

Original Articles

THE SAINTS' HERALD HISTORICAL SERIES.

II. JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST VISION, BY ELDER T. W. WILLIAMS, PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—Elder Williams' article deals in part with both the vision of 1820 and the later manifestation or manifestations of 1823, but it is directed more especially to the former. We introduce his article with Joseph Smith's own account of the occurrence. It will be remembered that Joseph was then about fifteen years of age. A very exciting religious revival had been held in his neighborhood in which various churches were united. When the revival ended unity ended and each church began a struggle to secure the major portion of the converts. Joseph had become anxious to be saved and desired to know which church he should join. Each denomination was loud in its demands for his allegiance—until he became confused and distressed. While in this condition he was reading the Bible and came upon James, chapter one, verse five: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." This commandment was like a ray of light and he obeyed it immediately.]

JOSEPH SMITH'S TESTIMONY.

"It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"After I had retired into the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astonishing influence over me as to bind by tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, (not an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in my being,) just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other,) 'This is my beloved Son, hear him.'

"My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to

join. No sooner therefore did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong,) and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.' He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me which I can not write at this time. When I came to myself again I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

"Some few days after I had this vision I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers who was very active in the before-mentioned religious excitement, and conversing with him on the subject of religion I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the Devil; that there was no such thing as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there never would be any more of them. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a hot persecution; and this was common among all the sects; all united to persecute me. It has often caused me serious reflection both then and since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy of a little over fourteen years of age, and one too who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, so as to



JOSEPH SMITH AS A BOY.

"Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this [James 1: 5] did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart."

create in them a spirit of the hottest persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and was often cause of great sorrow to myself. However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had had a vision. I have thought since that I felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa and related the account of the vision he had when he 'saw a light and heard a voice,' but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled; but all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew and would know unto his latest breath, that he had both seen a light, and heard a voice speaking to him, and all the world could not make

him think or believe otherwise. So it was with me, I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak unto me, or one of them did; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, Why persecute for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and 'Who am I that I can withstand God,' or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen; for I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dare I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation."—Church History, vol. 1, pp. 8 to 11.

Whether Joseph Smith, the acknowledged leader of this distinctive American religious cult, did or did not see an angel, is not to be determined by mere superficial analysis or even by the rules of logic applied to the everyday affairs of life. The law of evidence relating to things purely mundane, and which permits of universal physical demonstration, is inoperative here.

If you would hale me before one of our leading jurists, and he would propound a question looking to the discovery of what I knew in relation to the claim of Joseph Smith, it is very probable my testimony would be thrown out as irrelevant. If the question was put directly to me, "Did Joseph Smith see an angel?" I would be forced to say, "I do not know." I was not there. I was not born when this event is said to have transpired. I have never seen an angel, much less the one which he claimed appeared to him. Even though I had received an angelic visitation it would not confirm beyond all doubt his assertion or authenticate his story to anyone but myself, and even then it would be hearsay evidence. I might believe the angel, but his mere affirmation would not "cause me to know." In answer to every query along this line I must simply say, "I do not know." Courtesy and fairness compel me to withhold judgment as to the information possessed by others.

So far as my own consciousness is concerned, I have been content for thirty years to believe his message, to entrust all my temporal and spiritual hopes to this frail craft, conscious at times that the atmosphere was hazy and the light largely obscured, occasionally groping absolutely in the dark, yet again buoyed up by the confirmation and spiritual intuition which, to me at the time, was absolute. I have heard thousands testify they knew Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and far be it from me to

impugn their motive, question their integrity, or reflect upon their sanity. I have been content to permit each and all to follow the even tenor of their own way, satisfied with the privilege of following my own. It takes much less to satisfy some minds than others: the mere manifestation of some occult power has been sufficient to sway the mass and to for ever banish doubt and fear in the breasts of religious devotees. This is equally true of all religionists. It is universal. It is one manifestation of that indefinable quality of the mind or soul which, in its accentuated form, is called superstition or credulity.



JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET.

"Though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. . . . I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it."

Environment and heredity, the two great forces which have ever played a part in furnishing the mold in which human personality is cast, must be reckoned with in arriving at a solution of this question, the why of action.

Annie Besant, a companion worker with Charles Bradlaugh, a conspicuous and seemingly relentless foe of all things occult and divine, became a mere puppet when confronted with the phenomenon of East Indian occultism. Her espousal of theosophy is mysterious and from the simple laws of cause and effect indefensible. Unconsciously her long fight against all things spiritual, the persistent denial and challenge had wrought within her a nervous apprehension, a soul hungering for the things against which all the forces of her being had been arrayed, and it needed but the faintest glimpse of

things beyond her ken to make her a willing devotee and subsequent high priestess of forces which remain ever mysterious and incapable of practical demonstration.

