

# A MARVELOUS WORK AND A WONDER.

## SERMON

By Elder Joseph Luff of Independence, Mo.

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Reported for Zion's Ensign by Miss Belle Robinson.

From the 29th chapter of Isaiah I select the 13th and 14th verses which read thus:

“Wherefore, the Lord said, forasmuch as this people darw near me with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

I make no attempt to-night to disguise the fact that, as a minister, I represent a body of religionists that is being looked upon as occupying, to say the least, a very anomalous position, a peculiar people indeed. I am, therefore, committed to the necessity of offering something in the way of defense for that position. I take opportunity here at the outset, however, to state that it seems a little peculiar to us that a body of Bible believers should find it necessary in a bible-believing community to offer a defense for its existence: but the fact remains, and inasmuch as we stand as

but one among the many who are making and urging a claim for a hearing at the hands of the populace, it is wise that we shall present in as clear language as may be at our command the reasons for our faith, and allow the thinkers or investigators with whom we come in contact to place these reasons alongside of the reasons that are being assigned by others making a like claim with us, then after making a fair comparison of the views, the arguments, the ideas presented, or in other words, the reasons for the various things, to be able to judge as to which of the number has been able to draw from the word of God the greater measure of warrant and support. It may be possible to-night that in considering this subject, I shall re-canvass ground that has frequently been traversed by me and others while upon this stand in the past, when furnishing a reason for the hope that is within us, and I offer no apology if I shall do this, for the reason that that which shall prompt me to do it to-night is precisely the same influence that has prompted me to offer these same reasons in the past. There are those, and possibly in our midst to-night, who earnestly and sincerely desire to know what possible ground can be found in the word of God for a body of religionists known by the name of Latter Day Saints in the world, to stand upon. The chapter read in your hearing to-night calls attention to a condition of affairs foreseen by the prophets in the centuries ago that was to have existence at a period in the history of the world just prior to the time when Jacob was to again take color in his face, or in other words, lose his paleness, and in order that an understanding of this may be had, it may be well, possibly, to call your attention to what you have learned in the past when reading the word of God, viz., that there was a time after the death of Solomon, the king of Israel and Judah, when a division took place in which Israel was separat-

ed from Judah, and in course of time each of these in their turn were taken captives by different rulers, and from that time forward so far as the Bible speaks of them in any way, they are referred to as the "outcasts of Israel" and the "dispersed of Judah." From that time until the present, history has never furnished us any ground for the belief that they have ever been brought into a condition of unity again, such as they enjoyed prior to the death of Solomon, but the prophecies do abound with testimony in regard to the coming of a time when such re-union will take place, and in fact, I may state here without any fear of being successfully contradicted, that this forms the main theme of all the prophetic utterances from Isaiah to Malachi; that wherever Israel or Judah is referred to as the scattered and peeled, the broken and divided, they are referred to in language that expresses sadness over that condition, but nearly always supplemented by the announcement that after God had rendered unto them sufficient by way of punishment for their wrongs, he would gather them and unite them together again and make their last condition better than even their first, and that the Master himself, the Messiah, who, because he failed to come according to their carnal expectations was rejected by them, shall indeed appear to fulfill their grandest hopes in relation to Him, when His sacred feet shall literally press the soil of Palestine and this earth that God has made his foot-stool, and when his sceptre shall be wielded as a sceptre of power and righteousness and when every knee shall bow and recognize him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Some of these prophets have referred to the incipient stages in the great restoration work, and this prophet Isaiah in his 29th chapter takes occasion as in other places to refer to the means God intended to employ in bringing about this

wondrous culmination. This was done, I apprehend, with a view of putting all those who would afterwards read and believe upon their guard lest they should be deceived by the voice uttered in the desert, or in the secret chamber, "Lo, here is Christ," and "Lo, there is Christ!" They might know by the outlinings and forecastings of inspiration the very line of march that the Son of God would elect to pursue in accordance with His Father's appointments when the times had been fulfilled and the great culminating work was to be ushered in. Jesus made the announcement to the people who had discarded him at his appearing, "How often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wing, but ye would not; therefore your house is left unto you desolate." Again he said, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until"—I want you to understand that I emphasize that word—"UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

