

SERMON BY ELDER JAMES WHITEHEAD.

LAMONI, IOWA, 22^d MAY, 1887.

THE most of you are strangers to me in the flesh, but not in the spirit; God's children are one. It is not my intention to preach to you this afternoon. I have more important work for the present. I have earnestly desired from my Father in Heaven, the privilege of bearing testimony to the truth of the work in which I am engaged in connection with my brethren, that it is the work of God. Jesus has manifested himself for the salvation of all mankind, and the gospel has been restored in its beauty and excellence, in order that we might have an inheritance in the due time of the Lord.

I joined the church in England, my native land, on the 18th day of October, 1837, and was baptized in the river that runs by Preston, by Heber C. Kimball. I never repented it, and I am exceedingly thankful to my Heavenly Father that I ever embraced the gospel and took a humble part in proclaiming the truth for the salvation of the human family. They were good men at that time. Heber Kimball was a choice man, and he enjoyed much of the Spirit of God. I can tell you many incidents that took place in the church in those early days in England, that were thrilling in the extreme. They were faithful and indefatigable in the work of God. Orson Hyde and Heber Kimball two of the twelve, came with five others. Two returned to America in a very little while, and the rest remained. They came to Preston where I lived. Orson Hyde was a wonderful speaker, and Heber Kimball was the waterer. They preached in the demonstration and power of the spirit of God. I then went in prayer to God and asked him to make known to me if it was his will that I should join and become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, proclaimed by these brethren from America. And as I said before, I was baptized October 18th. I had been superintendent of a Sunday School in which there were nearly seven hundred pupils. I have always worked, whether I was right or wrong, and my intentions were good, and God blessed me, according to

the light that I had; but when I joined the Latter Day Saints I soon experienced the difference. I was confirmed the Sunday after I was baptized; and when that brother, Heber Kimball, laid his hands upon me, I felt such a power running through me as I had never experienced before. He pronounced upon my head blessings that amazed me. I did not comprehend them at the time. In two weeks he called me up and ordained me a Teacher in the Church, and in four weeks I was ordained a Priest, so that I could preach the gospel, so that I could warn men to flee from the wrath to come, so that I could be instrumental in the hands of God to persuade men to embrace the truths of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. I labored with the best ability I had in that vicinity many months, and preached from three to four times on Sunday in the open air. Things moved on in power and the brethren went forth, Orson Hyde proclaiming the truth, and Heber C. Kimball baptizing the people by scores. They were only about eight months that time in England, and how many do you suppose were brought into the church during that time? There was a conference held at Preston before they left for their native land, and it appeared that between seventeen and eighteen hundred had embraced the gospel in that short space of time; for the power of God was made manifest upon every hand, and there was a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God. The saints pressed forward and were true to the work they had embraced, and worked together as one man. But I tell you, brethren and sisters, never since the day that Joseph departed; never since the day that the church became corrupt, have I felt such a power of the Spirit of God as I feel this afternoon. He will bless you and he will work his work; for truth must be established, and a people prepared for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will tell you a little circumstance that took place with me a little while after I came into the church. I became torment-

ed with the fear that I should sin against the Holy Ghost. I prayed to my Heavenly Father, but when I arose from prayer the temptation would come again from time to time, and I never mentioned it to mortal being. One afternoon, after I had closed my school—I was teaching school then—I went to the brethren for comfort. I was in terrible agony lest I should commit that terrible crime. I went there, and I found Bro. H. C. Kimball and Bro. Hyde. They were in their room and I went in there. They received me with kindness as they always did, and I sat down with a heavy heart. Bro. Hyde got up and walked to and fro some three or four times, and then he came to me with his fist in this way (speaker illustrating), and said, “You never will sin against the Holy Ghost, for God will never suffer it.” That load left me, and I never have been thus tempted since. My brethren, can I mistrust that the Spirit of God moved upon that man to speak words of salvation and peace to His mourning child? I was made free, and shortly they ordained me to be an elder, and I labored in that capacity until they returned a second time, and then seven of the twelve came to England. As soon as they came, H. C. Kimball told me that they were going to ordain a patriarch; for they had instructions from Joseph the Seer to do so. They chose one Peter Mellen, a good man, and they chose me to be his scribe, and I went with him from branch to branch where he blessed the children of God—the fatherless who had no one to bless them. I will tell you one circumstance that took place, which I can never forget as long as eternity rolls. He called a meeting at a brother’s house—it was a very large room, and the doors were opened so that two rooms were used and they were filled with the children of God. Bro. Kimball was there and John Taylor and Brigham Young. Father Mellen called the meeting to order and asked Bro. Kimball to pray. Then he gave out another hymn, which was sung. He then commenced to bless, and continued until he had blessed six, which I had written down as the blessings came from his mouth. A brother then came to me and said, “Bro Whitehead, it is too bad for you to work so hard; will you allow me to write two or three for you?” Yes, I said, I am perfectly willing. I gave him

