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JOSEPH SMITH.

Was He a Prophet of God?

By ELDER R. C. EVANS.

Friends, I am thankful for the opportunity afforded me of standing before you upon this occasion, and will give you a few reasons why I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. As a standpoint upon which I will base the remarks I may have to offer, I draw your attention to the seventh chapter of the gospel as written by Matthew and will read from the fifteenth to the twentieth verses, inclusive:

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing,

but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

The leading thought to which I desire to direct your attention is, that we should beware of false prophets; that they were to be known by their fruits, and that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. I am persuaded that the general testimony of the world today evidences the fact that they disbelieve in the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith, when tried before the tribunal of popular opinion he at once is found guilty. But I ask you this morning to throw aside your preconceived ideas and give

to Joseph Smith just the same kind of a trial that you would be willing to give to any other man claiming to be a servant of God, in this or any other age of the world. I am here to say that I do not believe this is a proper tribunal before which to try Joseph Smith, or any other man. But as the world has tried him before this tribunal and found him guilty, I want to apply the same kind of a trial to others, who lived in the years ago. If it is fair to try Joseph Smith by popular opinion, you will at once concede that it is fair to try any other man by this same criterion.

We introduce to you the prophets of the long ago, but before going into a critical examination of all their trials, difficulties and persecutions, we submit one small piece of evidence in the language of the Savior, wherein he said, reviewing the past and how the servants of God had been treated when tried before the tribunal of public opinion: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And

they have killed those who testified before of the coming of the Just One." Here we discover that when the prophets were tried before the tribunal of public opinion they were found guilty and the penalty was death.

We next introduce to you the Lord Jesus Christ, he whose fair life was not darkened by even a shadow of sin, whose life was a benediction to the race, who lived only to bless and to lift up and to strengthen. He was put upon trial before this same tribunal, popular opinion. What is the result? The chief men of the nation, his own brethren after the flesh, the Jews, were found testifying against him. Their chief effort was to educate the people to believe that he was a bad man. It was a work of years before this was accomplished. At times we find them trying to injure him, but were foiled in their attempt, and the reason given was, "They feared the people." But in process of time the people became educated, under

the vituperation and scandal that was constantly being hurled against him, to cry out to Pilate, "Thou art no friend of Cæsar's if you let this man go," and, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Sworn testimony was given against him, until he who knew no sin was found guilty by the tribunal of public opinion, and the verdict was similar to that given in the case of the prophets—guilty, and the penalty followed—death.

We hurriedly pass on to the apostles of the Lamb, and we find that everywhere the cry was, "Away with them! Away with them!" Until the prophetic declaration was fulfilled—"The time came that they drank the blood of the Saints."

Now we know that Jesus was innocent and pure and true to his charge, but we have histories telling us that the verdict of the age in which he lived was, that he was an illegitimate child; that he was born of fornication; that his mother was a poor woman who earned

her living by the labors of her own hands, as though this was a disgrace. And I call your attention right here to the fact that Beadle, one of the great writers against Mormonism, urges as a claim against Joseph Smith that his mother was a poor woman who had to wash for a living, forgetting that many a good, honest and true heart beats beneath the ragged shawl of a wash woman. History tells us that these stories were circulated against Christ and his disciples, until it was said of him that he, being a bad man, went about the world getting his living in a bad and shameful manner and that he had connected with him ten or eleven vile publicans. This is found in Lardner's history of Christianity.

So go further than the apostles, and we find that the world hated Christianity as long as the Christians remained true. While the servants of God were struggling amid the gloom of earth-life, the purity of their lives was a constant rebuke

to bad men and the result was that bad men hated them, until we find them over there in Rome, where they were persecuted and killed by the thousand. We are informed by Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," that so great was the animosity against the early Christians that Nero, the Roman Emperor, ordered them to be tied to sticks and dipped in inflammable material, which was then ignited, and the darkness of the race course was illumined by the living blood of dying martyrs, true representatives of the stainless Christ.

