

THE "ONE BODY:"

OR, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST UNDER THE APOSTLESHIP,
AND UNDER THE APOSTASY.

Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Lamoni, Iowa.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Answer: The collective body of Evangelical Christians. All true believers in Christ found among the various denominations.

Should an objection be raised against this position, on the ground that there is no unity of faith or practice, or church organization among these different parties,—we are answered that the disagreement is upon non-essentials, while upon fundamentals there is unity, or an agreement. Yet, singular as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that these non-essentials, so-called, furnish the foundation of the mutual distrust, separation, and antagonism that exist among them; and are the bones of contention that vallant theologians contend over, with as much zest as if the salvation of the whole world depended upon their views being the universally adopted ones. They do not agree to disagree, but make their several peculiar views so prominent that no fellowship, in a true scriptural sense, is offered to their opponents; and these non-essentials furnish the bone and sinew of the rivalry that exists in their efforts to establish their organization in every quarter of the globe; if not, one party would labor as earnestly in establishing the churches of another as their own.

Should one be asked why they do not help build up another than their own, it is answered, They are not right. But if further asked, Are they Christians? Will they be saved? Will they receive the same glory hereafter as you? O yes, no doubt of that, is the answer.

To this we would reply that if they are Christians, and heirs of salvation, why not preach *their* faith, assist in building up *their* churches, &c., for to make men Christians, and heirs of eternal life, is the avowed object of the labors of each and all the different ministers—and we may say members also.

If to believe certain sentiments that are agreed upon constitutes a Christian character, then these non-essentials can have no part in forming that character, and therefore are merely useless opinions, and subserve no real purpose, except to furnish food for Satanic rejoicing, and texts for infidel dissertations, as well as frustrating the purposes of Jehovah. If they *are* essential to the formation of a Christian character, then they are necessary to salvation, for Christian character is essential to salvation. If they *are* essential to constitute a Christian life, or to form a Christian character; which ones are so essential, or are all of them?

If one set of views is essential to this end for one class, they must be for another; and so until all have to be believed by the several parties; but inasmuch as they are so utterly diverse and antagonistic, no man in possession of his reason can believe them all. So, no matter what he first believes, he can not possibly believe that which conflicts with this original faith, without laying aside as erroneous that which he had received; and if the first was essential, then to receive the other he must discard the first essential,—which act of course would damage his prospects of salvation. But

if it is not needful to believe all, then which one?

Says one party, Mine; says another, Mine; and so on through the whole list. So we must believe all; but says one, Our views are taken from the Bible, and agree therewith, and so say all.

If their views are all scriptural, then they are necessary; for "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,—that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

But, it is further urged, in defense of this disagreement of faith, practice, and church order, that Paul says that "The body is not one member but many;" and again, "But now are they many members, yet one body," and we are only so many members of the one body. But the apostle argues in the same connection: "That there should be no schism [or division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another"(a). But do the different churches have the same care one for another? If so, would there exist the rivalry, the contention, strife and selfishness seen among them? Paul says: "And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Now is this true of the different churches?

Again he says: "And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor." Is this true? Do the popular, or leading churches, bestow more abundant honor on some weaker or less popular ones, than on themselves?

Again he says: "For by one Spirit are all baptized into one body, * * and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Jesus says of that Spirit which the whole body possesses: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."

Now if the Spirit (which this body is

to drink into) is really possessed by the several members, and their teachings are those of the Spirit, then their doctrines must all be of God, and essential to salvation,—or if they are not of God, then they are of man, and therefore merely human opinions, and can be received or rejected as he who hears may choose. If they are of God, then he is the author of positive contradictions, and the Bible does not represent him fairly, when it declares of Him "With whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Again: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the Saints."

But if God is represented truly in these and other Scriptures, then he is not the author of these different faiths, orders, or systems, and of course they are not the efforts of the operation of his Spirit,—and, if not, then what spirit originated and perpetuates them?

If their faiths, or systems of religion, are systems of truth, and the Spirit has guided each of them in the development and establishment of their several doctrines, then we are required to believe that which can not be true—for one party declares that the Spirit in him teaches the eternal conscious misery of the sinner who dies in his sins, and another declares, as the mind of the Spirit, that the finally impenitent will be burned up,—be as though they had not been,—cease to exist as conscious beings. And another claiming to be led by the same Spirit says, that all mankind will finally be saved. Now it must be apparent to any mind, that it is utterly impossible for each of these doctrines to be true; for if the wicked suffer forever in torment, they are neither destroyed nor yet saved alive in the kingdom of heaven; or if saved, they are neither destroyed nor eternally tormented. And so it may be argued with many other clashing and contradictory teachings.

