts 7: 52. See also 2 Chron. 36: 10; Luke 13: 34. Here we discover that when the prophets were tried before the tribunal of public opinion they were found guilty and the penalty was death.

We next introduce to you the Lord Jesus Christ; he whose fair life was not darkened by even a shadow of sin, whose life was a benediction to the race, who lived only to bless and to lift up and to strengthen. He was put upon trial before this same tribunal, popular opinion. What is the result? The chief men of the nation, his own brethren after the flesh, the Jews, were found testifying against him. Their chief effort was to educate the people to believe that he was a bad man. It was a work of years before this was accomplished. At times we find them trying to injure him, but they were foiled in their attempt, and the reason given was, "They feared the people." But in process of time the people became

educated, under the vituperation and scandal that was constantly being hurled against him, to cry out to Pilate, "Thou art no friend of Cæsar's if you let this man go," and "Crucify him, crucify him!" Sworn testimony was given against him, until he "who knew no sin" was found guilty by the tribunal of public opinion, and the verdict was similar to that given in the case of the prophets—guilty, and the penalty followed—death.

We pass on to the apostles of the Lamb, and find that everywhere the cry was, "Away with them! Away with them!" until the prophetic declaration was fulfilled—"The time came that they drank the blood of the Saints."

Now, we know that Jesus was innocent and pure and true to his charge; but we have histories telling us that the verdict of the age in which he lived was, that he was an illegitimate child; that he was born of fornication; that his mother was a poor woman who earned her living by the labors of her own hands, (as though this was a disgrace). And I call your attention right here to the fact that Beadle, one of the great writers against Mormonism, urges as a claim against Joseph Smith, that his moth-

er was a poor woman who had to wash for a living, forgetting that many a good, honest and true heart beats beneath the ragged shawl of a washer woman. History tells us that these stories were circulated against Christ and his disciples, until it was said of him that he, being a bad man, went about the world getting his living in a bad and shameful manner and that he had connected with him ten or eleven vile publicans. This is found in Lardner's history of Christianity.

We can go farther than the apostles, and find that the world hated Christianity as long as the Christians remained true. While the servants of God were struggling amid the gloom of earth-life, the purity of their lives was a constant rebuke to bad men and the result was that bad men hated them, until we find them over there in Rome, where they were persecuted and killed by the thousands. We are informed by Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," that so great was the animosity against the early christians that Nero, the Roman Emperor, ordered them to be tied to sticks and dipped in inflammable material, which was then ignited, and the darkness of the

race course was illumined by the living blood of dying martyrs, true representatives of the stainless Christ.

I will now introduce some history to prove that Christ foretold that his people would suffer; this was one of the true signs that was to follow the believer. One of the true points or marks of identity is:

“Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”—2 Tim. 3: 12.

“Ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake [Christ].”—Luke 21: 16, 17.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”—John 15: 19.

The early saints have this to say of their suffering and persecution:

“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”—1 Cor. 4: 12, 13.

“We are troubled on every side,

yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”—2 Cor. 4: 8, 9.

No one can read the history of the Saints of these latter days without seeing clearly that they have passed through similar trials to those foretold by the Master, and endured by his saints of former days.

I submit a few brief notes from history regarding Christ and his early saints.

“Jesus was born of a poor woman, who subsisted by the labors of her own hands—condemned of adultery, cast off by her husband, wandering about in a shameful manner, and giving birth to Jesus in an obscure place, and he (the child) being in want, served in Egypt for a livelihood, becoming familiar with some Egyptian charmers, he returned and set himself up for a god; then taking to himself ten or eleven vile publicans and sailors, he went about getting his living in a bad and shameful manner.”—Lardner, Vol. 8, pp. 19–23.

The above will suffice to show what they thought, or said of the Master and his saintly mother. Now let us read what they said of the “household.”

“What the crimes were, which

were laid to the charge of the primitive Christians, we know from divers writers, Greek and Latin—from whom it appears that besides Atheism, or impiety to the established deities, they were charged with having their wives in common, with promiscuous lewdness in their assemblies, with incest, and eating human flesh, especially young children, whom they first killed and then ate, at their nocturnal meetings, where persons of each sex and every age were present.”—Lardner Vol. 1, p. 240.

“Some of them say, ‘Let not any man of learning come hither, nor any wise man, nor any man of prudence; but if any man be unlearned, if he is ignorant, if he is silly, let him come without fear.’ Thus acknowledging that these are the men who are acceptable to their God; and thereby manifesting that they are neither willing nor able to gain any but the foolish, the stupid, slaves, women and children.”—Lardner, Vol. 8, p. 23.

The above are quoted from Lardner’s works, London edition of 1788.

“Christians were called Atheists because they derided the heathen Polytheism, magicians, because they wrought miracles; self murderers,

because they suffered martyrdom cheerfully for the truth; haters of the light, because to avoid the fury of the persecutions raised against them, they were obliged at first to hold meetings at night."—Moshiem, Vol. 1, p. 52.

"They were said to be unsupportable, daring, and arrogant, enemies to public tranquility, and excitors to civil wars, and continuous haters of mankind, and their doctrine was called a destructive superstition."—Moshiem, Vol. 1, p. 73.

Robinson, in "Ecclesiastical Researches," page 90, edition of 1792, quotes Tertullian as saying:

"You tax us with killing and eating children; the charge is absurd and cruel in the extreme, and we cannot conceive how you came to invent such a scandalous calumny; we defy you to prove it. Why do not the magistrates examine us on this subject? * * * but you hate us, even the bare name by which we are called, and without giving yourselves any trouble to examine, you say all manner of evil of us."

"Tacitus reproaches them (saints) with the odious character of haters of mankind, and styles the religion of Jesus 'a destructive superstition.'"—Moshiem, Vol. 1, p., 73; note M. 1797 edition.

‘Nero exposed to accusation and torture, with the most exquisite penalties, a set of men detested for their enormities, whom the common people called Christians. Christus, the founder of the sect, was executed during the reign of Tiberius, by the pro-curator, Pontius Pilate, and the deadly superstition suffered for a time, began to burst out once more, not only through Judea, where the evil had its root, but even in the city of Rome, whither from every quarter all things horrible or shameful are drifted and find their votaries.’—Tacitus, the Roman historian, quoted by Canon Farrar in “Early Days of Christianity,” p. 136.