When that prediction was uttered there were no surrounding circumstances to indicate a likelihood of its fulfillment. After it had its fulfillment and years had passed by there were found no surrounding circumstances that indicated the likelihood of a restoration work, but the same Spirit that lead the Son of God to pronounce the prophecy of distress and overthrow and calamity, also led the prophets that preceeded him to testify of a subsequent restoration, when the curse should be lifted from the Gentile-trodden land and when after its removal the light that was connected with the ancient glory of Israel should be flashed upon it again, and when Jerusalem would stand as a challenge to every eye and every ear and heart that loved the sight and sound of the beautiful and felt proud in bearing the name of an Israelite indeed; and that back to that land their thoughts would turn, while an ambition would spring up within them to move back and occupy

the land once famous and glorious when inhabited by their fore-fathers.

With this statement I ask you to consider that everything out-lined by the Savior has had its fulfillment accordingly; there were no statements made in a haphazard or irregular way; the Savior was not here to present sensational ideas and then fill in his startling statements with language that had no particular significance except as mere filling, but every word here, as I understand it, was fulfilled with an exactness that only Divinity could locate within it, and if I have correctly stated the matter in declaring that the same Spirit moved the prophets previous to this, then I am pledged as a consequence, (when I accept this 29th chapter of Isaiah as a part of the work of that inspiration) to believe that somewhere away down the stream of time subsequent to the fulfillment of the Savior's prediction against Jerusalem, there would be introduced upon this earth what the Lord here was pleased to call a marvelous work and a wonder, a something that would come in direct contact with everything that the world's wise men pronounced good in a gospel sense on earth, and against which the wisdom of the wise would be arrayed, and against which the testimony of the prudent would be hurled, and against which the activity of the age in which it was introduced would be directed. If, therefore, we are living as we all believe in the neighborhood of 1,800 years or perhaps more, later in the world's history than the time of the fulfillment of the Savior's prediction regarding Jerusalem, it is but meet that we shall, in view of what light we may gather from the Scriptures, take carefully our religious or theological soundings—begin to cast about us, if you will, and learn whether the age in which we live, the society of which we form a part, is or is not to be directly affected by the introduction of the kind of work here prophecied of. Is this unreasonable?

At the outset I tacitly admitted that we were considered a peculiar people. One of the peculiarities consists in the fact that we believe we are associated directly with the fulfillment of this prophecy found in the 29th chapter of Isaiah; that the enterprise in which all our spiritual and moral forces are now embarked is the enterprise here spoken of by the Almighty as "a marvelous work and a wonder," that was to be looked upon in surprise by everybody on earth who had been following the lines of theology suggested by those whose wisdom was simply human, a class of people, I understand, whose fear toward God was being taught by the precepts of men; an age of the world when the voice of revelation was not being heard, a condition of affairs which was the natural consequence of the long absence of the light that God had formerly been in the habit of throwing upon earth affairs, especially where his government or church was interested.

In making a statement of this character, of course, we challenge all that is within the mind of the thoughtful in the way of criticism, and we are required, even more than ever before to furnish some of the reasons why we have what they call the audacity or brazen effrontery to believe that a people so terribly despised, a people whom the world gives so little credit of honor or even honesty too, should lay claim to such wondrous recognition at the hands of God as seems to be fore-shadowed in a prophecy of this kind.

A man was once approached by an individual who had seen the Savior, and information had been conveyed to his mind in regard to this Savior. After learning of the place of his birth or origin, he looked up as I have seen people look since and turning in a vein of inquiry and possibly surprise to the one bringing the tidings, he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The man said, "Come and

see," that is all. The trouble is the same in this age of the world—the people have been thinking more about Nazareth than that which came out of it. They have been listening to all that has been said and published about this modern Nazareth, and have been more ready to believe our religion base, because of its humble environments than to accept proof of its divinity from those who were the only ones qualified to speak the truth in regard to the question at hand. The proclamation has been made and has been responded to in a similiar question, "Can any good thing come out of what the world is pleased to call Mormonism?" "Can anything good have been associated with these humble conditions connected with its incipient stages" and the man against whose character the world has made it its especial business to hurl invective and anathema? Can any good come out of it? All we can say is, "COME AND SEE.