This is equally true of Robert G. Ingersoll, the great agnostic, the foe alike of superstition and intolerance, who did more to put out the fires of hell than any other of his time. If he, with that analytical mind which he possessed, had been permitted to obtain a clear and consistent elucidation of the philosophy of "the life to be," he would have capitulated and every force of his being would have been enlisted in its support and the blasphemer of yesterday would have become the apostle of to-day. This was the case with Saul of Tarsus. Somehow the forces were not opportune for Mr. Ingersoll. Notwithstanding his early education and environment, regardless of the grooves in which nature and the race needs had thrown his life forces, outlining a course not of choice but of destiny; still the instinc-

tive sensing of the man within as to the eternal destiny of the soul is clearly revealed. Moved by grief, and in the loneliness which follows the withdrawal of a soul affinity to the unknown, he gave expression to that literary classic which will remain as the index to that great man's heart when his epics and syllogisms are all forgotten. With that hope which is born not of knowledge but of faith, and standing by the bier of his beloved brother, he presented the following beautiful lines.

We strive in vain to look beyond the heights; we cry aloud but the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. He who lies here mistaking the approach of death for the return of health whispered in his latest breath, "I am better now." Let us hope in spite of doubts and dogmas, tears and fears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead.

The sublimity of this entire tribute bridges the uncertainties, not in the briefs of logic, but with that divine potentiality which is a part of, but not the creation of man, and solves our problems for us.

I must say in passing that the claim of Joseph Smith is equally valid with that of any man living or dead. What proof have we that Moses saw God, that with his own finger he wrote on the tables of stone? Simply the traditional record which has been handed down through thirty-four hundred years of a vascillating, wandering race. We have no authenticated letter or testimony from Moses himself. Simply the garbled record of the historians of a later time; that is, unless you accept the inspired correction of the Holy Scriptures by Joseph Smith, and in doing this the major question is involved.

What proof have you that Saul saw the light and was stricken to the earth? Nothing save the unconfirmed statement in his own epistle and that found in the Acts of the Apostles, which was the accumulated traditional facts preserved for nearly a hundred years before they were recorded. Please remember I am not denying the truthfulness of either, but I do say the claim of Joseph Smith is equally valid with any recorded statement in the Scriptures. In fact it is more so. Moses said God wrote on the tables of stone. No living witness has ever vouched for the statement. Twelve witnesses confirmed the testimony of Joseph Smith. If I were to determine on the mere facts in the case I must conclude there is more to substantiate the story of Joseph Smith and the work which he introduced than any recorded instance in the Bible. It happened in our day; we have the testimony of witnesses known to hundreds of men now living. These men say they knew; they saw the angel and bore witness to his message.

What may be said of the claim of Joseph Smith may, with equal propriety, be said of that of every other religious leader. I will not even exempt Jesus. I feel morally sure no man living could satisfy any

jury of twelve men that his knowledge along these lines was unimpeachable, providing they confined themselves to the simple rules of earthly logic.

All religious devotees with equal assurance affirm they "know." The Buddhists say, "We know Vishnu and Buddha live." The Mahometan says, "I know that Allah is God and Mahomet is his prophet." The Israelites know that "Jehovah is God and Jesus Christ an impostor." The Mormons in Utah know that, "Brigham Young was a prophet of God and polygamy a divine institution."

I can not paraphrase this in the language of Ingersoll when referring to some leading ministers: "They know that I know that they know that they don't know."

In Christian Science it is neither its Christianity nor its science which appeals to the mass of its converts. No; some friend or relative has been healed, and confronted with this inexplicable manifestation they gulp down all this jumble of idiotic and insane ravings of Mary Baker Eddy which no sane man can explain to the satisfaction of his own intelligence.

Seeing the sick healed is not absolute evidence of the truth of any position, for people have been healed in connection with almost every kind of doctrine and dogma. This is true of every other form of spiritual manifestation, whether it be prophecy, dreams, revelation, tongues or interpretations. The man who predicates his hope on anyone or all of these things *alone*, and pleads for support, finds himself submerged in a ceaseless jargon of equally substantiated claims. It will not suffice.

