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GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE.

BY ELDER JOSEPH LUFF.

The first part of the text may be found by turning to the 3d chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, the 14th and 15th verses: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

The second part you will find in the 1st chapter of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans, and the 20th

verse: "For the invisible things of him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

And that I may be sure of having at least sufficient text, I ask your attention to what is stated in the 28th verse of the 12th chapter of the same apostle's first letter to the Corinthians: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

When we read with faith a statement such as is made in the first two verses I have read, one thing appears certain and that is, the Almighty differs from the children of men in one respect, at least, and in that one respect our safety in depending upon him is insured. Nearly every success in life that is achieved by man has been preceded by a number of failures; one man

learns by the mistakes another man has made; each seeks to improve upon that which has been set before him, and in which some defect has been shown. God starts right; never makes any mistakes, never has had occasion to apologize for anything he ever did, and has never found it necessary to send a man forth to tell us that he has since failed to appreciate the importance of the work he undertook to perform, or the necessities that would be revealed in connection with it at a period later than when he began his work. There is something peculiar in the statement made in the 2d verse read, and I should not wonder if some who are present tonight, have, like myself, read it over time and again without ever discerning anything intelligent or divine in it, and possibly without ever stopping to analyze it or ask the question as to what was intended by it: "That which hath been is now, that which is to be hath already been, and God requireth that which is past."

I will venture a statement in regard to it, and those who may have a better interpretation to give can enjoy what comfort comes from their superior knowledge or wisdom after they have determined thereon. To me, it seems that human necessity, in the spiritual sense, never changes. That which was the necessity of man six thousand years ago is the necessity of man today; that which will be man's spiritual necessity a thousand years from now (if this world should continue that long), will be the same as what has been the necessity of man in the past. "That which has been is now, that which is to be hath already been."

When the Almighty devised a saving plan, or a redemptive scheme, he did not enquire as to what would be necessary to meet Adam's case, Abraham's case, the case of Moses, or the case of Paul or Peter, but he stood as a great Father, and he beheld from the beginning all that would transpire to the end, in connection with the development of

his creative work, and he had the last man as closely in mind, when he introduced the gospel scheme, as the first man that had been created; what he did, in his providence, had as much reference to the last man, and to the men in the intermediate periods of human history, as it had to the requirements of those figuring in the early morning of the world's history. Having all these before him, he considered the common family necessity, and like a father, wisely ordained for the good of the family—not any few favorites in the family. He provided something in which he might be as clearly revealed and understood ten thousand years afterwards, as in the time when it was said or declared.

One of the differences manifest or existing between the people of the church I am here representing tonight, and the people of other churches, is found in this fact, that while all of those without are willing to admit that God was, and that God will be again, they are not so

willing to admit that God is.

In Hebrews 11:5, Paul says it is impossible to please God without faith, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is. It is not sufficient to believe that God used to be a long way back in past ages, and that some time again, in the fulfillment of Scripture, he will be manifested in the future; but man must approach him as his Father now, and the benefit to be derived by a man from the knowledge of what God was, is to be obtained by approaching him with faith in his unchangeability.

Some of you may be inclined to call this in question, and say, "Elder, we believe that God is, just as much as you do." "Well, now, let us see: How do you believe that God was?" "Why" you say, "just as the Bible represents him as having been." "Well, how does it represent Him as having been? What was his character, his disposition? How did he manifest himself to the children of men? What did he furnish as ex-

pressive of his will regarding them and their government? Was there anything of what is termed miraculous about Christ? And in what sense do you believe that God will be in the time to come, when he is to introduce that marvelous power by which the bodies of those who have slept shall be enthused with life, with divine power communicated from the heavens, under the influence of which they shall arise and again become the tabernacles of the spirit from which they have been separated?" "There," you say, "will be a manifestation of God, in a sense that is to be esteemed, and is now esteemed as miraculous,"

Now, if such is the revelation of God and his character and his purposes, as he once was, and is again to be, the same authority that justifies you in believing what is stated in the book with reference to him in the past, is our justification for believing the same thing of him now.

