

to them a moderately extensive, living compendium of "Mormonism." (We use this cognomen for brevity and significance.) At these meetings, though some should admire, believe, and rejoice, while others tremble, rage, and shudder as a flash of light passes over their dark, superstitious minds,—or though some, from perverted tastes and warped judgment, should be offended at the truths advanced, none should be bored or disgusted by the stupidity, mannerism, or incapability of the speaker.

It is the duty of the Presidents of the Branches to make the preaching meetings answer to the character which we have described. Their arrangements must be such as to accomplish that desired end. They owe it to God, they owe it to their religion, they owe it to the world; and, having the important obligation to discharge of faithfully watching over the best interests of the work in these lands, we feel it our solemn and imperative duty to *demand* of the Presidents to bring about such a state of things as far and as fast as possible. Let the Presidents of Conferences and Pastors also seriously attend to this matter, and especially see that they themselves answer to the spirit of our remarks. We hope by this time all the presiding officers understand that they have *assistants* among the Elders and Priests for the preaching of the Gospel to the world. We hope they have not to learn, after all we have said, that, though it is one of their privileges and duties to preach, it is their *special* duty to *preside*, and, by wise arrangements and solid and penetrating judgment, accomplish such tasks as the one which we now give to them in the name of the Lord. We do not expect perfection yet; but we feel it our duty to urge progress and approximation towards that state, especially when it deeply touches the interests of the cause, and is not a personal matter. Neither do we demand of the Priesthood to be in this or any other matter what they *cannot*, but what they *can* be. Nor do we believe it within the capabilities of all the human race now on the earth to bring sufficient eloquence, language, logic, arrangement, argument, ideas, illustrations, evidence, principles, testimony, power, and spirit, to tell the fulness of the Gospel and do justice to the work of restitution, with its connections. It is not within their present power to grasp, nor the compass of language to express it. Indeed, the heights, depths, length, and breadth never can be told in any written or oral language, nor can eloquence, logic, evidence, testimony, &c., lay it fully before the mind. It may be comprehended, but not told. It may be realized and seen in the vision of the spirit by perfected beings, but never embodied in any of those partial signs, forms, or methods named. If there are any who have foolishly imagined that they could do too much justice to the work, or fill their discourses too full of ideas, argument, illustration, arrangement, eloquence, and proof, they may be surprised at these remarks. Let it be a relief to them to know that there will come many things that will surprise them before they realise the comprehensiveness of the Gospel and the magnitude of this work.

DIVINE COUNSEL.

BY ELDER CHARLES F. JONES.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."—DAVID.

This important truth, spoken by David, shall discover that those people and equally applies to men and nations. In nations have always been blessed who have proof of this, we have simply to take a walked in the counsels of the righteous. retrospective view of the past, as recorded On the other hand, we shall perceive in sacred history; and, by so doing, we that those who have followed the devices

of the ungodly have been subjected to all kinds of misery, and eventually have been punished for so doing.

When we speak of man, we do so as being the offspring of God; and when we consider that man is so related to a Being whose character, perfections, and attributes are so much superior to his own, we must at once realize the obligation he is under to listen to and implicitly obey the Divine counsels, whether given personally or through the medium of God's servants. But, alas! how seldom has he been thus acknowledged by his creatures! For, among those who in all ages have professed to acknowledge his supreme right to govern, many have been found whose worship was simply that of the lips, without the heart; which has always been an abomination to the Lord.

God's servants, who should have been received and acknowledged as his appointees to instruct mankind, have been made subjects of all kinds of cruelties—namely, hunger and nakedness, chains and imprisonments, banishment from homes, scourgings, and even martyrdom. And these punishments were inflicted because they chose to walk in the counsels of God rather than in the paths of the ungodly. But although we are informed that God is gentle, long-suffering, and full of mercy, we are at the same time informed that he is just, and will not allow his laws to be trampled upon with impunity, nor his servants to be always insulted by an ungodly clan. As an assurance of this fact, we have only to refer to Biblical history. The Psalmist says that the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The most striking instance recorded of this fact is in the life of Enoch, the son of Jared, who walked with God, and so strictly observed his counsels, that, when three hundred and sixty-five years of age, he was translated without dying.

The next person who was particularly favoured of the Lord was Noah, the son of Lamech, the tenth patriarch before the flood, who was a just man, perfect in his generation, and walked with God. In consequence thereof, God, before bringing the flood upon the ungodly world, commanded him to build an ark to save himself and family from the deluge.

Here we have another instance of God's blessing persons because they walked in his counsels. On the other hand, we see his just retribution upon the ungodly for rejecting his advice given through Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness for one hundred and twenty years. The traces of this destruction are still to be found in every country under heaven, as exhibitions of the effects of disobedience. Noah's descendants were greatly blessed, and they all spoke one language. So long as they followed the counsels of good men, they were thus favoured; but as soon as they allowed themselves to be influenced by Nimrod, they offended God. Because of so doing, he confounded their language, and thus prevented them from carrying out their design—namely, the building of the great Tower.

