

The New Birth and Baptism

WE HAVE ALREADY pointed out that in the history of Israel a process of enlightenment was carried forward through the instrumentality of great prophet-souls which revealed the nature of God. In Jesus this process was consummated. Prophets in our day have been at pains to make explicit what was implicit in the ministry of Christ, and under his Spirit they have elucidated the nature of the coming kingdom in terms we moderns can understand.

But not only was the nature of God and his ideal for man and society shown forth. Correspondingly the nature of man comes clearly into focus, and it will be necessary for us to analyze what we have on this subject, so as to see, perhaps a little more clearly, the nature of those to whom our ministry is to be directed. We shall endeavor to discuss the nature of man and the evaluation of him as given in the Scriptures, and compare it with some modern theories.

SIN AND THE FALL

The fact that the Scripture proclaims a gospel of redemption rests upon the assumption that in humanity as it stands there is something radically perverted, something which nothing but the action of God can remedy, something which forever disqualifies man from association and communion with his Maker, and which robs him of his own best possibilities. The cause of this perversion is sin. "There is no man that sinneth not" (I Kings 8: 46; cf. Ecclesiastes 7: 20; Job 4: 17 Revised Version, margin, 14: 4; 15: 14-16) Moses, Aaron and Samuel were "heard," "forgiven," and "punished" (Psalm 99: 8) Isaiah confesses his own sin and that of his people (6: 5). Even before his birth the Psalmist acknowledges sin as inherent in his nature (51: 5). A keen sense of humanity's sin pervaded Jewish literature. Thus when John

(This is the fourth of a series of lectures delivered before a group of church appointees in Chicago, during December, 1945.)

By Apostle Arthur A. Oakman

the Baptist came he preached "the remission of sins." Jesus did not seem to think however, that humanity was entirely hopeless. He appreciated natural goodness. Some are "not far from the kingdom of God." Others by their natural disposition bind his healing power to themselves. Publicans and harlots are assured a ready forgiveness if only they repent. The absence of ceremonial observance he seems in no case to evaluate as the cause of sin. He places sin firmly in its rightful place, in the heart or in the desires of men. He thus sets about to make their lives right at the center. But hypocrisy, self-righteousness, avarice and pride he saw as insurmountable barriers to the good life. Unmercifulness and the failure to do good actively he casts into outer darkness.

While we acknowledge that Jesus was ready and eager to forgive sin when the sinner repented, we must never forget that he infinitely deepened and broadened the sense of sin. "It hath been said by them of old time—but I say unto you." He is not deceived by appearances. "If ye *being evil* know how to give good gifts . . ." And again, "But Jesus did not trust himself to man, for he knew what was in man." And, if his redeeming power was to be applied, it demanded the equivalent of self-mutilation. "This is my body which I will give for (or in exchange for) the life of the world . . ." Thus, he said, none can be fit for the kingdom without a fundamental reconstruction of their nature, which begins by a voluntary *turning* of man from his own past under the glory of the revealment of God in Christ. "Except ye be born again." "Except ye become as little children." Jesus knew that human-

ity was untrustworthy as it stood—many a philanthropist by bitter experience has been turned into a cynic, and wise men have gone mad when their trust in their fellows has played them false.

So, then, Jesus, and indeed the whole New Testament, assures us of the nature of God, and of his free forgiveness and renewal upon repentance. We do not find the ways of God there manifest to satisfy our curiosity. But we do find a Gospel, good news of life and renewal for all. "Whosoever will may come . . ."

The *Book of Mormon* is quite clear, in the main, in supporting this estimate of man. "I would that ye should remember . . . your own nothingness before him." "Are we not all beggars?" "Our natures have become evil before thee continually because of the fall . . ." In moments of exalted insight something like the following is uttered, "O! the frailties and the vainness and the foolishness of men!" "Yea, the very God of Heaven they trample under foot."

Modern prophecy has the same thing to say. "Every man walketh in his own way after the image of his own God." "All flesh is corruptible before me." The tremendous impulsion to cleanse and purify the sons of men which is the genius of priesthood, and the sense of urgency which accompanies this throughout the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*, is given in order that men might be prepared against the "day when the wicked shall be consumed . . ."

