

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

The Gospel's plainness and adaptability.—Difference in testimonies.—The Holy Spirit the source of all revelation.

There is an old saying to the effect that it takes all kinds of people to make a world, and we have been reminded today that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is applicable to the conditions of all people. I hope your souls have been fed by the great variety of instructions to which we have listened. Mine has been; I have extracted from the remarks of each speaker teachings adapted to my condition, and have profited by all that has been spoken.

I appreciate the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel. "My soul delighteth in plainness," said Nephi of old. I heartily echo that sentiment. I like to speak so that people can understand me. I do not care a fig for eloquence if it be obscure. A speaker's first duty is to make himself understood, to speak with plainness, and he must also be in earnest, must mean what he says, and say what he means, or he can never impress the hearts of his hearers. If he be sincere, earnest, and plain in his instructions, eloquence will take care of itself. A man is never eloquent when he tries to be. Eloquence comes from being earnest, from having in our hearts a desire to bless the people and feed them with the bread of life. It is my desire, during the few moments I shall stand before you, to speak plainly, to make myself understood, and reach your hearts by the power of the Spirit of God.

It is one of the signs of the divinity of the Gospel, that it is plain

and adaptable to all conditions. If it could be understood only by a few, if it adapted itself only to the condition of a class, its divinity might well be questioned. That is one of the signs of a false doctrine, of a man-made creed. But the Gospel searches all hearts, and interprets itself to all classes and conditions. Not always in the same way, nor in the same degree, but in one way or another it makes itself understood by all.

The Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation, was intended to save all men. When the Savior commissioned His Apostles to go forth and preach the Gospel, He did not say, Go to this class, or to that nation, or to this man, or that people? He said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." And that Gospel, in like plainness, is now being preached in all the world, with a view to saving every son and daughter of God. He is not trying to damn anybody, but trying to save all, and His word is therefore understandable by all. Not until every man has had a chance to be saved, and every means of salvation has been exhausted, will the Gospel have completed its work, and Mormonism have fulfilled its mission.

I have a testimony that this is God's truth, and I presume I received it in a different way to what many of you received your testimonies. What of it? Does it matter upon what day Christ was born? The main fact connected with Him, is that He was born and that He died that we might live; that through faith in and obedience to Him all men might be saved. That

is the essential part. And the essential part of our testimony is that we received it and still have it. It does not matter particularly how it came. I never saw an angel. No audible voice ever said to me, "Thus saith the Lord." But God gave me a conviction that this is His truth. It came to me in this way: I was in Kirtland, Ohio, laboring as a missionary, and was walking up a hill toward the Temple one evening, when suddenly my mind was illumined and expanded until it seemed as if I could comprehend the whole scope of human history from the beginning, from the days of Adam down to the end of time. I saw why Adam had been, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Christ, and the Apostles, and Joseph Smith, and Brigham Young, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I saw the future also, the events for which this great work is preparing; and the whole plan of redemption opened before the vision of my mind. I saw nothing with my natural eyes, but from that moment I recognized my place in history; I saw what God required of me. I knew where I came from, why I am here, and where I am going. And that conviction has never left me; it is the greatest thing the Lord ever gave to me. I have had dreams. I have healed the sick by the power of God. I have been healed myself, I have been blessed in many ways, have had my prayers answered again and again; but nothing ever came to me so great as that mental or soul illumination that revealed to me my duty, and my place, in God's great scheme. That is what I call my testimony.

It is not given to every man to look upon the face of God as did

Moses, as did Joseph Smith. One must be specially prepared before he can see what Joseph saw. What do we read concerning him in the Book of Mormon? He is there referred to prophetically, not by name, but is designated as "a choice seer." What is a seer? One who can see. Joseph Smith had to be a choice seer, to see the Father and the Son. I used to think that if any good boy went into the woods and prayed the Lord would speak to him and manifest Himself in person, just as He did to Joseph. And there was a time, perhaps, when I would have thought that had He not done it He would have been partial. But I have got over that. It was a childish view. I do not expect the Lord to manifest Himself to me in the same way that He did to Joseph the Prophet. I expect Him to communicate with me through the gifts He has endowed me with, not through those with which He has endowed my brother or sister, unless they have the right to receive for me a message from Him. When the Lord speaks to me or to you, it will be in a method and manner justified by our preparation, our gifts, our powers; for we have all been endowed in some degree. The Prophet Joseph was prepared from the foundation of the world to do the work he accomplished. It was the work of a seer, a prophet, a revelator; and the truth was revealed to him in ways, perhaps, that it could not be revealed to us, because of a difference in gifts.

The Spirit of the Lord is the source of all spiritual gifts, but He "divideth to every man severally as He will." God can reveal the truth in a dream, and has done so on many occasions. When my grandfather, Heber C. Kimball,

with Orson Hyde, Willard Richards and others, went to England in 1837, to introduce the Gospel there, they found many people prepared to receive them. Whole villages were converted. The Lord had prepared the way before them. And how had He done it? He had given to some of the people dreams, in which they had seen these very men landing on the shores of England, and when they came to them with the Gospel message these humble factory or farm hands knew they were servants of God, because they had seen them in dreams. It was their privilege to receive the message that way.

I believe my testimony came by the spirit of revelation, that illumines the mind, and makes manifest the things of God. Another may be converted by seeing the sick healed, or by beholding a vision. It is all right if the Lord chooses to manifest Himself that way. It is all revelation. It all comes down from the Father of light.

It is the mission of the Holy Ghost to make manifest the things of God. "I will not leave you comfortless," said the Savior, "I will send you another comforter, even

the spirit of truth, that proceedeth from the Father, and He shall testify of me." That is the secret of it all. Not one of us could understand or appreciate this work, if the Lord had not first prepared the way by placing within us a portion of the Spirit that comprehends the things of God. "He will bring things past to your remembrance; He will show you things to come; He will take of the things of God and reveal them unto you." There are hundreds here today, thousands, perhaps, who, if called upon, could testify that the Holy Spirit, in some of the many ways in which it operates, has revealed to them the truth of this work. They have had it manifested to them not by man, but by the Holy Ghost. We know this is the work of God. He has given us a testimony to that effect, and this testimony will remain with us, my brethren and sisters, so long as we live for it, and prove ourselves worthy. God grant that we may do so, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang an anthem.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Hyrum Goff.