All we ask of the children of men

in the world today, in order to represent God as we believe in him, is, that we may hold up a mirror and let them put up the picture of God as he was, before it. Let them hold up the representation they find in the Book; we will hold up a mirror, and that mirror is our faith, and therefore the instant it is held up in the face of that which represented God in the past, there must be reflected an identical representation of the God and religion of the past. That is all that is claimed. But there is a difficulty arising here, because of the influences that have been at work in the world to educate man away from this thought, and to impress him with the idea that his liberty, under what is called the gospel, is not as broad, his privileges are not as numerous, and the character of his enjoyments are not to be nearly so exquisite as those characteristic of the people who lived in the earlier dispensations of God's grace, and of whose experiences we find testimony in this Book.

In this connection we introduce the statement made in the text I have read in your hearing: "That which hath been is now; that which is to be hath already been, and God requireth that which is past." If I am right in declaring that this has reference to human necessity, I am warranted in believing in the important thought that was comprehended in the prayer of Jesus Christ, as he introduced it with the words, "Our Father who art in heaven;" that God appointed Jesus Christ to appear among men in the meridian of time, intending that, in stretching forth his arms in offering that rich prayer, one hand should point as far back as the necessities and rights of man, since God's work in creating him; and the other hand point as far forward as human necessity would continue, until the dawn of the Millennial period. Representing man as man, He said, "Our Father who art in heaven." Not my father, nor Abraham's father, nor the father of Adam, nor the father of one who may be privi-

leged to live a century or more from now; but representing the common race or the human race—the brotherhood of man, he looked up into the face of his Father and said to the people: “After this manner shall ye pray: **OUR Father.**”

Now, the verse prior to this, the 14th verse, says: “I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever.” Accepting this as true, we find it peculiarly pertinent and significant when we use it or consider it in connection with the interpretation placed upon the 15th verse. Looking down, as he did, the stream of time, or through the vista of unborn years, and understanding the character of the necessities that would be revealed, the Almighty made provision at the start, so that no effort of his at any later period would ever cast a reflection upon the claim that he first made to having started right.

But if I look around me today and make a comparison of the forms of religion that I find in the world

with that form which is prescribed in the New Testament record, I am compelled to believe that someone other than God has been at work; unless God has changed his mind and come to the conclusion that he can better that which he once said he did forever; that human necessity has changed in its character and in connection with it there has been revealed a something that God had not calculated upon in the start. That there are vicissitudes and there are revealments in connection therewith, of necessity, for which he did not make provision at the beginning, and hence it is necessary that something shall now be done to rectify the wrong, to reform the ancient order or method that was once introduced in order to accomplish the same result, for no man pretends to believe today that God has any other thought in religious methods and work than he always had, i. e., the redemption of man, the salvation of man, the ennobling and celestializing, if you please, of man. No one pre-

tends to believe anything else than this. Hence, if the object of his work among men has not changed, unless he has learned something since he began his work, and has, by learning, shown that he is no wiser than his creatures; unless he learned by the changes that occur in life, and the experiences in consequence, his old or first plan reflects his will yet. "But, Elder," you say, "that won't do; that is next to blasphemy to talk that way about God." But you make me talk that way, I can't help it. I see religions all around me that are no more like the one presented in this book than the gas jet we have here before us is a resemblance of the sun in its splendor, or no more a likeness of the formulated system talked of in this Bible than any of the diverse theories entertained by man in politics or anything else. They are in many respects absolutely unlike those of former ages. Do you say God did it? If you do, why has he done so? He did not find any occasion for doing it at the start; but

if he did not, then you must, or you do, at least, by this statement made, force me to the conclusion that he has changed his mind. But immediately when I make that statement, or reach that conclusion, you throw the Bible back in my face—"I am God, I change not."—You won't allow me to come to that conclusion. Well, there is only one other, and that is, man has done it. I cannot escape it—or the devil, if you prefer that—I have no objection, but I do not think it.

Now, it is better that we understand each other in this gospel work. We can afford to be tampered with by pleasing words, and have men come and hand philosophy to us with gloved hands and ringed fingers, when dealing with principles that are merely to engage our attention for a moment, but we can not afford to have any man tamper with our spiritual interests by trying to make us believe that we can get as much nourishment out of a stone as we can out of a slice of bread. The man who stands as a

minister of the gospel, professedly in the name of Christ, and undertakes to say something other than God has ordained for the salvation of man will answer the purpose, sets himself up (though he may not intend to do it) as possessing wisdom superior to that possessed by the Eternal himself. Now, I can't afford to do that; I am not willing to try it.