the pen and he wrote down four, which made ten, and Father Mellen still called them. I took the pen and wrote again, the eleventh and twelfth, and he called the thirteenth. Brigham Young got up, and he says, Father Mellen, will you allow me to say a word to Bro. Whitehead? Take the man’s name and age, then lay down your pen and hear the blessing, and I tell you in the name of Israel’s God, tomorrow morning you will copy every word that has been spoken by the Patriarch. I took him at his word. Father Mellen blessed him, and after he had blessed that one, he was done for that time, and I took the papers up and went home to where we lodged. One of the twelve said to the congregation, “Now we want you to come here to-morrow night, and that blessing will be read, and if any of you can detect a word wrong, we want you to speak.” The next morning I arose, went into the room, took the papers up, and the first was the blank, all excepting the man’s name and age. I took up the pen and commenced to write, and wrote till I had filled three sides of foolscap paper, and then amen came and I wrote it. Father Mellen did not get up very early that morning, but after he was up and had eaten his breakfast, he says, “Have you written that blessing?” I says yes. “Will you let me see it?” I handed it to him, and he read it and cried like a child, and said, “I thank my God for I believe this is a verbatim copy of the blessing which I gave; I can not detect a single word wrong. We will take it and let the brethren and sisters see if they can detect any errors in it.” It proved true; for no one upon hearing it read was able to detect a single error in it. In that meeting they began to prophesy and speak in tongues. One sister spoke in tongues and I could have interpreted, but Bro. Taylor got up and says, “I will interpret.” And he interpreted, and I will give you one clause of it; for I want you to see that God was with his people—and He is with the Reorganized Church too. That one clause is “That this brother shall live until his hair is as white as wool,” and that was forty-five years ago. It has been fulfilled, and no one need to tell me this is not the Church of God; but sorry I am that they ran into transgression. But God is raising up another people, which Joseph the martyr declared he would.

We went on from one thing to another. The next Sunday it was announced that John Taylor would preach at Carpenter's Hall, on the Book of Mormon. I went in with Bro. Mellen and sat down, and I saw Bro. Pratt coming up the aisle, and he clapped his hand on my shoulder and he says you have got to go into the stand; for Brigham says he wants you there. I had gotten a back seat and did not wish to come in front. I did not know what he wanted, but I went and sat down with Heber Kimball on one side of me. Brigham gave out the hymn and Heber prayed. Brigham gave out another hymn and still another, but Bro. Taylor did not come. I thought one of the rest of them would take the subject up. Brigham got up and said, "Bro. Taylor is sick but I will appoint some one to take his place," and spoke it may be a dozen words, and then said, "Bro. Whitehead I will appoint you to preach upon that subject." I said Bro. Brigham I can't preach upon that subject. But he says, "You must preach and God will be with you." I got up and read the chapter that speaks about the sticks of Ephraim and Judah, shut the book and laid it down. I felt something like the darkness of midnight come over me for a moment, and then I felt something rushing through my being, and I felt as I never felt before. I got up, began to speak, and spoke for one hour and a half; and I will tell you this day, I did not know anything that I said. It was not I that spoke, but it was the Spirit of God within me. After I had done, Bro. Brigham got up and said, "Bro. Whitehead said he could not preach upon that subject, but I told him he could, and God would help him. I must say before this vast congregation, of 1,500 people, that I never heard it handled in that way before, and although I have heard it preached upon many times by the power of the Spirit, never did I hear it so demonstrated beyond the power of contradiction." I whispered, Brother Brigham, it was not I. "No," he says, "it was the Spirit of God within you, and to God be all the glory." After meeting Brigham put his arm around me and said, "You are one of those men who will never deny the faith; God will bless you because of the integrity of your heart." Now I am weak and feeble; but my Father in Heaven sustains me, and I only want