We go further on with the examination and see what popular opinion has done with other representatives of God among the sons of men. We turn to the reformation. Popular opinion, at the birth of the reformation, was against the light that was bursting out on every hand, and the result was that in five days over thirty thousand were massacred by command of Charles IX, and Pope Gregory XIII issued

medals in commemoration of this holy (?) event.

The time came when, in many parts of Europe, the reformation became popular, and, forgetful of the struggles through which they had passed, they followed in the wake of their mother, Rome, and did the works of darkness like unto those that she performed, and we are informed by the Catholic historian that the followers of Calvin alone burned over twenty thousand Roman churches and killed thousands of priests. We are further informed by the protestant historian, Cobbett, that it was death for a Catholic priest to come into England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Death was written on the lines all along.

Coming over here to America, we find that the fathers came over here that they might worship God after the dictates of their own conscience. They desired to worship as they pleased. The time came when they became popular and strong, and then they tried to force other men

to worship God as they worshipped him, until we find, on the statute books of the eastern states, laws (which perhaps are not repealed to this hour), that the Baptist people were fined because they did not attend the Episcopalian church; and, indeed, that the Baptist mother who had been taught to believe that sprinkling was not the order of things as found in the revelations of God, and that infant baptism was a creature of the Pope, that had no origin in the days of Christ, that the mother that refused to bring her child to the Episcopalian priest for baptism, was fined two thousand pounds of tobacco, half to go to the informant and half to the state.

We come further down, and we find that the great hero of the Baptist church, Roger Williams, was so persecuted that to save his life he had to escape through the rear window of his house, and that he ate berries, nuts and such things to sustain life during winter, until he reached a friendly Indian settle-

ment, which he called Providence, and which place is now known as Providence, Rhode Island. Our friends ought to remember this when they are referring to Joseph Smith under the line of popular opinion.

I draw your attention, now, to Wesley. It is said that John Wesley was charged and twelve indictments were found against him and he had to escape from the country to save his life. (Hailes history of the United States). I have the record as published by the Rev. Mr. Woods, a Methodist preacher, telling us that the popular wave had raged so loud and long against the Wesleys that an indictment was found against Charles Wesley and the rendering was, that he was a vagabond, a disturber of the peace, and a petition was presented to the king asking that he be transported from England. (Perfect Love, p. 249). We might refer also to John Wesley, who was dragged by the hair of his head through the streets of London be-

cause he had been heard to say something that popular opinion did not favor. He must have been talking about that time when the people had rejected the truth and foretelling the fact that it would yet be restored. I have no hesitancy in saying that perhaps Wesley was endowed with the Spirit when he sang:

“Almighty God of love,
Set up the ’tracting sign,
And summons whom thou dost approve
As messengers divine.

From favored Abraham’s seed
The new apostles choose,
In isles, and continents to spread
The dead reviving news.

He knew that the time would come when the law of God would again be obeyed and the Almighty would speak from the eternal heavens and designate his prophet and apostles to disseminate the word of truth and illumine the world by the light of the revelations that God said should shine in these last days.

I might proceed upon this line of argument, but I believe you are ready to admit now that popular

opinion is not the proper tribunal before which to try the prophets, Christ and the apostles, the reformers, or even Joseph Smith. If it is fair to try Joseph Smith by this tribunal, you must try all the rest by the same tribunal. You know the verdict has been with regard to all the rest that they were guilty, and death was the penalty in the majority of cases. Now, as you discover it is unfair and unreasonable to try Joseph Smith, or any other man, by popular opinion, I ask, what is the tribunal before which he should be tried, or before which the others should have been tried. My text says, "Beware of false prophets * * you shall know them by their fruits. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." When we try the reformers by this guide, by this rule, we find that God did bless them. This church has been reproached because of misunderstanding, and some have thought that we taught that there was no good in the reformation. This is not true. We believe that

God blessed Calvin, that he inspired Wycliffe, and that he blessed Charles Wesley, John Wesley, and others who were connected with the reformation. We believe that God's Holy Spirit truly inspired the Wesleys, and, indeed, was in the church over which Knox and Calvin presided; that almost every effort in the line of truth was made to break the dark chain of Romanism and let the light in, preparatory to the effulgence that should come when the God of heaven should again speak and send forth his accredited ministers and reorganize his church and place it upon the platform that Jesus left it upon. We are thankful for all the good the reformers brought about, and when this church sends her missionaries out to preach, we can say to every nation, every clime, every church and every man, Keep all the good you have. We introduce to you something that we claim is good and we ask you to test it, and if it is good accept it.

