

## THE AXE IS LAID TO THE ROOT—EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS

REMARKS BY ELDER ERASTUS SNOW, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE,

SALT LAKE CITY, FEBRUARY 28, 1869

Reported by David W. Evans

I am requested to occupy a little time this afternoon prior to my departure for my field of labor in the South, and if I can have your faith and prayers, I will try to speak upon a few subjects. A certain very expressive passage of Scripture, contained in the New Testament, has been passing through my mind since I have been sitting here. I will repeat it—

“Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

This figure of the fruit tree, though spoken in reference to the followers of the Savior in his day, is equally as applicable to us as to those to whom it was addressed. There are many other sayings of the Savior of a similar character, applied to the people of God in reference to the diverse doctrines and teachings of men; also warning them against false prophets and those who might come to them in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly were ravening wolves. He said to his disciples, “By their fruits shall ye know them,” for every tree that bears good fruit is a good tree; but a corrupt tree did not bring forth good fruit.

Now this figure of the axe being laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good

fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire, being equally as applicable to God’s people in these days as to His people in the days in which it was spoken, is very impressive, and should be retained in every mind; every heart should reflect upon it, and everyone should inquire, “Am I a subject for the burning, or am I bearing good fruit?”

To answer these questions satisfactorily we must be instructed in the things of God, so that we may understand our duties and know what God requires of us, we must become acquainted with the Kingdom of Heaven and the fruits thereof.

The people of olden times, to whom this saying of the Savior was addressed, were a peculiar people: they and their fathers before them for many generations had claimed to be the people of God. To their forefathers God had sent His prophets, revealed His word, and he had made His covenant with them, and had blessed them with many blessings. Yet in the days of the Savior, as a nation, they had apostatized and had fallen from their high position; they had become divided into sects and parties, proud, covetous, self-righteous, and very conceited; and the Savior pronounced many woes upon them. He illustrated their condition in a very noted parable concerning a certain vineyard, which the hus-