I want to be understood in what I have to say, and let me say it to you kindly; it makes but very little difference, so far as my hereafter is concerned, whether anyone believes as I do when I am through, or not, although it makes a good deal of difference to me whether I make these men and women understand me or not. My responsibility continues until I have made them understand, from my plainness of speech, just what I mean; and there my responsibility ends and theirs begins. And, as stated once before in your midst, no man ought to charge me, or those whom I represent—my associate ministers and

others of this work—with having manufactured Scripture in order to bolster up a formula that is at variance with what is commonly accepted in the religious world, if I shall confine myself to the testimony of this word. I am not responsible for the manner in which this book represents God, or for any other thought it teaches—it was here long years before I, or any other member of the Latter Day Saint Church, came. And, if in confining ourselves to preaching what is found in this book, we establish a system of religion, theoretically, that is at variance with what is commonly accepted in the world, we ought to, by so doing, fix in your mind the conclusion that the great God has more interest in that which we are establishing than that which is opposed to it, from the very fact that He furnished more in the Bible to support it than he did to oppose it. If there is truth in the statement that God started right, and what he did, upholds our belief and opposes something else,

then it is right that our philosophy be fixed and established. Can you run away from that idea? Is it illogical?

Now, it says, "Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it that men should fear before him." I want to bring in, in connection, right here, a statement found in the second part of the text I have read in your hearing, the 20th verse of the 1st chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans: "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they were without excuse." What does it mean? God has provided a means, under this gospel to which we have been referring, by which every man can understand what he desires, what the purpose of God is, by a direct communication with his Spirit to himself, by which he may be brought into relationship with God and enjoy the fellowship and the rights of a son—a Son of

God. But if he has failed to take advantage of that which God has done, through which it was possible to place the power in his own hand to become a son of God, there is, nevertheless, outside of that sacred precinct known as the church of God, or kingdom of God and his Christ, sufficient to condemn every man, or take excuse from every man's lips, who would seek to say that the method of God was not made sufficiently plain to satisfy him in regard to what his purpose was.

Now, if you will consider for a moment some of the works of God, of which testimony is borne in this Book—some of the works of God that do not require a man to be a member of the Church of Christ to understand, i. e., it does not require a special spirit endowment to comprehend them—they are patent to all men. There is not a corporeal eye that can look upon them without understanding the truth and the force that is revealed in them, and I use this testimony in connection

with the statement made, that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.

In the first place, I ask you to consider the statement made in the book of Genesis, regarding the creation. It is said that in connection with that work "God set the sun in the firmament." He set the moon and he set the stars there, and it is also declared that there was a specific purpose in them, a certain object was to be reached by placing them there. I turn to an astronomer today and ask him the question: "Friend, (if he is a religious man or not, it makes no difference to me) why do you suppose the sun was ever set, as it has been, in the firmament?" "Why, my dear sir," he says, "are you so ignorant as to be under the necessity of asking a question of this kind? Why, you cannot conceive of the condition of affairs that would exist should that sun cease for a moment to perform the function of its office—human life would be an impossibility; veg-

etation, everything upon which man or beast or nature depends, hinges upon the performance of the functional work that is assigned the sun and the moon and stars." I say to him, "Sir, I suppose there is some truth in that, or there was truth in it, if we apply it to the conditions that existed, or that God saw would exist immediately after he created the earth and placed man upon it, but why is the old sun still shining; what is the use of the moon continuing?" "Why, my dear sir," he says, "I pity your ignorance or stupidity. Don't you understand that precisely the same necessity exists now that existed then, and that it is still essential that these necessities be met?" "But," I reply, "can't you improve upon the sun?" And he looks at me and suggests to a neighbor that I be taken to an asylum. "Well," I ask, "can't you fix something that will do the work of the moon better than it is doing it? Or the stars, is there not some means, after all these years of study, that you can employ, by which you

