

God; I know that this is His Church and that it will do all that He intends it to accomplish; and that we may be successful, and be loyal to it as long as we live, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HYRUM M. SMITH.

Prevailing disposition to discredit the Bible.—“Private” interpretation of scripture denounced.—Principles of salvation plainly declared in scriptures.—Gift of the Holy Ghost most desirable.—Saints enjoined to become familiar with ancient and modern scriptures.

There appears at the head of each number of the Millennial Star, which is published weekly in Liverpool, England, a quotation from scripture, or a wise saying of some man. I opened the “Star” of Thursday, September 19, 1912, a day or two ago, and read this particular passage, and the remarks of some of the brethren in this conference have directed my mind again to it. I would like to read it because it is a striking sentiment and it is true. It is as follows:

“We must come to the study of the Bible as pupils, not as judges, to find, not what ought to be said, but what God has said, as enquirers after divine truth, not as advocates seeking arguments. It is the student and not the book that needs to be spiritualized.”

It is accredited to Dr. Liddon. I don't know who this gentleman is, and I don't know whether or not in his article from which this excerpt was taken he attempts to direct people how to become spiritualized. This is not altogether a new idea. The form of words may be new in which the idea is clothed, but the idea itself has been advocated by the elders of the Church for up-

wards of eighty years. Infidels have treated the Bible with the utmost contempt. They have read it only with the idea of condemning it. They have ridiculed it and have held in derision those who have professed to believe in it. Another class of men, calling themselves philosophers, or higher critics, have studied the scriptures very carefully, and have criticised them severely. They have discredited all in them that partakes of the supernatural or miraculous. They have raised grave questions concerning the authorship of the books of the Bible, and they contend among themselves over many of the things which are recorded in the Holy Writ. They argue over the question as to whether there was ever such a man as Job, or whether Mark wrote the gospel that bears his name, or whether Christ performed the miracles which are related of Him. This second class, I might say, have pretty thoroughly torn to fragments the holy scriptures. As a result of their work multitudes of men have come to doubt the divine nature of the Bible. Then there is still another class of men who are known as Christian ministers, who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God entirely. They declare that it is the word of God, the whole word of God; that God had spoken nothing before the beginning; nor since the close of that record and will speak never again. They profess belief in the book, with their lips, and then straightway deny it in their acts and their lives by refusing, or at least failing to follow the teachings of the Bible, notwithstanding the book itself declares, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”

Now, these three classes of peo-

ple have pretty well succeeded, with their sophistries and their criticisms and their ridicule, in thoroughly sterilizing the whole Christian world as to spiritual life. Of course, no man can spiritualize the scriptures. Men subject the scriptures to a form or process which they term spiritualizing, but which is not spiritualizing at all, but is merely placing their own interpretation upon them, in order to make the scriptures conform to their own particular views, and this again, in the very face of the declaration of the book itself, "that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And again, neither can the Bible spiritualize men. That is to say, the Bible has not the power to confer upon men the Holy Ghost, nor to give unto them that Spirit of God, which has been spoken of here in this conference by President Lyman and others. The Bible truly, as has been explained by the Prophet Joseph Smith, is the word of God, so far as it is translated correctly. The Latter-day Saints believe it to be such, and we are endeavoring to put into practice in our every-day lives the principles and precepts that are made plain and clear in the holy scriptures, which things were indited by the Spirit of God, but which things must be understood, and can only be understood by men who enjoy the Holy Spirit. Now, how shall men become spiritualized in very truth? Well, the scriptures are plain on that matter. It is, first, by faith in God. We should believe in Him with all our heart, might, mind and strength, and, second, by repentance of our sins, a

process of turning away from sin or being sorry for the evils we have done, calling upon the Lord to be merciful to us, and to accept us and acknowledge our repentance, and to help us to remain repentant to the extent that we shall no more return again to the works of evil. When we have thus repented and have purified our tabernacles and made them clean, that they may be indeed temples of the Lord our God, wherein may dwell the Holy Ghost, we are prepared for baptism in water by immersion for the remission of our sins, that through that ordinance our sins may be washed away and we be forgiven, being buried with Christ in baptism, in the similitude of His death, and being raised again cleansed and purified, to walk in newness of life, in the likeness of the glorious resurrection of the Son of God, then we are prepared to receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, that takes of the things of God and reveals them unto the children of our Father in heaven. The Holy Ghost is received by the laying on of hands by one having authority, and then, and not until then, can the student of the scripture and the believer in God become truly spiritualized.

When he has so received the gift of the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Ghost as a gift from God, he has received a comforter to his soul, a light to his path, a spirit that giveth understanding and knowledge, that brightens the mind, quickens the intellect and gives a proper comprehension of the things of God that have been revealed through the prophets, and are written in the holy scriptures. A man with this spirit, reading the scriptures will understand them. He will not wrest them to his own condemnation. He will

accept the declaration of the Holy Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman, literally and naturally, like all other men have been born, and will not attempt, as some do, to spiritualize the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will believe in the ministry of the Redeemer of men, will accept the history of His ministry, of His death, of His burial, and will believe and understand, by the power and witness of the Holy Ghost, that Christ rose from the dead, that He again took up that very same body that was crucified and laid in the grave, and further, he will believe that as Christ rose from the dead so shall all men come forth in a resurrection from the dead, taking up the body that died and was buried. And he will not attempt to spiritualize it or to interpret the word of God into meaning something else—that it is a spiritual resurrection and not the resurrection of a mortal body into an immortal body. As he reads the scriptures all things spoken by the prophets of old shall be understood by him, by virtue of his possessing the Spirit of truth, and they will be clear to his understanding; and, as the multitude read who are possessed of this Spirit, having been spiritualized in this manner, they shall see and understand, believe and know alike, and there shall be no difference of opinion nor of understanding upon these great fundamental truths of the gospel of salvation. He, the spirit of truth, shall guide them into all truth, and shall abide with the faithful forever.

