

made since its restoration in the dispensation in which we live, until today. And here we must confess that the verity of the Savior's words have been most fully established, that the truth comes not to us in its fulness; comes not to us in its complete and entire character; but it comes to us as a beautiful little bud upon a choice and tender plant that blooms; it comes to us as a growing protuberance on the top of a stem; it comes to us presenting the appearance of something more to follow; it swells: it enlarges; the leaves that modestly and beautifully cover up the internal structure of that bud begin to open and expand through the vitalizing energies of the sun, whose radiating rays impart warmth and life and vigor to the growing plant. And it grows stronger and higher; it branches, and spreads, and opens more and more until the blossom is spread open to full view, and kisses the sunbeams as they descend through the vestibule of Nature's laboratory into the *sanctum sanctorum*, if you please, where the formative principles and coordinating laws reside. The plant has passed through many stages of unfoldment from its germinal origin to its maturity—its maximum attainment. It has spent its energies in self-development and in elaborating provisions for a new existence. The environments change. The winter of its life has come. It passes into a season of rest, to be again called into new life and enlarged activity when spring-time comes again. This exemplifies the great law of growth and progress in universal nature, not only in the "lily of the valley," but in the realm of universal nature where God presides.

Now the Gospel has come to us something after the fashion pre-

sented in this little figure. It was not given to us in its entirety; it came to us line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. We are, moreover, informed in holy writ, that Jesus, who was the likeness of the Father and the express image of His person, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that He did not receive of that fulness at first, but received grace for grace; He increased, He grew in knowledge and in favor with God and man; and He is the great prototype, the great exemplifier of our faith. And so has been the growth and faith of the Latter-day Saints.

When we received this faith, we received it in the simplicity of our hearts. We received it as a message from God, not comprehending it in its entirety any more than the child when he is conducted to school and placed in a primary class to receive his first lesson, is capable of understanding all at once the several courses of study and the various branches of knowledge which he has the capacity to acquire. No, my friends, he learns little by little; he learns first to distinguish between the various forms of the characters to which are attached specific and distinct sounds, and by which they are to be known. He learns to attach the proper value to each and all as they stand in relation to one another in the alphabet; and after mastering that, learns to arrange and rearrange and change and modify the relationship of those characters, producing various results according to the principles of orthography and orthoepy. Thus he acquires a knowledge of the language he speaks. So with every other branch of knowledge in like manner, the study of theology being no exception to the rule.