can avoid the necessity for them, so that we can dispense with them?" "Why," he says, "my dear sir, if you are sane enough to comprehend an answer, I will tell you that all the developments resulting from human learning are but tending, year after year, and generation after generation, to confirm the astonishing fact that infinite wisdom was manifested in placing the sun, moon and stars there, and every day and night confirms the wondrous thought that there is a far-reaching influence, as the result of the faithful work of these orbs of day and night, that is as far beyond the comprehension of the human mind as the human intellect is beyond the ordinary intelligence of the oyster." He tells me that he has been confirmed more and more every year in the fact, or the knowledge of the fact, that these orbs can never be improved upon, and that man might think of inventing what he pleases, but after all, if he undertook to introduce anything that he had invented with that object in view, he

would but establish his folly the instant he made the announcement of it.

Now, did you ever hear tell of a man introducing anything that (even allowing for the disparity existing between God and humanity) would begin to compare with such a creation as that on the part of God? Did you ever know of a man starting so absolutely right at the commencement? If there is no occasion, after thousands of years, for changing the workings of the sun, or touching upon capabilities of the moon, because of their power to meet the necessities today, you, as well as your speaker tonight, are forced, in consequence, to the conclusion that what God did he did forever; nothing can be put to it to improve it, nor anything be taken from it and leave it capable of performing that wondrous work.

Now, that part of that which I read in your hearing, says that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

I can look upon the sun, the moon and the stars (the things that are made) and I ask the question, as I look upon them and through them at the spiritual, What do they teach? I want to comprehend the invisible things of God from the creation of the world; but the sun, the moon and the stars relate to man's physical necessities. What can I discover by looking through them at the provision that God has made for man's spiritual and possibly, invisible necessities? What do I learn? Just precisely the same thing that I learned with reference to these, that if the great God has any respect for my spiritual, as well as my physical existence, he will make no greater mistake in making provisions from the start for the one than the other. What he provided at the start will reach down and meet the necessities of the last man that shall ever live, as well as they met the needs of former day children. Whatever spiritual provisions he made with reference to the invisible things at the

commencement, are calculated to meet all the necessities of the man in the spiritual sense as long as a single one of these necessities will be found.

Again, I learn, from the Book, of the creation of Adam. All his parts, and members, etc. are not described in detail in this book, but from some statements that are found recorded there, I learn that Adam had hands, and that Adam had eyes and ears, and I presume he had a nose, and I suppose he had feet. And if I were to ask some reasoner why it was that God put the ears on Adam, if it was simply for an ornament he would say, "Nonsense! nothing ornamental about it; the Eternal, after having ordained that sound should exist, decided that man should have some peculiar organ about him by which he should be able to receive benefit from open contact with sound, and the ability to discriminate as between the various sounds." God had ordained that light should be; he decreed that man should get the benefit of

that light, and therefore he provided an organ or organs known as the eyes, upon which this agent called light was to operate, and the eyes were to be receivers, bringing information to the man, and that through the instruction or information that was obtained thereby a greater degree of wisdom would be possessed with reference to all of importance affecting human life or existence. If I ask why hands were given, I am told that he might feel and labor, and if I ask why feet and limbs were given, I am told, that he might walk.

If I should rise up tonight and ask you why hands, eyes, nose and feet are on and in our bodies today, what would you tell me? You would answer on the same principle as the man did with reference to the sun, the moon and the stars; that he might see, feel, hear, smell, think, etc. Brain is given for the purpose of thinking. Why, that is what they were given for in the start; has there not been some improvement? why not some addition or

subtraction; why not some variation from the original, from the formula that was first given? Simply because God has not discovered, in the lapse of ages since then, that there was any necessity. What he once did, he did forever; and you have never heard tell of a man who was sane enough to stay an hour out of the asylum, claiming that he could improve upon that hand, or even that it was possible, or upon the nose for smelling, the eye for seeing, or the feet for walking. No man has ever produced an eye that could see; and let men argue against Scripture and religious philosophy as they may, the very superiority of the work that is manifested in the creation of man, stamps it with a something that is infinitely beyond the comprehension of the human mind—I mean in its adaptation to all the varying necessities of this mundane sphere.

