

## SERMON BY ELDER JAMES CAFFALL,

At Lamoni, Iowa, March 25, 1894.

Subject, THE GREATER WITNESS.

THE thirty-sixth verse of the fifth chapter of John reflects the following: "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the work which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."

As a prelude to the discussion of the merits of the foregoing scripture, I wish to say that I shall follow the example set by the speaker of this morning and keep near the shore; for not being an expert swimmer, I have no wish to risk being drowned. Further, I wish to congratulate myself on the fact of preaching the same doctrine out West as taught this morning, and hope we may all continue in well-doing. We have one conspicuous fact in the above scripture; namely, the greater witness which Christ had, was the work the Father had given him to finish; hence these works bore witness that the Father had sent him.

I remember and you remember, for it is written in the same chapter that when Christ made his appearance, at the very inception of his ministerial labor, he imposed an injunction on the people, running thus: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

I understand one of the purposes reflected in Christ's coming in keeping with the behests of his Father, was to demonstrate the practicability of bringing his will in subjection to the will of God. I further learn that his ultimate exaltation depended upon this work. And as he began, and continued in this work, he invited the masses to test the validity of his procedure and the doctrine he taught. I further learn, as recorded

in the nineteenth verse of the seventh chapter of John, that irrespective of riches, poverty, nationality, race, or color, he promised, on condition of obedience to his Father's doctrine, a knowledge as to its validity which would enable the recipients of this knowledge to decide whether it was of God or whether he (Christ) had spoken of himself. And thus the fact of Christ acting authoritatively in what he did is made clear. And in the light of this fact, we have a basis for the belief that all his works were recognized and recorded in heaven. And this leads us to a further conclusion that unauthoritative acts were not recognized therefore not recorded.

In further confirmation of this I notice the fact of Christ saying "that thou art Peter, . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Nor do I understand by the light radiating from the Scriptures, that Christ's apostles could forgive or remit the sins of the people at will. I rather believe that the fact of Christ giving assurance that their acts were to be recognized in heaven, involved an absolute necessity of their being governed by divine laws that God had revealed and might reveal unto them from time to time. Hence their choice consisted in abiding in the doctrine of Christ or turning to that which had originated through human sagacity, for so I believe. I know of no evidence in favor of this belief, more potent than that found in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses of the

tenth chapter of John: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Thus taught the Christ, and he scarcely took a step, taught a doctrine, or performed any work that appertained to his mission, but in its performance he recognized the supremacy of his Father. And if ever we shall be so fortunate as to reach the grand ultimate, and hear the soul-inspiring plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord," I believe it will be because that all along the line of travel in our probationary career, we recognized the supremacy of God in being governed, reproofed, and corrected in the light radiating from God's law.

I do not understand from the Scriptures that Christ was coerced or compelled to accept and abide by the revealed decrees of his Father; rather that by the exercise of his will power, he chose thus to be governed; hence his Father loved him. But the thought may arise in the minds of some, Was it not decreed in the mind of the Infinite One that Christ should come forth, and is he not represented as a lamb slain before the foundation of the world? He verily is. Was he not therefore compelled to come by virtue of that decree? He says not, and he certainly knew something about it; hence the language gives us distinctly to understand that resident in Christ was a will power, recognizing the right of his Father to command, giving him the right to obey and thus securing his Father's love, or reject the same and incur condemnation. It may perhaps be asked, Where is the evidence to be found in favor of this claim? Why, the evidence, as I understand it, is reflected from the verses quoted from the tenth chapter of St. John.

I would not wish to have you infer from anything I have said or may say that I believe that there is an equality between Christ and man, for I don't believe that. I don't believe that ever there was a being on the earth except Christ that was infallible, but I believe, so far as the exercise of the will power is concerned, there is an

equality between Christ and man, and that as Christ exercised his will power and chose to accept the decree of his Father, so he went forth among men inviting them to come to him, and by moral suasion coupled with an example corresponding to the profession he made, he essayed to enlighten them, that thereby they might at once see the necessity of accepting the conditions that he came to prescribe, or teach them, that they might attain to the grand ultimate reflected in his economy. And hence we hear him say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and ye shall find rest to your souls. There was no being who ever trod the earth save Christ that had the right, or the power, and that could fulfill such a promise.

