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BLOOD ATONEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In the year 1856 the authorities of the "Mormon" Church inaugurated a reformation among its members. They were all required to confess and repent of their sins and renew their covenants with God to live righteous lives and refrain from evil. The President and leading Elders of the Church set the example in this movement, which was generally followed by the Latter-day Saints. Men and women confessed their sins freely, and manifested a disposition to devote themselves to purity of life in all time to come. Certain gross evils being in some instances thus brought to light, the subject of atonement for deadly sin, for transgressions committed after the reception of the Holy Ghost, was forcibly elucidated by leading Elders, particularly by President Young and his counselor, Jedediah M. Grant. Those utterances, given under the circumstances described, have been garbled and misrepresented and published to the world for the purpose of prejudicing the public mind against the Latter-day Saints and hindering the preaching of the latter-day gospel. To correct false impressions and present the truth on this subject the address is here printed as delivered, by request. And it is now published in the interest of true religion, for the benefit of erring hu-

manity and for the vindication of eternal justice, which will surely claim its own while it takes nothing that belongs of right to sweet mercy.

CHARLES W. PENROSE.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The subject treated in the following pages is one that has occasioned much interest and comment. It is still greatly misrepresented by opponents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first edition having been exhausted and numerous requests having been made for copies of it, this new edition is now offered to the public in its original form, as it was delivered as a lecture and therefore does not admit of additions or further comments or quotations, although the doctrines set forth are worthy of more extended investigation than is given in this pamphlet. To believers in the Bible, blood atonement should be an established principle of salvation; to the rational skeptic it ought to be accepted as logical and just. It is submitted to the thoughtful consideration of all people of every creed and nation.

CHARLES W. PENROSE.

BLOOD ATONEMENT

THE subject upon which I have to speak to this congregation this evening is one of very great importance, and one that has not been preached upon very often in the manner in which I expect to investigate it. The subject of blood atonement, in a certain sense, is a very common one. All the Christian sects, so-called, believe in that doctrine in some form. But there are ideas in relation to this subject which are peculiar to the Latter-day Saints, and it is these I wish to elucidate. It is presented at the present time in consequence of so many misrepresentations concerning it. The Latter-day Saints and their creed are being continually misrepresented in the world. Some people make it a business to set forth notions and ideas which they claim to be the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints, and which they proceed to argue against and demolish, just like setting up a man of straw and then knocking him down. The doctrine of blood atonement is one of those that are thus misrepresented, and it is because of this that it becomes necessary for me this evening to take up the subject and present it before this congregation.

There is one thing very consoling to me, and that is that the enemies of our people and our faith are compelled to resort to misrepresentation and falsehood in order to find anything to fight us with. If they

could bring truth wherewith to meet us they certainly would not resort to falsehood and error, because truth is always mighty, much more powerful than falsehood; and their only strength lies in the fact that the world is not acquainted with our doctrines, our aims and our desires, and therefore are easily imposed upon by anyone who puts forth an idea however monstrous and ridiculous it may be, purporting to be "Mormonism." The people of the world seem, generally, to be more willing to accept anything that is untrue in regard to us than to receive the facts in the case. But I hope there will come a time when we shall have the ears of the people; when we shall be able to present our doctrines from our own standpoint before the world; when we shall be able to represent ourselves instead of being misrepresented by others.

But there is one good that arises out of these persistent attacks upon us, and that is, it develops our powers. We are placed continually on the defensive; we are never let alone; we are all the time stirred to action. This is good for us. It causes us to think and to investigate for ourselves the principles of our holy religion, and to prepare ourselves to defend those principles before all mankind. This develops life among this people. Stagnation is death. Action is life. There is no life without action, and there is no action without some life.

It will be my purpose this evening to present, first the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints on the subject of blood atonement, then, to show you some of the misrepresentations that have been made about it in the world, and let them be compared with the doctrine as we present it from our standpoint. I shall have to take up some of the writings and sermons of some

of our leading men now deceased, such as Presidents Brigham Young and Jedediah M. Grant, also to allude to the scriptures and perhaps quote from one or two works written by persons unconnected with our faith. I will endeavor to do this in as concise a manner as I possibly can, and cover all the ground allotted to me. I trust I shall have your patience, and the faith and prayers of my brethren and sisters, as I feel I need both, not having been able to prepare my mind as thoroughly as I would like to have done for a subject of this magnitude.

The doctrine of blood atonement is founded on the sacrifice made by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. When God made this earth—according to the revelations contained in this book, the Bible—He placed a man and a woman in the garden of Eden, and gave them a commandment in regard to a certain tree. They were told not to eat of the fruit of that tree. The penalty if they did eat of it was death. They partook of the forbidden fruit and the penalty came upon them. But a provision concerning this had been previously made, in the mercy and foreknowledge of God. He understood—knowing all things from the beginning to the end—that Adam and Eve would transgress, that they would break the law, and that it would be necessary to provide some means for their restoration from the effects of that fall, and so we read that Jesus was “the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.” He was provided beforehand as a sacrifice that this sin which our first parents would commit might be atoned for, so that they might be brought back into the condition that they were placed in before they committed the transgression, and—as the effect of their transgression was to fall upon

others—that their posterity also might be restored through the same sacrifice.

When Adam and Eve were placed in the garden they were not mortal beings. They were not subject to death. They were able to live forever. If I were asked what an immortal being is, I would say, a being who is capable—that is, by continuing and living in the law of his existence—of living forever. Adam and Eve were capable of continual existence. But they broke the law of their being and the penalty thereof was death. Now, it took a person who was innocent of sin, a person who was spotless before God, a person upon whom death had no claim, to atone for that transgression. In the justice of God, a person upon whom death had no claim had to atone for the sin of one, or rather two people made one, who had committed that great transgression. They were immortal when they committed it, and became mortal and not able to atone for it, and therefore the “Lamb without spot,” a sinless person upon whom death had no claim, had to come and atone for the sin thus committed.