My brethren and sisters, perchance there are some among us who have been spiritualized in this way, who have received the Holy Ghost, by which our minds may be enlightened and our knowledge in-

creased, who have wandered away from daily companionship with the things that have been spoken and written by holy men of God, and which are found recorded in the Bible. If there are any who are not in close association and familiar with the word of the Lord as contained in the Bible, then I would invite all such to return again to that book, and to read it frequently, to be encouraged and comforted, enlightened and made wiser, more humble and true by daily converse with the inspired word of the Lord. If there are any among us who rarely, if ever, take up the Book of Mormon, another book containing the words and prophecies of holy men who spoke and wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, which has been revealed to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith in the latter days, and contains the history of the dealings of God with His children who dwelt upon this continent—then I would say, return again to the Book of Mormon and become familiar with it. Read it and be instructed, and allow the Spirit of God, even the Holy Ghost, to open the eyes of your understanding, to make clear unto you the precious words of life which it contains. And as you read the Book of Mormon and come to comprehend its great message, you will come to love it, love it most dearly, as a direct communication of God to man.

If there are any of the Saints who neglect to read the Doctrine and Covenants—which contains the revelations of our Lord to His children in the dispensation of the fulness of times—I would advise them to take it up oftener and read it carefully and prayerfully, because it contains indeed the words of eternal life.

I might say the same of the Pearl of Great Price, which we might all read with great profit to ourselves. Now, I would advise you, my brethren, if in your communities there are members of the Church who have long since ceased to be daily searchers of the scriptures, that you invite them to renew their acquaintance with the word of the Lord. If there are any among us who are not as faithful as they should be in attending to their meetings, where they may hear the word of God spoken, spoken too, by the promptings and inspiration of the Holy Ghost; things which come fresh and new from the fountain of all truth, then I would say, labor among them and with them and invite them to come into the house of the Lord, where they may be comforted and instructed. Encourage them to repent and to commune with the Lord through the gift of the Spirit, and to associate more with the Saints who enjoy and possess that glorious Spirit.

There is a cry that has gone forth from some of the leading statesmen of our land recently to those who crowd and congest the great cities of our country, it is "back to the farm," back to the soil, back to nature. It is good advice. It is wise counsel. And I would say, too, that if there are any of us who have wandered away from reading the scriptures and from acquaintance with the word of God, that we come back to the Bible, back to the Book of Mormon, back to the Doctrine and Covenants, and back to prayer; back to our knees, if not to our mother's knee, at least to our own knees before the Lord, in the spirit of prayer and repentance, that we might possess and en-

joy the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

My brethren and sisters, I would say just this word farther, that the process of becoming despiritualized is just the reverse to that of becoming spiritualized, or of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost as we receive it through faith and repentance and baptism by immersion in water, and by the laying on of hands by one holding authority. Let us see to it that we do not lose the Spirit of God by lapsing into indifference, into neglect of duty, into failure to pray, into disobedience, and the breaking of the commandments; into the spirit of fault-finding and committing of sin. One step leads to another, until by and by the Spirit is grieved and will no longer strive with us. We can go to the extent, in our sinning and neglect, that the Spirit of God will altogether withdraw from us, and then when the light that is within us has become darkness, oh, how intense, indeed, is that darkness. Then we are left to the buffetings of Satan, to become like the waves of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed, to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, to be persuaded by all manner of men, never secure, never established in the truth, always full of anxiety and doubt, not knowing whither we are being enticed. That is a terrible condition. It has been said that it had been better never to have been born, than to have received the Holy Ghost, and then deny Him. "For if after we have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ we are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it had been better for us

not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after we have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us." I would warn all the Latter-day Saints against getting into such a state through neglect of meetings, neglect of prayer, neglect to read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the scriptures of modern times, lest they lose the Spirit of the Lord and are left in a darkened state of mind. If there are any taking such a course let them repent and return ere it is too late, for when once a man has enjoyed this Spirit and the witness thereof—and the chief mission of the Spirit is to bear record and witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and to bring and reveal to man this knowledge, which is eternal life—I say that when a man has once enjoyed that Spirit and had that witness and then through sin and neglect, and wickedness, has that Spirit withdrawn from him, so that he cannot repent, he is in a terrible condition, and it is practically impossible, either in this life or the life to come, for that man ever again to get possession of the Spirit of God and the witness of Jesus Christ. It is impossible, either in this life or the life to come, for a man who commits such a crime, to obtain forgiveness, for there is no forgiveness without true repentance.

I bear testimony to you of the truth of these things. I rejoice in the truth, and I love it, as my brethren have declared they love it, and I trust that I shall have sufficient courage and sufficient of the Spirit of God and the light of truth always to guide me in that path which leadeth again into the presence of God the Eternal Father. May that Spirit be kept alive and free within every one of us. May we keep our tabernacles pure and holy as temples of the Lord our God, that we all may be led back into the presence of the Father to enjoy for eternity the association of loved ones and of the Saints who have confessed, both in their lives and with their tongues, that Jesus is the Christ. And O may God grant that not one of us may be lost, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A letter to President Joseph F. Smith, from the Presidency of Alberta Stake, was read by Elder Heber J. Grant, in which it was stated that the Cardston choir had been honored with an invitation to sing at the Dry Farming Congress meetings in Lethbridge.

Benediction was pronounced by Elder Junius Romney.

Conference adjourned until Sunday, October 6th, at 10 a. m.