But we find, further, that after Christ had thus taught the people he left them to choose for themselves. He very positively, very plainly, and authoritatively set forth the benefits that were to be derived through obedience to the revealed method of salvation, and was just as explicit in telling them the consequences that would ensue if they failed to comply with the conditions that he revealed unto them. Hence, my friends, another purpose in the divine economy, is the fact of a time of retribution, a time of rewards and of punishments. And in view of that fact it must of necessity follow that a man has within him a will power, or power of choice; for why should God hold man morally responsible for his course of procedure if he was forced to be righteous, or restrained from righteous deeds irrespective of his will power or his desire? It certainly would be an act of injustice to man. Therefore the very fact that there was to be a time of retribution, is in itself proof of the power of man to make a choice. I find a Scripture declaration, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, we find a description of the church, under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun. We also see that while she was yet in her grandeur and power that the moon was under her feet. And thus we learn that the time must come when everything inferior to the

gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, shall be subjugated by it, and God will reign supreme, and all shall recognize the supremacy of the Father, as the word declares that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of the Father. And though man may fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, it were not possible to evade this power. Hence the fact of our individual responsibility becomes a grave matter, for Latter Day Saints especially, to take into consideration. I have no boasts to make of my conception of that responsibility, but I may claim that of this justice reflected in the economy of God, I may acquire some conception at least; and I thank God that the privilege is given to me as well as to you to so live, study, work, and believe that this conception may be broadened, for I believe that we shall share in God's glory, and in his power, and goodness in proportion as we become godlike. I believe there is no other method through which we can become godlike and be permitted to partake of the glory that is to be revealed, than through Christ; hence I believe that however deficient my course of procedure may be, it will be demonstrated by those who may watch the same; yet in my soul I believe that if we reach the perfection contemplated in the economy of God, that it will be by a correction of our errors and faults, and if this is the case, there is an absolute necessity that we shall know our faults and wrongs, as well as we know our rights, and that if we are not ready to confess our wrongs when we know they exist, we thereby miss a gospel equilibrium which Christ preached at every step that he took in consummating the work that the Father gave him to do.

And here I pause to ask a question which I think to be a pertinent one. It is this: When and where did Christ pause in his ministerial labor to ingratiate himself into the confidence of his disciples by boasting of the work he had done, or of the great sacrifice made? If he did it, I don't know where it is; I don't know where to find it; but this I find by searching his word; that the burden of his teaching and preaching was, "I have come to do my Father's will." And he never lost sight of that grand fact, or essential work, irrespective

of the position he occupied from the time he began his ministerial labor until he appeared before his Father in all humility and asked his Father to give him the glory that he had with him before the world was.

I find, further, that he instructed the people not to talk too much about what God had done for them. And when the disciples, John, Peter, and James were with him at the transfiguration on the mount it was a grand affair—it was at that time that they saw the kingdom of God coming in its glory and power, and they were among those that did not die until they saw the kingdom of God come in power. Yes, there was Moses, there was Elias, and it doesn't prove that there was no purpose in their mission because we don't know exactly what they did or what they said, for the very fact of their being there and communing with Christ demonstrates the fact, to my mind, that they had something to do, and that in the wisdom of God it was an absolute necessity to have that something done and it was done. And Jesus charged them, saying, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."

Neither do I find that Christ taught that pure friendship consisted in smothering faults, and hence I find in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke that he came to them on one occasion and said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe what a great person Christ is." Is that it? No. I rather think it ran thusly: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." He saw a lack of the proficiency attainable through a due study of the word, and hence he pronounced them fools, but he didn't leave them to struggle alone. O no. In humility and contrition he began from Moses and all the prophets and expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Here is a lesson that we may take to ourselves and consider with profit and thus essay, in this one particular, to be Christlike. I believe that it's useless for me to profess to be Christlike unless my course of procedure shall demonstrate the fact. And certainly this was the procedure of Christ, and therefore if we would progress as Christ progressed, if we would finish our work that God has given us to

do as Christ finished his work, we must become Christlike, leave self behind, and make Christ prominent. Thus the work and teachings of Christ instruct and admonish. Now it appears to me that the above reproof proved a wonderful benefit to the disciples. Christ taking and beginning from Moses down through the rest of the prophets telling them what they had written concerning him. And it further appears to me that this policy of education was an absolute necessity to fit them for the mission whereunto they were called; and he did not want to ascend to his Father's right hand, though it was very desirable, and there was a very great inducement for him to go there, but he was willing to forego the pleasure for a time and make an effort to more thoroughly educate these poor, illiterate disciples, that by virtue of his instructions they might be better qualified to represent Christ and be prepared to meet the opposition that would face them in their efforts to represent Christ and teach what he sent them to teach. Hence I can but believe that Christ, whether he justified people or reproved them, evinced a gospel, a God-imposed equilibrium, and I am sorry in my heart that I fail to evince such a gospel equilibrium as I believe he manifested from the inception to the termination of his ministerial career.

Another evidence as to the importance of the work. When Christ was praying to the Father and telling him that he had finished the work that he gave him to do, upon this ground he asked the Father for the glory that he had with him before the world was, and his soul was made aglow with the contemplation that he was going to that place after he had been loyal to the behests of his Father, there was something that seemed to increase that joy, if possible, and hence we hear him saying, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; . . . and they have believed that thou didst send me." And hence the reception of the word, the belief that Christ was sent by the Father was absolutely necessary to fit the apostles to go forth and represent Christ. And when Christ saw the evidence of their having received the work, when he saw the evidence that they had believed that the Father had sent him, it seemed to add to his joy;

and these instructions are recorded for your benefit and for mine.