On the occasion when this great atonement was wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily sacrificed Himself that He might atone for this sin, not only was Adam’s transgression atoned for by the shedding of Jesus Christ’s blood, but His blood was shed as an atonement for the actual transgressions of all mankind. The sin that our first parents committed is technically called original sin. The sins of mortal men and women are called actual sins. I wish to direct your attention to this matter—that Jesus Christ not only died as an atonement for the sin of Adam, the original sin, but He died to offer up a sacrifice as an

atonement for the sins of all mankind ; for not only did Adam sin, but all his posterity have sinned. As the scriptures say, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." So Jesus, who was sinless, who "knew no sin and guile was not found in His mouth," voluntarily laid down His life for the guilty. It is true that He was taken by wicked hands and put upon the cross and crucified. But He declared before that event took place, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." And further we are told that "He is a propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world ;" and "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Jesus, then, made a sacrifice for the original sin, and for the actual transgressions of man, but with this difference—Jesus Christ atoned for the sin that Adam committed without any act required on the part of Adam, and without any act on the part of his posterity. Adam's one sin brought death into the world, and it passed upon all mankind. Jesus Christ's atonement brings life again, and so all mankind must stand up again upon their feet in their resurrected bodies and be judged for their own sins, not for Adam's transgression. The penalty for Adam's transgression was death to the human family. The atonement wrought out by Christ brings life to them again. The atonement is as broad as the offense, and the effects of Christ's sacrifice are as extended as the effects of Adam's transgression. As I have quoted to you, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But when all men are made alive again, the good and the

bad, the bond and the free, Jew and Gentile; when all are brought up again in the time and order that God has ordained, they must be judged for their own transgressions. Now, then, when they are judged for these transgressions, if they have accepted by their obedience to the laws of God, the gospel of Christ and the atonement which Christ wrought out for them, His blood will be a propitiation for their actual sins. If they have not accepted that by obedience to the gospel, then the shedding of His blood will not have effect upon them, and they will have to suffer the penalty. That penalty is banishment from the presence of God, which is spiritual death.

This death was pronounced upon our parents in the beginning. They not only died as to the body, but were shut out from the presence of God. This is the spiritual destruction which is coming upon the wicked. As the Apostle says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." But if people accept the atonement wrought out by Jesus Christ for them—and that acceptance is not merely in assenting unto it by word, but in obedience to His gospel—then it will act as a propitiation for their actual sins, just as the Apostle John says: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." If they are not in the light as He is in the light, if they have not fellowship with Him, then His blood is not a propitiation for their sins. It is shed *unconditionally* for the sin

of Adam; it is shed *conditionally* for the actual sins of his posterity.

This may be a little different from the view entertained by "Christian" sects; but all people who profess to be "Christians" believe in the atonement wrought out by Christ in some way or other—that is, they believe that through Christ's blood atonement was made for sin, and that through that atonement they have acceptance with God. They have various views in regard to doctrinal matters, but this is the cardinal point, and it enters into every creed of the "Christian" religion.

Now, on what principle was this predicated? It was on the principle laid down by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, to which I will draw your attention, for there is a reason for all these things. There is a reason why blood had to be shed. Atonement could not have been made without the shedding of blood. The 22nd verse of the 9th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews says: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." There is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood, and "the wages of sin is death." That is the penalty. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." This is the law of God. But Christ, who was sinless, offered Himself as a propitiation for the sins of those upon whom death had a claim, and if they accept His atonement they obtain the benefit thereof. Instead of the blood of the individuals being shed the blood of Christ was shed for them, and it stands in the place of their blood. What is the reason of that? Why, we are told in the book of Leviticus, the 17th chapter and 11th verse: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given

it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Here you see the doctrine of blood atonement laid down, and the reason for it. "The life of the flesh is in the blood," and it requires the shedding of blood to make "atonement for the soul." But, as I have shown you, the blood of every individual man and woman is not required, because of the atonement wrought out by Jesus Christ. Here is a cardinal principle of the law of God—that without shedding of blood there is no remissions of sins. Therefore, if Christ's blood had not been shed, each individual would have had to have his blood shed, according to Bible doctrine. This may sound very horrifying to some people; but it is Bible doctrine all the same. It is the doctrine of the Old Testament, it is the doctrine of the New Testament; atonement or sacrifice was based on this, and this doctrine was practised by the people before the law of Moses was given.

Take the Old Testament and read the account given in the Book of Genesis. There you will find that sacrifices were offered as soon as our first parents came out from the Garden of Eden. They understood the principle of sacrifice, for the law of sacrifice was revealed to them. If I were to read from the book called *The Pearl of Great Price* you would see the reason for it; but a great many people would not receive what is contained in that book as authoritative. But the Bible shows that the law of sacrifice was revealed to the patriarchs, and under it, before the law of Moses was given, the people are represented as offering up sacrifices for individual sins, and when the law of Moses was received, this was amplified and made clear. Plain and definite laws were given to the

people by revelation from God through Moses, so that when they committed certain sins the blood of certain animals was shed as a sacrifice for those sins.

All those sacrifices which were offered up before Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, came into the world were typical of the atonement that He was to work out. It was not the shedding of the blood of goats, sheep and bullocks upon the altar that made the atonement; but this was typical of the atonement of Jesus Christ in the future; just as we, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, have a piece of bread and a cup of water, or wine, as the case may be, to represent the atonement wrought out in the past. As the bread and wine, or water, of the sacrament represent the body and blood of Christ who died for us, so all those sacrifices which were offered up in the Mosaic dispensation, and in the Patriarchal dispensation which preceded it, were typical of the atonement to be wrought out by Jesus Christ when He should come, their ceremonies looking to the future, ours referring to the past. So the doctrine of salvation, you see, is absolutely based on blood atonement, and without blood atonement there is no salvation, for there is no remission of sins. And there would be no resurrection if it had not been for the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. He was given as a ransom for us all. He said, "And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men towards me." And again on another occasion: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Showing that though His blood was shed for the resurrection of mankind, yet when they were resurrected,

all would not enter into life and receive the full benefit of the atonement because they did not obey His commandments.

Now, the people called Latter-day Saints believe in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ. They believe that it cleanses from sin. They believe that through faith in God and repentance of sin, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, they obtain a remission of all their past guilt; that they become washed and made clean through obedience to this principle and ordinance. This is the gospel revealed in these last times to us, as God revealed it through Jesus in former times, which we may read in the New Testament. The people in the days of the Apostles were called upon to believe in Jesus Christ, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized in water for the remission of sins; remission of sins coming through the shedding of Christ's blood, baptism being administered by one having authority from Jesus Christ and being void without it is administered by that authority. But an individual who believes in Christ, and who repents—that is turns away from his sins—and is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ by one having authority from Him, receives the blessing of the remission of sins, which is given to him through his obedience, in the act of baptism, and through the shedding of Jesus Christ's blood. Persons who have been thus washed from their sins, who have been thus made clean, who have been thus regenerated, are thus made fit to receive the Holy Ghost—which Holy Ghost will not dwell in unclean tabernacles. But being washed clean, and believing in the blood of Christ, they are made fit to receive the Holy Ghost. This is the Spirit of Truth, which bears record of the Father and of

the Son, and makes the things of God plain to humanity. It is a constant monitor to those who will listen to its voice.