“A principia reason of the severity with which the Romans persecuted the christians * * * seems to have been the abhorrence and contempt felt by the latter for the religion of the Empire * * * These, however, were the two things which the Christians were charged with, and that justly, though to their honor. They dared to ridicule the absurdities of Pagan superstition, and they were ardent and assiduous in gaining proselytes to the truth, nor did they only attack the religion of Rome, but also all the different shapes and forms under

which superstition appeared in the various countries where they exercised their ministry; hence the Romans concluded that the Christian sect was not only unsupportable, daring and arrogant, but moreover, enemies to the public tranquility, and ever ready to excite civil wars and commotions in the Empire.”—Moshiem, Vol., 1, Ch. 5, part 1.

“Among the obstacles that retarded the progress of Christianity, the impious calumnies of its enemies were the most considerable. The persons, the characters and the religious sentiments of the first Christians were most unjustly treated, and most perfidiously misrepresented to the credulous multitude who were restrained by this only from embracing the gospel. Those, therefore, who, by their apologetic writing for the Christians, destroyed the poisonous influence of destruction, rendered, no doubt, signal service to the doctrine of Christ, by removing the chief impediment to its progress.”—Moshiem, Vol. 1, p. 52.

“What renders this highly probable is, that the most urgent necessity required it being done; for not long after Christ’s ascension into heaven, several histories of his

life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstitions and ignorance. Nor was that all; productions appeared which were imposed upon the world, by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles. These apochryphal and spurious writings must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and the doctrine of Christ uncertain, had not the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolic and divine, from all the spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume."—Moshem, Vol. 1, Chap. 2, par. 17.

“To accomplish more speedily the ruin of the Christians, all those persons whose interests were incompatible with the progress of the gospel, loaded them with the most opprobrious calumnies, which were too easily received as the truth by the credulous and unthinking multitude, among whom they were dispersed with the utmost industry. * * * and these indeed were the only arms the assailants had to oppose the truth, since the virtues

of its ministers and followers left to its enemies no resources but calumny and persecution, nothing can be imagined in point of virulence and fury that they did not employ for the ruin of the Christians. They even went so far as to persuade the multitude that all the calamities, wars, tempests and diseases that afflicted mankind, were judgments sent down by the angry gods because the Christians, who condemned their authority were suffered in the empire.”—Moshiem, Vol. 1, Chap. 5, par. 8.

“Certain fictitious acts of Pilate and our Savior, full of blasphemy, were by the Emperor’s approbation circulated through his dominion with orders to facilitate the publishing of them in all places, and to direct school masters to deliver them to youth, that they might commit them to memory. Children in their school days sounded Jesus and Pilate, and other things invented to asperse the gospel.”—“Milner’s Church History,” Vol. 2, p. 32.

“The Jews were the first and the most inveterate enemies the Christian’s had, * * * They cursed the Christians three times a day in their synagogues. They would not speak to a Christian on any occasion * * *

They dispatched emissaries all over the world to defame the Christians, and spread all sorts of calumnies against them. They accused them among other things of worshipping the sun, and the head of an ass. They reproached them with idleness and being a useless set of people. They charged them with treason, and endeavoring to erect a new monarchy against that of the Romans. They affirmed that in celebrating their mysteries, they used to kill a child and eat his flesh. They accused them of the most shocking incests, and of intemperance in their feasts of charity.”—Buck’s Theo. Dict. Art. Chr. p. 66.

Under Nero, 67 A. D., Nero ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which was executed by his officers, guards, and servants * * * Nero finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, and at once excuse himself, * * * Some were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, then worried by dogs till they expired; others dressed in skirts made stiff with wax, then fastened to axletrees and set on fire in order to illuminate his gardens.”

“Under Domitian 81–95 A. D., forty thousand were supposed to

have suffered martyrdom. * * * He commanded all the lineage of David to be put to death * * * St. John was boiled in oil, afterwards banished to Patmos. * * * Timothy was clubbed to death.

“Under Trajan 100–108 A. D. about ninety thousand Christians were martyred, women were hung up by the hair, scourged, drowned, stabbed, sawn asunder. Phocus was first cast into a hot lime kiln and then thrown into a scalding bath. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch was compelled to hold fire in his hands, and at the same time papers dipped in oil were put to his sides, then set on fire, his flesh was torn by red hot pincers, and then he was torn to pieces by wild beasts.”—Blanchard’s Book of Martyrs, pp. 19–40.

Those who study the histories referred to will discover that all that the vile tongue of slander and the merciless hand of hate, assisted by priestcraft superstition and idolatry, could do, was done to injure the Master, his saints and the gospel of peace and good will.

Before leaving this part of my subject I call your attention to this fact, that many of the charges urged against the former day saints, were like e’en to those constantly urged

against the Latter Day Saints, murder, treason, polygamy, lewdness, opposition to the creeds of men, ignorant, foolish, stupid, silly, kind to slaves, superstitious, hating the name. They wrote books and filled school histories with their slanders, and circulated them over the land, thus they prevented people from obeying the gospel; and last but not least, men who claimed to be brethren of Christ and saints, were found, after the death of Christ and the apostles, "writing fabulous wonders" and "false revelations," claiming them to have been handed down by the apostles. We are informed by the celebrated historian, Eusebius, as also Buck in his "Theological Dictionary," that the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," referred to in Revelation 2: 6 "was a community of wives, or polygamy." This Nicolas is supposed to be one of the "seven deacons," chosen as recorded in Acts 6: 5, 6. Yet after Christ and many of the apostles had gone to rest, this man corrupted many of the former day saints by the shameless introduction of polygamy. Those who were true opposed and denounced it, yet the church had to suffer the reproach. So has it been with the Latter Day Saints. After Joseph Smith had

completed the work God called him to perform, and had sealed his testimony with his own blood, men of the church departed from the faith, and, like Nicolas, of the former day saints, Brigham Young, of the Latter Day Saints, pretended to give fabulous wonders, spurious writings and revelations, as the revelations of Joseph Smith, including that silly, self-contradictory and fraudulent revelation on polygamy. Holy men have stood by the prophet and the truth as taught by Joseph Smith, and hence we find the sons of Joseph Smith, his wife and the honest and pure of the church, rejecting and denouncing the doctrine of polygamy or Brighamism, as did the honest of the former day saints, the doctrine of polygamy or Nicolaitanism; yet do they suffer as did the former day saints.