I find in my travels and experience that on account of the apostasy the world is growing more unbelieving in relation to the imperativeness of the word and more ready to dispute its verity.

I met an individual a few weeks ago at North Platte, Nebraska, who said that there was no virtue in baptism. Why, said that gentleman, "Faith and repentance are all that is necessary to obtain a remission of sins." I asked him if he could give me the proof of it; for whether he could or could not, it would not have been becoming to have entered into the sacred precincts of the man's motives. I found it possible to test the validity of what he said without that. I don't think of questioning the validity of anything an opponent or a friend may say, for that matter, as it is an evidence of a desire to judge men or charge them with insincerity. I asked him if he could adduce the proof. I told him that I had searched the Scriptures and, as I understood them, the position assumed was antisciptural; that there was not one guarantee in all the divine economy that men could become converted or receive a remission of their sins through faith and repentance alone. And then he said, "When a man becomes converted to God he can use his discretion about baptism; if he then wants to be baptized, a drop of water is just as good as a river." I wish that brother had been here to hear our speaker this morning on the necessity of baptism. It is a grand thing, and I cannot conceive why a Latter Day Saint should grow tired of hearing this grand ordinance discussed, presented, and preached on; because it's a part and parcel of God's economy, and it is imperfect without it. And so I sought to tell this gentleman in all kindness.

It is perhaps unfortunate for me, that I don't give greater evidence of gospel kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and patience. I am not responsible for my make-up, but I believe myself amenable to God for my moral procedure, and to the church, while I claim to be a representative thereof. And I believe it my privilege to aspire to the gift of eternal life; and while I may fail in this, I trust that every person may receive it, who de-

sires it, and especially every Latter Day Saint. And hence I see the necessity of a proper gospel education, and I have reason to believe that the divine economy does not consist of sensationalism, or undue impulsiveness, or wild excitement; but I believe it is possible for men to be carried away by either of them, and hence the necessity of a thorough understanding as to the gospel of Christ with power to discriminate between undue impulsiveness and impressions by the Holy Spirit. And I trust that we may evince a progress in this gospel education. I know that it is very difficult; I know that this life is a continuous warfare, and so the Apostle Paul seemed to understand, and one of the most essential things with a view to prosecuting this warfare to a grand ultimate is an examination of self. Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." He further says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." I certainly commend him for that; it's a grand and lofty sentiment, and in keeping with the injunction that the Savior imposed upon the people, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," hence Christ gave them the privilege, and not only gave them the privilege, but made it a duty to search the Scriptures, for they testified of him, that they might see whether he preached and taught according to the Scriptures or whether he did not. Was not that the purpose of it? What other purpose could be intended by those words, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"?

Again Paul says: "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." Furthermore he told the saints that he was jealous over them, with a godly jealousy; for he had espoused them to one husband that he might present them a chaste virgin to Christ. Christ's church exists in integral parts; and I believe that every integral part has a grave responsibility; I believe, too, that the gifts of intelligence, and talent, and powers of mind of

these integral parts differ. As I heard the President a few years ago, when alluding very graphically to the works of creation, say that we behold a great variety in the works of the creation of God; but in this variety we discover a grand oneness. Hence I believe while there are integral parts in the mystical body of Christ and a variety of talent and different gifts and callings—for so has God ordained—that notwithstanding these differences and variety of talent and powers of mind, there should be a oneness reflected in all our procedure in order that we may reach the ultimate. And hence I believe that the grandest success of gospel work is brought about through a legitimate activity of the integral parts of the mystical body of Christ. And I never have thought, I never have believed that in this variety of talent there was one member that was in any way superfluous, but that all were indispensable and necessary for the consummation of the purposes of God. And I believe that we give evidence of learning, and that we demonstrate our character. But the main thing is, as we read, to be acquainted with the work and calling of God unto ourselves individually.

I take up the Doctrine and Covenants. I do not read it now, as I see my time is exhausted. I do not wish to distress you by a protracted discourse; but in that book I gather evidence that Joseph Smith spoke more elaborately as to the possibility of the introduction or the existence of false spirits and evil influences, and the manner of their detection, than any of his predecessors. And hence I find in this book that to the Bishop and the elders who are to watch over the flock is promised a proficiency that they may discern all the gifts that God has promised the church, lest there be any professing and yet not be of God, in order that those whose duty it is, may detect and discriminate between truth and error, the true and the false, the good and the evil. Now, brethren and sisters, lest I weary you, I close my remarks thanking you for your patient hearing.

(Reported for the *Herald* with the Edison phonograph by F. E. Cochran.)