But there are persons who, after having been washed and made clean through the blood of Christ, and made members of His Church, again commit sin. What about them? Why, if they truly repent, and make all the restitution that lays in their power, they may be forgiven, they may be cleansed again. But there are some sins that can be committed from which they cannot be cleansed by the blood of Christ. After receiving the gospel and entering into sacred covenants with God Almighty, after having been enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, having tasted of the good word of God and the power of the world to come, if they commit certain sins they cannot gain the remission of those sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. That may be a new doctrine to many people of the world, but it is an old doctrine to the Latter-day Saints, and you can find it laid down distinctly and clearly in the Bible.

As the misrepresentations that have been made concerning this doctrine are all founded upon some remarks made some years ago by Presidents Brigham Young and Jedediah M. Grant, I will here read President Young's doctrine on this subject so that you may understand it as it was enunciated by him. I have here a volume of a work called the *Journal of Discourses*, containing sermons preached by our leading Elders for many years. These were first published in the *Deseret News* in this country, and afterwards in England—42 Islington, Liverpool—in book form. Thus they were no secret, as some traducers would have the

world believe. What I am about to read is in the Fourth Volume, page 53:

“There are sins which men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon the ground, that the smoke thereof might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins; and the smoking incense would atone for their sins, whereas if such is not the case, they will stick to them in the spirit world.

“And furthermore I know that there are transgressors, who, if they knew themselves, and the only condition upon which they can obtain forgiveness, would beg of their brethren to shed their blood, that the smoke thereof might ascend to God as an offering to appease the wrath that is kindled against them, and that the law might have its course. I will say further I have had men come to me and offer their lives to atone for their sins.

“It is true that the blood of the Son of God was shed for sin through the fall and those committed by men, yet men can commit sins which it will not remit.”

Now, according to the doctrine of President Brigham Young, the blood of Jesus Christ, as I have shown you, atoned for the original sin, and for sins that men commit, and yet there are sins which men commit for which they cannot receive remission through the shedding of Christ's blood. Is that a true doctrine? It is true if the Bible is true. That is Bible doctrine. I will direct your attention to one or two passages of scripture which bear on this subject. In the first place I will refer you to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, which you will find in the 12th chapter of the gospel according to St. Matthew and the 31st and 32nd verses, namely:

“Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

Here is one sin spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ which will not be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come, notwithstanding that Christ's blood has been shed for the remission of sins. And why is this? It is to be supposed that a person who sins against the Holy Ghost must have first received the Holy Ghost. A person who never received the Holy Ghost, never was enlightened by it, never enjoyed that heavenly gift, could not sin against the Holy Ghost; but if he has received the Holy Ghost through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ—having first been washed clean of his transgressions through the atoning blood of Christ—then if he sins against that Holy Ghost he sins against light, he sins against knowledge, he sins understandingly, he sins wilfully, and then there is no more cleansing from sin, as I will show you from another text, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 10th chapter, 26th verse:

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

There is then no more sacrifice for sins. Why? Because he has received the benefit of Christ's atonement and the light of God as the consequence of obedience, and then sinned against that light, for which there is

no forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come. Now, you take that with the doctrine of Brigham Young and you will find that they harmonize and that there are some sins for which we cannot receive forgiveness. We must pay the penalty. There are some sins that people commit, and no matter how much they may repent, no matter how sorry they may be afterwards, yet the effects of the sins have such far-reaching consequences that they will have to pay the penalty of their transgressions before they can come forth from punishment and receive the blessing of God. As Jesus said, "They shall be cast into prison and verily they shall not come out thence until they have paid the uttermost farthing." There are sins that can be forgiven. There were sins that could be forgiven in olden times by offering certain sacrifices on the altar. Then there were other sins that could not be atoned for in that way; the individual himself had to pay the penalty by his blood, as I can show by reference to the book of Leviticus. However, I will cite you now to the First Epistle of John, 5th chapter and 16th verse, namely:

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

The Apostle John seems to have understood this doctrine in the same way that President Young understood it—that there are some sins that are sins unto death, and he would not counsel men to pray for a man who had sinned unto death. Hence you see that John the Apostle and Brigham Young are in harmony on this question. Let me turn now to the Epistle to

the Hebrews, the 4th verse of the 6th chapter, which reads :

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

“And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

According to the Apostle Paul, then, after a man has been enlightened by the heavenly gift, after he has received the Holy Ghost as a gift from God, after he has tasted of the good word of God and of the powers of the world to come, if he shall fall away it is impossible to renew him again unto repentance ; therefore it is impossible for him to be saved ; for he cannot repent, and there is no forgiveness without repentance, and when a man gets into such a condition that he cannot repent, he cannot be saved. If he cannot repent, he cannot be forgiven ; he must pay the penalty ; and if his sins are of such a character that he is worthy of death he must suffer the penalty ; otherwise there is no salvation for him, according to the doctrine that the Apostle lays down in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Now let me cite you to the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and 5th chapter. In the first part of this chapter the apostle refers to a very great sin, a sexual crime, which was had among the Corinthian saints. The former-day saints sometimes committed great transgressions just like some of the Latter-day Saints, so that the Latter-day Saints are no worse than the former in that respect. For in the ancient Church of Christ some apostatized, and those who

came into that Church and afterwards fell away, became much worse than people who had never tasted of the word of God, nor of the power of the world to come. The Apostle Paul writes about a gross sin that I need not mention tonight; but he says:

“For I verily, as absent in body but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present concerning him that hath done this deed,

“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

I wonder how much our modern Christian friends understand of that doctrine. Paul understood it, the Corinthian saints understood it. Here was a man who came into the Church, received the Holy Ghost, was made partaker of the heavenly gift, had rejoiced in the truth, and then, through temptation and wickedness, he went into corruption, violated the covenants he had made to be true and faithful to God by ceasing from sin, and committed a gross transgression for which he could not have forgiveness—such a one was to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Now, it seems, according to this doctrine of the Apostle Paul, that if that man was destroyed in the flesh there would be some chance for him to be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Why? Because he had made as much atonement as he possibly could for his sin. He had given his life. What is life? The life of the flesh is the blood. So the scriptures say. He was delivered over to the buffetings of Satan that he might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. This is the same as the doctrine taught by

the Savior. Brigham Young understood it perfectly. He says there are some sins men may commit for which they cannot get forgiveness, for which they will have to suffer the penalty in the world to come, but if their blood is shed as an offering for their sin, their spirits might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; just exactly as the Apostle Paul teaches here, in the text I have read to you.