It is therefore evident that some of these doctrines must be taught by the spirit of error, instead of by the Spirit of Truth; and if so, why may not the

* Therefore necessary, and indeed such is the signification in this and other places.
(a) 1 Cor. 12: 25.

same spirit lead in the construction of the different forms of church government, as displayed by the several parties? And if the Spirit of Truth leads to one form of government, then it should not, and would not, lead to the formation of a different and opposite one.

If these reflections are legitimate—and the deductions from the premises logical, then the query may arise, How shall we tell what is right, either in doctrine or church government?—We reply that inasmuch as these several parties professedly declare their acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice—we must appeal to them for a solution, and when presented in their plainness, and untrammelled by learned and wise (or otherwise) comment, or glosses, they may present the subject in a tangible form.

Therefore, after examining the testimony of the Spirit against the present divided state of the religious world, we may then inquire into the character of the church as established in the Eastern Continent over eighteen hundred years ago. Paul says:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division * * * * for they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, * * * and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."—Romans 16: 17, 18.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1: 10.

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"—1 Cor. 3: 3.

Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one, even as his Father and he were one,—“that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (b)

Then, by reasonable inference, we would say that discord, or division, and strife among his professed disciples will produce the opposite effect, or cause the world to deny that God has sent his Son Jesus, which it very generally does today; for a rapidly prevailing doctrine is

that he was of human origin, the son of Joseph the carpenter, and essentially and entirely human in his begetting, life and death, and repeat the bribed report of sleeping sentinels, who testify that his disciples stole him while they slept, or in other words, deny his resurrection.

The world does not believe, yet Christ declared in substance, that it would if his disciples were one. Then are the churches responsible in any degree for the infidel state of the world?

The present condition of things in contrast with that of apostolic times may be illustrated thus:—A mariner who has been away on a voyage for several years, on his return to the port of departure, instead of the one steady or fixed light that once gave him the bearing of numerous shoals and breakers, as well as the course to a safe anchorage ground, finds a score or more houses strung along the coast, at irregular distances, presenting every kind and color of light, would be more apt to ground his vessel on a shoal, or run her on the shore in his bewilderment and despair, than to find his way to safe harbor.

But we enquire, What is the Scriptural idea of the church—the Bible definition?

The term “church” is translated from *eklesia*. An assembly is its primary signification. An assembly or congregation of believers in Christ is therefore a Church of Christ. The Apostle Paul used to write to the “*Ecclesia ton Theon*,” or the Church of God at Corinth.

The phrase “church” is used to designate a particular congregation of believers united in the gospel order; also the collective body of believers made up of all the churches throughout the world, and in all ages. Paul generally named the different congregations or assemblies, as churches. The word “church” occurs about sixty-four times in the New Testament; the term “Church of God” seven times; and the word “churches” about thirty-four times. We nowhere read of the Pauline church, church of Cephas, church of Apollos, but the entire phra-

(b) John 17: 21.

seology used impresses the mind with the idea of ONE BODY, baptized with ONE BAPTISM, actuated by ONE SPIRIT united by ONE FAITH, inspired by ONE HOPE, and governed by ONE LORD, even Jesus the head of the church. The union existing between this church and Christ was as close and intimate as that between a God-united husband and wife. Says the apostle:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."—Eph. 5: 22-33.

Another figure is employed by the Savior himself to express this union:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."—John 15: 5.

It would be worthy of notice here that the branches must (if alike) partake of the life-powers, or principle, that is in the stem, or vine, and the fruit produced will be by the life-power in the vine.

The vital force, or divine energy by which Christ spoke and performed his wondrous works, evidently was the Spirit of God,—and that divine power he promised to the branches, (not church organizations as such), but to individual members. He promised them ability to perform the same works that he did, and greater, if they would abide in him; but how or by what power were these works to be done? By the Spirit of God, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. This

Spirit would guide them into all truth, and teach them things to come, besides bringing to their remembrance whatsoever he had taught them (e).