My heart was made glad when I was called before the tribunals of

our country to defend this cause, and when I heard the brightest minds of the British realms declare, after having read the Book of Mormon, the revelations of Joseph Smith, and the theory of this church, that it is not only Christian, but eminently Christian, and that the great cause of the world's opposition to this work was because the Latter Day Saints clung with tenacity to the truths as taught in the Bible. And when the cause was brought in, Chief Justice Armour declared that the action was not prosecution but persecution; and do you know that when the Judge gave that verdict, I was so rejoiced in my soul that I forgot that I had not had any dinner. I went out upon the streets and talked, and did not have any dinner that day. I felt to thank God that the chief minds of the British nation should declare, with words of soberness, that there was nothing contrary to Christianity in the whole doctrine of this church. They will all find that out in time if they will only be honest enough to investigate.

Chief Justice Armour's decision is as follows: "We think it quite clear that this conviction cannot be maintained. The defendant was clearly a duly ordained minister of this religious body, and there is no doubt that it is a religious denomination within the words of the statute. Assuming that Christianity is the law of the land in a sense, there is nothing contrary to Christianity in the tenets of this body."

* * *

It has been said that not only the popular opinion of the world, but that the friends of Joseph Smith have denounced him as being a false prophet, and the work he introduced as being of the devil. Do you know, my friends, that I am here this morning with the intention of hurling this falsehood back into the face of those who make it? I am going to show you that the strongest evidence that can be given came from those who became entangled in the affairs of this world until they lost the Spirit of God, and because of their sins, were ex-

communicated from the church. I will introduce a few of them this morning as witnesses in the defense of the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith and the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon and the work he so nobly established. It has been said that the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon denied their testimony, but the evidence says that the last words of Martin Harris were in defense of the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith, and it is said by those who claim to know, that he died with the Bible in one hand and the Book of Mormon in the other. And notwithstanding Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer had their trouble with Joseph and the church, when the world would have lauded them to the skies had they denounced him as a false prophet and denied the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon and the work he established, in the midst of all their difficulties, they ever stood firm to the testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and the Book

of Mormon was of divine authenticity. It is also said that Oliver Cowdery's last words to David Whitmer were, "David, be true to your testimony." And the grand old man, David Whitmer, when the very ice of death was freezing the marrow of his bones, took a pen and, for the last time, signed his name to the statement that an angel appeared to Joseph Smith and that the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity; that he knew it because an angel of God had revealed it to him, that he had heard the voice of God declaring to him that that work was divine, and the last words that he uttered were in defense of the testimony that he had borne from a young man up to the lilies of eighty years.

But I am told that some of the leading lights of the church denied the faith, and we have heard a good deal about what the "Expositor" was and how the Latter Day Saints destroyed that publication, and all that sort of thing. Why, do you know in the testimony we offered

up in Canada a little while ago with reference to the Laws and Higbees, and Fosters and so on, at considerable expense I went and purchased a paper that was published in 1844 called the "The Expositor." There was only one issue of that printed, and let me read to you from that this morning the testimony of the Laws with reference to this question. Now I want you to understand that the Laws and Fosters and others were excommunicated from the church because of their wrong doing. After they had printed this scurrilous sheet against the church, after they had done their level best against the church, I ask, What did they say with reference to the prophetic mission of Josep Smith? What did they say with reference to the Book of Mormon? What did they have to say with reference to the organization of the church as organized by Joseph Smith? I now read you an extract from that very "Expositor" that was published in 1844. After they were cut off from the church. This

was written on the 7th of June, 1844, and reads as follows:

“As far as our acquaintance with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, we know no men or set of men can be more thoroughly acquainted with its rise, its organization and its history than we have reason to believe we are. We all verily believe and many of us know of a surety that the religion of the Latter Day Saints as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon and Book of Covenants, is verily true, and that the pure principles set forth therein are the immutable and eternal principles of heaven.”