THE CURRENT CONCEPTION

When we turn from Holy Writ

to appreciate the spirit abroad today we find a great contrast. Ever since the Renaissance we have listened to the gospel of the kingdom of man. The industrial revolution and the tremendous advance in scientific knowledge has caused the outer world to be made subservient to man's purposes, and a gigantic sense of power has come to him, which has almost if not entirely obliterated the sense of his own inner need. The Bible is now considered out of date, because it seems to disparage what delights the modern mind—the conception of "God in man." Psychology has rationalized prayer, and psychiatry has cast out the devil. "Within you is the power," is what we hear time and again.

Strangely enough, along with this sense of power and the inflation of the modern ego, there prevails a cynically low estimate of man's ability to restrain his lusts. We moderns seem to want a God who will sit with us in the gutter, and be so fully identified with us as to take us as we are—or else. He must not condemn us for our sins. In conformity with this attitude we are content with what we find of him as a result of our own searchings and stirrings. But, we are not in very good heart about world redemption. The new atomic bomb is a bomb for the "benefit" of mankind. With all our strivings and our searchings, with all our vaunted power and dominion, our hearts are failing us for fear.

What a contrast to the optimism of Christianity! While it sees clearly the need for humanity's utter renewal and cleansing, while it certainly affirms that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," yet it goes forth in triumphant glory at the prospect of new life found in association with Christ's society. There, brethren, you have a paradox which you will do well to think about. Our church needs to rediscover the "joy of its salvation."

But, as if in confirmation of the prophets and of Jesus, the seers of the human spirit—the poets—whose

works endure because they had insight into human nature, are as emphatic as the Scriptures that "our life is a false nature—'tis not the harmony of things." Thus, in effect Rousseau, Byron and Shelley. And what shall we say of Shakespeare, that greatest of all Renaissance prophets—that profound student of human nature? Listen to what he says:

What a piece of work is man!
How noble in reason!
How infinite in faculty.
In form and moving how express and admirable.
In action, how like an angel.
In apprehension how like a god
The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals.

This man wrote in a time when bitter religious controversies were sweeping the world, when acrimony and bigotry were rife, when the human personality did not count for much. Yet he stood marvelously aloof. He approached mankind as a spectator, free from all this bickering. Yet observe how his estimate slowly and inexorably and subtly changes. His last sonnets particularly the 129th give us this picture of lust as

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action.

And he concludes

All the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

How that confirms the ancient statement:

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,
But the end thereof is the ways of death.

Shakespeare's great tragedies tell the same story. Macbeth trusted in powers that destroyed him, and none was so blind as he himself. Thus it is that sin destroys men, by deceiving them. It blinds them. It leads them captive. (Genesis 3: 5, Inspired Version.)

It is like a cancer. It feeds on the best of them. And it has within itself no means of cure.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

THE SCRIPTURES AND MODERN THEORIES

The scriptural doctrine of sin and the fall was not arrived at by philosophical speculation, but was received as part of a teaching about God and man. Today there are many theories to account for the origin of evil and about three of these I wish briefly to speak.

1. The first of these imputes sin to be in the flesh or in the material world. Christian Science denies the reality of evil by denying the reality of the visible created order. The early church fought a battle against this error many years ago with the Gnostics, who vacillated between extreme asceticism and ribald license. The Gnostics felt that to believe in matter as evil begets the desire to be free from the body, so some of them renounced earthly pleasures. "But we cannot so be free," others said—and so the body was viewed by these as the temporary envelope of the soul, and bodily acts as morally indifferent. So, the rebound to license.

But the early church and the Scripture as a whole teach that nothing is bad but the will to evil—the will to misuse the things of this world. They clearly teach that there are not two rival gods or created orders, but that Jehovah who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the creator and sustainer of all that is, and that he must take responsibility, in the very last analysis, for all that happens. So Paul admonishes the saints to "present your bodies, holy, a living sacrifice." This unfortunate tendency to see the source of sin in the material world led to all sorts of weird theories of the nature of Christ. Some said he was a Ghost, since he could not have been contaminated with a material body.