This Spirit would therefore unfold new truths, and reveal unfulfilled prophecies, or declare coming events; for besides bringing to their remembrance what they had known or heard, which includes all the teachings they had received from him, it was also to declare that which had not been revealed as yet. The Spirit therefore is the *principle or power of direct revelation*. This point we wish to keep ever in mind. The Spirit is to do this work,—this is its character and design, even the Spirit of prophecy and revelation. We are met here with an assertion that this power was promised the Apostles alone; but let us see and compare the following passages:

"The former treatise have I made, O, Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he showed himself after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."—Acts 1: 1-8.

"Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. * * * Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our

(e) John 14: 17-26; 16: 13.

God shall call."—Acts 2: 33, 38, 39.

From this we learn that the same promise is given to all who believe, repent, and are baptized. Consequently we are allowed to believe that the word of Christ will be fulfilled in the case of all who become true believers, even the word spoken in Mark, that

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

The same idea is taught in Corinthians:

"Now there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."—1 Cor. 12: 6-11.

Having learned somewhat of the vital force, or life-powers of the church, we will employ another figure,—an apostolic one, however, and examine the creation of the church under the type of a building. The Apostles call the church the building of God—the members as lively stones. Paul says the saints

"Are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."—Eph. 2: 20.

It is here assumed by some that the church is to be built upon the teachings of apostles and prophets, and not that apostles and prophets are always to be present as a foundation of the existing church. But this position we will show is incorrect. To the inquiry, Is the foundation here the real beginning of the church, and no regard to be paid to the location, or resting place of the foundation? Is the foundation (admitting it to

be apostles and prophets) built on the sand, on air, or on water, on what? Says Jesus:

"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you what he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock."—Luke 6: 47, 48.

So the Church of Christ,—including the foundation and the corner-stone,—is built on a rock, but what is the rock; remembering its distinctive position, not the foundation, but that on which it rests? Let us see whether there is an answer to our query in the scriptures. What is the declaration of Christ in Matthew?

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—Matt. 16: 18.

What rock, Peter? No; for Peter was one of the foundation stones, for he was an apostle, and could not be the rock on which the foundation is built. Let this distinction not be forgotten. Well then was it upon Christ? No; for he was the corner-stone—or head of the corner. Well then, perhaps on the truth that Peter uttered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?" Hardly; for while this is a cardinal principle in the gospel, yet not the main one—which is evidently the Kingdom of God; for the gospel is glad tidings of the kingdom. (d)

What is the rock? It is important to know this, as we are examining the building, to understand upon what it is built. Let us see. Jesus had asked his disciples what they had understood the people to teach concerning him. "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Their opinions were various. He inquires of them, "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter responds, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The answer to this declaration of the Apostle's knowledge is, "Blessed art thou Simon-Barjona, [or son of Jona], for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven." Now what was he blessed for? Because he had

(d) Matthew 4: 23; 24: 14. Mark 1: 14. Luke 4: 43; 8: 1; 9: 2. Acts 8: 12; 19: 8; 20: 25; 28: 23, 31.

supposed or guessed correctly? Nay, verily. What then? Blessed art thou FOR, or because, it was not REVEALED by flesh and blood, but by the Father. That is to say Peter received this knowledge of the character of Christ by divine revelation. It was something more than mere faith, for that he could have received by hearing the word of God,—that portion then in existence, or the Old Testament.

Says one, in surprise, Does the Old Testament teach a faith in Christ, or could men believe in him through that? Certainly. Jesus said to the Jews, before any of the New Testament was written.

"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me. * * * For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me."—John 5: 39, 46.

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."—Luke 24: 27.

So it was not faith, received by reading,—or believing,—only as they prepare the way or make knowledge possible, for knowledge follows faith, the latter results from testimony, the former from experience. No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." How is the revelation received? Says Paul:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them unto us* BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—1 Cor. 2: 9-11.

So then the Spirit of God is the Spirit of revelation, and this is the rock upon which the foundation, or apostles and prophets rests, for an apostle is "one sent" by the Spirit, whether through Christ when he was on earth as the medium, as Peter, James, John, and the others were; or through prophets, as Paul and Barnabas and Timothy. (e)

What is a prophet? One who reveals the mind and purposes of God by his Spirit:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—" 1 Peter 1: 21.

So there could be no apostles and prophets but for the Spirit of revelation, consequently no foundation for the church.