I do not believe that President Joseph Smith or W. W. Blair could stand to-day and bear stronger testimony to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and to the divinity of the mission of Joseph Smith than Law and Foster and others did on this occasion, and which they put right in their own paper. And this paper has been hurled against us as

evidence that Joseph Smith was false and all that sort of thing. While these men believed that Smith and others prominent in the church had erred in judgment, when the time came for them to bear testimony to the divine authenticity of the work, they declared that they believed they knew as much as any other men on earth about its rise, progress and history, and that they knew its doctrine was the immutable and eternal principles of heaven.

The Doctrine and Covenants referred to by them is a book of revelation given by God for the government of the church, through Joseph Smith, and they say these are true.

I call your attention to just one other testimony with regard to this matter. I find it in Smucker's history written against the Latter Day Saints, pages 171-174. Now, remember that this man comes to us with his record as a book written against the church. He believes that Joseph Smith was deceived, that he was not a true prophet, but

see what he says with reference to the man, as to his character, and as to his sincerity, and as to his purity of life:

“They (the Mormons) allege, what appears from his (Joseph Smith’s) whole career to be the most probable, that he was at all times most anxious to preserve the church free from taint and to exclude adulterers, seducers and persons of immoral lives. * * It is utterly incredible that Joseph Smith who—great imposter as he was—never missed an opportunity to denounce seducers and adulterers as unfit to enter his church, should have been concerned, directly or indirectly, in proceedings like these, though it is scarcely surprising that when such stories had been circulated by men whom the prophet had thwarted or reprimanded, there should have been found some persons willing to believe them.”

The reader of the pages referred to, will, when reading the full accounts, discover that the men referred to as being thwarted, reprimanded,

manded or cut off the church, and who afterwards slandered Joseph, were the Laws and Fosters of the "Expositor."

Governor Thomas L. Ford is on record in this very work as having stated that the charges preferred against Joseph Smith at the time of or prior to his death, were unfounded in fact, and there was no evidence by which they could be proven; that the Smiths were innocent of the charges preferred against them. And it is said that when the rumor went out that the Smiths were to be liberated, the mob came together, and do you remember what the verdict was? Smucker tells us. Oh, how in keeping with the verdict of those bloody scenes of long ago! Here it is: "If the laws of our country cannot kill them, powder and shot can." (See Smucker, pp. 176, 206.)

Father James Whitehead, in the congregation, here said, "Yes, that is true. I know that is true, I was there." Here is the private secret of the martyred prophet declaring

this to be true, and more than that, he was there.

You discover that, in looking over his personal enemies, in looking over the testimony of the chief magistrate of the State in which he then lived, and in looking over the testimony of men who had been in the church and were excommunicated from it, they speak with reference to his character as being a grand, good man. While they thought he had made mistakes, yet when brought face to face with the idea as to whether God had called him, and whether the Book of Mormon was of divine authenticity they declared that they were in a position to know as much about the rise, progress and history of this work as any other men on earth, and they declared that God was in it; that the doctrine as taught by Smith, and the revelations contained in the Book of Covenants and the Book of Mormon, were the divine principles of heaven.