Most men mistake a pacific attitude for knowledge. To be satisfied is "to know." The absence of doubt to them means knowledge. Such a condition may be one of lamentable ignorance. Ignorance is generally arrogant. The less a man knows the louder his protestations of knowledge. Ignorance vaults forth in forbidden fields where knowledge modestly refrains. From time immemorial the kings and priests have wielded the scepter of destiny by that magic word, "I know." Throughout all the centuries of the past the masses have been awed by this arrogant assumption, content to bring of their abundance and lay it at the feet of their exploiters who, because of their superior wisdom, (?) were entitled thereto. They never once thought to ask them how they knew. The world is changing and the pendulum of that great eternal time is swinging to the other extreme.

The peculiar fanaticism of the overcredulous is, when they are satisfied with the manifestation along a certain line, they have no consideration for anything else which in any sense differs therefrom. In fact they become intolerant, notwithstanding the others have equal claims with their own. In other

words the manifestations I have received are all right and of God while those you have received are all wrong and of the Devil. It is but fair that every man should be heard in his own defense. We are under no obligation to accept his message. We are morally committed to consider it.

A revelation to one man can, in no sense, be a revelation to another. It is but hearsay to the second party. The latter may, either from church association, friendship, or discipleship, accept the spiritual manifestations of the other. It is not a revelation to him unless the force which imparted the message to the first confirms or reiterates it to the second.

Whether Joseph Smith did or did not see an angel may always remain a mooted question, but that he had equal rights with all others no man can gainsay. I have as much reason to believe him as any other man. When he published his message to the world the warring elements of all Christendom locked hands and, with one voice, proclaimed him an impostor. They did not care to test his claim. As the Jews with Jesus, they said, "Away with him, away with him." The leaders, as in Christ's time, saw that an acceptance of this new religion meant ostracism to them. It struck at the root of their philosophy. They had been telling the people for centuries that divinity had either voluntarily or involuntarily been relegated to heavenly confinement; that while for many centuries prior to this men more or less carnal, some vulgar and uncouth, had been in daily communication with him on seemly and unseemly subjects, yet now, though the world was passing through changes necessitating the application of mental acumen entirely eclipsing the childhood of the race,—at times at an entire loss for a true solution of the vexed questions of soul and mind,—yet no more did he volunteer any information. With a great many there had arisen a lurking fear that this confinement was involuntary, for they could not understand how a loving Father, all powerful and all wise, could content himself in perpetuating monastic seclusion when the whole race, the direct result of his divine creation, were groping in ignorance and fast going to destruction as a result of lack of information which he alone could supply. Of the two horns of this dilemma they could better believe in God, if believing at all, as in this condition from necessity rather than choice. The Christian world had nothing but hearsay evidence to support their claims.

Paul, who lived two thousand years ago, testified he saw an angel. His testimony had been preserved by the Catholic Church. The Protestant world could not say too harsh things against the same church, and yet they were wholly dependent upon this church for everything they had in the way of

divinity. They were dependent for their very existence on this book preserved by this same Catholic Church. What supreme logic this!

If angels have once appeared to men, where in all the bibles of all religions was there any restriction as to time and place? None, my friends, none. The cessation of divine communication to-day is an unanswerable argument against its reception in any age. The leaders of Protestantism had lost that psychic power, whether acquired or conferred, whereby they could appall or charm their people and hence, perfectly logical in their own minds, they had manufactured the statement, "God does not speak any more." "No more spiritual manifestations, no superhuman phenomenon." The people swallowed it as a pacific morsel, an opiate which quieted their overwrought nervous desire for revelation,—an anæsthetic which produced a delirium of joy in the consciousness that they were infinitely better off with nothing than if supplied with abundance!

This was the condition in which Joseph Smith found the world. I need not elaborate on his experience. This you can find in his history. It is in his own words. That he had recourse to the Bible is somewhat strange to many, for the mass gratuitously had yielded the right to the clerics only to interpret and apply scripture. The fact that he was profane enough to enter where priests only were allowed to tread, was in itself enough to provoke the scorn and contumely of the world: but when he made bold to enter the holy of holies where no priest had dared to enter for nearly two thousand years, and bring a message direct from the throne of grace, his act became blasphemous and throughout Christendom were reënacted the scenes of Palestine. This fellow was pestiferous. He must be put away, and the emissaries of the gospel of peace united to destroy him.