God first lays the rock of revelation, or his Spirit, then calls apostles and prophets into existence. The former preach the gospel, baptizd for remission of sins those who believe and repent, lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which Spirit they are baptized into the body of Christ, and by which the gifts of faith, wisdom, knowledge, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kind of tongues, and interpretation of tongues proceed.

Prophets reveal the mind of the Spirit, as to who shall be called as elders, or evangelists, pastors and teachers, where labor shall be bestowed, as well as reveal the gifts to be obtained or possessed by those who are worthy; make known the will of God in any matter of church government necessary, as well as any purpose that God has for his servants to accomplish,—for "surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets." (f)

Having found the rock, and the foundation, we are prepared to ascertain the scripture statement of the character of the church and its needs. Paul says:

"God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."—1 Cor. 12: 18.

These members he further names:

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."—vs. 28.

Observe it PLEASSED God to set these members in the body. Could it displease him afterward so that he should remove them, and he be an unchangeable God,

(e) Acts 13: 1-4. 1 Tim. 4: 14.

(f) Amos 3: 7.

and when they were so necessary for the church's progress and existence? as appears from Ephesians, speaking of Christ, Paul says:

"When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. * * * 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."—Eph. 4: 8-12.

Notice these inspired officers were necessary for several important duties. First, "THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS." How can they be perfected without them. If the former apostles, prophets, &c., perfected the saints in their day, how can the saints in these days be perfected? Says one, by their teaching; but their teaching is not understood by all alike, and different meanings are given their word; besides, the saints in that day had the words of prophets and apostles, (for those sent by the Spirit are apostles—no matter in what age they figure), and if such teachings alone were needed to perfect the saints, then these could have been without the aid of living ones as well as we. Paul argues that

"All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Timothy, 3: 16, 17.

The Holy Scriptures which were able to make Timothy wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, he had known from a child, and evidently were the writings of the prophets—termed the Old Testament—and if they could do this work, yet were not apostles and prophets needed also. So we may have *their* writings, yet living ones be needed too.

This will appear more clearly from the second great use that Paul says they are for; namely: "THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY."

The prophets of the Old Testament filled their ministry and passed away, and yet the work of the ministry was still needed, consequently other prophets were raised up to do it; they in turn passed from the stage of action, and the

ministry, or "the work of the ministry," is still needed; if so, who are to do the work? Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, certainly; especially as the "gospel of the kingdom" is again to be preached before the end of the world; (g) and no one can preach except he be sent, (h) and this ministry or priesthood no one should assume without a revelation through a prophet as Aaron received his (i).

Another purpose for which these officers were designed was "THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST." To edify is "to build, to improve, instruct, profit." We might ask not only how could the church be built, improved, instructed, or profited without them; but also raise the important, yea, momentous query, How could the Church exist without them? As they composed in part the members of the body, and as necessary to its very organization and life, as the eyes, ears, hands, feet, and every other member of a human body are essential to the very formation and uses of the body, for the members respectively, in their proper position, constitute the body, so if God once placed these apostles, prophets, &c., as members of the body of Christ, it was for the purpose of forming that body, consequently their abolition, or removal, is equivalent to the destruction of the body itself. So, from whatsoever cause they were removed, (as evidently they have been for about sixteen hundred years, as all sects admit), there could have been no true body, or church, since then. Let this thought be retained in the mind while we examine a so-called proof that they were to be removed, because no longer necessary; but we may with unfeigned surprise ask why was the church no longer needed? "O, the church was needed, but these gifts, these apostles and prophets, are what were to be dispensed with." "But ah, these powers, gifts, officers, and members, are what composed the church, and with out which there would be none.

(g) Matt. 24: 14.

(h) Rom. 10: 14, 15.

(i) Heb. 5: 4.

As well might a person say that the Republic of the United States of America was a grand and necessary institution, but having been fully established by the founders thereof, there is now no need of the President and Cabinet; Supreme Court, Senate, House of Representatives; Army and Navy; State and Territorial Governors and Legislatures. We will do with our Mayors, and Councils, and Police force, and the Constitution which, allowing it, provides for the election of these various officers, and describes their duties and powers, yet we will use it only as an interesting document, full of good instruction, but only in part applicable to us.

A Republic indeed, a foreigner would say, with all the governmental machinery removed, or destroyed, and an imperative Constitution. Why, sir; your Republic is defunct; it is not found; may it rest in peace.