to do my duty, and when I am done, then I want to go home; and in all probability it will not be long. When I leave here, there is one thing comforting, I have many friends there; and I have one great attraction there—I have a noble companion there, and the only one I have ever had or ever expect to have either in this world or any other.

The Spirit of God continued to be poured out in great measure. At a meeting three miles from Preston, they began to speak in tongues, but nobody seemed to have the gift of interpreting. Of course they prophesied and gave glorious testimonies of the truth of the work in which they were engaged. I went home to my private chamber, fastened the door, and knelt down before God, and said, "Father, I want that gift, I pray for it, and I can not rise from my knees until God has heard my prayer." In less than two minutes after that the Spirit of God rested upon me, and I began to pray in tongues. I felt the power of God, but I did not know a word I said. I got up with a thankful heart. And I was not the only one. It was poured out upon the brethren and sisters, and there was a glorious work done. The power of God was with the elders, and they baptized by the scores, and God manifested himself in majesty and glory to the salvation of human beings. In Preston and vicinity there was a very large branch. Father Mellen would have me sit by him—he was like a father to me, and I a son to him—and the power of the Spirit of God rested upon the people. There was a sister spoke in tongues, and the Spirit of God rested upon the entire congregation. Father Mellen asked if any could interpret, and, brethren and sisters, the Spirit of God was so powerful upon me that I arose and gave the interpretation, and it contained things which I never understood until I saw Joseph the Seer, and he made it plain as the noon-day sun.

The work prospered; but after Joseph and Hyrum were martyred for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, what a wonderful change took place! They began to disorganize the church which Joseph had been called to organize and set in perfect order, wherein every man should stand in his own place. They soon changed it, and why? Because it did not suit their purpose. They had a desire to be

more than they really were. They rose up and claimed to be presidents. Father Cutler claimed to be the president of the church, but he never was ordained to the office of president. I know what he was. He was a member of the [a] High Council, one of the quorums that God gave through Joseph for the protection of the church from false spirits and false revelations; and if that quorum had not been destroyed, they never could have introduced the things they did introduce. But it was broken up, and then what did the Twelve do? They went around and declared that it was the law of the Lord that all the families of the Saints should be sealed to them and become members of their families. One of them came to me and said, "Bro. Whitehead, I want you to come into my family, you and your wife and your children." I says, I can't do that. "It is all right." I says, Where do you get your doctrines? Did Joseph teach you that? He says, "No matter, it is all right." I says, I can not do it, it is not right. I can not do it, and I won't do it for any man in the world. I believe in the work, but Joseph never taught that doctrine, and I can prove it beyond the power of contradiction. "Well now," he says, "it is all right, and it must be done." I says it can not be done by me. He came the next day, H. C. Kimball, and it was pretty hard for me to refuse him. I loved that man, but I could not sell my birthright. Says I to Bro. Heber, No, I can not do it. I do not believe in the doctrine, and I can not do it, so do not press me any farther. Then Brigham wanted me, and I told him no, and I refused them all steadfastly, and I thank God that I did. It was because of the goodness and mercy of God. What was it for? It was as Joseph Young termed it, they had an iron band around them, and they were so scared by what they told them that they could not turn or do anything; but, he says, that ring will snap. They were vexed at him, and were going to put him out of the church, but did not do it. I could tell you many more things about the work, similar to those I have narrated, but I forbear for the present.