In looking over the audience to-night, I take it for granted that some hundreds of people are here who have heeded the advice to come and see—have come laden with these peculiar prejudices that were begotten within them by what the Lord has called, "The wisdom of the wise," and also the understanding or the skill of the prudent of earth, and in so far as they have committed themselves to an honest investigation they have been enabled to gather a something akin to that gathered by Nathaniel on the occasion when he heeded the advice of Phillip in former days, and they are found now as Nathaniel was of old, bearing witness to what they claim to be a divinity in that which came out of this modern Nazareth, asserting it fearlessly everywhere from the simple fact that they have taken it for granted that any enterprise authorized of God will certainly find intelligent moral support and divine backing in the counsels given of God in any age of the world, and from the further fact that wherever God talks or works he must be found in harmony with himself.

What then is our faith? Let me stop here and consider a thought. One of the most surprising things in connection with this marvelous work that strikes the thinker, who has been educated under the traditions of the present age, is the claim that there is something especially divine in connection with its introduction; that this church was organized by Divine command; that these people claim to receive the ministration of angels; that they claim to be in direct communion with the Eternal himself; that in other words, all that characterized the experiences of earlier years of Christianity, for which Christ was responsible, is characteristic of the gospel they are advocating, or the faith they are proclaiming to-day. To any who may be present who entertain feelings of surprise in this direction, let me offer a simple question,—Is it or not, according to your thinking, a truth that is uttered in the Bible in so many places and ways, “I am God, I change not.” That he is without variableness or shadow of a turning, the same yesterday—the past—to-day—the present—and forever—the future. Are these statements true in your judgment or are they untrue? Taking it for granted that you agree with me that they are true, can you in consistency with that thought, differ from what I announce now as my faith, that wherever the footprints of this great unchangeable God shall be discerned among people on earth—wherever they shall be found, they must bear a close resemblance with themselves as they appeared to the eyes of the people when they were discerned in the earlier years? Can he be unchangeable and yet materially differ in his actions of the present and past? Does not the statement further made that “God is no respecter of persons,” in connection with the other statement that he is our common Father and hath created us and hath made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth and hath determined the

times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation," clearly indicates that God is as responsible for the fact and the time of my birth as he was responsible for the existence of Peter, James and John and the times of their birth? In other words, if he is my Father as well as Peter's Father, and has certified that he is no respecter of persons—that he loves all his children alike, is it not natural for me to presume upon that statement that if I shall live and act in the same manner as they did, he will treat me in precisely the same manner as he treated them? Is this unreasonable? If so, we are an unreasonable people, because that is one of the features that helps make us appear marvellous.

Further than this, taking this statement into account, we naturally feel ourselves pledged to the belief that the great God who authorized the writing of what we find in the New Testament with a view to the instruction of the people, intended that the acceptance of and faith in that testimony as manifested in the observance of what it enjoined, should make disciples unto Christ or followers of Christ and of God, no matter in what age of the world that testimony should happen to be thus received. Hence, believing as we have declared ourselves to do, in the unchangeability and impartiality of God and of Christ, and taking it for granted as a truth that the Holy Spirit so frequently referred to in this word is a part of the great Trinity of which so many strange ideas are entertained, we naturally are committed to the thought that it is one with them in sentiment, one in every purpose relating to the children of men, and now I ask the question, (and you will pardon the very commonplace methods I introduce to-night for the sake of making myself understood by the youngest child that can think) have you any reason for believing that the Almighty is dead? Have you any reason for believing that the Son of Man is dead? Have you any reason