Now, what kind of sins are there for which men cannot get forgiveness? The Apostle John says in the same epistle I read from just now—the 3rd chapter of the First Epistle of John:

“No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

The man who commits murder, who imbrues his hands in the blood of innocence, cannot receive eternal life, because he cannot get forgiveness of that sin. What can he do? The only way to atone is to shed his blood. Hanging is not the proper method. I refer you now to the 9th chapter of the Book of Genesis, 6 verse:

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”

That is the law of God as laid down in the beginning; that if a man shall shed blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Why? Because the blood is the life of the flesh, and is the only atonement a man can make for killing another. A murderer, by the shedding of his blood, may make some atonement for his sin; but he cannot come forth and inherit an exaltation in eternal life, he must be content with a less degree of glory. Still, as Brother Brigham taught, there is a chance for some men who have committed this great

transgression if their blood be shed, and there are others who, even if they were willing to have their blood shed, could not obtain forgiveness for their transgressions. You can read about this in the revelation on celestial marriage. (*Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. cxxxii, par. 26-7.*) They are those who have not only been baptized into the Church of Christ, received the power of the Holy Spirit and been enlightened from on high, but have been in the most sacred places on the earth, ordained of God by His holy law, and have made special covenants in relation to that and other sins; they have been specially enlightened; they have gone from step to step, from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, and have had keys of power placed in their hands whereby, if they are faithful, they may climb to the highest pinnacle of honor and glory in the presence of our Heavenly Father, and then they turn round and commit this great transgression, the shedding of innocent blood. For them there is no forgiveness. They will be banished from the presence of God; they cannot inherit the glory which was sealed upon them, however repentant they may be; they cannot come up in the first resurrection and enter into their exaltation; but they must be cast out from the presence of God and have the everlasting penalty pronounced, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity." They will be banished from the presence of God, which is spiritual destruction, that spiritual death which is called the "second death."

But, there are other persons who by making this atonement may obtain redemption—persons that have not advanced to this degree of knowledge and understanding, and whose sins are not of so heinous a nature. Because sin is gauged by the light of the in-

dividual. The depth of man's infamy is gauged by the degree of his light and his opportunity. He that knows much is expected to do much. Of him that knows but little, only little is expected. If a man has great light and he sins he is the greater sinner. I have heard people argue that all sin is the result of ignorance. Well, it is just the other way. Sin is rather the result of knowledge; because a man cannot sin without some light. An idiot cannot sin, because he is irresponsible. It takes a responsible being to do responsible wrong. The more responsible a man is, the greater wrong he does if he commits transgression. The greater a man's light is, the greater his sin. The greater the light, the greater the condemnation for doing wrong. That is based upon the eternal principle of justice. From this, then, it would seem that if a man commits a sin unto death there is no redemption: if not unto death, and he pays the penalty, there is for him a chance of salvation.

This divine law for shedding the blood of a murderer has never been repealed. It is a law given by the Almighty and not abrogated in the Christian faith. It stands on record for all time—that a murderer shall have his blood shed. He that commits murder must be slain. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." I know there are some benevolent and philanthropic people in these times who think that capital punishment ought to be abolished. Yet I think the Lord knows better than they. The law He has ordained will have the best results to mankind in general.

Well, is there any other sin that a man may commit which is worthy of death? I think there is. I will

refer to one in the Book of Leviticus, 20th chapter and 10th verse:

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

That was the law of God in the days of Moses. It was the law of God previous to the days of Moses, as you will find by reference to the Book of Genesis. It has been a law of God from the beginning. Some people have an idea that Jesus Christ did away with that law, and they bring up the case of the woman that had been taken in transgression. The object of the Pharisees in bringing the woman to the Saviør was that they might catch Him in some way. You will find by reading the history of Jesus Christ’s ministry on the earth that it was then as it is today—snares are all the time being laid to catch the servants of God. They tried to entrap Him in many ways; but He was able to meet them with the wisdom of the great God; for the Spirit of God was given to Him without measure. The woman they brought to Him was taken in this great transgression. The Pharisees knew the law of Moses was that she should be put to death. They inquired what Jesus had to say. He stooped down and thought a little while, then wrote with His finger on the ground and exclaimed, “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone!” The Pharisees looked at each other and finally they slipped away. Why? Because that was “an evil and adulterous generation.” These self-righteous hypocrites were guilty of the transgression themselves, and the person to inflict the penalty, justly, had to be one who was not guilty; for how could one

such sinner rightly inflict the penalty upon another? Jesus Christ's words smote them to the heart, and they slunk off and left the woman standing there. Did the sinner go free? Did Jesus say the law ought not to be inflicted? No. He asked: "Woman, where are thine accusers?" They are gone. "Neither do I accuse thee." It must be remembered that there must be accusers as well as judges. Jesus set a pattern which judges in these times would do well to follow. He did not act as an attorney for the prosecution or as a witness against the accused as well as a judge to pronounce the sentence. "Woman, where are those thine accusers * * * Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

In regard to this offense the law of the Lord to the Latter-day Saints teaches that if a member of the Church commits adultery and repents with all his heart he shall be forgiven, but if he does it again he shall be cast out. But there is another law in relation to this that goes a little further, that is in regard to persons who have advanced in the knowledge of God. A man who comes into this Church and is baptized for the remission of his sins and advances no further in the order of God, if he commits this transgression and truly repents and commits the sin no more—and true repentance is shown by refraining from sin in future—he may be forgiven. But if he has entered the sacred covenants spoken of in the revelation on celestial marriage and then commits that transgression, what is the penalty? Why, if it were carried out to the full extent as in times of old his blood would be shed. As it is he is excommunicated—cut off from every gospel privilege. Is not that strong doctrine? Yes, it is strong doctrine, but it is true doctrine. Should not virtue be

at least as dear to us as life? I think it should. I think that virtue should be dearer than life, if there is any difference between them. Then if he who sheds a man's blood should have his blood shed; if he who takes life is worthy of death, then he who takes that away which is dearer than life is also worthy of death, and any man who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, after he has entered the new and everlasting covenant, ought to make atonement for his transgression by the pouring out of his blood upon the earth. For he has tampered with the fountain of life, he has defiled life at its mainspring and polluted the source from which life comes. That is the doctrine upon which the law was predicated—that the adulterer and the adulteress should be put to death. Thus, there are some sins that cannot be atoned for through the blood of Christ. They can only be atoned for by the shedding of the sinner's blood. A murderer is one, and an adulterer is another. And there is plenty of proof in what I have read that this is Bible doctrine.

But I want to carry this subject a little further. Suppose we grant the position that a murderer is worthy of death, and that he is particularly worthy of death if he has been enlightened by the power of God and knows the full extent of that great transgression—supposing we admit that for the sake of argument—the next question that arises is, Who is to inflict this penalty? What do our Church laws say on this subject? I will refer you to section xlii of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and the eighteenth verse:

“And now, behold, I speak unto the Church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come.