But the cruel, unthinking world charges thus, "There must have been sown the doctrine of polygamy by Joseph Smith, else Brigham Young and some others in his church would not have adopted it after his death." That kind of logic would condemn Christ and the apostles, by reason of Nicolas polygamy in the former day work. Nicolas in former days, Brigham in

latter days, departed from the true faith, and taught polygamy; as a result, both former and Latter Day Saints have had to suffer. May the dear Lord help you to see that the church has ever suffered by the judgment of *popular opinion*, and that in our times, as in the dear dead years of the silent past, God's true people, God's true church may hear the words as addressed to Paul:

“But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”—Acts 28: 22.

We go further on with the examination and see what popular opinion has done with other representatives of God among the sons of men. We turn to the reformation. Popular opinion, at the birth of the reformation, was against the light that was bursting out on every hand and the result was, that in five days over thirty thousand were massacred by command of Charles IX, and Pope Gregory XIII issued medals in commemoration of this holy (?) event.

The time came when, in many parts of Europe, the reformation became popular, and forgetful of the struggles through which they had passed, they followed in the

wake of their mother, Rome, and did the works of darkness like unto those that she performed, and we are informed by the Catholic historian that the followers of Calvin alone burned over twenty thousand Roman churches and killed thousands of priests. We are further informed by the protestant historian, Cobbett, that it was death for a Catholic priest to come into England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Death was written on the lines all along.

As a closing sentence regarding the Roman Catholic tribunal of opinion, I submit the following from "Buck's Theological Dictionary," article, Persecutions:

"Fifteen millions are said to have been sacrificed to the genius of popery in about forty years. * * * It has been computed that fifty million of protestants have at different times been the victims of the persecutions of the Papists, and put to death for their religious opinions."

Buck quotes from fourteen different authors, whose names and book titles appear at close of his articles.

Coming over here to America, we find that the fathers came over here that they might worship God after

the dictates of their own conscience. They desired to worship as they pleased. The time came when they became popular and strong, and then they tried to force other men to worship God as they worshipped him, until we find, on the statute books of the eastern states, laws (which perhaps are not repealed to this hour), that the Baptist people were fined because they did not attend the Episcopalian church; and, indeed, that Baptist mother who had been taught to believe that sprinkling was not the order of things as found in the revelations of God, and that infant baptism was a creature of the Pope, that had no origin in the days of Christ, that that mother, who refused to bring her child to the Episcopalian priest for baptism, was fined two thousand pounds of tobacco, half to go to the informant and half to the state.

We come further down, and we find that the great hero of the Baptist church, Roger Williams, was so persecuted that, to save his life, he had to escape through the rear window of his house, and that he ate berries, nuts and such things to sustain life during winter, until he reached a friendly Indian settlement, which he called Providence,

and, which place is now known as Providence, Rhode Island. Our friends ought to remember this when they are referring to Joseph Smith under the line of popular opinion.

I call your attention, now, to Wesley. It is said that John Wesley was accused and twelve indictments were found against him, and he had to escape from the country to save his life. (Haile's history of the United States). I have the record as published by the Rev. Mr. Woods a Methodist preacher, telling us that the popular wave had raged so loud and long against the Wesleys that an indictment was found against Charles Wesley and the rendering was, that he was a vagabond, a disturber of the peace; and a petition was presented to the king asking that he be transported from England. (Perfect Love, p. 249). We might refer also to John Wesley, who was dragged by the hair of his head through the streets of London because he had been heard to say something that popular opinion did not favor.

I might proceed upon this line of argument, but I believe you are ready to admit now that popular opinion is not the proper tribunal

before which to try the prophets, Christ and the apostles, the reformers, or even Joseph Smith. If it is fair to try Joseph Smith by this tribunal, you must try all the rest by the same tribunal. You know the verdict has been with regard to all the rest, that they were guilty, and death was the penalty in the majority of cases.

Now, as you discover it is unfair and unreasonable to try Joseph Smith, or any other man by popular opinion, I ask, What is the tribunal before which he should be tried, or before which the others should have been tried? My text says, "Beware of false prophets * * * you shall know them by their fruits. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." When we try the reformers by this guide, by this rule, we find that God did bless them. This church has been reproached because of misunderstanding, and some have thought that we taught that there was no good in the reformation. That is not true. We believe that God blessed Calvin, that he inspired Wycliffe, and that he blessed Charles Wesley, John Wesley, and others who were connected with the reformation. We believe that God's Holy Spirit truly inspired the Wesleys, and, indeed, was in the church

over which Knox and Calvin presided; that almost every effort in the line of truth was made to break the dark chain of Romanism and let the light in, preparatory to the effulgence that should come when the God of heaven should again speak and send forth his accredited ministers, reorganize his church and place it upon the platform where Jesus left it. We are thankful for all the good the reformers brought about, and when this church sends her missionaries out to preach, we can say to every nation, every clime, every church and every man, Keep all the good you have. We introduce to you something that we claim is good and we ask you to test it, and if it is good, accept it.

My heart was made glad when I was called before the tribunals of our country to defend this cause; and when I heard the brightest minds of the British realms declare, after having read the Book of Mormon, the revelations of Joseph Smith, and the theory of this church, that it is not only Christian, but *eminently* "Christian," and that the great cause of the worlds opposition to this work was because the Latter Day Saints clung with tenacity to the truths as taught in

the Bible. And when the cause was brought in, Chief Justice Armour declared that the action was not prosecution but *persecution*; and do you know that when the judge gave that verdict, I was so rejoiced in my soul that I forgot that I had not had any dinner. I went out upon the streets and talked, and did not have any dinner that day. I felt to thank God that the chief minds of the British nation should declare, with words of soberness, that there was nothing contrary to Christianity in the whole doctrine of this church. They will all find that out in time if they will only be honest enough to investigate.

