

rich and the poor, the wealthy man of business and the common laborer—would contribute equally to this proposed charity. Not that what would be saved from the fast of the common laborer's family for the fast fund would equal in dollars and cents the amount that would be saved from the fast of the rich man's family; but it would cost one as much as the other, *viz.*, the sacrifice in each case of the meals that would otherwise be eaten; and that which costs the same to each, ought to be equal, and in the sight of God would be equal, in contribution to such a cause.

Again, another beauty of this charity proposed for universal Christian acceptance, is the fact that it would place those who live always in the enjoyment of an abundance, in sympathetic relations with those who frequently feel the pangs of hunger, and sense the weakness that comes of insufficient food. When the children of the rich feel the lassitude and perhaps the faintness that arises from their voluntary fasting, they can better understand the meaning of insufficient food, and days of enforced fasting that must be endured by the poor, and make them more ready and willing, not only to deal kindly, but justly, with those who toil for rewards less than sufficient to meet their daily needs. It is for the Latter-day Saints to magnify this regulation of the Church, vindicate its wisdom, and demonstrate for the instruction of the world its wonderful possibilities.]

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

What "Mormonism" Stands For.—Gathering and Unity.—Things of God only to be Comprehended by the Spirit of God.—How to Obtain and Retain that

Spirit.—Obedience the Key to all Blessings.

This great gathering of God's people reminds me of a remark dropped by a reverend gentleman in a conversation between him and myself. It had devolved upon me to correct a public statement made by him, to the effect that the "Mormon" people advocate a social system destructive of the purity of the home. After I had, from this stand, corrected that statement, the gentleman called upon me and explained very courteously that he had not intended to impugn the morality of the "Mormon home." He had meant to say merely that "Mormonism," as he viewed it, destroyed the oneness or integrity of the home. He had used the word purity, he said, in the sense of oneness, and he added: "It seems to me that your system has a tendency to disunite and scatter things."

I did what I could on that occasion, and have subsequently taken pains, to correct this mistaken notion. If "Mormonism" stands for anything, it stands for the gathering, not the scattering, of things, It is for the unification of all that is good and virtuous and pure and praiseworthy. This vast congregation is a testimony to the character and results of our religion. These are the days of the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion. This is the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God has set his hand to gather in one all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. For this purpose the Gospel was instituted, and for this purpose it was restored in these latter days. Gathering is the great distinctive feature of the dispensation of the fullness of times.

"Mormonism" does not scatter, does not disintegrate, does not divide; it gathers, unifies, and proposes to bring together all things in Christ.

But how impossible it is to see the kingdom of God except by the Spirit of God. "Except a man be born again he cannot see" that kingdom. It does not matter how intelligent he may be, how learned, how educated, how well trained; if he have not the gift of the Holy Ghost he cannot comprehend the things of God.

I have often marveled why those great men who came in contact with the Prophet Joseph Smith, men like Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, men of intelligence, men of character, men whose motives were pure and worthy for the most part—why they were not converted to the Gospel—the religion that Joseph Smith preached and represented. I have often wondered why such men as Hoarce Greeley, who came here in early days and had long interviews with President Brigham Young—why he was not converted. Greeley, like Lincoln, was a good man, a great man, whose word at that time was more influential than that of the President of the United States; he was probably the greatest editor that ever lived. He came here, saw President Young, conversed with him, investigated "Mormonism," and went away and wrote a book in which he recorded his impressions of Utah and her people. He wrote in praise of the people, but he was not converted to their religion. He did not see in "Mormonism" what you and I see in it. Why? It was not because he lacked intelligence, or education, or learning, the wisdom of the world. Schuyler Colfax

came some years later; he was then Speaker of the House of Representatives; and he came again when he was Vice-President of the Nation. He also had interviews with President Young; he heard him preach in the "Old Bowery" then on this Block, and spoke there himself on the character and principles of Abraham Lincoln. But Colfax was far from converted to "Mormonism." He wrote against it, used his powerful influence against it; utterly unable to see in it what you and I recognize.

And so with this reverend gentleman to whom I have referred. He is right here among us; has studied our sacred books; has heard our preachers; has made a diligent study of our system and faith; and yet he has formed the misconception that "Mormonism," whose very sign-manual is gathering and unity, stands for and has a tendency toward division and distintegration.

The explanation is simple, after all. Spiritual things are only to be comprehended by the Spirit. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the great things that God has reserved for those who wait for 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 a man save by the spirit of man that is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." And the Spirit has been given to every man, woman, and child who has embraced the Gospel. All who have had faith in God, who have repented of their sins, have had their sins remitted by baptism, and have received the laying on of hands for

the gift of the Holy Ghost, are entitled to the possession of that Spirit, and it enables them to see what is hidden from the wisdom of the world.

What a precious possession! Can we afford to part with it? How and why did we become possessed of it? It was because of our obedience. Every blessing comes from God upon that principle. There is "a law irrevocably decreed in the heavens," governing the distribution of all things, spiritual and temporal; and when we receive anything from Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, it is because of our obedience to the principle or law upon which that blessing was predicated. Men may sit upon thrones, may preside over nations, may issue edicts or enact laws; they may go through college may become eminent; may possess all human wisdom and all worldly wealth, by virtue of their obedience to the laws governing such things; but if they ever receive the kingdom of God and the testimony of the truth, it will be because they obey the laws pertaining to these higher blessings. They can be obtained in no other way—neither obtained nor retained. Obedience is the key to it all. This is why our Savior exhorted the hearers of the word to be doers of it too, thus building upon the rock, and not upon the sand. There is no safety in any other course. We cannot receive a testimony that this is God's work, without obedience to Him, without the Spirit that rewards obedience. Neither can we retain that testimony, only by keeping God's commandments and having the Holy Spirit ever burning brightly upon the altar of our hearts.

May the Lord help us to profit,

through obedience, by all the good things that we have heard during this Conference. May he enable us to maintain ourselves firmly upon the rock where He has planted our feet, I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

AUTHORITIES SUSTAINED.

Elder Heber J. Grant presented the General Authorities of the Church, to be voted upon by the assembly, as follows:

Joseph F. Smith, as Prophet, Seer and Revelator and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Anthon H. Lund, as First Counselor in the First Presidency.

Charles W. Penrose, as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Francis M. Lyman as President of the Twelve Apostles.

As members of the Council of Twelve Apostles: Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, Rudger Clawson, Reed Smoot, Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, George F. Richards, Orson F. Whitney, David O. McKay, Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and James E. Talmage.

Hyrum G. Smith, as Presiding Patriarch of the Church.

The Counselors in the First Presidency, the Twelve Apostles and the Presiding Patriarch, as Prophets, Seers and Revelators.

First Seven Presidents of Seventies: Seymour B. Young, Brigham H. Roberts, Jonathan G. Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin, Charles H. Hart and Levi Edgar Young.

Charles W. Nibley, as Presiding Bishop, with Orrin P. Miller and David A. Smith as his first and second Counselors.