Whatever the value of his claim, the attitude assumed by the Christian fanatics of America in relation to Joseph Smith, the future historian will certainly be unable to classify in the line of sane and intelligent action. Remember, reader, it was not the religious scoffer; it was not the infidel, agnostic or atheist; it was not the Jew, Mahometan, or any of these heathen people who mobbed Joseph Smith for claiming he had a message from Jesus. Oh, no, but, anomalous as it may seem now, it was the class leaders and preachers who wielded the tar buckets and feathers; these men who were supposed to be humble followers of the Nazarene. Joseph Smith supplied the missing link; without it their position was untenable, and yet they rejected him. They should not be censured for refusing to accept his message on his mere *ipse dixit*, but reason shows us they were very short-sighted in refusing to test

his claims. He made it possible of proof. This was in his favor. He said, "I have seen an angel. I have seen God. I know there is a God. It is within your province to know. Not by me telling you. Not by accepting my message. No. I have blazed the way. I have entered within the veil and I know. You can know. If you care to go in, you can know as I know to-day. I can not give you that knowledge, you must get it for yourself. Reading will not cause you to know. Hearing me tell it will not cause you to know. You must read and hear and then apply."

My arraignment of the Christian world is that they pretended to be close to God and yet gave no evidence of contact. Joseph Smith said, "The unknown country is there; and I have seen it. This is the road I traveled." Their religious fanaticism, prejudice, and intolerance made cowards of them. Joseph Smith had not blazed out any new way. He had simply found the old path grown up with the briars and thorns of centuries and mowed them down. He had only taken the book they cherished and turning its pages came to that significant passage, that specific statement wherein no man following should be lost: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." This certainly was all inclusive. It meant him. It meant every man. Jesus had formerly said, "If any man will do God's will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

Note: He was to know *of the doctrine*—not of Christ, for it was not given to all men to know him, know for himself. How? Not in any way that would satisfy another, but it would satisfy himself. After all, this is the chief end of life. The individuals who receive such knowledge from God will be so fortified they will need no forts of prejudice or breastworks of bigotry, no intolerant weapons; they will have the truth and that will be ample to meet the Goliaths of error.

The supreme evidence of divinity is not the power to awe, mystify, and bewilder the people. It is the manifestation of those qualities of heart and mind which enables men to have a greater insight, a broader scope, a more complete hold on life. If you ask me as to the claims for divinity among men, I would answer that that man who carries with him the greatest love for his fellow-man, the most astute powers of soul and mind, looking to the uplift of the race, has greater proof of divine contact than all the occult manifestations which he could produce. Thomas Paine, who did more for the American revolution with his pen than Washington did with his sword, according to Washington's own words, who wrote and published practically every essential of the Declaration of Independence ten months before

it was formulated by our revolutionary patriots, and who was not in accord with the church of his time and rejected many of the assumptive terms of religion which have long since been discarded, gave evidence of greater claims for divinity than the bigots who sought his life. He shows the source of his inspiration in the following words:

Any person who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, can not but have observed that there are two distinct classes of what are called thoughts—those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining, and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have.

The sublime personality of Abraham Lincoln stands out in bold relief as a character with divine potentialities. He was content to live his life and act for men. He paid the forfeit in martyrdom. Joseph Smith in the religious field was similar to Lincoln in the political arena.

A jurist, when determining as to the validity of two adverse positions, is guided by the following rule of logic: Which is the most plausible? Which the most logical? Considering the claim of Joseph Smith as to divine contact and that which he has given to the world, which is the most logical conclusion? Was he so far in advance of all his fellows as to discover all the legitimate appurtenances of the gospel long since lost? Did he in himself possess the mental insight and spiritual penetration as to more than equal the combined wisdom of the world?

When Joseph Smith read this passage in James he felt impressed with its significance. It was plausible. It was highly probable. It was very essential. He resolved to put it to the supreme test. He repaired to the forest, an ideal priestless sanctuary; no ritual; no prescription; no intermediary; that is my idea of service. He approached divinity not by beating his breasts, by pitched voice or contracted body. He simply laid his case before the Almighty and requested a fulfillment of his promise. In this last particular he was strictly orthodox. Men for centuries had been doing the same thing and had been perfectly satisfied in the doing. If he had been content with this he would have been in full fellowship with the evangelical throng without sun, moon, or stars to light their way to never-ending day. He was *different*. He *waited for a reply*.

Poor, foolish man, herein lay your mistake. Had not Rome, papal Rome, thundered her pronouncement down through the ages that no answer would ever come again; that true service consisted of supplication with no response; in entreaty but no reply? Had not Protestantism said, "Aye, aye, sir" to this illogical creed? "Who is this Daniel come to judg-

ment, who dares to pray morning, noon, and night to any but the God of our own creation?" "Throw him into the lions' den that we may devour him."