But to the supposed proof that these gifts were to cease in the church, (or we suggest as a better idea, the gifts were to cease with the church). In Corinthians, it reads: "Charity never faileth; but whether there be tongues they shall cease;" and he adds, "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." (f) Now suppose we admit that prophecies or prophets, and gifts of tongues should fail and cease in the establishment of churches in the days of the apostles, then knowledge must vanish too; and if knowledge, then the Spirit of God is withdrawn also; for by that is the only way (as we have shown) that knowledge of God—of Christ—of the things of God is obtained—and "No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and every spirit that does not make that confession is not of God. If the knowledge of God and Christ is lost, then eternal life is forfeited.

"This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."—John 17: 3.

Who is prepared to admit that the

world, the religious world, has been in profound ignorance of God and Christ for the past seventeen or eighteen hundred years?

But the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached again in all the world, before the end thereof. To do this a ministry is needed, and to do the work of that ministry, apostles and prophets are needed. Men must be called into that ministry by revelation, or prophecy, and as the gospel is to be preached in all the world—or among all nations—then the gift of tongues is needed, for the primary use of that gift was for that purpose in the days of Peter and Paul.

But when were tongues to cease, prophecies to fail?

When that which is perfect is come. Paul argues that that time evidently is not before the coming of Christ: "For we know in part, and prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." What shall be done away? That which is only existing in part? No; for it would be a strange way to perfect an imperfect thing by destroying the imperfect or incomplete part. We would hardly perfect a house that was half, or two-thirds built, by destroying that which was built. The fact of partial existence is absorbed in the complete, or perfect existence.

Will we cease to have knowledge when the perfect is come? Certainly not; for Paul, in the same connection, says: "Then I shall know even as I am known." He will not cease to know anything, but will cease to know in *part*, because he will have perfect knowledge. Prophecy does not fail, in the sense of its utter disuse, for the "testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."

But that the gift of prophecy was not to cease after the apostles' time till Christ's second coming, is evident from the following scripture and logical deductions. Peter, quoting from Joel, says:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see vis-

(f) 1 Cor. 13: 8.

ions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy"—Acts 2: 17-19.

But some may say that these last days were those then in existence, and his prophecy was fulfilled then,—and they were the last days of the Jewish dispensation. This we can not admit, for the same objection in defense of other views of theirs will claim that that dispensation ended with John the Baptist's appearance, and quote; "The law and the prophets were until John." Well, if they were until *then*, how could they continue in force till the day of Pentecost, nearly four years after, and after Christ had completed his mission, and work of offering salvation to the Jews exclusively?

Further: Joel adds, that the

"Lord will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come."

And further, he says:

"For in those days, and at that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat."

Now no one can claim that all this took place at Pentecost, nor at any time since. However, as many scriptures point to these times as the last days, we look for the fulfillment of the whole prophecy in these days.

Further: Jesus says the "Spirit of truth will show you things to come." And Paul: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." So if the Spirit of Christ is on the earth today it must fulfill its mission, unless Christ's words are meaningless; and if it will do as Jesus says, it will then follow that the Spirit of prophecy and revelation must exist among his followers today. Again, there are two prophets of great faith and miracle-working power yet to appear in the great city, where our Lord was crucified, who are expected to preach to the Jews after their restoration to their land.

But there was to be a time when

prophecies would fail, tongues would cease, and knowledge would vanish away, but not because they were no longer needed—as John Wesley sensibly argues, "As is vulgarly supposed, but because the church had turned heathen again." The reason why they would be no longer manifested, but cease to exist in that day, was because the Spirit which caused them would be taken away,—and as certainly and upon the same principle as *effect* would cease with the removal of the *cause*, so the gift of the Spirit ceased when the Spirit was withdrawn.

But why should the Spirit be withdrawn from the churches? Because they rendered themselves unworthy of the bestowment of the Spirit—for the Spirit can not dwell in unholy temples; and the temples Paul declares are the saints' bodies (k).

Paul foresaw an apostasy, or falling away, and that the saints would become unfit to be the recipients of the Holy Spirit. John also, by the Spirit, describes this fallen condition of some of the churches. Says Paul:

"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."—Acts 20: 36.

"For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables."—2 Tim. 4: 3, 4.