for believing that the Holy Spirit has ceased forever to exist? Have you any reason for believing that all the angels of God are dead? I apprehend you will all say with me, "No, we have not the first reason for believing this," or in other words, we do not believe they are. Pardon me then if I ask you a question that will seem a little more harsh than this, Do you believe that the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit or the holy angels have gone out of business? Have they ceased to operate? If so, please answer me how can I meet the charge of unchangeability if it be made against them? How am I going to do it if they have gone out of the original business? In the name of reason, I ask where is there a single passage of Scripture then upon which I can base an argument with the hope of success in a fight with atheism? How can I prove God to be unchangeable or impartial if the facts are against the testimony? I know they were in a certain line of business if that book is true; if they are out of that business now, they have changed. When I read of the men of earlier times, I find in the revelations concerning them, characteristics that are common with the men I am meeting every day and when I find the moral exigencies that crowded upon them, I simply turn to the present day and find a repetition of history; I find that to-day the necessities, moral, spiritual and intellectual are as great so far as they represent the condition of this world, as they ever were in any age of which history gives me any information, and with this thought in view I understand that the Great Master of the world, the King of the universe if you will, directed the forces that he introduced thousands of years ago, specifically to the meeting of these necessities, regardless of the date of their appearing. If these necessities still remain, I ask you the question solemnly and thoughtfully, how can they be met in Divine wisdom by the use of any other means than an unchangeable God in the exercise of di-

vine wisdom employed thousands of years ago? How can it be done? I don't know, so far as I am concerned, everything in regard to the purpose and intent of the Almighty. I have been met by individuals who have said, "Elder Luff, your people teach that because Jesus said they were to be baptized 1800 years ago, they must be baptized now." "Why certainly." "Why, you teach the doctrine of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and instead of sprinkling a child, your ministers lay their hands on it and bless it as they did anciently." "Yes." "And when the sick call upon your elders they lay their hands upon them and annoint with oil and claim that in a number of instances they are healed, miraculously." "Yes." When they press me for a reason for this I turn to the Scriptures and tell them it was a command given by the same inspiration that sent Jesus into the world, the same inspiration that moved him to walk up and down the streets of Judea and that led him to endure among men. James says that, "If any are sick among you let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, annointing 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."

Now I ask you to simply consider, my dear friends, that no Latter Day Saint is responsible for that being in the Bible. If it is not true, pardon me for calling your attention to the fact, that we are not responsible for the untruth—it was there before we came into the world. If it is true there is no credit attaching to us because it is true, if it is not, there is no discredit attaching to us because it is not true.

We find it there as a representation of the divine mind, the divine will, though opposed to the "wisdom of the wise." And now the Apostle Paul says, speaking of the angels of God, that they had been appointed of God, to be

“ministers unto those who shall be heirs of salvation.” Are there any upon this earth to-day who shall be heirs of salvation? If so, and the angels of whom such testimony is borne have not ceased to exist nor have changed their business, shall there not be found somewhere on the earth among those who are to be heirs of salvation, a people who are testifying of angelic ministrations among them? If not, how is the Bible true? That is the serious thought connected with it, and I am frank to say it constitutes one of the peculiarities that make us appear so marvellous in the eyes of the people.

Now this statement made in the Bible carries the thought that when this marvellous work was to be introduced, it was to be introduced by the Almighty and in likeness to his former acts, he being unchangeable; but it was to be out of harmony with every religious philosophy that was on the earth at its introduction, and it was to carry on its work until in course of time the cry raised against it by the “wisdom of the world” should be silenced by the very forces it contained. It was to lay the axe to the root of everything in opposition that had been pronounced wise and powerful on earth till they should be overthrown and out of all there should be finally evolved a condition of affairs that would bear the photograph of the divine purpose upon its face and in its heart there would be located permanently the potency which would expose the puerility and folly of everything that had been known to the world as christianity in the age of its introduction.

Now let me call your attention to a few things in connection with this. This work had its commencement about the year 1824 or 1825, by the first testimony about the visitation of an angel and in regard to the organization of a church. On the 6th of April, 1830, the church was finally organized and at that time things in this world carried a very different aspect from what they do now. The creeds by which men were being affected, and by which our forefathers were held, preserved themselves free from the fear of any hurtful contact with reason or from the apprehension of any unsettlement because of contact, but will you, my dear

hearers to-night, do me the favor of pointing out anything under the head or title of creed to-day that feels as secure as it did seventy years ago? Why, the Doctors of Divinity have to-day upon the dissecting table the very creeds that their fathers instituted and aimed to perpetuate. Now I state this without any feeling other than the utmost deference to those who differ from me in judgement. In order that people shall know what ground we occupy, it is necessary to make them understand precisely by our language what we mean, and I call your attention to the fact that when this work was first introduced the announcement was made that the angel of God had informed the first individual connected with it that the creeds as they existed in the world were an abomination in the sight of God, that the churches were not organized right, but that the time was ripe for the introduction of the means by which the church of God should be brought into existence upon the earth again, and from it there should go forth that which would accomplish the overturning eventually of all that was opposed to God and Christ and his purposes, notwithstanding they might be supported by the wisdom of the wise of earth and the skill of the most prudent among men.