Chief Justice Armour's decision is as follows: "We think it quite clear that this conviction cannot be maintained. The defendant was clearly a duly ordained minister of this religious body, and there is no doubt that it is a religious denomination within the words of the statute. Assuming that Christianity is the law of the land in a sense, there is nothing contrary to Christianity in the tenets of this body. * * *"

It has been said that not only the popular opinion of the world, but that the friends of Joseph Smith, have denounced him as being a

false prophet, and the work he introduced as being of the devil. Do you know, my friends, that I am here this morning with the intention of hurling this falsehood back into the face of those who make it? I am going to show you that the strongest evidence that can be given came from those who became entangled in the affairs of this world until they lost the Spirit of God, and because of their sins, were excommunicated from the church. I will introduce a few of them this morning as witnesses in the defense of the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith and the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and the work he so nobly established. It has been said that the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon denied their testimony; but the evidence says that the last words of Martin Harris were in defense of the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith, and it is said by those who claim to know, that he died with the Bible in one hand and the Book of Mormon in the other. And notwithstanding Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer had their trouble with Joseph and the church, when the world would have lauded them to the skies had they denounced him as a false prophet and denied the

divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and the work he established, in the midst of all their difficulties, they ever stood firm to the testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity. It is also said that Oliver Cowdery's last words to David Whitmer were, "David, be true to your testimony." And the grand old man, David Whitmer, when the very ice of death was freezing the marrow of his bones, took a pen and, for the last time, signed his name to the statement that an angel appeared to Joseph Smith and that the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity; that he knew it because an angel of God had revealed it to him, that he had heard the voice of God declaring to him that that work was divine, and the last words that he uttered were in defense of the testimony that he had borne from a young man up to the lilies of eighty years.

But I am told that some of the leading lights of the church denied the faith; and we have heard a good deal about what the "Expositor" was and how the Latter Day Saints destroyed that publication, and all that sort of thing. Why, do you know in the testimony we offered

up in Canada a little while ago with reference to the Laws and Higbee, and Fosters and so on, at considerable expense I went and purchased a paper that was published in 1844, called *The Expositor*. There was only one issue of that printed, and let me read to you from that this morning, the testimony of the Laws with reference to this question. Now I want you to understand that the Laws and Fosters and others were excommunicated from the church because of their wrong doing. After they had printed this scurrilous sheet against the church, after they had done their level best against the church, I ask, What did they say with reference to the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith? What did they say with reference to the book of Mormon? What did they have to say with reference to the organization of the church as organized by Joseph Smith? I now read you an extract from that very *Expositor* that was published in 1844, after they were cut off from the church. This was written on the 7th of June, 1844, and reads as follows:

“As far as our acquaintance with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we know no men or set of men can be more thoroughly ac-

quainted with its rise, its organization and its history than we have reason to believe we are. We all verily believe, and many of us know of a surety that the religion of the Latter Day Saints as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon and Book of Covenants, is verily true, and that the pure principles set forth therein are the immutable and eternal principles of heaven."

I do not believe that Presidents Joseph Smith or W. W. Blair could stand today and bear stronger testimony to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and to the divinity of the mission of Joseph Smith, than did Law and Foster and others on this occasion, and which they put right in their own paper. And this paper has been hurled against us as evidence that Joseph Smith was false and all that sort of thing. While these men believed that Smith and others prominent in the church had erred in judgment, when the time came for them to bear testimony to the divine authenticity of the work, they declared that they believed they knew as much as any other men on earth about its rise, progress and history, and that they knew its doctrine was the immut-

able and eternal principles of heaven.

The Doctrine and Covenants referred to by them is a book of revelations given by God for the government of the church, through Joseph Smith, and they say these are true.

I call your attention to just one other testimony with regard to this matter. I find it in Smucker's history, written against the Latter Day Saints, pages 171-174. Now, remember that this man comes to us with his record as a book written against the church. He believes that Joseph Smith was deceived; that he was not a true prophet; but see what he says with reference to the man, as to his character, and as to his sincerity, and as to his purity of life:

“They [the Mormons] allege, what appears from his [Joseph Smith's] whole career to be the most probable, that he was at all times most anxious to preserve the church free from taint and to exclude adulterers, seducers and persons of immoral lives. * * * It is utterly incredible that Joseph Smith who—great imposter as he was—never missed an opportunity to denounce seducers and adulterers as unfit to enter his church, should

have been concerned, directly or indirectly, in proceedings like these; though it is scarcely surprising that, when such stories had been circulated by men whom the prophet had thwarted or reprimanded, there should have been found some persons willing to believe them."

The reader of the pages referred to, will, when reading the full accounts, discover that the men referred to as being thwarted, reprimanded or cut off the church, and who afterwards slandered Joseph, were the Laws and Fosters of the "*Expositor*."

Governor Thomas L. Ford is on record in this very work as having stated that the charges preferred against Joseph Smith at the time of, or prior to his death, were unfounded in fact, and there was no evidence by which they could be proven; that the Smiths were innocent of the charges preferred against them. And it is said that when the rumor went out that the Smiths were to be liberated, the mob came together, and do you remember what the verdict was? Smucker tells us. Oh, how in keeping with the verdict of those bloody scenes of long ago! Here it is: "If the laws of our country cannot kill

them, powder and shot can.,' (See Smucker, pp. 176, 206.)

Father James Whitehead, in the congregation, here, said, "Yes, that is true. I know that is true, I was there." Here is the private secretary of the martyred prophet, declaring this to be true, and more than that, he was there.

You discover that, in looking over his personal enemies, in looking over the testimony of the chief magistrate of the state in which he then lived, and in looking over the testimony of men who had been in the church and were excommunicated from it, they speak with reference to his character as being a grand, good man. While they thought he had made mistakes, yet when brought face to face with the idea as to whether God had called him, and whether the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity, they declared that they were in a position to know as much about the rise, progress and history of this work as any other men on earth, and they declared that God was in it; that the doctrine as taught by Smith, and the revelations contained in the Book of Covenants and the Book of Mormon, were the divine principles of heaven.

Now then, as we have found:
 First, That popular opinion is not the proper criterion by which to try Joseph Smith or any other man.

Second, We have discovered that the testimony of those who were his personal enemies speak in his favor, now.

Third, I wish to introduce to you the proper way by which to try Joseph Smith, as found in my text: "Beware of false prophets. * * * By their fruits ye shall know them. * * * A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

Now, I ask you to notice very carefully. I am going to try to show you some of the fruit that was produced in the doctrine, teaching and faith and organization of the church under Joseph Smith. I am going to ask you to pass judgment upon it this morning and see whether it is corrupt fruit, or good fruit. If it is good fruit, remember you must not condemn it. If Joseph Smith was a corrupt, bad man, remember Jesus has here laid down the line by which we are to measure him, in the declaration, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

What were the teachings of Joseph Smith? In the first place, he taught the world that the church as established by Christ, eighteen

hundred years ago, had gone into apostasy; that the priesthood (that is, authority to act in the ordinances of the church of Christ) was taken to heaven. Was there any proof for that? I must be brief upon this thought, but I just subpoena the evidence of the entire Protestant world, they ought to be good witnesses on that point; for if the Roman Catholic church is the true church of Jesus Christ, if they are legitimate successors of the apostles as ordained by Jesus Christ, according to their claim, what right had Wycliffe, Latimer, Ridley, Wesley, Knox, Calvin, Campbell, or any others, to reform and organize another church? If the church of Rome is the true church, these reformers did wrong in leaving her, they were leaving the true church. But they all come to us saying that the church of Rome was in apostasy; that she is the mother of harlots, the abomination of the earth, etc. Well, if she is, then Joseph Smith told the truth when he said that the Church of Christ had gone into apostasy.