Man was made of the earth earthly, because the spirit that was in him could not adapt itself as well to the earthly without it. A body

was given to man so that the spirit which was within might be enabled to adapt itself to the conditions of the earth, which was and is earthly. Now, if we thus look upon man, or the things that are made, we are enabled to rightly understand the things that are invisible from the creation of the world. And here I ask the important question, What has God done in making provision for the spiritual necessities of man? Now, the third part of my text comes in: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Accepting this as a true statement, I am pledged to the conclusion that at some time in the past, in the judgment of God, a church was necessary, and that in that church there should be found officers and powers, under the direct management and direction of the Father himself, in order to accomplish this result that I have been

referring to, in the saving of the world. If, therefore, I approach this subject tonight, looking upon this question of human necessity in a spiritual sense, and the work that God has done with reference to providing for it, through the means of the things that are plain to my understanding, what conclusion am I pledged to? Why, simply this: It seems to me, that if the necessities for which a church was first organized, and for which prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and spiritual gifts were placed in it, still exist, then what God did once, in order to meet these necessities, he did forever, and the mere fact that these necessities exist and will exist, is all the argument that a sensible man ought to ask in evidence of the fact that provision made by the Almighty to meet them is still in demand. The next question I ask, then, is, What were those necessities? What was the object in the Almighty organizing a church and placing in it these officers as here named? Let us

turn to the record and see. In the 4th chapter of Ephesians it states that it was for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Now, the question following upon the heels of this one is, Is there a necessity for the work of the ministry today? Do men need salvation? Is there a necessity for perfecting the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ? You answer the question for yourself, and if you answer it as I have answered it and others have in the past, viz: that necessity does exist and is more manifest than at any time in the history of the earth; if this is a truth, then it is proper to argue as a consequence, or in the line that I have been pursuing tonight, observing it as a correct one, that the provision once made to meet these necessities is still in demand, and will be in demand, from the simple fact that, as that which has been is now, and that which is to be has already been, and God in pro-

viding for that necessity once, provided for it forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.

If you would enjoy the peculiar benefits which God's people have enjoyed in the past, you must do just exactly what this Bible informs us, or implies they did, for it says, "God requireth that which is past." If I desire to follow that divine rule today; if my spiritual necessities are simply the same as the spiritual necessities of men who lived two thousand or five thousand years ago, and I would have those necessities met, and would have the Almighty respect my cry as he respected the cry of those to whom reference is made in this book, then I must pay heed to that word of counsel that God requires of me, as he required of them, for God requires that which is past. I can not justly hope for the enjoyment of the privileges they enjoyed unless I am willing to bow where they bowed and serve where they served, and recognize every divine-

ly appointed ordinance, and obey the doctrine which they recognized in the day and generation in which they lived. I come, therefore, to the conclusion quite readily (I don't know of course how it will be with you) that the Master himself, having ordained for the salvation of man a certain means, never intended to apologize for that work which he once did, and if you find a man today undertaking to tell you that something else will do just as well, or telling you that some improvement is necessary on the old fashioned formula as it dropped from the mind of the Eternal himself, or that some improvement must be made by addition or subtraction, you can exercise your privilege of believing what that individual says or not, as you please; but if I was to undertake to believe for one moment any such statement as that, the whole record from Genesis to Revelation would rise up before me and protest in the name of God, its author, against such a blasphemous attempt to wipe God

out as being inferior to his creatures. That is the way I would feel about it.

Now, when I go to the judgment by and by, as I expect to do, to meet the record of my doings, and the question is asked of me, "Why did you believe that apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers should be in the church?" I will turn right over to the place that furnished me the information, and which God inspired the Apostle Paul to write as a fact, and I will call His attention to it and say, "Father, I believed in your word spoken to me on earth, and I take the consequences of that decision. Did you inspire it or did you not? If you did not inspire it, then I have no information on the subject, and doing the best I could I did just as well as any other people did anyway, and if you respect honesty in man, you must deal with me at least as well as you do with them. But if you did inspire Paul to write it, then you certainly cannot condemn me for believing it and

contending for it; you must condemn Paul for writing it, or Christ for inspiring him to write it." And when he asks me why I was baptized for the remission of sins, I will turn to the statement made by the Savior, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." If there was another effort made to condemn me, I would say, "There is the Savior who said it, condemn him; but do not start on me."