Brothers and sisters, the main part of my testimony that I have to bear, and the part that is most deeply interesting is yet to come. I will tell you things I know to be true, and I know they were true. Some

would gladly persuade you that our present Joseph was not appointed, was not a prophet of God; but brethren and sisters, I know better than that. Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph the Martyr, our present Joseph, was anointed, ordained and set apart, to be a prophet, seer and revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by his father and his uncle Hyrum. Hyrum was a prophet but not to the church. The prophet to the church is the one through whom the law comes to prepare them for the great and glorious events that have to come. Joseph the son of Joseph the Martyr, he was called, he was appointed by direct revelation from heaven, for his father told us so. Joseph told us that God had commanded him to do it; and N. K. Whitney, bishop of the church, held the vessel that contained the sacred oil that was poured upon his head. This was done in Nauvoo, in the upper room of what was known as Joseph's store. I lift my hands to heaven before God, and declare unto you that this is the truth of heaven unto you, for it is a positive fact. When was he to come out? Was he to take his place right then? No, that was not the ordination. Right after that Joseph the Martyr brought his son Joseph on the stand with him in Nauvoo at the east end of the temple, and after preaching one of the grandest discourses I ever heard him preach, he called Joseph to his right hand—I was as close to him as I am to that brother—he called him to his right hand, and put one of his hands upon his head and said, "Brothers and sisters, I am no longer your prophet; this is your prophet. I am going to rest." But we did not think he was going to be killed. But he knew. When was Joseph to come out? He was anointed and set apart to be prophet, seer and revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and to be his father's successor in office; but he was to remain after that ordination until God should call him from the heavens to take his place. I tell you if the Almighty had not called Joseph to take his place, he would not have taken it to this day. But he did call him while he was in his field, and he was lost to the sight of his brethren and the glory of God shrouded him, and a cloud prevented him from seeing them. It seems enough. He is the true prophet; he is the leader, the

anointed of God, and he is filling his mission. Look at the beautiful revelation given at Kirtland. God is with this church, and it is the very power of God unto salvation, and let us treasure up the words of eternal truth; let us love God from the heart, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then we shall be prepared for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Now a word about returning to Jackson County. Father Cutler, Father Calhoun and Bro. Joseph and myself were together once, and Bro. Calhoun said, "Bro. Joseph, how long do you think it will be before we shall have the privilege of returning to Jackson County and building that temple, and how long do you think it will be before Jesus comes?" The first question, he answered in this way: "Brethren, I firmly believe, that in about sixty years from the time of the organization of the church in Kirtland, in about sixty years from that time the Saints will be permitted to go back to Jackson County, and be fully prepared to build it up. In regard to the second question, the coming of Jesus Christ, I do not know. But I will tell you one thing; he never will come until there is a people ready to receive him, if it takes a thousand years to prepare them." These were his words, I believe; so if we want the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we must all prepare for it. Let us walk in the ordinances and precepts of the house of God blameless. Let us be honorable in all our dealings, faithful and honest towards God and man. As soon as we do all these things he will come. Remember the declaration, "He will suddenly come to his temple; as a refiner of fire, and a purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an acceptable offering." Remember the promises of Jesus Christ. Mothers attend to your little ones. The responsibility is upon you, and you must render an account to God. See that they do not use tobacco. See that they do not indulge in strong drink. Let them be honest men; let them be pure men and women. I charge you before my God that you attend to these things, and try to protect and teach, instruct and culture your own loved children. You want them with you in heaven. "They without us," says the apostle, "can not be perfect." Neither can we without them.

How would a mother feel if her children were dragged down to a lesser kingdom while she was in the Celestial Kingdom of God? My sisters, you would weep if it should be so.

There are other things which it is not my business to tell you at the present time. Fathers, love your children. Husbands, love your wives and treat them well. Stand by them in the glorious truths of the gospel. Teach them the principles of life and salvation. Be obedient to the law of God, and he will bless you. Children, obey your parents.

Brothers and sisters, let brotherly love continue.

