

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL—APOSTASY  
FROM THE PRIMITIVE FAITH AND RESTORATION OF THE  
FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL

REMARKS BY ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH, MADE IN THE TABERNACLE,  
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Reported by E. L. Sloan

We have heard a very practical discourse this afternoon from Elder Woodruff, one which is calculated to cause all persons to consider for themselves whether they are pursuing such a course as is in accordance with the law of righteousness, instead of following the wickedness spoken of which exists in the world. Considerable has been said on various occasions to show us that great efforts have been made to teach the principles of religion, and to make known to the children of men what they should do to be saved; but professing Christians have unfortunately become very much divided in their opinions as to the proper way of obtaining this salvation. “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” Such is the record of Luke of the last commandment given by the Savior of mankind to his Apostles when they went forth to preach the Gospel, and communicate to the human family a knowledge of the way by which they could be saved. He commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. “And,” said he,

“ye are witnesses of these things.” The witnesses were the Apostles sent forth to deliver the message entrusted to them, and to administer the ordinances by which salvation could be attained. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Now, when these Apostles—these witnesses—went forth, in obedience to the injunction of their Master, they preached repentance to the people; they called upon the human family to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing testimony, as they were witnesses, that it behoved Christ to suffer and rise again from the dead, that the way might be opened for the human family to obtain a remission of their sins. Let us inquire what they taught. The very first lesson, as we find it recorded by the same writer, Luke, after the Apostles had borne testimony of the