I believe that every man will be at last permitted to stand in the majesty of his honest manhood, (for God will never require him to crouch as a serf) and as a man, looking into His face, answer why he did as he did, and why he refused to do things that he ignored in this life; and as far as God has respect for honesty he will place a premium upon it in his creatures. And just as far as he must pay respect unto his work, just as far as he intends that men and angels shall at last blend their voices in

paying tribute to the majesty and divinity of his work, just that far will he be pledged, himself, by that word to redeem and celestialize every man who subscribed to its details in life. God placed this pledge upon himself; I don't. And let me say that the confidence I have in him is begotten of the experience that I have obtained through contending for the faith in which this work is revealed.

I look, as the Scriptures advise me to do, upon the manifestation of God in the invisible world, or in the spiritual sphere, through these material creations of his, and the argument that sustains the one upholds the other. I turn to the 16th chapter of the Gospel recorded by St. Mark, where it says that Jesus, just prior to his ascension to his Father, appointed certain ones to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." What did he mean by being saved. From the information

of Christ's gospel I conclude that it is something that relates to his spiritual being. No man ever saw the process of salvation going on. I did read an account once of a man having invented an instrument by which he could see a spirit leave the body; but I didn't believe it. I never heard of an individual who had power in that physical organ called the eye, to discern the operation of the Spirit of God in the saving of a man, but he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now, that is a matter of faith; an individual must accept of that statement and put it to a test. That is an invisible thing, and he cannot determine fully with reference to the truthfulness of it; he must wait for the absolute accomplishment of the fact until he has passed, as one writer has expressed it, "beyond the bourn from whence no traveler can return." He must wait until death has intervened.

Well, has he nothing now by which he can determine the correct-

ness of his faith and practice? Oh, yes! For the Savior said in the same connection; "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Now, then, here are material things that are to be affected by fulfillment of the very same promise that relates to the spiritual man, and while he must wait until he has passed the river of death before he realizes absolutely the truthfulness of the promise that he shall be saved if he believes and is baptized, yet he can receive and witness right here, the manifestation of a divine power in connection with his own experiences and those he administers to in this life, that will demonstrate to him that THE PROMISE is divine; and manifesting the fact to him that two thirds of the promise is divine, it gives him

an evidence, a supernatural assurance with reference to that part of the same promise that relates to the future life, and for the demonstrated fulfillment of which he must wait until after passing from this life. This comes as near absolutely demonstrating the truthfulness of the other part of the promise as anything can do in this existence, and through these things that are apparent, he witnesses the wondrous divinity that is pledged to the fulfillment of the entire promise. Moving forward, on the strength of the fulfillment that comes to him and helps to make life enjoyable, he breasts the stream that is turned against him because of his faith, and is willing to contend for the divinity that is presented in the sacred word, and at last approaches the ordeal of death without any apprehension as to the satisfaction that shall come as an ultimate of the service he has rendered.

If I should come to your house as a visitor tomorrow, and should say to your children when leaving,

calling them by name around me, Johnnie, Mary and Sallie, and all the rest of you, I am going to be here tomorrow morning and bring you some sweetmeats in a paper sack, and on the next morning I am going to bring a basket of oranges, and the next morning I will come with a big box of cakes, and the next morning with a sack of nuts, and on the next day I am going to be here with a great variety of different kinds of things for you that will be very pleasant and gratifying to your taste. Then I am going away and won't be back for a long while—several years—but when I do come back I am coming with a whole car load of good things for you. Well, they all feel delighted and run and tell papa and mamma about it, and they ask how many hours they will have to wait. By and by the morning comes, but I don't materialize, no sweetmeats appear; next morning comes and the oranges are not there; they never hear anything next day of the cakes; next morning they hear

nothing whatever of the nuts, and the next morning comes and there has been no showing up of the variety of good things. Now, at the end of the week how much confidence would they have that I was coming in a few years with a car load of good things? "Why" you say, "the children would not have any ground for hope."