“And again, I say, Thou shalt not kill; but he that killeth shall die.”

Here is the law of God to the Church. You know it is represented abroad that the Latter-day Saints believe in killing in a great many different directions. But here is the law of God to the Church by revelation. This is the word of God Almighty to the Saints. This law is given to people who have been baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, who have been made partakers of the heavenly gift—“Thou shalt not kill; but he that killeth shall die.” But that does not answer the question, Who is to inflict the penalty? I will refer you to a passage a little further on in the same revelation—section xlii, verse 79:

“It shall come to pass, that if any persons among you shall kill, they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land; for remember that he hath no forgiveness, and it shall be proven according to the laws of the land.”

Now, there is the word of the Lord to this Church—that if a man kills he shall be delivered up to be dealt with according to the laws of the land. Here, you will see, there is a general principle laid down by the Lord to the Church—that they are to obey the laws of the land. If a man commits a crime he is to be delivered over to be dealt with according to the laws of the land, and his offense is to be proven, not by the laws of the Church, but by the laws of the land. The Church can withdraw fellowship from him, but the Church has no authority to execute the death penalty. A man may be deserving of death, but it is not in the province of the Church to kill, he must be delivered over to be dealt with according to the laws of the land.

But here I shall be cited by our opponents to some remarks by Elder Jedediah M. Grant. Little bits of extracts have been sent abroad from time to time, and a great many false constructions put upon them. But here is something that seems to come in conflict with the revelation I have read:

“I say that there are men and women that I would advise to go to the President immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their case; and then let a place be selected, and let that committee shed their blood.” (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4, page 51.*)

What kind of folks was he talking about? Let us see.

“Some have received the Priesthood, a knowledge of the things of God, and they dishonor the cause of truth, commit adultery and every other abomination beneath the heavens, and then meet you here or on the street and deny it.” (*Journal of Discourses, Vol. 4, page 51.*)

These were the kind of people he was talking about. Brother Grant expressed in this strong language his feelings in regard to these transgressors. He felt that they were worthy of death; and that the only chance for them was to have their blood shed. You must remember that this was at the time of the reformation, when all the people in these valleys were required to repent of their sins and renew their covenants; when the power of God rested upon the people and caused them to rise in their meetings and confess their sins, and then it was found that some men who had received the Priesthood had committed adultery and other great transgressions, as members had done in the early Christian church. This was why Brother Grant expressed himself so strongly.

The question arises whether any one of these received the penalty. Does any one know of a single case of blood atonement, in the popular sense of the term, having been inflicted in Utah? If you do, you know more than I do, and I have investigated the matter pretty thoroughly. Has there ever been a case of blood-shedding by the authorities of the Church, or by the sanction of the Church, outside of the regular operations of the criminal law? I say there has not, and let those who say there have been such instances bring forth proofs. The burden of proof is upon them. I deny that there has ever been a case of blood atonement in Utah, in the sense that the charge has been spread abroad to the world. I admit that the doctrine has been preached, that men have committed sins for which they were worthy of death—sins for which they could not get forgiveness short of shedding their blood; but I deny that the law has been enforced, and I will give you the reason why it was not enforced. This is from a sermon by President Brigham Young, published in the same book, page 220:

“I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain in order to atone for their sins. I have seen scores and hundreds of people for whom there would have been a chance (in the last resurrection there will be) if their lives had been taken and their blood spilled on the ground as a smoking incense to the Almighty, but who are now angels to the devil until our Elder Brother Jesus Christ raises them up—conquers death, hell and the grave. * * * The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbid this principle’s being in full force, but the time will come when the law of God will be in full force.”

I now read from the same discourse, page 219:

“The time has been in Israel under the law of God,

the celestial law, or that which pertains to the celestial law, for it is one of the laws of that kingdom where our Father dwells, that if a man was found guilty of adultery he must have his blood shed, and that is near at hand. But now I say, in the name of the Lord, that if this people sin no more, but faithfully live their religion, their sins will be forgiven them without taking life."

President Young and Jedediah M. Grant preached this doctrine to the people at that time, because there was a necessity for it in consequence of the transgressions of the people, and it worked upon them in the same way that the instructions which Jesus Christ gave to His apostles acted upon the people in His day, and have a similar effect in this day—that is, by the principle of fear. For instance, Jesus declared:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

You will find just such declarations all through the revelations of God. His servants in preaching the gospel have had to hold up the penalty for sin that fear might take hold upon the wicked, and that people might be led not to transgress the divine commands. There is a higher law to which we all should advance, and that is that men should learn to do right for righteousness sake; men should learn to avoid wrong because it is wrong, not because they will be damned for doing it, not because there will be a penalty inflicted for committing sin, but because it is wrong and their souls revolt against it. Men should do right for the love of it, not because there is a reward for doing right, but because right is good, and is beautiful, and is exalting. But have all mankind reached that high plane? No; very few have advanced to it.

The doctrine of condemnation has to be preached to the world as well as the doctrine of salvation. People have to be encouraged by the hope of reward, and deterred from doing wrong by the fear of punishment; whereas, he that is governed by the higher law—the law that God lives, that Jesus Christ lives—says, “This is right, therefore I will do it; that is wrong, therefore I will avoid it *because* it is wrong; for if I do wrong it debases me, but if I do right it exalts me.” For the practice of right elevates a man, while the practice of wrong brings him down and degrades him. But the divine appeal to all is, generally, “If you will keep my commandments you will be rewarded; if you commit transgression you shall be damned.” That is the word of the Lord to the world. Now, Brothers Jedediah M. Grant and Brigham Young, because of the transgressions of the people, spoke as I have quoted. This was the time of the “reformation” and the fears of evil-doers were worked upon to induce reform, and hence the strong language used at that time. Do we need the same language now? I hope not; but if there was any need for it, it would be just as applicable now as then.

The reason why this penalty referred to by President Young was not inflicted as in olden time was because of the laws of the land. We have to observe them as I have just read to you. The law of the land says that if a man kills he shall suffer death. But the laws of the land do not say that the adulterer shall be put to death. Therefore, the penalty, however deserved, cannot be inflicted. Sometimes an injured husband pursues the seducer or the adulterer, and sheds his blood, and it is very seldom, if ever, in this country, that a person who takes the law into his own hands

and inflicts this penalty has to suffer the judgment of the law against murder. A jury of his countrymen will scarcely ever convict a man who takes vengeance on the seducer of his wife, sister or daughter. But it is not for the Church to inflict this deserved penalty, because the Church wishes to observe the laws of the land; and the commandment of God is, if a man commits murder he shall be delivered up to be dealt with according to the laws of the land.