(To be continued.)

www.LatterDayTruth.org

The New Birth and Baptism

(Continued from last week.)

By Apostle Arthur A. Oakman

2. There is a doctrine abroad today which grows out of the idea of development. This doctrine or idea is applied to the historical process and states that the animal and tiger in us is responsible for the ill will in the world, that "sin is a relic of man's rise, and not a result of his fall." Accordingly, all we need is a little more time, and some further enlightenment, and we will outgrow the animal within us. Now, no doubt, there is an important element of truth in the doctrine of development. Mankind has had a checkered career, and we can see where improvement has been made over the years and where the social conscience of mankind is being slowly and painfully developed. But to say that the millenium will come inevitably regardless of what we may do or may not do is to deny the very thing that sin is. Sin is rebellion against God, which subverts the order of creation, and places our entire being out of harmony with the law which is designed to preserve us. And—there is as much sin today in New York as there was in New Amsterdam three or four generations or so ago. There is as much sin in modern London as there was in ancient Britain. It may be of a little different kind, but it shows no signs of being outgrown. The history of war will suffice to prove that the veneer of civilization is indeed thin, and bestiality comparable with that of Atilla's Huns still is ready to stalk abroad at the least provocation. And what, brethren, shall we say of the twisted, distorted minds which our present culture rears? Shall the powers and forces of nature forever produce that which is their crowning glory to be used for cannon fodder?

3. Again, the doctrine of determinism is also rife. According to this idea, whatever has occurred in general or in particular has, in the

last analysis, been inevitable. It could have been no other way. But if you were to insist that today I am what I am because I could have been no other, and I believe it, you destroy the springs of moral effort within me. Calvin might have caused many to believe that human actions were absolutely determined by God. But we have grown wiser since that time. Or have we? "Scientific" determinism (and this phrase is open to question) which affirms that what I am is inevitable, fixed and determined, and could have been in no other case, makes my sense of responsibility and personal guilt an illusion. And my sense of responsibility and the conviction of personal guilt is the only basis upon which moral progress can be made. Science may observe that the energy in the human organism is liberated a certain way. It may study the results of such action thus entailed. But it is not within the province of science to say that such energy could not have been liberated in any other course of action as if the incidence of human lives, the one upon the other, were the result of mechanical laws such as are put in motion when two billiard balls strike each other. We must insist on human freedom and upon agency, within certain limits of course, as a principle of our own experience, known from within.

All these theories remind one of the language of the Scriptures which refer to the function of the evil one to "deceive," and "to blind and to lead captive." Any of them, or all of them, if believed, will destroy the springs of moral effort, and so, effectively destroy agency. Against them we must insistently proclaim and steadfastly work.

THE GENESIS STORY AND EVOLUTION

The Christian doctrine of sin faces

a difficulty when it is confronted by the doctrine of evolution or the theory or principle of evolution. A word must be said in this connection. The gospel has not been content to assert that men are individually and generally sinners. It has attributed to mankind an organic unity based upon descent from a common origin. "As in Adam all died." As "Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec while in the loins of Abraham," so we, in the loins of Adam, "fell short of the glory of God." What was done then, disordered the whole race; and the drift of human life has been selfish from that day forward. As a modern Catholic writer truly affirms, "The whole dogmatic system of the Church revolves upon the two poles of sin and redemption, the old humanity and the new, Adam and Christ." There, brethren, you have it.

Popularly stated the contradiction between Genesis and Evolution took about this form. The Bible teaches that man "began at the top and fell into a brutish and sensual condition from which he can only be redeemed by act of God; while evolution presents him as beginning from a single cell and working upwards through his own efforts. Here it is in poetry:

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution
And others call it God.

And Emerson:

The Book of Nature is the Book of Fate. She turns the gigantic pages, leaf after leaf, never returning one. One leaf she lays down, a floor of granite; a thousand ages, and a bed of slate; a

thousand ages, and a measure of coal; a thousand ages and a layer of marl and mud; vegetable forms appear; her first misshapen animals, zoophyte, trilobium, fish; then saurians—rude forms in which she had only blocked her future statue concealing under these unwieldy monsters the fine type of her coming king. The face of the planet cools and dries, the races *meliora te*, and man is born. But, when a race has lived its term, it comes no more again.