Now then, as we have found (1) that popular opinion is not the

proper criterion by which to try Joseph Smith or any other man, (2) as we have discovered that the testimony of those who were his personal enemies speak in his favor, now, (3) I wish to introduce to you the proper way by which to try Joseph Smith, as found in my text: "Beware of false prophets. * * By their fruits ye shall know them. * * A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Now I want you to notice very carefully. I am going to try to shew you some of the fruit that was produced in the doctrine, teaching and faith, and organization of a church under Joseph Smith. I am going to ask you to pass judgment upon it this morning and see whether it is corrupt fruit or good fruit. If it is good fruit, remember you must not condemn it. If Joseph Smith was a corrupt, bad man, remember Jesus has here laid down the line by which we are to measure him, in the declaration, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." What were the teachings of Joseph Smith? In the first

place, he taught the world that the church as established by Christ eighteen hundred years ago had gone into apostacy, that the priesthood (that is, authority to act in the ordinance of the church of Christ) was taken to heaven. Was there any proof for that? I must be brief upon this thought, but I just subpoena the evidence of the entire Protestant world. They ought to be good witnesses on that point, for if the Roman Catholic church is the true church of Jesus Christ, if they are legitimate successors of the apostles as ordained by Jesus Christ, according to their claim, what right had Wycliffe, Latimer, Ridley, Wesley, Knox, Calvin, Campbell, or any others, to reform and organize another church? If the church of Rome is the true church, these reformers did wrong in leaving her, they were leaving the true church. But they all come to us saying that the church of Rome was in apostacy, that she is the mother of harlots, the abomination of the earth, etc. Well, if

she is, then Joseph Smith told the truth when he said that the Church of Christ had gone into apostacy.

Next, when Joseph Smith organized the church he declared that an angel from God had restored the priesthood to him and to other men. Now the world says, "But wait here. We have no need of such a restoration." I ask the whole reformation, By what authority do you act? Has an angel appeared to you? Did you ever read in the writings of Luther, Wycliffe, Calvin, Knox, Latimer or Wesley that an angel appeared to them and that they were ordained under divine hands? You never did. Now if the church of Rome was corrupt, and they all claim she was, I ask you, where did these men get their authority to preach and minister in the ordinances of the church? The answer comes back, It is an apple that grew on the corrupt tree, Mother Rome. Our text says a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Did you ever realize this truth, that Luther,

Wycliff, Ridley, Latimer, Calvin and Knox all acted under the ordination of the ministers of the Pope? And let me tell you further, that they never suffered a second ordination. Now if that church was wrong, if that tree was corrupt, then it was not the authority of Christ, therefore, while we are willing to accord to them their just dues, that they accomplished a great deal of good in the world, that they were blessed of God in bringing about a great deal of good, yet when the question of priesthood authority and church organization comes, they are weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Further, Joseph Smith comes to us and declares that an angel appeared to him. "Now," says one, "that is the very fact that stamps him an imposter." Is that so?

"O yes, there are no angels now."

What has become of all the angels?

"O well, they do not come to earth now."

Well, why? The book tells us, as a part of the business of angels, that they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Have we any heirs of salvation in this country now? Angels used to appear to the people of God, and just look up the record and see if God ever had a people, acknowledged of himself, to whom angels did not appear and bless. You cannot find any.

Joseph declared that an angel appeared unto him. Now we go to the Bible and we find that in the last days, in the hour of God's judgment, just before the harvest time, near the end of the world, at eventide, there should be light and knowledge; that the light of God should rest upon the world and that knowledge would increase. In the day of his preparation these things were to be brought about, and the gospel was to be restored, that "this gospel" should be preached in all the world for a witness and then the end should come, and we are

told that in this epoch of the world's history an angel was seen flying through the midst of heaven bringing the everlasting gospel to the earth.

"But," says one, "that means to some foreign nation."

Oh no; the record says that the gospel is to be preached to every nation, and kindred, tongue and people; and that this is to come in the hour of God's judgment, by the hand of an angel (14 Rev. 6-7) at the harvest time. Then, before the end of the world, an ensign spoken of by the prophet Isaiah shall be lifted up.

Says one, "If the angels were to come, I do not think they would appear to a young fellow like Joseph Smith. They would come to a Cardinal Newman, or a Talmage, or a Beecher."

Jesus did not think so. He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for

so it seemed good in thy sight." And it did not take Paul long to remind us that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," but that God had "chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and * * the weak things of the world to confound those which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are."