Now, if there appears to be some conflict between Elder Jedediah M. Grant's remarks which I have quoted, and what I read to you from the Doctrine and Covenants—I don't think there is however—it must be remembered that we are to be governed by the law of God. And the law of God by revelation from on high, the law of God as revealed through the head, is of greater importance and more binding than the opinions of any man no matter who he may be. The law of God is paramount. When men give their views upon any doctrine, the value of those views is as the value of the man. If he is a wise man, a man of understanding, of experience and authority, such views are of great weight with the community; but they are not paramount, nor equal to the revealed law of God. However, I see no conflict between Brother Grant's views and the revelation, and I have explained to you from President Young's own discourse the reason why the death penalty was not inflicted, and this is evidence that as a matter of fact it was not inflicted.

Yet the most frightful stories have been published concerning the alleged blood atonement among the "Mormons," and the most horrible pictures have been printed to illustrate those imaginary sacrifices. I wish I could throw upon a screen these pictures published in

this book "The Mysteries of Mormonism," that you might see for yourselves. These stories and disgusting pictures have been published and spread abroad throughout the United States for the purpose of misrepresenting this doctrine of blood atonement. I know of no fitting use for such works unless it is to be put in the fire. But that you may know something of the character of this book I will read to you an extract:

"Mrs. Maxwell had two sons, aged respectively fourteen and sixteen years. Their father urged them to go through the Endowment House and become Mormons, bound by all the oaths of the church. Mrs. Maxwell objected, and in order to prevail over her sons she told them the secrets of the Endowment House.

"The penalty for revealing these secrets is dismemberment of the body, the throat cut, and the tongue torn out.

"Mr. Maxwell overheard his wife, being in an adjoining room, and forthwith he informed the Elders, who sent for the unfortunate woman and her two sons. They were taken into what is called the 'dark pit,' a blood-atoning room under Brigham Young's house. The woman was then stripped of all her clothing, and then tied on her back to a large table. Six members of the Priesthood then performed their damnable crime; they first cut off their victim's tongue, they then cut her throat, after which her legs and arms were severed.

"The sons were compelled to stand by and witness this dreadful slaughter of their mother. They were then released and given twenty-four hours to get out of the Territory, which was then an impossibility. The sons went directly to the house of a friend, to whom they related the butchery of their mother, and obtaining a package of provisions they started; but on the following morning they were both dead.

"They had met the Danites.

"Created in the most sombre secrecy, this infam-

ous organization was from the first a shadowy terror known only by its works. The real calling of a 'Destroying Angel' is rarely known save among his fellows. To the bulk of the people to whom he is a constant menace, the assassin of the church is a mere spectre, red-handed, merciless and deadly, but invisible" "and therefore the more dreadful. Your murderer might be your own brother, and you never dream it, so well are the secrets of this shameful order kept."

Now the person who wrote this, claims to have seen one of these "Destroying Angels," or "Danites," and I will read what is said, so that you will see how much value to place upon the story:

"An instance of this: One day in Salt Lake City I was out walking with a male relative, and a man stopped us. During the conversation I watched him closely, because he was so handsome—with light, wavy brown hair, skin like a girl's, and beautiful blue eyes. He was tall and of slender build. He was dressed after the fashion of men in general, except that he wore a large sombrero, which he kept drawn well over his face. He conversed affably, his voice being noticeably melodious. After he went his way my cousin said:

" 'Well, you have seen one at last.'

" 'One what?' I asked.

" 'An Avenging Angel.'

" 'Where, where?' I asked, looking around.

" 'Why, the man who has just left us. He is the chief 'Avenging Angel,' and has had a hand in the bloodiest deeds that have stained the record of this Territory.' "

That is how she knew that she had seen a "Destroying Angel." What could be more convincing? Her cousin told her so and she was prepared to credit that and more too, and hence the "horrible tales" that are told to travelers who are ready to gulp them down.

These are the kind of stories published to the world in regard to this doctrine of blood atonement. I think I will read an extract or two from another work: "Fifteen years among the Mormons," which has been circulated extensively throughout the country. The author of this work—Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith—says:

"I deem it proper to state in connection, that the mysteries of the Second Anointing of the Endowments, among other inhuman ceremonies are supposed—"

A good many things supposed, you see.

"to be defiled by the monstrous rite of offering human sacrifices, or at least, that the doctrine is fully taught and developed there. Enough has already transpired among the women to justify this conclusion. Those who have not taken this anointing, and but a comparatively small number have taken it, are very alarmed about this as they know not what to expect. They are always upon the rack, as they are liable to be called upon at any time to go to the Endowment rooms for that purpose."

How much truth there is in that you folks that are "on the rack" can tell. You would never have known in what fears you lived if this veracious (?) historian had not told you.

Again:

"The Mormons recognize the *right*, and inculcate the *duty* of the father to slay his daughter or her lover, as a last resort, to prevent her marriage with a 'Gentile.'"

Did you "Mormons" ever hear of such a "right or duty" before? But here is a story of a father who is said to have been absent when his daughter married a "Gentile." I read from the same book:

"For when he heard of it, he wrote to the prophet

blaming him very severely for not preventing the marriage by the sacrifice of her life. He wrote that he should always feel dissatisfied because the blood of his daughter had not been shed to atone for the sin of marrying out of the church."

What do you think of a story like that? But here is an account of a man by "the name of Hartly," who is said to have been "blood atoned:"

"I do not understand all he discovered, or all he did; but they found he had written against the Church, and he was cut off; and the prophet required, as an atonement for his sins, that he should lay down his life. That he should be sacrificed in the endowment rooms, where human sacrifices are sometimes made in this way. This I never knew until my husband told me, but it is true. They kill those there who have committed sins too great to be atoned for in any other way. The prophet says if they submit to this he can save them; otherwise they are lost. Oh, that is horrible!"

It is indeed very horrible; almost as horrible to invent such falsehoods as the stories would be if they were true. But I do not think I will take up any more time in reading extracts of that kind. There is just one more, however, that I would like to read from a lecture by the Rev. Sheldon Jackson, who was once in this city, and who has delivered a great many misleading lectures on "Mormonism." In a lecture delivered in Dr. Cuyler's church in Brooklyn, he said:

"The Mormon women are expected to do all the work of the farm and support the man, leaving him to idle away his time if he likes, perhaps hunting or fishing. They are not only servants, but slaves; and if any wife tries to escape she is shot down by the Danites, and her carcass is left to rot on the ground."