Next, when Joseph Smith organized the church, he declared that an angel from God had restored the priesthood to him and to other men. Now the world says, "But wait

here. We have no need of such a restoration." I ask the whole reformation, By what authority do you act? Has an angel appeared to you? Did you ever read in the writings of Luther, Wycliffe, Calvin, Knox, Latimer or Wesley that an angel appeared to them and that they were ordained under divine hands? You never did. Now, if the church of Rome was corrupt, and they all claim she was, I ask you, Where did these men get their authority to preach and minister in the ordinances of the church? The answer comes back, It is an apple that grew on the corrupt tree, Mother Rome. Our text says a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Did you ever realize this truth, that Luther, Wycliffe, Ridley Latimer, Calvin and Knox all acted under the ordination of she ministers of the pope? Let me tell you further, that they never suffered a second ordination. Now, if that church was wrong, if that tree was corrupt, then it was not the authority of Christ; therefore, while we are willing to accord to them their just dues, that they accomplished a great deal of good in the world, that they were blessed of God in bringing about a great deal of good, yet when the

question of priesthood authority and church organization comes, they are weighed in the balance and found wanting.

I submit a few brief extracts from history supporting the claim made by Joseph the prophet, that the church established by Christ, went into apostasy:

“Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects and degrees of men, women and children of whole christendom (an horrible and most dreadful thing to think) have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices, most detested of God, and damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years and more.”—Book of Homilies, on Perils of Idolatry, p. 261.

“The Christian religion or worship was now (sixth century) become no less idolatrous than that of the gentiles, who therefore chose to retain their own, there being no material difference between one and the other, between worshiping the ancient heroes or the modern saints.”—History of Popes, by Bowers.

“The apostles being dead, everything came to pass as they had foretold, *the whole christian system underwent a miserable change, * * ** Christianity was maintained though

under gradual decay, during the first three centuries.”—Dr. Buck’s Theological Dictionary, p. 475; Philadelphia edition, 1830.

“In the very first society at Rome, there were ‘divisions and offenses,’ but how early and how powerfully did the mystery of iniquity work in the church at Corinth; not only schisms, heresies, animosities, fierce and bitter contentions, but actual open sins. We meet with abundant proof, that in all the churches the tares grew up with the wheat, and that the ‘mystery of iniquity’ did everywhere work in a thousand forms. That grand pest of Christianity—a faith without works—was spread far and wide. When James wrote his epistle, the tares had produced a plentiful harvest. (See 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th chapters). There was envy, strife, confusion and every evil work; whoso reads with attention, will be inclined to believe that the tares had well nigh choked the wheat, even at this early period, and that among the most of them, no more than the form of godliness (if so much) was left.”—John Wesley, sermon 66, subject *Mystery of Iniquity*.

“We easily infer what was the state of the church in general from

that of the seven churches in Asia; all but Philadelphia and Smyrna were corrupted so that many of them were not a jot better than *the present races of Christians*; and our Lord then threatened, what he has long since performed, to remove the candlestick from them. * * * We have been apt to imagine that the primitive church was all excellence and perfection; and such, without doubt, it was on the day of Pentecost, but how soon did the fine gold become dim; how soon was the wine mixed with water; how little time before the Christians were scarcely to be distinguished from the heathens; and if so bad in the first century, we cannot suppose it to have been any better in the second; undoubtedly it grew worse and worse. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in the third century gives an account of his time. * * * The converts practiced all kinds of abominations, exactly as they did before conversion * * * A Christian nation, a Christian city (according to the ancient pattern) was no longer to be found. Has the case altered since the reformation?"—John Wesley, sermon 66.

“This was the real cause why the gifts of the Holy Spirit were no longer to be found in the Christian

church; because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left.”—J. Wesley, sermon 94, in Vol. 2.

“The apostate church—Babylon the great, the mother of harlots changed even the Bible itself, and the *mal stirdiction* of the Christian institutions or government.”—ACampbell.

We could multiply historical proof and flood this discourse with Biblical statements confirming the position of Joseph Smith that the church established by Christ went into apostasy, but we think the above will be sufficient.

Further, Joseph Smith comes to us and declares that an angel appeared to him. “Now,” says one, “that is the very fact that stamps him an imposter.” Are you sure?

“O say, there are no angels now.”

What has become of all the angels?

“O well, they do not come to earth now.

Well, why? The book tells us, as a part of of the mission of angels, that they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Have we any heirs of salvation in this country now. Angels used to appear to the people of God; just

look up the records and see if God ever had a people, acknowledged of himself, to whom angels did not appear and bless. You cannot find any.

Joseph Smith declared that an angel appeared unto him. Now, we go to the Bible and we find that in the last days, in the hour of God's judgment, just before the harvest time, near the end of the world, at eventide there should be light and knowledge; that the light of God should rest upon the world and that knowledge would increase. In the day of his preparation these things were to be brought about, and the gospel was to be restored; that "this gospel" should be preached in all the world for a witness and then the end should come; and we are told that in this epoch of the world's history an angel was seen flying through the midst of heaven bringing the everlasting gospel to the earth.

"But," says one, "that means to some foreign nation."

Oh no; the record says that the gospel is to be preached to *every* nation, and kindred, tongue and people; and that this is to come in the hour of God's judgment, by the hand of an angel (Rev. 14: 6, 7) at the harvest time. Then, before the

end of the world, an ensign, spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, shall be lifted up.

Says one, "if the angels were to come, I do not think they would appear to a young fellow like Joseph Smith. They would come to a Cardinal Newman, or a Talmage, or a Beecher."

Jesus did not think so. He said, "I thank he, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babies. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." And it did not take Paul long to remind us that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," but that God had "chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and * * * the weak things of the world to confound those 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 naught things that are."