Now when this announcement was made by the young man and his associates who believed it, the people said that the angel who made such a statement as that told a falsehood, and politely informed the messengers that they were at liberty to go back and tell the angel so, if they ever met him again.

A few months ago, that is, within the last two years, some of the foremost advocates of one of the most popular faiths couched in certain articles, stood upon the platform when the question of the revision of that creed was under consideration, and openly denounced some of the features formerly considered vital and divine. One of them whose name I cannot give you at this moment, said, "Some of us have been teaching a damnable heresy." I don't know whether it was truth or not, but he said it. If I had dared to say that a few years ago, they would have considered me an enemy to righteousness and truth. Another one rose up and made

the statement, "We cannot believe it and we ought not to teach it," and some of the most popular religious ideas to-day are being dealt with in this manner, so that the people who were foremost in advocating these religious forms are now pronouncing them an abomination in the sight of God, —just what the angel said nearly seventy years ago. Thus the "wisdom of the wise" is perishing and the testimony of God and his church is sustained, though unintentionally and unconsciously by its enemies. Some of the clauses in human creeds have made infidels by the thousands and caused church adherents to blush with shame. The Lord pronounced them an abomination. He told the truth, as not only the few but the many will some day discover.

If this young man and those associated with him told a falsehood seventy years ago, and if the angel also told an untruth, what do you call the statements now being made against the creed by its would-be revisers? They have come to the angel's conclusion in part. What unseen force has been at work to bring their former creed images into disgrace in their own eyes? The Bible forbids the idea that God has changed his mind. It warrants me therefore, in believing that wherever he was found spiritually, morally and intellectually 1800 years ago, he may be found to-day. Hence my duty is plain. If I want to find and walk with God I must go where he formerly was and where other men once walked with him. Men have turned from God but notwithstanding they have lost the privilege of hearing his voice by reason of that turning, yet if they desire to walk with him again, if ever they wish to hear his voice again, to enjoy the peculiar favors that were associated with a close relationship with him in earlier times, they may do so by going where he is.

There is no warrant in the word for the idea that the Almighty will follow men in all their wanderings from him, but there is a warrant for the thought that if they will return unto him, all the evidences of a common Fatherhood, all the evidences of impartiality, all the evidences of unchangeability will be showered upon them and here upon the earth will come a deluge of sweetness, moral and spiritual such as made

the church of the earlier years conspicuous above all that had the name of religion attached to it.

You cannot conceive of such an idea as the growth of the Almighty, that he has improved upon himself or upon his original breadth of judgement or of mind or soul; you must think of him as a stationary character, otherwise you could not base your hope of life upon him, because instantly you admit the idea of growth to him, you admit the possibility of change and with that comes the thought that He is advocating new methods and plans, and if there be not continued revelation from him; I may forfeit his present and future favor because of abiding by the last revelation of his purpose and will that was made to men. I hold it as a truth, a claim that cannot be successfully disputed by any argument furnished from this word, that the only hope that underlies our great spiritual structure is that which is based upon our faith in the unchangeability of God. It is not in any sense marvellous when we read the word, for us to believe that God talked with men in earlier times,—nothing marvellous about that; we all seem to take it as a natural consequence that He did it because he ought to do it, I care not where you cast your eye, where you throw that book open, I challenge you in all candor and honesty to name one single page, one single line, one single sentence in that Bible which bears divine authority and sanction for the salvation and government of mortals, that did not come by either direct inspiration from God or by direct ministration of angels. Take out if you please all that has come from the testimony of angels, all of inspiration by direct articulation from God and all the voicing of the Spirit testifying to mortals on earth; take all of them out which came by dreams and visions and how much Bible have you left upon which to base any assurance or any hope as to the existence of God or anything beyond this life?