Peter says:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."—2 Peter 2: 1, 2.

John, through the Spirit, condemns the church at Thyatira for having a false prophetess, who taught and seduced the Lord's servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols. So to the church of Pergamos it is written that there were those who taught the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the child-

(k) 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 15.

ren of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication (2).

As the Spirit of God was to guide into all truth, to prove of sin, and to teach the knowledge of God, and without it no one could be Christ's; and as these evil teachings and practices were the works of the flesh, and were opposed to the fruits and workings of the Spirit, it is evident that those who held them had lost the Spirit; and as James says, "the body without the Spirit, is dead," we reason that the body, or church of Christ, is dead also without the Spirit.

John Wesley, in reasoning from Ecclesiastical History, states that the spiritual gifts were in the church until the middle of the third century. And it is evident that as long as the church remained pure and uncorrupted by false teachings, and unholy practices, she retained the Spirit; but by reason of unbelief, defiling of their temples, and by mixing pagan practices and notions with the doctrine and practices of the gospel, they lost it; and consequently it became dead, as branches of the vine become, when through any cause the supply of sap or life power is cut off.

When the church lost the Spirit of God she began to be led by the spirit of man, and to aspire after worldly honor and power. And in the union of spiritual principles with temporal powers, as was effected through the conversion (so-called) of the Emperor Constantine, the Church became lost to Christ, and the divorce between the bride and the Lamb was consummated in the establishment of the Bishop of Rome as Universal Bishop, or Father of all the bishops, and the church at Rome as the mother of all the churches.

The church still was called the church, but she had by this time lost her distinguishing characteristics as introduced by the Savior, and more fully established by the Apostles whom he appointed.

The wife who proves unfaithful to her marriage vows and seeks the companionship of other men than her husband,

and by him is put away and legally divorced, does not cease to be a woman, although no longer virtuous, yet she does cease to be the man's wife. So the church was still a church, yet no longer the spotless and virgin bride of Christ. She found a lover in the world, or Roman earthly power, and forsook her legal husband, and despised his law, and ignored his claims. So, becoming the paramour of Roman potentates, with whom she has lived the wanton's life, with whom she has committed fornication, she places herself in a position to become not only a harlot, but the mother of harlots, or false and apostate churches.

Council after council was held to establish new and unscriptural dogmas, changing the ordinances, altering the character of the order of church government, introducing new doctrine, and remodeling the whole superstructure, as reared by God himself as it pleased him, and thus became an entirely new and distinct church, devoid of the faith, practice, order, and spirit of the Apostolic Church.

THE CHURCH RESTORED.

But was this sad condition to remain forever? Was God's church to be no longer on the earth? Was the power of darkness to rejoice unceasingly over a fallen church, over a corrupt Christianity, so called? Should Jesus come and have no kingdom from which he would gather that which should offend and do iniquity? Was the gospel no more to be preached in power upon earth? No. For the word had been spoken by the Son of God before the gospel had been proclaimed outside of Judean courts, before Gentile ears had heard its gladsome sound, that "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (m). Or as is otherwise translated, "And again this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached." But how shall it be preached? "For how can they preach except they be sent."

If God rejected the apostate church in

(2) Rev. 2: 14, 18.

(m) Matt. 24: 14.

former days and withdrew his Spirit, how could men preach by its aid,—for the servants of God formerly did not preach by world only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. "Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," says Paul. And which he "Did not receive of man, neither was taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ."

If the gospel ordinances and order, with the power of the Spirit and authority to administer in the things of the kingdom were lost, how could they be restored? Important question truly. Is there an answer? Listen!

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets."—Amos 3: 7.

Well then, here is an important secret necessary to be made known, even how to restore the gospel church with its faith, ordinances, and organization. How shall it be done? Answer.—By revelation to such as God may call to be prophets.

Shall there be prophets in the last days? Yes, answers Joel. But who shall *ordain* men to preach, as this power was conferred by laying on of hands anciently? Was any one on earth empowered to do this? If so, then they held it from God, and either received it by direct ordination from Jesus Christ, or by some messenger delegated from the courts of heaven,—or else received the power and right to preach by ordination of man, who must in his turn either receive it from heaven, or through human instrumentality. If the latter, then the rule must hold true in every case till it is run back to the apostles, thereby establishing a line of apostolic successors, which is equivalent to saying that the church existed in its purity from the apostles till now; but apostles and prophets ceased centuries ago, is the claim to-day.