It is recorded that an angel appeared unto Zechariah, and Zechariah says that when the angel appeared, he said to another angel: "Run and speak to the young man, and tell him that Jerusalem shall be

inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." Do you remember, right here, that Joseph Smith was an early advocate of the fact that the Jews would be restored to Palestine, that Jerusalem would be built up again, that the land of Palestine would be blessed under the smile of God, and the former and latter—that is the Spring and Fall—rains would be restored? And when he urged that then, it was declared that no one but a fanatic would believe that this Scripture was to be taken literally, "for," they said, "this prophecy, with reference to the land of Palestine being blessed, is spiritual, and the building up of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ will be in a land you cannot geographically locate"—up here somewhere (looking upward). But Joseph believed in the divinity of his own mission and that Jehovah had spoken to him, and he could sing:

"Go on in faith, ye Saints, go on,
 Fear not, the cause is good,
 The Jews rebuild Jerusalem,
 As prophets said they would.
 The prophets said in latter days,
 The Jews would once again
 Return and build their city up,
 Their loved Jerusalem."

Joseph was the author of that hymn, I am told. When the world

was heaping all manner of vituperation upon him, his faith was inspired by the light that was shining in his great heart and he was enabled to rejoice in tribulation. I think the testimony that he gave with reference to the angel is pretty good.

Permit me to present some historical evidence in support of the claim made by Joseph Smith regarding the building up of Jerusalem, and the returning of Gods blessings to the land of Palestine.

“Eighteen centuries of war, ruin and neglect have passed over it; its valleys have been crossed for ages without the least attempt at fertilization. Its terraced walls have been allowed to crumble, and its soil has been washed down its ravines, leaving the hillsides rocky and sterile. Its trees have been cut down and never replaced. Its fields have been desolate; its structures pillaged, and all its improvements ruthlessly destroyed; a land of ruins without man or beast. Everywhere on plain or mountain, in rocky desert, or on beetling cliff, the spoiler’s hand has rested.”—McClintock and Strong’s Encyclopedia, article Palestine.

“I know not whether you are aware of the fact, but it is one that

is *fully authenticated*, that the "latter rain" returned last year to Mount Zion—a rain, that had been withheld, so far as our information goes, ever since the dispersion of the people; and he who has brought back the 'latter rain' in its season, will also give the 'former rain' in its season; and these returning showers of earthly blessings are the harbingers of returning showers of spiritual benedictions from on high."—Rev. Hugh Stowel, in *Scottish Presbyterian Magazine*, 1853.

"I arrived in Indiana a few days since, from the eastern continent; I stopped at Joppa nearly the whole winter. For my part I was well pleased with the country. It is certainly a land of most wonderful fruitfulness, with a delightful climate, producing everything if properly cultivated, and from two to three crops in a year. They have grain, fruit and vegetables all the year around; in fact, I never was in such a country before; I have seen much good country in Europe and America, but none to compare with Palestine; its fruitfulness is uncommon, and the climate the most delightful, even in winter. I did not see the least sort of frost, and vegetables of every sort were growing in perfection in gardens.

It is a fact that the rain and dew are restored; recently (in 1853), the former and latter rain were restored, to the astonishment of the natives.” —Louis Van Buren, Sen. Nov. 14th, A. D. 1867.

“At present the Jews are coming here by the hundreds * * * A half a century ago there were only thirty-two Jewish families in all Jerusalem, and the number in Palestine was only three thousand; now there are nearly fifty thousand in the Holy Land, and three-fourth’s of the population is made up of them.”—F. G. Carpenter, writing from Jerusalem, June 15, 1889, in *National Tribune*.

“Another sign is the return of the Jews to Palestine. There are more of them there now than there were after the return from the Babylonian captivity. * * * A sign which is undeniably miraculous, too, is that Palestine is again becoming fruitful, after years of desolation, during which scarcely anything would grow. It was under a curse and the curse is being lifted.”

The above is the findings of a “Prophetic Conference” held at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, July 15, 1895, at which very prominent ministers of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist denominations took

part, as was reported in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* for August 17, 1895. Surely the Lord did reveal this to his prophet, Joseph, and thanks be to his name, he has confirmed the word with the signs following, and the nations now in astonishment rise to exclaim, "'Tis a truth, Palestine is restored to its ancient beauty. The curse is removed, the Jews are gathering home, all the modern improvements and comforts are enjoyed by the sons of Jacob. Railways, steamboats, telephone, telegraph, and all other modern inventions are enjoyed by Israel in his own land—Palestine."

Now, this angel told him something else that was quite shocking. It was that none of the churches, none of the creeds, were entirely right. He declared that they were an abomination in many respects. And do you know who seconded that motion? Do you know who has supported that statement? Do you know who has been crying "Amen!" to the statement made by the angel to Joseph Smith? I will tell you; the entire christian world has been shouting "Amen!" to that statement. What do I mean? I mean that Joseph Smith declared that a message from heaven was communicated to him, and they

said amen in this sense: They have been tinkering with their creeds and changing and mending them. That shows that there was something wrong about them at that time and is evident that Joseph Smith was right.

An Indianapolis paper for February 23, 1890, speaking of the Methodist creed says:

“The following paper was read by the Rev. T. A. Goodwin at the meeting of the Methodist ministers, ‘For more than seventeen hundred years the church has been tinkering at her creeds, now adding now subtracting, and then refashioning the things that remain, until the creeds of today are a theological hodge podge, rather than the faith of the church. * * * From that day to this, creed building and creed repairing has been a chief occupation of the church. * * * The crying demand of the times is a thorough reconstruction of pulpit terminology as well as of creeds, so as to make words and creeds express the exact meaning of the revealed word which abideth forever.’ ”

“The different sects are looking away from the different creeds or catechisms, to the absolute sufficiency of the Bible, and are learning that church government, as de-

scribed in the Bible does not exist upon the earth.”—Dr. Thrall, in *New York Sun*, October 11, 1874. □

“The St. Louis, *Globe Democrat*, of March 3, 1890, contained the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage’s sermon, “Why a New Creed is Needed,” and represents him as saying: The unfortunare thing now is that so many Christians are only half liberated. They have been raised from the death and burial of sin into spiritual life, but they yet have the grave clothes on them. Many have been bound hand and foot by religious creeds; but now that the electric lights have been turned on the imperfections of those creeds—and everything that man fashions is found to be imperfect—let us put the old creed respectfully aside, and get a brand new one. Now that the old creeds have been put under public scrutiny, something radical must be done. Some would split them, some would carve them, some would elongate them, some would abbreviate them. At the present moment and in the present shape they are a hindrance. * * * If you want one glorious church, free and unencumbered, take off the cements of old ecclesiastical vocabulary. Loose her and let her go.”