Did Joseph say anything about the church being led away into this terrible condition? He did, and I heard him. One Sunday afternoon after partaking of the sacrament, Joseph got up and spoke and said, "Brothers and sisters, I am going to warn you to day of things to come. Do not let these things overthrow you, but be faithful and cleanse yourselves from filthiness and everything corrupt. Beware of all kinds of iniquity, for it is in high places." He then turned round to Parley Pratt, and pointing to him said, Brothers and sisters, if that brother knew what I know, he would turn around and want my life." The Twelve did not stand by Joseph. Heber Kimball was the best of the whole. They did not do as they were instructed by that choice seer. He was the man to whom they should have hearkened. He did instruct them, and sent them on their mission; and when they returned he did not let them rest until they took their report to him. He also told them, that if they did not cease from their sins God would reject that people; "but," said he, "God will raise up another people that will keep his commands, and either I or one of my posterity shall be the president and prophet of that people, and he shall be their teacher." He knew Brigham Young or John Taylor did not have this authority. They were not called to this work, and Joseph was not afraid to lift up his voice and tell them so. I loved that man; he was a kind benefactor, he was a father to me. I never shall forget the kindness of that man, and I never shall be satisfied until I go to where he is again. I have seen him and have conversed with him, and with Hyrum and father Joseph and N. K. Whitney. After Joseph

had blessed his son Joseph he said to me, "I have one request to make of you." I said, Brother Joseph, what is it? "My request of you is, to stand faithfully by my son Joseph." I said, "God being my helper, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, I will stand by your son Joseph as long as he stands faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ; and as long as he stands

faithful to the Kingdom of God, I mean to be faithful to him.

I have been nearly fifty years in the church, and have had to contend with powers you know nothing of; but hitherto God has preserved me, and if I am faithful he will continue to preserve me. Be faithful to God, and his peace be with you. Amen.

From "Lamoni Gazette."

Autumn Leaves from the Tree of Poetry.

THE UNFRUITFUL TREE.

There stood in a beautiful garden
A tall and stately tree;
Crowned with its shining leafage,
It was wondrous fair to see.
But the tree was always fruitless;
Never a blossom grew
On its long and beautiful branches
The whole bright season through.

The lord of the garden saw it,
And he said, when the leaves were sere:

"Cut down this tree so worthless,
And plant another here.
My garden is not for beauty
Alone, but for fruit as well,
And no barren tree must cumber
The place in which I dwell."

The gardener heard in sorrow,
For he loved the barren tree
As we love some things about us,
That are only fair to see.

"Leave it one season longer,—
Only one more, I pray."
He pleaded; but the master
Was firm and answered, "Nay."

Then the gardener dug about it,
And cut the roots apart,
And the fear of the fate before it,
Struck home to the poor tree's heart.
Faithful and true to his master,
Yet loving the tree so well,
The gardener toiled in sorrow
Till the stormy evening fell.

"To-morrow," he said, "I will finish
The task that I have begun."
But the morrow was wild with tempest,
And the work remained undone.

And through the long, bleak winter
There stood the desolate tree,
With the cold white snow about it,
A sorrowful thing to see.

At last the sweet spring weather
Made glad the hearts of men,
And the trees in the Lord's fair garden
Put forth their leaves again.

"I will finish my task to-morrow,"
The busy gardener said,
And thought, with a thrill of sorrow,
That the beautiful tree was dead.

The lord came into his garden
At an early hour next day,
And then to the task unfinished
The gardener led the way.
And, lo! all white with blossoms,
Fairer than ever to see,
In its promise of coming fruitage,
There stood the beautiful tree?

"It is well," said the lord of the garden,
And he and the gardener knew
That out of its loss and trial
Its promise of fruitfulness grew.
It is so with some lives that cumber
For a time the Lord's domain;
Out of trial and mighty sorrow
There cometh a countless gain,
And fruit for the Master's pleasure
Is born of loss and pain.

Selected.

THE GIRLS THAT ARE WANTED.

The girls that are wanted are good girls—
Good girls from the heart to the lips;
Pure as the lily is white and pure,
From its heart to its sweet leaf tips.