If none can trace their ordination back to apostolic days, then they are decidedly and solely of human origin, or else were bestowed by special revelation and commission from God through Jesus or an angel. But who claims the latter? The

idea is scouted as being unreasonable, or impossible. Yet what would those who sneer at such an idea say to the claim that authority taken from earth, because of transgression, must be restored by those who once held it, which authority men for centuries have not held. And that idea is not ridiculous, but a reasonable and a scriptural one.

God must reveal "His secret unto his servants the prophets," (or prophet, if he had but one). How did God reveal his secrets in former days? By the Holy Ghost, says one. Truly; but is that the only way? How did he reveal secrets to John on the Isle of Patmos?

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."—Rev 1: 1.

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."—Rev. 22: 16. (Also, to Daniel, 9: 21.)

So it is not unreasonable to suppose that Jesus would adopt a similar way to reveal the great secret that the time had come for the gospel of the kingdom to be again preached, the ordinances restored, the organization revived, and his church once more established upon earth.

The gift of the Holy Spirit was formerly conferred through the laying on of hands, as were also ordinations to offices, and was one of the principles, or ordinances in the churches (*n*). So that while the secret could be revealed by the Spirit, or by the voice of God directly uttered, yet in order that authority to preach should be conferred and the Holy Spirit bestowed, it was needful that some one properly qualified should come and lay on hands.

If this authority has been lost for ages, and therefore not possessed by man since, then either Jesus himself, or an angel sent by him, must come and perform this work.

He could not come personally to re-establish his church, for he will come to judge the quick and the dead when he does come, and to perform other great

(*n*) Acts 8:17; 13:1-4; 19:6. 1 Tim. 4:14. Heb. 6:1.

and momentous works, so he will send his angel, and to this agrees the word of John:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"—Rev. 14:6.

Let it be remembered that John well knew that the gospel had been preached and was being preached on earth at the time he wrote these words, and could not have reference to his time; and further, the angel is quickly followed by another, who proclaims the downfall of Babylon, which had not come into existence in John's day. This gospel then being preached could not of necessity be brought to earth by an angel, as something that had been lost or neglected.

Neither must he bring something new, or another gospel, if so, he comes under the anathema of Paul:

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—Gal. 1:8.

If he could not bring a new gospel, and there being no necessity of bringing that already preached throughout the world (o), then it must be a future day that John saw, previous to which he discerns that the true and only gospel would have ceased to be preached in purity, power, and by divine endorsement.

Has the angel come? If not, will he come? Yes, if the Bible be true. But we claim that he has come,—has ordained men to the Apostolic office, has revealed his secret and empowered men to restore the church to its original purity and order.

Says one, I have no proof. Have you proof that an angel appeared to John, to Peter, to Paul, to Cornelius, to the women at the sepulcher, to Mary, to Elizabeth,

(o) Col. 1:23.

and to numbers of others? Yes, the Bible says so. True, but for all that, it is the testimony of those who were the recipients of the angelic visitations. They said that they saw angels, and we do not doubt it; but is not the word of men today worthy of belief? And would not the fact of angels visiting such as God appointed a work to do, corroborate the testimony of these others, or at least demonstrate the fact that angels did appear to mortals, and strengthen our faith in the claims of the former.

A man might testify upon oath that he saw another shoot a third one, and kill him. The testimony of ten thousand men that he did not see him do it, would not invalidate his testimony, unless they could prove that he was under circumstances that made it impossible for to see it.

But, says one, the fact of the dead man being found, and at the place where the murder was said to have occurred, would be strong evidence of the assertion of the first being correct. Well, the fact that the gospel of the kingdom, with all its attendant privileges, ordinances, and blessings is preached; the fact of the church existing as in the days of Paul, with apostles, prophets, teachers, and the various spiritual gifts, is strong evidence that it is restored, and that by angelic influence, or agency.

Who can prove that the angel has not come?

WHO CAN PROVE THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT EXIST AS IN FORMER DAYS?

When was the church reorganized? is anxiously asked. APRIL 6th, 1830. And now existing under the virtuous ruling of Joseph, the son of Joseph the martyred prophet.

Send for an Epitome of the Faith, and compare with the scriptures.

THE SAINTS' HERALD,

Official Paper of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,