We learn what patient periods must round themselves before the rock is broken, and the first lichen race has disintegrated the thinnest external plate into soil, and opened the door for the remote Flora, Fauna, Ceres and Pomona to come in. How far off yet is the trilobite, how far the quadruped, how inconceivably remote is man! All duly arrive, and then race after race of men. It is a long way from granite to the oyster; further yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul!

—Essays on
"Fate," "Nature," "Culture."

John Milton was responsible for putting about the idea that man was created in the full-blown glory of intellect and virtue, and Michelangelo objectified this in his paintings. But Genesis does not even hint at it. It suggests the complete ignorance and innocence of childhood. Clement says that man was not created perfect, but "only in a condition to attain or to receive perfection." So, in effect, all the early church fathers, and so, also, the *Doctrine and Covenants*. "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning." The Bible teaches that man was created free and empowered to co-operate with God in further perfecting his nature. Man's advance might have been inconceivably more intelligent and less costly and more glorious had he obeyed his Maker. But, constantly, since his days in the Garden of Eden, he has rebelled, and has perverted his nature. Man was made for constant dependence upon God. His growth and development, his immortality and eternal life, depend absolutely upon his maintaining relations with his Creator. But his rebellion has placed him in bondage, and he cannot redeem himself out

of his prison. He can only be rescued upon conditions of repentance; and, while man is surrounded with every inducement to turn to God, God can have no ultimate guarantee that man will finally respond. (The atonement was treated in the preceding issue.) The agony and poignancy of that doctrine rests upon this fact; that man, in the last analysis, has been created in such a manner as to be enabled to "follow after his own will"—if he so desires.

This statement in no sense conflicts with science. And the story in Genesis, whether it is fact or fiction, whether it is allegory or not, certainly objectifies the truth in simple language which every child can understand. Let the critics of the Genesis story try to invent a fable that will testify of sin in more moving and clearer terms. Genesis is confirmed every time a drunkard rolls in the gutter. Sin is always a fall, and while we may learn from our mistakes, it is foolish to suppose that the fruit of the tree of knowledge can only be obtained by going against the law of our being.

ORIGINAL SIN

I have been at pains to discuss the nature of man and of sin. Let me remind you that this is essential in order to bring out the absolute necessity of a new birth. The change required of man, if man is to inherit the Kingdom of God, is so deeply fundamental that Jesus could find no other analogy than "Except a man be born again, he cannot [even] see, the Kingdom of God." What makes this rebirth so necessary? The answer is, that our natural birth, the first birth, condemns us; and prevents us from seeing our need, or from finding our way to God. Original sin, with its sentence of death, physical and spiritual, has been passed on all of us. What is original sin? What has happened to us to make the new birth so utterly necessary? William Temple has cogently phrased the doctrine thus:

When we open our eyes as babies we see the world stretching out around us;

we are in the middle of it; all proportions and perspectives in what we see are determined by the relation—distance, height, and so forth—of the various visible objects to ourselves. This will remain true of our bodily vision as long as we live. I am the center of the world I see; where the horizon is depends on where I stand. Now just the same thing is true at first of our mental and spiritual visions. Some things hurt us; we hope they will not happen again; we call them bad. Some things please us; we hope they will happen again; we call them good. Our standard of value is the way things affect ourselves. So each of us takes his place in the center of his own world. But I am not the center of the world, or the standard of reference as between good and bad; I am not, and God is. In other words, from the beginning I put myself in God's place. This is my original sin. I was doing it before I could speak, and everyone else has been doing it from early infancy. I am not "guilty" on this account because I could not help it. But I am in a state, from birth, in which I shall bring disaster on myself and everyone affected by my conduct unless I can escape from it. Education may make my self-centeredness less disastrous by widening my horizon of interest; so far it is like the climbing of a tower, which widens the horizon for physical vision while leaving me still the center and standard of reference. Education may do more than this if it succeeds in winning me into devotion to truth or to beauty; that devotion may effect a partial deliverance from self-centeredness. But complete deliverance can be effected only by the winning of my whole heart's devotion, the total allegiance of my will—and this only the Divine Love disclosed by Christ in his life and death can do.

