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“MORMONISM”

DISCOURSE BY ELDER ORSON PRATT, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE,

SALT LAKE CITY, FEB. 24, 1869

Reported by David W. Evans

“Mormonism,” so-called, is a strange thing in the 19th century. It has caused among the inhabitants of the earth a great deal of reflection and conversation for the last forty years. It is a very marvelous and wondrous thing to see a numerous people assembled together in these interior wilds which, but a few years ago, were a solitary waste, where the face of a white man had been seldom seen; the abode of savages only, who wandered about nearly naked, living upon crickets, rattlesnakes and lizards, sunk into the lowest depths of degradation. To see so large a people, all of one faith, united together in their energies, occupying a Territory, which, from north to south, is several hundred miles in extent, building up towns, cities and villages, establishing common schools, sending forth their missionaries to the nations of the earth, bringing in their thousands every season by emigration, render “Mormonism,” as it is generally called by the world, a wonder in our age.

We heard this morning a discourse, delivered by Elder Cannon, upon the subject of the Gospel and the principles of our faith. We were told some of the principles that have been received by this people, not only in these mountains, but wherever the Latter-day Saints, as a people exist. Our people are taught to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as one of the principles of our faith; we are taught to repent of all our sins and to re-

frain from everything that is forbidden by the law of God. This is included in the doctrine of repentance as taught by this people among the nations which we have visited. Having taught faith in Christ, and repentance of all sins, we next require penitent believers to be baptized in water for the remission of their sins. Thus they become subjects of the Kingdom of God by being born of water. Another principle taught by this people is the doctrine of the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, as was taught and practiced in ancient times.

We heard this forenoon concerning the effects of the Holy Ghost when bestowed upon individuals, and its diversified gifts throughout the whole Church, according to the righteousness of the individuals who receive these principles. We also heard it testified that God had sent down from heaven authority to administer in these ordinances; that He had sent His angel for this express purpose.

It is my intention, this afternoon, if the Lord will lead me by His spirit, to dwell upon some subjects connected with the organization of this Church, which has received the principle I have named. Strangers who may be present have heard for many years past of a man called Joseph Smith. Perhaps they have never heard much good respecting him. But this people, called Latter-day