Thus you see, after they mis-

represented, slandered, and cruelly murdered the Prophet Joseph Smith, the light was, as Talmage says, "turned on," and today the creeds are denounced and exposed by their own ministers. Surely the angel's message to Joseph Smith, was the turning on of the light. Since then, those who wandered in the dark, are confessing that the light has come, for which we are thankful. May we walk in that light.

Further, Joseph Smith organized the church upon its original platform, with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.; and when he did this the whole world raised up and declared, "That is a fraud, anyway; that is not right! Why, the idea of this young man organizing the church according to the original pattern. Such an impossibility! Wesley, or Calvin or Knox, never dreamed of such an absurdity.

But right here permit me to show you that many of the leading reformers did dream and preach and sing and pray, and look forward to the time when God would restore the priesthood and set up his kingdom according to the ancient pattern with apostles, prophets and spiritual gifts.

"The primitive gospel in its

effulgence and power is yet to shine out in its original splendor to regenerate the world.”—Alexander Campbell, *History of the Disciples*, by Hayden, p. 36.

“The practical result of all creeds, reformations and improvements, and expectations and longings of society warrant the conclusion that some *new revelation* or some new development of the revelations of God must be made, before the hopes and expectations of all true Christians can be realized, or christianity can save and reform the nations of this world. We want the OLD GOSPEL BACK and sustained by the *ancient order of things*.”—Alexander Campbell, *Christian System*, p. 234.

“The preaching that is to bring America into the fellowship of the Apostolic church must be accompanied by a revival of apostolic gifts, and I believe it will be.”—Rev. Lewis T. Wattson, in *Pulpit of the Cross*.

“And should the Apostolic church finally be reproduced, thereby bringing Christ to the earth again in personal power and rest-giving influence, what would then be the prospect before us? * * * The full realization of this splendid ideal is what the world is waiting for, and until it is realized we must continue

to trust, pray, labor, hope, and patiently wait"—W. T. Moore, in *The Christian Evangelist*, December 18, 1890.

"We must restore the gifts of Christ (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) to their proper place and power if we would have his peace rest upon us and be once more in him."—Elder H. H. Hawley in *Christian Evangelist*, July 17, 1890.

"What could God have done which he hath not done to convince you *that the day is coming*; that the time is at hand, when he will fulfill his glorious promise, and will arise to maintain his own cause and set up his kingdom."—John Wesley, Sermon 71, Vol. 2.

The Wesley hymns and sermons clearly show that they looked forward to the time when the spiritual gifts and the "ancient order" apostles and prophets would be restored. Having quoted from John Wesley's sermons, I submit a few verses from C. Wesley's hymns

"Previous to the dreadful day
Which shall thy foes consume,
Jesus Christ prepare thy way;
Let the last prophet come."

Once more he wrote when looking forward to the time when God would restore the Apostolic church,

“Almighty God of love,
Set up the attracting sign,
And summon whom thou dost approve,
For messengers divine.

“From favored Abraham’s seed,
The new apostles choose,
In isles and continents to spread,
The soul reviving news.”

“Luther perceived that the ancient and primitive church of the apostles must on the one hand be restored in opposition to the papacy by which it had been so long oppressed.”—
D’Aubigne’s History of Reformation, Vol. 3, p. 80.

“In the poor, small span of my life I desired to have been a diligent and constant observer, and have been myself many ways engaged in city, in country, in court, in schools, universities, in churches, in Old and New England, and yet cannot, in the holy presence of God, bring in the results of a satisfactory discovery, that neither the begetting ministry of apostles or messengers to the nations, or the feeding or nourishing ministry of pastors and teachers, according to the first institution of the Lord Jesus, is yet restored and extant. These imperfections in the church, in its revived condition could be removed by a *new apostolic ministry* alone.”—
Hirling Ministry, by Roger Williams.

“He (Roger Williams) conceived

that the apostasy of anti-christ hath so far corrupted all, that there can be no recovery out of that apostasy till Christ should *send forth new apostles* to plant churches anew."—Struggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty, p. 239, Knowles History, p. 172.

I might continue on this line, producing evidence in support of the fact that the leading reformers, and most gifted preachers, understood from the Bible that God would again restore the church of Christ with apostles, prophets and the gifts that "confirmed the word" and cheered and instructed the saints in former days, but I forbear lest I weary you, and believing the above sufficient proof, I ask, Why do the professed followers of such men as Campbell, Wesley, Williams, Luther and others, refuse to accept the claims made by Joseph Smith, where those claims are in accord with the Bible, and the earnest expectations and longings of the leading men of their societies or denominations.

Now I have proven that the reformers looked forward to the restoration of the "ancient order of things," and more than that, Joseph Smith says, that is the way God had instructed him to act.

“But,” says one, “it is not right.”

How do you know? Try him by the fruits; this is the test. Let us go to the record. In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians we have language something like this: “God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,” and so on.

“But,” says another, “they were set in the church until it became perfect, and then they were no longer needed.”

Yes. That is, it takes twelve apples to make a perfect dozen, and as soon as you have the perfect dozen you can take six away, and you still have a perfect dozen. If the church was perfect with those officers in it, just as soon as they were taken out, I ask you, would it not become imperfect? Let us see. Paul tells us why these were to remain in the church. He says:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

How long, Paul?

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

He gives one other reason, a grand one, for which I thank God, and for which every Latter Day Saint ought to thank God. It is this: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

As to the doctrine taught by Joseph Smith, I just hastily glance over it. He taught the doctrine of faith. Is that good fruit? You shall know him by his fruit, and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Joseph Smith taught that we should believe in God and in Jesus Christ, and that we should believe in the Holy Ghost. Is that good fruit? Is that similar to the fruit that grew upon the Christian tree eighteen hundred years ago? And remember, he never requested you to believe in a dead god, but the living God, and alive to the interests and welfare of his people at all times. He taught us to believe in the God of heaven, the omnipotent God, and, that he would save to the uttermost. And I draw your attention to the thought that when he taught us to believe in the Holy

Spirit, it was not a dead spirit, but, that that Spirit would be in you, springing up as a river unto everlasting life. He taught you to believe that the Spirit was unchangeable; and that you had a right to believe in the Spirit in which they believed eighteen centuries ago and accept the ministrations of it as they received it then; and that it was a live organization into which he asked you to enter. Is that true? Is that right? Is that good fruit? But I must hastily pass on.