Ah, foolish boy, if you had been content to be as other men, your life would have been a flowery bed of ease; they would have loved you when living and lauded you when dead. Your great mistake was in claiming that God *answered your prayer*. This was the only charge the Christian world had against you. They prayed; so did you. They did not get any answer; you did. There was the rub. It mattered not whether your claim was in harmony with the Bible or not. Looking at it impassionately can you not see the inconsistency of your position?

"Your churches are all wrong." Your "creeds are an abomination in my sight." "You draw near me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me." You "teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." Thus spake the Almighty through Joseph Smith.

"It is false," said all of the churches then.

"It was true," say all of them now.

How is that? Because every one of these churches have changed their creed since then. If they were right then they are wrong now. If they are right now they were wrong then. Whichever horn of the dilemma you take Joseph Smith has the advantage. I am not here to say the Bible is infallible or all of the minor premises invulnerable, but the Christian world must appeal to it or nothing, and in said appeal they are incriminated; they are under the dire necessity of repudiating some of the specific teachings and promises in order to have any semblance of consistency, while the claims of Joseph Smith, both as to doctrines and results, coincide identically with the book itself. I am not claiming that this in itself is irrefutable evidence of divinity, but so far as the churches are concerned it is unanswerable.

Resolving this question to its final analysis individual consciousness must be the determining quality as to what is or is not divine. Certainly I will not allow any other man to settle this question for me. I should not assume to settle it for any other man.

Whether Joseph Smith did or did not see an angel must be left to the arbitrament of time. From a legal standpoint I do not know. I have been content to give my support to the philosophy which he propagated because it satisfied my inner concept of right. I have tried other things, but always the divinity in me led me back to this same old premise. In development it is not so much that the mind and soul of a man is awed with some supernatural phenomenon as it is that the divinity within finds expression. I am a Latter Day Saint because there is afforded a greater latitude to express this divinity, because it allows to divinity the most unobstructed

privileges. I could easily assert that I knew that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Very probably I would, by some, be considered very strong in the faith. I prefer to think that the greatest witness I can bear, either to his divine call or the truthfulness of his message, is to so live, teach, and act, that others coming in touch with me will be constrained to feel and sense the divinity which comes in exemplifying the message which he gave to the world.

I believe that Joseph Smith told the truth. I have accepted his message. In seeking to make my life conform to the religion which he gave to the world I have found great peace and satisfaction. Aside from that, deponent saith not.

The so-called Christian world asserted there was a God. They furnished no means of determination. They denied present day revelation. Joseph Smith said there was a God and affirmed revelation. He was consistent; they were not. It is not of so much consequence that I know Joseph Smith saw an angel as it is that I am true to myself, true to the manifestations of God which come to me individually; for, if I am true to these, I can not oppose any other divine message which comes through any other source. If there is truth in Joseph Smith's claim it will be vindicated in time. I have not attained that point where I can look over into the promised land. It may be my fault, but I have tried to prove worthy of all necessary help. I am not walking by sight but by faith. I am content if there is enough spiritual direction to guide my feet aright. It is enough to know that I am moving in the right direction. I am afraid if I knew more I would strive less. Possession oftentimes produces stagnation. I am better off with enough of denial and uncertainty in my life to stimulate action, providing said stimulation will bring me to the point where I can utilize knowledge. It is not what one knows which is so important. It is the use we make of what we know. "To know" and not to do brings condemnation. Future retribution will be predicated not on the light and information which God has given us, but on the use we have made of what he has given. The greatest testimony one can give in favor of this latter-day work is not an offhand, "I know," but rather a consistent exemplification of the spiritual and ethical forces which must stamp it as divine. I long for the time when our people will bear this testimony, "I know this work is true because of the help it has been to me. I know it is true because it has made me more divine. I know it to be true for I am a better being."

I have known thousands who have been loud in their claims to knowledge, but I am at a loss to know what use said knowledge has been to them. If I, with my lack, do each day the duty the day brings to me, I am best serving my Master. I want to know. I am hungering for more light. I am striving to fit myself to receive it. I do not crave it as the boy does a toy or the girl a new dress to pander to pride or fancy. I do not desire it to gratify a morbid curiosity. It is inconsistent to claim we know unless we bear the fruits of knowledge. When I hear a man loudly proclaim his knowledge of things divine and I am sure his life morally, intellectually, and socially does not bear out his claim, I must reject his statement. "To know" is to do, to be all which that knowledge embraces. God's "No" to me has been my benediction.