These are a very few of the stories circulated in regard to this doctrine of blood atonement, and it has been given out by a sheet published in this city—the name of which I never like to mention, it always leaves such a bad taste in my mouth—that a great many persons, Latter-day Saints, have been blood-atoned; that is, they have had their blood shed for the commission of certain sins; that the doctrine of the Church is that apostates must have their blood shed, and to carry this doctrine still further it has been stated that persons who never were members of the Church at all have been “blood-atoned.” The Mountain Meadows massacre is referred to. Those who suffered that awful fate, were it is asserted, “blood-atoned;” and the same has been said of some horse-thieves who were killed while escaping from the officers of justice. Well, the best answer to all these stories is, that they cannot produce a single case of blood-atonement—cannot produce one individual case of a man or woman in this Territory who has suffered, at the hands of the Church, this penalty that President Young said ought to be inflicted upon persons guilty of capital crimes. There are, no doubt, many persons that ought to be killed who are still living, and you need not go very far from this hall to find them. Criminals may be worthy of death, but who is going to kill them? I would not soil my hands with their blood nor their persons. The further I can get away from them the better for me. Would I touch a hair of their heads? No, I would not. I would let the law take its course, and if the law does not take its course, then I would leave them in the hands of the Lord. Is not that the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints? I think it is. I know the principles of our faith pretty well.

I know the feelings of the leaders of the Church—Presidents Taylor, Cannon and Smith—and other authorities of the Church. They have a horror, a repugnance to the shedding of blood. They have no desire in their hearts to inflict any penalty of that kind upon any individual. And as to transgressors who are not of our faith, they want nothing to do with them. All we claim the right to do in this respect is to defend ourselves against our enemies, and we have the law of God on that question. We are told in the book of Doctrine and Covenants that if our enemies come against us and they repent, we are to forgive them. And if they come again the second time, they are to be forgiven; also the third time they are to be forgiven; and if they still persist and seek our lives, we have the right to defend ourselves to the last extremity. But if we then forgive them we shall be rewarded for our righteousness. All this shows that the Lord does not delight in the shedding of blood, neither do His servants. We are told that we shall not be blood shedders. We are to be temple builders. David of old was not allowed to build the temple because he was not clean from the blood of his generation. And the people called Latter-day Saints, from the heads of the Church down to the humblest member, have a horror of the shedding of human blood. They are not a bloody-minded people. They are a forbearing people, as our cowardly persecutors are well aware. And yet there is a point where forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

These are some of the ideas entertained by the Latter-day Saints on the subject of blood atonement. After baptized persons have made sacred covenants with God and then commit deadly sins, the only atonement they can make is the shedding of their blood. At

the same time, because of the laws of the land, and the prejudices of the nation, and the ignorance of the world, this law cannot be carried out. But when the time comes that the law of God shall be in full force upon the earth, then this penalty will be inflicted for those crimes committed by persons under covenant not to commit them.

There is one passage I read from Prest. Young's discourse that may need a little explanation. We will let him explain himself. I read to you just now that Prest. Young said he had known of many instances where men had been righteously slain to atone for their sins. Let me read it again:

"I could refer you to plenty of instances where men have been righteously slain in order to atone for their sins."

That sentence is copied and scattered broadcast throughout the nation, coupled with some other little bits, here and there, from his sayings. Our opponents tack them together, sometimes giving the first part of a sentence and leaving the latter part out; at others, giving the latter part, but omitting the former, making the quotation have a different meaning to that which was intended; after the fashion of joining these two scraps of scripture:

"And Judas went out and hanged himself."

"Go thou and do likewise."

They tack portions of sentences together and send them forth as the veritable utterances of the "Mormon" leaders. I will read to you what Brigham Young really meant and said in regard to those who had been "righteously slain for their sins." I read from the same page

of the same discourse. (*Journal of Discourses*, page 220):

“Now, take the wicked, and I can refer you to where the Lord had to slay every soul of the Israelites that went out of Egypt except Caleb and Joshua. He slew them by the hands of their enemies, by the plague and by the sword. Why? Because He loved them and promised Abraham He would save them.”

Who was Brigham Young referring to when he said that in many instances men had been righteously slain to atone for their sins? Any one who had lived in latter times? No, but those old Israelites whom the Lord slew. He referred also to the people that lived in the days of Noah, and other transgressors in early times whom the scriptures say the Lord destroyed for their sins. Now, that is Brigham Young's doctrine of blood atonement.

It will be necessary to say a few words in regard to the supposed order of “Danites,” because the doctrine of blood atonement, as misrepresented to the world, is always intimately connected with that alleged order. Danites are supposed to be a body of men who inflict the penalty of blood atonement. Let me say here, once and for all, that I know of no such order, never have known of any such order. Is there anybody here who knows of Danites, cut-throats or destroying angels, who lie in the way of apostates, and prevent their leaving the Territory? No. You will find that all these stories told by lecturers and others are derived from tales told by untruthful men who are opposed to us. Talk about Danites and destroying angels, and about people being killed to prevent their escape from Utah! Is it not remarkable that these people who have been in such imminent danger of being killed always man-

age to make their "escape?" Our enemies cannot point to a single instance where a person who wanted to get away from Utah did not "escape."

The Danite idea sprang from a circumstance that occurred in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I will read an extract from the history of Joseph Smith, under date of October, 1838, published in the *Millennial Star*, in 1854. This idea of Danites had gone abroad so much that the Prophet thought the falsehoods circulated ought to be corrected:

"And here I would state, that while the evil spirits were raging up and down in the State to raise mobs against the 'Mormons,' Satan himself was no less busy in striving to stir up mischief in the camp of the Saints; and among the most conspicuous of his willing devotees was one Doctor Sampson Avard, who had been in the Church but a short time, and who, although he had generally behaved with a tolerable degree of external decorum, was secretly aspiring to be the greatest of the great, and become the leader of the people. This was his pride and his folly, but as he had no hopes of accomplishing it by gaining the hearts of the people in open strife, he watched his opportunity with the brethren, at a time when mobs oppressed, robbed, whipped, burned, plundered and slew, till forbearance seemed no longer a virtue, and nothing but the grace of God without measure could support men under such trials, to form a secret combination by which he might rise a mighty conqueror, at the *expense of the overthrow of the Church*; and this he tried to accomplish by his smooth, flattering and winning speeches, which he frequently made to his associates, while his room was well guarded by some of his pupils, ready to give him the wink on the approach of anyone who would not approve of his measures.