If, then, this is worthy of consideration, another thought is also important and equally worthy and that is, if this Bible, containing a history of the dealings of God with men for a period of over 4,000 years, gives really a correct and accurate representation of Him during those 4,000 years and the

history shows an uninterrupted stream of revelation from heaven to earth, an unbroken series of angel ministrations to men, an uninterrupted revelation of the Divine purpose wherever there was a human ear in attitude to catch the inspiration that flowed. If that history of 4,000 years is given to me upon which to base my conception of the character, the purpose and all other things connected with this God, am I not as a consequence pledged to the conclusion that being unchangeable, whatever was the voicing of those 4,000 years, must be the uninterrupted voicing of that unchangeable God through millions of years should it be required in which to make a record of his dealings with men. I cannot escape this conclusion. I cannot answer for you, however, but my judgement is based upon the testimony here, and I cannot conceive that a kind Father would feed on the rich corn or product of heaven those members of his family who lived 1800 years ago—would feed my elder brothers, Paul or James or John or Peter or any of them farther back, even Samuel or David; and that he will take the mere husk from which they had eaten the corn and give it to me to feed upon, simply because I was not born as soon as they were. You may think that is a coarse illustration, but I will ask the question, what is this Bible to the people of the 19th century. You say it is the gospel, but it is not, it is simply an historical account of the kind of treatment God gave to a certain kind of people in the years of the past, and after furnishing this history for my encouragement, it asserts in my hearing that what God was he always will be; that being impartial, he remains so; being unchangeable he will so be revealed and manifest among men. The only thing necessary then is for me to learn by what means others placed their ears in receptive attitude that they might catch the inspiration of heaven and be governed by it, and then go and do likewise; and the great purpose of our preaching is to let people know that while we are anxious to partake of the good old bible day experiences, we are consistent enough to expect and to receive them only upon the same conditions under which they were guaranteed unto those people. If God said unto them that it was necessary they should be bap-

tized for the remission of sins, we cannot by any means feel warranted in the idea that we are entitled to-day to remission of sins without baptism, or if we simply accept a form of baptism as some declare, because our sins have been pardoned, thus commending ourselves as saved to him, outside of the ordinances appointed by him with that object in view.

We read the statement that a man must believe in God and in Christ and we are simple enough to believe that it is necessary now. We read that this same Jesus authorized men to repent or in other words, reform, and we are simple enough to believe it and teach it. Baptism is shown for remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the blessing of children and the reception of the Holy Ghost, and we are simple enough to believe and practice it now. We read there that Paul said that no man should take the ministry unto himself except he was called of God as was Aaron, and we turn to that book and find that Aaron was called by revelation from heaven, and we are simple enough to believe that if the inspiration was not faulty in that time, it is necessary that men to-day shall hear from God before they dare to go forth and use their ministry as by authority from him, and when we take a man and immerse him in the waters of baptism, and say we do it in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we do that which would be to us tantamount to blasphemy were it not for the fact that we have heard from God as Aaron did, and thus received our ministry.

How can I go forth for one of your leading firms and sign documents in the name of your firm if I have never heard from your firm? How can I do it? Why I may go forth as a forger, but let me tell you my friends, the forgery will some day be detected and I shall be brought to account, and the Savior says in that day (of judgment) many—when God says “many,” it has a numerical significance—shall come and say, “Lord Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name done many wonderful works, and I will profess unto them, I never knew you—depart from me.” This host must represent those who have taken it upon themselves to be ministers for Christ, without first having heard and received authority from him. I did not put that idea in there, my

friends, it was there before the Bible reached me.

