

SUPPLEMENT.

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SERMON,

BY ELDER W. H. KELLEY, DELIVERED AT INDEPENDENCE, Mo., APRIL 15, 1888.

Whatever powers of mind and body we may be possessed of, in life we find ourselves largely the creatures of circumstances, and especially I find myself so this afternoon. Near the close of the last chapter of first Thessalonians, we find the familiar words, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," perhaps as familiar a passage of scripture as we have and as full of import, and calculated to present at once the liberty and right that belongs to individuals upon the great religious question as well as all others. Associated with this text there is a declaration made by the same Apostle Paul, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God proposes to gather in one all things, both in heaven and earth in him, indicating to us that it is the purpose of God through the mission of Christ into this world, to unify the race in some regards, and under the presentation and by the influence of that mission, and by its operation upon the minds and hearts of men to bring them into oneness, and constitute a people that in faith, in spirit, in everything shall be acceptable to him. The Sav-

ior made the statement that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." By our experiences we learn, that wherever division and discord exist, whether among families, or in neighborhoods or states, they engender weakness instead of strength. This is proven by the experience of the people in our own country socially and politically. In order to bring about a unity, oneness, a united effort in any given direction, there must be acknowledged rules, accepted principles, to govern and direct in that purpose; and these, whether few or many, must be received intelligently by those who propose to be governed and directed by them, whether it is in church or in state.

We look back over the history of a century or more, and we find the political states of our country were very much different from what they are to day. There was a struggle at that time for the planting of the principles of freedom and the rights of man upon the shores of this new world. Men and women, ostracised from the associations of their birth in the eastern world, came to this land, inspired with a desire of freedom, of right, of equality, and took themselves away from that condition of things that had surrounded them from their infancy and took away the natural rights that seem to belong to every man. When they had

arrived here and the time came, a compact was formed by the people upon this land, to constitute a government, and they desired to incorporate into it such principles as would present themselves at once to the thinking mind as right and true, that they might be united upon a government that would become strong and powerful, and able to resist all encroachments. In order to do this, they were desirous of implanting principles which would at once recommend themselves to the judgment and consciences of men as right, such as guaranteeing to every man the right to worship in his own way, according to the dictates of his own conscience, and recognizing in every man an individual identity and existence, constituting one among the great family of men, whose rights should be preserved along with those of all others. From the recognition of these principles as they were engraved upon the constitution of our country, and implanted in the hearts of the people of this new world, has grown one of the grandest nations the world has ever seen. All nations to-day admire, not the Government of the United States as such, but by reason of the equity, the justice, and the rights of men which are preserved, and the privileges of men which are recognized, therein; so that it becomes a home for all nations and all people who are seeking for the privilege of exercising the God-given faculties with which they are endowed, to think, to make inquiry, to worship, to be free. It is this underlying thought that gains the admiration of all, and inspires all people who become acquainted with this institution of things, to love it, be-

cause every man's rights are held intact. These individual rights, these governmental rights thus preserved, enable the government to move forward for the accomplishment of one purpose, the building up of a great government. By and by some thinking that they held the right to move away, to divide and weaken this institution which would by and by result in its destruction, as a house divided against itself can not stand. So the people of this country thought. So they put the forces at work to correct this error; and set to work to convert, and if they could not convert at once, to enforce the power by which these influences should be restrained, that the government might still go on, for the accomplishment of the great purpose for which God called it into being, and planted and founded it upon the principles of freedom in the beginning. There is no other place in the world as we conceive, at least not many, where men have that exclusive right of thought and inquiry, politically, and religiously, that they enjoy in this country; and it is under this influence that we have become endowed with that love of the rights of men to that degree, that it has called out the latent forces planted within the mind, and given expression and development thereto, so that in this country though it is a new world people are entitled to the credit for some of the most advanced ideas and theories of the most profoundly educated men and women that we read of in the history of the past. And under the exercise of these rights and privileges contemplated in the language of our text, "Prove all things and hold fast to