It is recorded that an angel appeared unto Zechariah, and Zechariah says that when the angel appeared he said to another angel: "Run and speak to the young man, and tell him that Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." Do you remember, right here, that Joseph Smith was an early advocate of the fact that the Jews would be restored to Palestine, that Jerusalem would be built up again, that the land of Palestine would be blessed under

the smile of God and the former and latter—that is the spring and fall—rains would we restored? And when he urged that then, it was declared that no one but a fanatic would believe that this scripture was to be taken literally, “for,” they said, “this prophecy with reference to the land of Palestine being blessed is spiritual, and the building up of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ will be in a land you cannot geographically locate”—up here somewhere (looking upward). But Joseph believed in the divinity of his own mission and that Jehovah had spoken to him, and he could sing:

“Go on in faith, ye Saints, go on,
 Fear not, the cause is good,
 The Jews rebuild Jerusalem,
 As prophets said they would.
 The prophets said in latter days,
 The Jews would once again
 Return and build their city up,
 Their loved Jerusalem.”

Joseph was the author of that hymn I am told. When the world was heaping all manner of vituperation upon him his faith was in-

spired by the light that was shining in his great heart and he was enabled to rejoice in tribulation. I think the testimony that he gave with reference to the angel is pretty good.

Now, this angel told him something else that was quite shocking, that none of the churches, none of the creeds, were entirely right. He declared that they were an abomination in many respects. And do you know who seconded that motion? Do you know who has supported that statement? Do you know who has been crying "Amen!" to the statement made by the angel to Joseph Smith? I will tell you, The entire Christain world has been shouting "Amen!" to that statement. What do I mean? I mean that Joseph declared that a message from heaven was communicated to him, and they said amen in this sense, they have been tinkering with their creeds and changing and mending them. That shows that there was something wrong about them at that

time and is evidence that Joseph Smith was right.

Further, he organized the church upon its original platform, with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., and when he did this the whole world raised up and declared, "That is a fraud, any way; that is not right! Why, the idea of this young man organizing the church according to the original pattern. Such an impossibility! Wesley, or Calvin or Knox, never dreamed of such an absurdity."

Yes; but Joseph Smith says that is the way God had instructed him to act.

Says one, "It is not right."

How do you know? Try him by the fruits, this is the test. Let us go to the record. In the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians we have language something like this: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," and so on.

"But," says one, "they were set in the church until it became per-

fect, and then they were no longer needed.”

Yes. That is, it takes twelve apples to make a perfect dozen, and as soon as you have the perfect dozen you can take six away and you have a perfect dozen yet. If the church was perfect with those officers in it, just as soon as they were taken out, I ask you, would it not become imperfect? Let us see. Paul tells us why these were to remain in the church. He says: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

How long, Paul?

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

He gives one other reason, a grand one, that I thank God for, that every Latter Day Saint ought to

thank God for. It is this: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

Why, do you know, friends that that is grand?

But somebody says: "Look at this individual. You cannot put any dependence in him. At one time he was a Catholic, and after a while he came down to the Baptists, afterwards he landed in among the Methodists, and has been running every way. There is no stability in the man."

Why, the poor fellow evidences the fact that he is honestly seeking for the kingdom. He recognizes that God has given a description of the kingdom, and in this description of the organization of the church he declares that these apostles and prophets, etc., were to be placed in it, and the man has been searching around to find that church. And just as soon as he

comes to the church organized by Joseph Smith he finds apostles and prophets there, and therefore he says, "I have sought the church according to the description and here I have found it. Now, I will be no more a child, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." And the result is that, though you may find men going into darkness in this church and being excommunicated because of their sins, you have them saying in public places and writing in the public press, "I deplore my weakness, but if I fall and go to perdition, I want this people to understand that the church of Christ has been organized. Joseph Smith is a prophet, the Book of Mormon is true; this church and its organization is of God and will stand though I fall." There is something grand about this, that though a man goes into darkness and is cut off, when he is brought face to face with the question of the divinity of the church he stands firm and declares that the work is true.