The Book of Genesis informs us that Abraham, because of his integrity in keeping the commandments of God, was pronounced perfect; so much so, that he was privileged to see God and converse with him as one man converses with another. When one hundred years old, he was promised that he should be exceedingly fruitful, and that nations should come out of him. This has been strikingly fulfilled, according to the scriptures; for, in less than five hundred years afterwards, one branch of the family alone amounted to the number of 600,000 men, besides women and children.

Lot, in consequence of hearkening to the counsels of the angels sent to him, escaped the flames of the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. His wife and neighbours perished because of rebellion and for following the devices of their own hearts, which were evil. The plain in which these cities stood was pleasant and fertile, but was full of slime pits; and, being very bituminous, readily caught fire. When consumed, the land was depressed 1,312 feet, and now contains the waters called the Dead Sea,—thus standing as a sample of God's vengeance upon the disobedient.

The children of Israel, after being in Egyptian bondage 430 years, were miraculously delivered through Moses and Aaron. They might have reached the land of Canaan in about two years. But, because of refusing to carry out the counsels of Moses, they suffered all kinds of privations and afflictions, besides being in the wilderness forty years.

Witness, again, Tyre, which was one of the most flourishing cities in ancient times, but is now reduced to a paltry village, where fishermen pursue their humble employment. All this happened according to the words of God's Prophets, on account of the Tyrians' disobedience.

The cities of new Tyre, Gaza, Ashdod, and others, were afterwards destroyed by Alexander. This God permitted, in consequence of their rejection of his servants and teachings, in fulfilment of the prophecies of Zechariah.

Egypt also was one of the most ancient and powerful kingdoms in former ages. But it likewise degenerated into luxury and debauchery, and consequently incurred the displeasure of God, who inspired his Prophets to foretell its destruction. Their predictions all came to pass.

Nineveh, an exceedingly great and mighty city, because of its degeneracy and refusal to receive the instructions of the Almighty, was also destroyed, according to prophecy. So complete was this destruction, that the place where it stood is with great difficulty discovered, even by the most accurate researcher.

Babylon, the glory of kingdoms and the beauty of the Chaldeans' excellency, was indisputably one of the first cities in the world. But the Prophets of God, when it was in its height of splendour, were inspired to foresee and foretell its downfall. In a few years after, it was attacked by its enemies, and has been for ages a habitation for wild beasts; and the place where it stood is now hardly perceivable.

Space will not allow the mention of Jerusalem and other cities and nations which have crumbled and been brought to a state of beggary, through rejecting righteous counsel and admonitions. But suffice it to say that disobedience to Divine counsel has caused much of this fair planet to be changed into a wilderness, sapped the foundations of nations, cast down thrones, brought powerful cities to mingle with the dust, drenched the earth with blood, introduced disease and misery in ten thousand forms, degenerated man, and made him in many respects far below the brute creation.

The same cause will always produce similar effects. God is a being who is justly jealous of his rights; and although he may wink at man's evils, and allow him for a time to reject his counsels and

usurp his right to govern, he nevertheless will in time assert his rights, even though it be to the causing of the destruction of the rebels.

The history of the past has so clearly pointed out man's inefficiency to govern himself, that the inevitable consequence of attempting so to do should be a warning to all future ages. This fact should lead men to honestly acknowledge that, by their own wisdom, they cannot find out God or his purposes. It is the right of the Creator to command, and the creature to obey; and the path of obedience is the only one of safety.

Joseph Smith, the illustrious Prophet of the nineteenth century, discovered that the boasted wisdom of the religious and political world was foolishness with God, and that the world was full of division, jealousy, envyings, and various evils too numerous to mention. Consequently, in the spring of 1820, like a wise man, he sought intelligence from a higher source to satisfy his noble mind, in compliance with that sage advice of the Apostle James—"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." He received counsel from on high to leave the paths of the ungodly and the way of sinners, with a promise that, if faithful, he should be greatly blessed. In fulfilment of this promise, because of Joseph's obedience, the Lord frequently sent his angels to him, who gave him much valuable instruction, and at the same time pointed out to him the follies of men and the destitute state of all earthly governments and societies. In due time, through faithful observance of counsel, he became acquainted with God and with just men made perfect; and many things which had remained a mystery for ages were solved by him. He soared aloft, and gained intelligence not common to man. He had a deep understanding of things around him, and was able to read the hearts of men as the pages of a book, and was thereby able to discern their hypocrisy and deceit. At the same time, being filled with intelligence, he was able to impart instruction to those who sought it. By virtue of the Priesthood, which was duly conferred upon him, he preached the Gospel in its fulness, conferred blessings on the faithful, foretold the destiny of Emanuel's kingdom, and prophesied of the downfall of every government and institution that should fight against God and reject his