"that which is good," the citizens of this country have made inquiry into everything that has been presented for their consideration, and have gone so far into it as human sagacity and thought and inquiry would enable them to go, having so far as possible investigated everything which might redound to the well being of mankind. We scarcely know what it is to be told; You shall not do this or that, if it is something that is calculated for the benefit of mankind. These rights and privileges guaranteed to all, have become a sort of second nature. We all, perhaps in this one direction have recognized the rights of individuals, and we can understand in the presentation of the evidence, that God had a purpose in the establishment of this condition of things in the world, in order that it might be a nursery for the establishment of that institution of things, calculated to prepare a people that shall be his when he shall come to make up his jewels; for the statement is that the time will come when He will gather together all things in heaven and in earth, even in Him. The thought naturally impresses itself upon the mind of man, if Christ ever brings the people in one, it must be by the recognition of such principles and rules as are calculated to bind them in this bond of union, and by an obedience to which they may receive all that is in store for those who are partakers of this union.

It is said that we live in that age of the world, when this kind of a work will be consummated, when the Savior will come to his bride: and the statement is made, that "the bride has made

herself ready," indicating a day of preparation, a work that has for its object the education of the people, an exercise of the powers of the mind in discriminating between what is right and what is wrong; the acceptance of truth; and the rejection of error—"a house divided against itself cannot stand." There is a kind of impulse of the mind and heart and soul, that goes out to the world, and would incline us to take every man and every woman, whatever may be their religious faith, by the hand and desire their well-being, that they might occupy a place in this great union. But we are divided. We are here to advocate principles we believe to be in harmony with what God has communicated to the race for their well being, and which we believe will bring to them the highest and best good. But somebody else advocates a different line, and presents certain principles that divide rather than unite; that obstruct rather than encourage. Now it does not take a very good philosopher to come to the conclusion that if these two classes of principles are in operation in this world, they will pull asunder rather than unite. We all desire oneness of faith in the human family; but that cannot be accomplished very soon, if there is not only two, but many pulling in opposite directions, and making an absolute division upon the questions of religion. This division exists in the minds of men whose sincerity cannot be questioned; who have a desire for life, and whose love for God and for principle is perhaps equal to any in any age of the world. But notwithstanding this, the division exists, so much so that individuals

with the Bible in their hands, claiming it as the revealed will of God to man, pointing out their obligations, all claiming it as a standard—one holds it contains one set of facts and principles and another, another until it would take a person quite a while to count all the different sects and parties we have in the world to-day; all claiming to be Christian, and all divided against each other.

To recapitulate: God proposes to gather in one all things in heaven and earth in him, in harmony with that sentiment of Christ's prayer, "Father make them one as I and thou art one." So long as these forces are at work among the multitudes of men in this world, one planting one kind of a sentiment and another, another kind, under the name and guise of religion, this unity will not be affected. In the organization of our government, it was not difficult to convince the people; that if one man had a right to representation, another had; and it did not take us a great while to learn that if the white man had certain rights under the law, the black man had also; for the good book says, that "God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the whole earth; hence the black man was not responsible for his blackness, any more than the white man was responsible for his whiteness. Each one was a part of humanity, a part of one great family; and they concluded that one part of the family had no moral right to hold the other part in bondage. When they have come to a unity upon this question which has held our right and privileges intact, we have to-day before us for consideration, a faith that has for its

object the unification of the race; the promulgation of this set of principles that will call individuals out from every nation under heaven by the acceptance of truth, that they may be brought into that bond of unity and oneness constituting what is declared in the word, a united house; for "if a house divided against itself cannot stand."