As to the doctrine of Joseph Smith, I just hastily glance over it. Joseph taught the doctrine of faith. Is that good fruit? You shall know him by his fruit, and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Joseph Smith taught that we should believe in God and in Jesus Christ, and that we should believe in the Holy Ghost. Is that good fruit? Is that similar to the fruit that grew upon the Christian tree eighteen hundred years ago? And remember, he never requested you to believe in a dead God, but a living God, and alive to the interests and welfare of his people at all times. He taught us to believe in the God of heaven, the omnipotent God, and that he would save to the uttermost. And I draw your attention to the thought that when he taught us to believe in the Holy Spirit it was not a dead Spirit, but that that Spirit would be in you, springing up as a river unto everlasting life. He taught you to believe that the Spirit was unchangeable and that you had a right to

believe in the Spirit in which they believed eighteen centuries ago and expect the ministrations of it as they received it then, and that it was a live organization into which he asked you to enter. Is that true? Is that right? Is that good fruit? I must hastily pass by.

After teaching faith and confidence in the Father, Son and Spirit, he taught you to believe that you should repent of your sins, because God would not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. Is that good fruit? I think it is good. After repentance, he taught that you should be baptized by immersion, for the remission of sins. Is that according to the fruit that grew upon the Christian tree eighteen centuries ago? We are told by the God of heaven, who sent forth his Spirit according to the prayer of Jesus Christ, to his apostles—he informs us—now, notice, it is not Peter, but God; he sent the Spirit and inspired the twelve apostles to answer the momentous question, as “What shall I

do to be saved?" or "Men and brethren what shall we do?" found in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and it is, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Joseph Smith told us this was our duty in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

Some one says, "Oh no, Joseph, you are wrong. Baptism is well enough if you feel like it."

But when Jesus Christ appeared to Paul he did not tell him what he should do if he felt like it, but said, "Go to Damascus, and it shall be told you what you must do," and he was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins. We find that this is in keeping with the rule of eighteen hundred years ago, the same kind of fruit that the Christian tree brought forth then. But we must pass hastily on.

He told us that we should have our children blessed by the laying on of hands. Is that true fruit? Jesus did this, declaring that, "The

works that I do shall you do;" "As my Father sent me so send I you."

We find that Joseph taught that we should have hands laid upon us in confirmation, that we might receive the Holy Ghost, and I hastily call your attention to the eighth chapter of Acts, where it is recorded that Phillip went up to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel unto them and they were baptized, and then Peter and John came down and "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hand on them and they received the Holy Ghost."

Again, I call your attention to the nineteenth chapter of Acts, where it is related that "Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus" and found people there who were not properly in the way of the gospel, and he explained the way unto them. They were baptized, and after he laid his hands upon them they received the Holy Ghost.

Joseph taught also the doctrine of the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick. Jesus practiced that doctrine, and in James, fifth chapter, we read: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." In Mark, tenth chapter, Christ said: "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." He taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Is that true?

Now, friends, I want to call your attention finally to one thought. In Canada, a number of years ago, a learned professor came to me and said, "Mr. Evans, I like to hear you talk, but I have no faith in your Bible."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because there is a lie on the face of it. God said to Abraham that he would give him the land of Palestine for an everlasting inheritance and Abraham died and never

owned a foot of it. He then confirmed his promise in Isaac, saying, "To thee and thy seed, will I give this land for an everlasting inheritance," and Isaac died and never owned a foot of it. It is afterwards declared that he confirmed his oath in Jacob, and promised him for an everlasting inheritance the land that had been promised his fathers, but he died without owning a foot of it."

"And," he said, "for fear you might not believe my statement I call attention to the dying testimony of Stephen. He declared that they all died not having so much as a place to put their feet, (Acts 7), and, indeed, it is said in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews that they all died in hope; that they did not stay long enough in one place to build a house, but wandered about in tents, for they looked for the city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

"Now," he says, "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all died, and you say they went to heaven and will

stay there forever. Where and when will they inherit the promised land?"