Jesus Christ says, "I am going away, but if I go away I will come again, and when I come again I am going to receive you unto myself, and I am going to open the doors of the celestial city and bathe your souls in the infinite splendor with which my dominion shall then be filled. But in the meantime I will be with you until the end of the world. I will be present with you in works, with you when you go forth to minister as my servants, and in fact, will be the same as if I was there in person; in my name this shall occur and that shall be done, and the next thing shall be done and the following shall be consummated, and then at last the

crowning evidence shall come of my divinity, when everlasting life shall burst in its golden splendor upon your enraptured and delighted spirits, and you shall be mine forever." But I go forth and labor, and these signs do not follow; the Monday and the Tuesday, the Wednesday and the Thursday, the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of this life pass by, until I reach death's door without having seen any of them. On what shall I base my certain expectations that somehow after this existence I shall find eternal life?

I confess to you that if I had nothing more than what is commonly called sectism in this world today, I fear I would be one of the most rampant infidels that it would be possible for my small intellect to allow me to be. But the fact is that if God honors the plan that relates to the natural man and with reference to the eternal things which he authorizes the Apostle Paul to write about, looking through these things at the invisible, I know

that the same divinity is there, the same promptness and punctuality, the same jealous care that fulfill my Father's words in physical concerns will be revealed in connection with the fulfillment of that promise, everlasting life.

And I say to you, and leave this matter for tonight, that there is a something associated with this gospel of Jesus Christ that the instant the power of it touches the human intellect it invests with a skill for investigation, and as it moves forward opening the mind to a comprehension of the divine law, new opportunities lie before man, and every movement brings in a new measure or an enlarged flood of that which is divine in itself, consistent in its character, ennobling in its moral influences and sanctifying in its effect upon the human character, and it permits the soul of man to expand and enlarge, delivers it from the serfdom of self, and consecrates all within its range to the service of man as one brotherhood, and institutes among men

that which warrants them in the belief of the common fatherhood of God; not as the father of Peter, of Adam or some other, but "Our Father who art in heaven." Jesus thus represented him as the Father of the entire race, and he has also ordained one gospel for all mankind which possesses in it those features that shall meet the necessities of the race, and without which no one man can be saved more than the other, and ignoring which no man will be honored nor expect to be honored more than another.

We commend it to all, and feel satisfied in saying to the people that God, through Christ, spake the truth when he said, "If any man will do His will," that is, my Father's will, "he shall know of this doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I have spoken of myself."

One man came to me, two or three years ago, who had moved around through various forms of religion, and I give it to you in his words. He said: "I entered at the wide end of the funnel and came out at the

spout every time, until I became so disgusted with everything claiming to be religion that I abandoned it in despair. But feeling poor in health I went to visit an old acquaintance of mine over in Michigan and while visiting there to recruit my health, I heard him say something in regard to this marvelous work, as you call it, and though I was not particularly disposed to listen to him, yet his persistence was admirable, and I gave him audience occasionally until my curiosity was excited; it was so different from anything else I had ever heard, I began to look at this, squint at that, under the suspicion that I might be deceived. I did not want to touch it at first. But," he says, "after a while something about its consistency struck me, and finally I took a letter of introduction from this man to another man over in another part of Michigan. When I met this second party and had talked matters over with him I finally made up my mind that I was once more going to take a risk, for

I thought it was risk, sure. I was baptized, but certainly with no more faith than the law demanded."

Time passed on, and when I met him he said, "I entered the spout end of the funnel into this thing, but I declare it is widening." And when I saw him a year afterwards, I asked him if it was still widening. "Why," he says, "where will this thing end? It has been growing and unfolding until it seems that I have had sufficient to prove to me that God and man properly belong to each other, and there should never be dreamed of such a thing as any interfering agency to separate them, and," said he, "the divinity of this work has been so clearly fixed in my mind that I hope never to see the day when the first disposition will lurk within me to speak with any degree of suspicion in regard to it. I know this work is true." He is a missionary today, preaching this gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, we have an influence and we hope to employ it to the glory of God, not to the gratification of the

flesh, but to the praise and honor of Him who has placed such possibilities within our reach and filled our souls with a foretaste of that which is in store, on the strength of which we hope, and our hope has connected with it that which tells us it will bloom with immortality.

May God bless us with wisdom to abide therein. Amen.