There is a feeling prevailing among all denominations of Christians to-day, that lines of division and discrimination ought to be moved out of the way. It is not simply the belief of your speaker or the people he represents, but it is the feeling and desire of multitudes of different religious beliefs; and there is a movement at work all over the land in order to affect this. They have become convinced that this division engenders weakness; that the principle is true to-day, that a House divided against itself can not stand. I want to read to you from page 970 of the *Century Magazine* for April, concerning this thought: "It is now very generally believed, that there is a tendency towards some organic union of the Churches of Christ in the United States. The leading men of the different denominations are for the most part declaring themselves in favor of an attempt at some form of union. * * * And the grand thing in order to accomplish it, try to tear away as much as possible, what now stands in the way, and constitutes these barriers. For instance, one man believes another should be baptized in order that he may constitute a member of Christ's church. Another one says, It is not necessary, and this brings up a dividing line. * * * This great

chasm may be bridged over by simply recognizing the fact, that because Christ has died, everything else should be deemed of minor importance. Hence, all Christians may unite together upon that platform." That platform takes us all in. It takes the Saints, the Methodists, Presbyterians, for they all recognize this to be true. Still these divisions exist. The question, how much a person may believe and how little; and still retain his place in the church, is a serious question before us to-day. Since my arrival in this county I chanced to be present at a little place where there is a great revival going on. There had been a considerable amount of preaching in the neighborhood for a few days previous to my going there and quite an interest awakened, and a good many had been moved by a desire to become Christians; and the question came up while I was there, what one should do in order to be a Christian, and have a standing place upon the broad platform. The minister told them, that all that was necessary for them to do was to get on the platform and be prayed for. One brother said he would like to feel differently from what he did. The minister talked to him quite a while. He wished to impress upon his mind that he was saved. But, he said, I do not feel any different. There must be some feeling about it. The minister talked with him about ten minutes, but could not make him feel as he desired. The minister got up before the congregation and said, there is nothing in feeling, there is no sense in feeling. If you hate sin, said he, you are saved. If you hate sin that is the evidence that

you are a Christian and saved. There was a great deal of time taken up in order to impress that upon the vast audience. If this position be true, then there is something wrong with the evidences given to us in the Scriptures. This minister said a worldly man could not hate sin, but we think he was mistaken in that. I remember reading some lectures by Mr. Ingersoll, and some of them are pretty good, and he gives evidence that there are some kinds of sin which he hates. According to the theory presented at the revival he is saved. He also affirmed that they did not want any doctrine. Believe that Jesus was the Christ—that was all that was necessary. In order to have a standing when Christ makes up his jewels, is a belief that he was and that he died to save sinners is all that is necessary. If it is not correct we have each an individual work to do; and it is our privilege and duty to determine by proper investigation and consideration, which theory is correct. We take up the New Testament, and we read like this in the second chapter of Acts, when so many were converted to Christianity on the Day of Pentecost, it says they continued in the Apostles' doctrine. They had a different idea, they could not do without doctrine. Paul writing to Timothy says, "Take heed to thyself and the doctrine, for by it thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee." If men were saved by accepting and obeying doctrine in olden times, it seems to be wrong to tell men and women that there is no saving power in doctrine. These doctrines of Christ were the power and life of that institution de-

nominated the church in olden times, just as the rights of representation and the worship of God are underlying principles that constitute this great institution denominated the government of the United States. They belong to it, and are essential to the well-being of it. Let me quote you another text upon this thought: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. But whosoever abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son." This presents the thought, that if a man undertakes to enter into the relationship with God which will entitle him to salvation in any other way than by obedience to the doctrine, he will fail. He may think he has God, or he may think he has Christ, but if he does not recognize the doctrine of Christ, it is *prima facie* evidence that he has not God. But some say, we have an experience, a joy. You never read about a denomination of people, and you never saw one but what had some kind of joy. But this dispensation of the fulness of times, in which God proposes to gather together all nations in one, is the one in which God proposes that the principles that constitute his doctrine shall be presented to the world. And it seems to have started right here in this land of liberty, under this institution of things where the rights of men are guaranteed to them; the right of inquiry, of worship; the right to say no or yes. In presenting Christ to the world we may refer to the statement of Paul in Corinthians, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." How did Christ reconcile the world unto himself? When we learn how Christ reconciled the world unto himself, we find that he went from city to city preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. He called out other individuals and they went forth preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. We read further, "And he has committed unto us the word of reconciliation and the ministry