I just referred him to our opinion. I showed him that we did not teach the doctrine of men going to heaven to stay forever. I said, "That kind of doctrine is precluded by the resurrection of the dead." And I drew his attention to the fact that Joseph Smith taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; that the spirit would return and the spirit and the body should be united again. In this connection I hastily draw your attention to a statement made in the Bible, in the language of Job:

"Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were printed in a book!
they were graven with an iron pen
and lead in the rock forever. For
I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the latter
days upon the earth: and though
after my skin worms destroy this
body, yet in my flesh shall I see
God."—Job 19.

Further on he declares, "Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of his hands."—Job 14.

Again, we read:

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. Come, my people, and enter into thy chambers [the grave] and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be ever past."—Isa. 26: 19, 20.

And Ezekiel gives us this cheering promise:

"Thus saith the Lord, * * I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel; * * and shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. * * And they shall dwell in the land that I gave unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt, * *

even they and their children for ever.”—Ezekiel 37.

The answer silenced the infidel and afterwards he obeyed the gospel.

Why, I might proceed, friends, but I think I will have to close. When we review the fact of Joseph Smith's life; when we see the stupendous work that he performed in bringing forth the Book of Mormon that gives the great and wonderful account of this American continent, without which the world would be in darkness so far as the early inhabitants of this continent are concerned; when I think of the stupendous work of the Inspired Translation of the Bible that he gave to the world, a work that is every day coming more and more into prominence, a work that has been recognized by the leading translators in these latter times, a work that they in some instances followed when they revised the New Testament in 1881; when I think of that inspired translation; when I think of this, with the revelations of

Joseph Smith, that revelation on the war of the rebellion and all the revelations that the Book of Doctrine and Covenants abound with, my heart is filled with gratitude to God. And while the world may throw all manner of vituperation and scandal upon the prophet Joseph Smith, I tell you today, friends, his real character is beginning to be understood, and the great work he performed is now being appreciated. The Encyclopedia Britannica, has recorded the fact that Brigham Young and others have largely departed from the pure faith as taught by Joseph, and have introduced polygamy and other evils into their faction of the church, which was never taught by Joseph. Chambers' Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, latest edition, called "Students' Edition," says: "It cannot be shown that Smith was a polygamist." Speaking of the practice of polygamy it says: "Young, Pratt and Hyde are its true originators. Emma, wife and widow of the prophet, stoutly denied that her

husband had any wife but herself. Young's revelation she declared to be a fraud." "Joseph's sons have now formed a monogamic Mormon community, called the 'Josephites.'" The courts of Canada, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio have spoken highly of Smith and his work. The gifted historian Bancroft and such world renowned men as Hon. Elisha R. Potter, and Hon. Josiah Quincy, by their gifted pens have told the world that Joseph Smith was a man among men. He was great, true and noble. Those who knew him best loved him most. His life was a crowning benediction to the pure and the good, a withering rebuke to the wicked, untrue and vain.

As the crowning testimony to all that I may have said this morning, let me say this: This church, organized by this man with six members, has grown and increased until today hundreds and thousands of people come to us in "sickness and health, in poverty's vale and abounding in wealth," and their

testimony has been that God, through Jesus Christ and the office work of the Holy Spirit, has testified to them that he raised up Joseph Smith to be his representative among men in these last days. And furthermore, friends, not only have they testified in word to this effect, but their lives have testified that there has been a power in this work found in none other, that ameliorates their condition, that elevates them to the pinnacle of purity and power, and enables them to live in such a way that they may enjoy the Spirit of God, whose work is to lead, prepare and educate them in such a way that they will be worthy to inherit with the true and pure who have suffered with them, in the land beyond the gloom.

May the God of heaven help us to throw aside all prejudice and tradition and receive with meekness the ingrafted word of the gospel of heaven, that is able to make us wise unto salvation, is my prayer.