Now in the light of this prophecy by inspiration regarding the introduction of the marvellous work that was to be in contrast, in wondrous contrast with the wisdom of the age when it was introduced, I make the announcement frankly that while we claim to be directly identified with its fulfillment, we are ready to canvas with every mortal on earth, if necessity requires, from Genesis to Revelation, and if there can be found the weapons with which to wage a successful warfare against this claim, we are willing, God being our judge, to be slain therewith as a church forever. If the Bible furnishes the weapons to destroy that claim, we want to have it destroyed, and the sooner the better. I will welcome the hand and clasp it with mine cheerfully, that will bring to me the scriptural evidence that I can go into some more popular institution, that I can step outside of this circle, humble as it is, and realize the same certificate of my acceptance in the sight of God that I find here, I have searched for it but failed to find. Hence I prefer to remain with the "little flock" that feeds in divine pastures.

Lest I weary you let me say if this work is not divine it is absolutely nothing, it is either divine or it is nothing. Seventy years ago it registered itself not down among the creeds of men, but up in direct opposition to them and made higher claims than any other had made in certain directions. Every time a creed revision has been attempted since, that attempt has squinted in the direction of harmony with the principles that have been part of this faith from the start and if that kind of business shall continue until a score or more years shall have passed, at the same gait as we have witnessed in the past, I ask you what kind of a spectacle will greet our children by that time? Will not the principles of our faith be popular though their first advocates in this generation be ignored.

There was a time when you put your money into the bank, you felt safe and if you loaned a dollar you felt safe, there was a time when most people felt secure and satisfied in their environments, and when no apprehension was ever experienced in making an investment or in moving here or

there, but I confess that after careful observation and earnestly inquiring of thinkers here and there and elsewhere as to the spot in this political, religious, financial, philosophic or scientific world as a realm of safety, I haven't found the man that will tell it to me.

Every decade is revealing revolution, the hypothesis upon which one decade builds its superstructural arguments are being removed by development of the next decade and with the removal of the hypothesis, the faith building totters and men whom you have given the highest place in the financial world or in the world of credit, are to-day in hiding, having yielded to influences that seem to be a part of the very diseased atmosphere we are breathing in this period of time; and whether we are mistaken in our views in regard to all this or not, everything around us is furnishing evidence in support of the faith we have entertained that the time is at hand when a wonderful change shall be made, the land of Palestine is again fertile, the nations are interested in getting the Jews back again. If what is published is true, Mr. Blaine has taken a hand in advising with other nations as to the advisability of showing generosity to the Jews and locating them in the home of their forefathers and I will ask you to consider if that has nothing to do with the prophecy that "Kings should be their nursing fathers and queens their nursing mothers," and on the mountains of Israel they should again dwell in safety and everlasting peace should select its abiding place in their midst.

I simply say that if these things are hoped for in righteousness, the incipient stages or the means to be introduced tending to such a culmination should be equally important in our eyes, and somewhere, even if we are deceived—someone must yet arise who will bear testimony of a condition of affairs among them similar to that which had an existence in the earlier years, in order to demonstrate these things that I have referred to as attributes of God's character, and we shall be ready to receive that which bears better evidence of it than we now have in support of the claim we have been making.

I say to you now, if you, at the hands of one chosen of

God in these last days and making such a claim as we have made, shall, believing and repenting, be baptized for the remission of your sins and receive the laying on of hands, you shall know of the divinity of this doctrine, whether its claim to a God origin and an angelic committal to men in these days is true or false.

I state to you frankly, and then take my seat, that either the church I represent is the Church of Jesus Christ and has been organized under His Spirit's direction or it is the grandest imposition that has ever been palmed off upon mortals in any age. It is, however, in our judgement the means to the end referred to when Jacob shall lose his paleness and all Israel shall be free. It is the "marvellous work" of which Isaiah prophesied in my text, which was to appear just before the restoration of Palestine and the revolutionizing of human creeds. It is the linking or blending together of the dispensations for the accomplishing of God's final work.

May God bless you and as long as life shall be prolonged unto you here may He speed you in all the good you do, in all the good you establish may he be with you and finally crown you with all these excellencies that are at his command, and if he can save you and bless you requiring less at your hands than the word declares, we have no objection, but we are not warranted by that word in telling you he either can or will; we are simply confined to the testimony of the word and ask you to believe it because it is there; we obeyed and accepted it and received the evidences by which it is guaranteed to us. May peace continue and abide with you, is my prayer in Jesus' name.

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