of reconciliation," and through this ministry of reconciliation he presented the words of reconciliation to the world, and men became converted, and entered into spiritual communion with him, and were denominated the "Body of Christ," or "The Church of Christ," so that in this union there is another bond, in which all are one whether black or white, bond or free. "For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;" for in this relationship neither Jew nor Gentile, bond or free, male or female, is recognized: All are the children of God if they have faith in Jesus Christ. "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;" showing their faith by their works. It seems to me that it would be a wrong move for the great body of Christians to unite and leave out all these principles of doctrine, and unite together upon the broad platform, if we may so call it, in the recognition of the fact that God has forgotten all laws. It says in this good book that devils believe and tremble. We would have to follow that crowd, and stand on the platform with all the rest, if we admit the basis of union which throws away all doctrine. Ingersoll says if he finds out by and by, that there is a God, he will be willing to recognize him. So he must be received also. If we take into consideration the peculiar age of the world in which we live, and the condition of things in which we find ourselves, having these barriers taken away, and the rights of individuals guaranteed, the mind and soul go out in search of truth; and with the Bible before him, I do not see how an individual can expect to enter into that particular relationship with God, except by obedience to the doctrine of Christ. Let me give you an example from the New Testament explaining my thought. You will remember the familiar statement found in the Acts, when the Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join yourself to the chariot, and he went and did so. There was a man in

the chariot who had been reading the scriptures. He was a choice man, had been to Jerusalem to worship the great Jehovah of the Jews. He was sincere, but did not understand what he read. Philip said to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I except some man guide me?" Then it is said that he commenced at that same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. He said more than telling him Jesus was the Christ; he did more than tell him Jesus was crucified. Before he was done preaching to this man he realized there was a work for him to do. "Here is water," he exclaimed, "what does hinder me from being baptized. And Philip said unto him if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest; and he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch." It seems, then, that no difference what may have been an individual's peculiar religious environments, in order to take his place in this institution known as the church of God, he must be baptized. Just as a Frenchman or Spaniard, who may come to this country tomorrow, must conform to the rules laid down by our government, in order to become a citizen thereof; so all men, if they would stand in a place to receive recognition of heaven and God, must comply with the requirements of the heavenly kingdom, and be received into it in accordance with its requirements. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, he hath not God; but whosoever abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son." Thus they went in olden

times, preaching everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. They preached the doctrine of Christ, a set of principles to which men might conform, and thereby become one. As it was in that day, so it is to be in the age denominated the dispensation of the fulness of times, in which God proposes to gather together all things in one, in heaven and in earth.

When the harvest is, we understand is the end of the world. The prophet Isaiah points out a time just before the end of the world, or just before the harvest time when he exhorts thus: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." Then somewhat in the future from that, when the harvest is ripe, the world ready for the cleansing by fire, about the time when old Babylon would make all nations drunken as indicated in the revelation, God would commence a work. You remember that significant statement in this same chapter, wherein he says, "Woe to the land shadowing with wings" etc. This land was not known until the days of Columbus, and from that time this new world began to be peopled, and a grand nation arose, founded upon liberty and human rights. It seemed about the right time for God to commence his strange act, and to bring to pass his strange work, to gather together all things in heaven and earth in one, even in him. That is the reason we are here this afternoon. Right here in this land, the best and most suitable

place, God has commenced that work. It is for the purpose of presenting to men the principles of Christ's doctrine, that by accepting and obeying them, men may be prepared for his coming. They are the same underlying principles that were presented to the world in the days of Christ and the Apostles. The Apostle tells us, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular; for by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit. Christ is the life of the body, the life of the Church; yet it is difficult to get men to believe that there is any inspiration in the body to-day. The Apostle tells us, that by "one spirit are we all baptized into one body, and been made to drink into one spirit are we all baptized into one body, and been made to drink into one spirit."

There is division in the world over these things, one preaching one organization and another something differ-

ent, and it is thought to be selfish to take the ground that one is right and another wrong; but there is a square conflict, both can not be right. I may be wrong and you may be wrong, but if we conflict with each other, we can not both be right. So we must have recourse to the language of the text this afternoon, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." Investigate that which is presented to you, and having satisfied yourselves as to that which is right and true, make your lives correspond therewith.

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