"In this situation, he stated that he had the sanction of the heads of the Church for what he was about to do; and by his smiles and flattery persuaded them

to believe it, and proceeded to administer to the few under his control, an oath, binding them to everlasting secrecy to everything which should be communicated to them by himself. Thus Avard initiated members into his band, firmly binding them, by all that was sacred, in the protecting of each other in all things that were lawful; and was careful to picture out a great glory that was then hovering over the Church, and would soon burst upon the Saints as a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and would soon unveil the slumbering mysteries of heaven, which would gladden the hearts and arouse the stupid spirits of the Saints of the latter-day, and fill their hearts with that love which is unspeakable and full of glory, and arm them with power, that the gates of hell could not prevail against them; and would often affirm to his company, that the principal men of the Church had put him forward as a spokesman, and a leader of this band which *he* named *Danites*. * * * *

“After those performances he held meetings to organize his men into companies of tens and fifties, appointing a captain over each company. * * * *

“When a knowledge of Avard’s rascality came to the Presidency of the Church, he was cut off from the Church, and every means properly used to destroy his influence, at which he was highly incensed, and went about whispering his evil insinuations, but finding every effort unavailing, he again turned conspirator, and sought to make friends with the mob.

“And here let it be distinctly understood, that these companies of tens and fifties got up by Avard, were altogether separate and distinct from those companies of tens and fifties organized by the brethren for self-defense, in case of an attack from the mob, and more particularly that in this time of alarm no family or person might be neglected, therefore, one company would be engaged in drawing wood, another in cutting it, another in gathering corn, another in grinding, another in butchering, another in distributing meat, etc., so that all should be employed in turn, and no

one lack the necessaries of life. Therefore, let no one hereafter, by mistake or design, confound this organization of the Church for good and righteous purposes, with the organization of the Danites, of the apostate Avard, which died almost before it had existence."

There is a further reference on the same subject in a letter from the Prophet Joseph Smith, dated December, 1838, to be found in the same volume, page 627:

"We have learned also since we have been prisoners, that many false and pernicious things, which were calculated to lead the Saints far astray and to do great injury, have been taught by Dr. Avard as coming from the Presidency, and we have reason to fear that many other designing and corrupt characters like unto himself, have been teaching many things which the Presidency never knew of being taught in the Church by anybody until after they were made prisoners, which if they had known of, they would have spurned them and their authors from them, as they would the gates of hell. Thus we find that there have been frauds and secret abominations and evil works of darkness going on, leading the minds of the weak and unwary into confusion and distraction, and palming it all the time upon the Presidency, while meantime the Presidency were ignorant as well as innocent of those things which were practising in the Church in their name."

It will be seen, then, that this notion about "Danites" and "Destroying Angels" originated in the way indicated in what I have read. This was the little bit of fire from which all this smoke has arisen. Behold how great a matter that little fire hath kindled! All the stories about preventing people leaving this Territory, about "Danites" or "Destroying Angels" way-laying apostates and shedding their blood; all the horrible, blood-curdling stories like those I have refererd to—

stories about men and women being taken out on the prairie to starve or to welter in their blood—all these are lies made out of whole cloth. The organization was started in the way I have shown. That is all there is to that matter.

But before I sit down I want to say a word or two about the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Perhaps this subject should be taken up on another occasion and gone into fully. I claim, however, that the Latter-day Saints are no more to be charged with the great crime that was committed at Mountain Meadows than any other church is to be charged for the wrongs done by its church members. I have not time tonight to go into the details of this subject, to show who were engaged in the crime, and how it came to be committed; I will leave that to be done on some other occasion. I wish, however, to put on record for myself, and my brethren and sisters of the Church of which we are members, that we have a horror, a loathing and a repugnance at the wickedness of that crime; that the Church never did endorse the deed; that the Church never had any hand in it; that the Church never condoned it afterwards; that as soon as the President of the Church found out that John D. Lee had been implicated in it he was cut off from the Church and left to be dealt with according to the laws of the land; that President Young was innocent of any participation in that crime; and that the delay in bringing Lee to justice was not due to President Young, or to any stumbling blocks thrown in the way by the Latter-day Saints—any leader of the Church, any Elder or any members of the Church—but was due to the laxity of the officers of

the law themselves, and I could prove it, if there was time, by documents which I could produce.*

But the word has gone out to the world—it is published all over the earth wherever our Elders go; it is sent out from this city purposely to misrepresent this people, and our Elders who go forth to preach the gospel without purse or scrip, who leave their homes and suffer hunger and thirst, and sometimes have no place to lay their heads, to bear testimony, as servants of God, to the truth as it has come from heaven—that the gospel is restored, that the power of the Priesthood is here, that the way is opened up whereby men may gain access to the Father and a knowledge of the things of eternity; I say when these men go out to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to warn the inhabitants of the earth of the judgments to come, they are met with copies of that sheet that I have alluded to with falsehoods about the Mountain Meadows massacre, holding the Church responsible for it, putting the blame on President Young, and people's minds are closed against the truth in consequence of the flood of falsehoods that has been poured out.

I wish to say here tonight, that the Church never authorized that terrible crime committed upon the emigrants at Mountain Meadows; that the few whites engaged in it claimed that it was principally done by Indians; that the Church does not condone the shedding of blood; that the doctrine of the Church is, he that kills shall be delivered over to be dealt with according to the laws of the land, but it shall be proven against him by the laws of the land. Has there ever been an iota of proof brought forward to connect Pres-

*See my lecture, "The Mountain Meadows Massacre."

ident Young with that terrible crime at Mountain Meadows? No. No proof, but a great deal of supposition. If imagination and jumping at conclusions are worth anything it might be said to have been proven. But it cannot be proven because it is not true. President Young's body lies in the tomb; his spirit has gone to the spirit world; he is not here to defend himself; but I take the liberty of saying, in behalf of President Young, from conclusive evidence, that he was not aware of that dreadful crime until after it was committed; that he never condoned it, never sanctioned it, never palliated it in the least degree; he had a horror of it. And our leading men today—Presidents John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith—have a horror of that dreadful deed; they denounce it as a crime and never palliated it in the least degree. From what I have read to you tonight you will see that our belief accords with the scripture that says: "A murderer hath not eternal life abiding in him," and that a man who has been enlightened by the Holy Ghost and who commits that great crime cannot obtain forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come, and that after receiving the new and everlasting covenant even the shedding of his blood would not atone for that sin.

Now, my brethren, and sisters, and friends, although I have had to lay aside a number of extracts, which I have not had time to introduce, I think I have proved to you that the doctrine of blood atonement is a Bible doctrine, Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian; not only an Old Testament, but a New Testament doctrine; that the Bible as well as President Young teaches that a murderer should have his blood shed, and that the adulterer should suffer the penalty of his crime by death; that the stories that have been circulated and