After teaching faith and confidence in the Father, Son and Spirit, he taught you to believe that you should repent of your sins, because God would not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Is that good fruit? I think it is good. After repentance, he taught that you should be baptized by immersion, for the remission of sins. Is that according to the fruit that grew upon the christian tree eighteen centuries ago? We are told by the God of heaven, who sent forth his Spirit according to the prayer of Jesus Christ, to his apostles — he informs us — now, notice, it is not Peter, but God; he sent the Spirit and inspired the twelve apostles to answer the momentous question, "What shall I

do to be saved?" or "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" found in the 2d chapter of the Acts of the apostles, and it is, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Joseph Smith told us this was our duty in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

But some one says, "Oh no, Joseph, you are wrong. Baptism is well enough if you feel like it." But when Jesus Christ appeared to Paul he did not tell him what he should do if he felt like it, but said, "Go to Damascus, and it shall be told you what you MUST do;" and he was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins. We find that this is in keeping with the rule of eighteen hundred years ago, the same kind of fruit that the christian tree brought forth then. But we must pass hastily on.

He told us that we should have our children blessed by the laying on of hands. Is that true fruit? Jesus did this, declaring that, "The works that I do shall you do;" "As my Father sent me, so send I you."

We find that Joseph taught that we should have hands laid upon us in confirmation, that we might receive the Holy Ghost, and I hastily

call your attention to the 8th chapter of Acts, where it is recorded that Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel unto them and they were baptized, and when Peter and John came down 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."

Again, I call your attention to the 19th chapter of Acts, where, it is related that "Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus" and found people there who were not properly instructed in the way of the gospel, and he explained the way unto them. They were baptized, and after he laid his hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost.

Joseph taught also the doctrine of the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick. Jesus practiced that doctrine, and in James, 5th chapter, we read: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him

up.” In Mark, 16th chapter, Christ said: “They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”

He taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Is that true?

Now, friends, I want to call your attention finally to one thought. In Canada, a number of years ago, a learned professor came to me and said, “Mr. Evans, I like to hear you talk, but I have no faith in your Bible.” “Why?” I asked. “Because there is a lie on the face of it. God said to Abraham that he would give him the land of Palestine for an everlasting inheritance and Abraham died and never owned a foot of it. He then confirmed his promise in Isaac, saying, ‘To thee and thy seed will I give this land for an everlasting inheritance,’ and Isaac died and never owned a foot of it. It is afterwards declared that he confirmed his oath in Jacob, and promised him for an everlasting inheritance the land that had been promised his fathers, but he died without owning a foot of it.” “And,” he said, “for fear you might not believe my statement, I call attention to the dying testimony of Stephen. He declared that they all died not having so much as a place to put their feet, (Acts 7), and, indeed, it is said in the 11th

chapter of Hebrews that they all died in hope; that they did not stay long enough in one place to build a house, but wandered about in tents, for they looked for the city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

"Now," he says, "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all died, and you say they went to heaven and will stay there forever. Where and when will they inherit the promised land?"

I just referred him to our opinion. I showed him that we did not teach the doctrine of men going to heaven to stay forever. I said, "That kind of doctrine is precluded by the resurrection of the dead." And I drew his attention to the fact that Joseph Smith taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; that the spirit would return and the spirit and the body should be united again. In this connection I hastily draw your attention to a statement made in the Bible, in the language of Job:

"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: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”—Job 19.

Further on, he declares, “Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of his hands.”—Job 14.

Again, we read:

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. Come, my people, and enter into thy chambers [the grave] and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”—Isa. 26: 19. 20.

And Ezekiel gives us this cheering promise:

“Thus saith the Lord, * * * I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel; * * * and shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. * * * And they shall dwell in the land that I gave unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt, * * * even they and their children forever.”—Ezekiel 37.

The answer silenced the infidel, and afterwards he obeyed the gospel.

When we review the fact of Joseph Smith's life; when we see the stupendous work that he performed in bringing forth the Book of Mormon that gives the great and wonderful account of this American continent, without which the world would be in darkness so far as the early inhabitants of this continent are concerned; when I think of the stupendous work of the Inspired Translation of the Bible that he gave to the world, a work that is every day coming more and more into prominence, a work that has been recognized by the leading translators in these latter times, a work that they in some instances followed when they revised the New Testament in 1881; when I think of that inspired translation; when I think of this, with the revelations of Joseph Smith, that revelation on the war of the rebellion, and all the revelations with which the book of Doctrine and Covenants abounds, my heart is filled with gratitude to God. And while the world may throw all manner of vituperation and scandal upon the prophet, Joseph Smith, I tell you today, friends, his real character is beginning to be under-

stood, and the great work he performed is now being appreciated. The Encyclopedia Britannica, has recorded the fact that Brigham Young and others have largely departed from the pure faith as taught by Joseph, and have introduced polygamy and other evils into their faction of the church, which was never taught by Joseph. Chambers' Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, latest edition, called "Students' Edition," says: "It cannot be shown that Smith was a polygamist." Speaking of the practice of polygamy it says: "Young, Pratt and Hyde are its true originators. Emma, wife and widow of the prophet, stoutly denied that her husband had any wife but herself. Young's revelation she declared to be a fraud." "Joseph's sons have now formed a monogamic Mormon community, called the 'Josephites.' "

The courts of Canada, Illinois Missouri and Ohio have spoken highly of Smith and his work. The gifted historian, Bancroft, and such world renowned men as Hon. Elisha R. Potter, and Hon. Josiah Quincy, by their gifted pens have told the world that Joseph Smith was a man among men. He was great, true and noble.

As the crowning testimony to all

that I may have said this morning, let me say this: This church, organized by this man with six members, has grown and increased until today hundreds and thousands of people come to us in "sickness and health, in poverty's vale and abounding in wealth," and their testimony has been, that God, through Jesus Christ, and the office work of the Holy Spirit, has testified to them that he raised up Joseph Smith to be his representative among men in these last days. And, furthermore, friends, not only have they testified in word to this effect, but their lives have testified that there has been power in this work found in none other, that ameliorates their condition, that elevates them to the pinnacle of purity and power, and enables them to live in such a way that they may enjoy the Spirit of God, whose work is to lead, prepare and educate them in such a way that they will be worthy to inherit with the true and pure who have suffered with them, in the land beyond the gloom.

May the God of heaven help us to throw aside all prejudice and tradition and receive with meekness the ingrafted word of the gospel of heaven, that is able to make us wise unto salvation, is my prayer.