The fundamental task of our ministry, then, is to so preach repentance that a conviction of sin will come to our hearers, that thereupon may be set in motion forces and powers which will sweep guilt away and refresh and renew the inward vision, and grace the souls of men with the love of God. And I submit to you, brethren, that this is a task which we dare not enter upon without deep humility, and without being conscious of Divine aid.

(To be continued.)

Nothing in the world so strengthens democracy as public recognition of the standards of Christian morality.

www.LatterDayTruth.org

The New Birth and Baptism

(Continued from last week.)

By Apostle Arthur A. Oakman

THE PREPARATORY GOSPEL

If, then, men are to be won from their sin, and saved from themselves, they must first of all be exposed to righteousness. This can be done through certain agencies which we must recognize as primary—the Spirit of Christ and the ordinances.

First, the life of Christ must be lived among men. It is still his province to quicken men; it is not ours. He it is and not us, who converts them and renews them. It is not what we may do in the church that counts, so much, but rather that which Christ can do through us. Christ's whole life was a drama which was enacted to prepare the souls of men to receive the word of life. When some came to him to ask "What shall we do that we might work the works of God," the answer was "This is the work of God, that ye receive the Son." In other words, "All these miracles which I do are simply to make the soil,—your souls,—ready to receive the seed." Men are prepared for the reception of the Divine Word by the life of Christ. "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." Whoever is truly won to Christ is won through those who manifest His spirit. What a calling and what a challenge to us! It is not alone that we must minister ideas, although we must be intelligent. It is not alone that we must have infallible methods, although these should be given careful thought. It is rather that through all these things there shall shine the love of Christ, which sees the better nature which is like him beneath the sordid exterior of the worst sinner, and loves that sinner to the point where complete surrender to the Lord Jesus is achieved. This is the gospel of preparation. There it stands, brethren, the supreme life, challenging, condemning and sham-

ing us, yet persisting in us, and inviting us to join with it in winning men from their degradation.

The key to this doctrine of the preparatory gospel is found in Section 18:2, which says "when I had finished my *preparations* unto the children of men . . ." How extremely significant! Only when men see in us that we have chosen the better part, that we have been with Jesus, only then will the common ore of our physical nature be baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost, and radiate that light which will warm and melt the hearts of others. Our ministry is one of life, not simply one of ideas, or of methods or of buildings or lands, or of gatherings, of goings to and fro. It is indeed tremendously sobering to contemplate that into our hands has been yielded, for good or ill, the opportunity Christ has of winning others to Him.

The new birth begins as men are exposed to the life of the Master. It is our profession to reveal that life. Here, before proceeding to the ordinances which consummate the new birth, I must speak of one other thing—Education.

EDUCATION AND THE NEW BIRTH

This is the most enlightened age that ever was. Knowledge has been increased. Our dominion over the external world has been immeasurably extended. We have conquered time, we have eliminated space, and subdued substance and made them serve our purposes. But we have not subdued our rebellion against the law of our inward being. The truth is *we have lost the way*.

Education has been likened to the headlamps on an automobile carrying a body of men through a dark night on a lonely road. Its function is to light the way. "Our knowledge," says Santayana, "is a torch of smoky pine" which lights

the pathway. But if we take this analogy it will readily be seen that the people in the car choose the road, and that education, therefore, is simply the servant of the purposes men choose in life. Education (as we know it now) can never direct human life. It can only shed its light as men direct its influence. The choice of destiny which is the essence of freedom, lies deep in the action of the will. It is in the action of the will, not in the accumulation of knowledge, that solutions for world problems must be found. A murderer may step into an aeroplane in London, and fly, nonstop, to Melbourne. He is still a murderer when he gets out of the plane.

We are told, repeatedly, that the cure for the wrongs of our age will be found in a reformed education. We are told that our education trains people for a world that is dying, instead of seeking to refashion their minds for a world that is struggling to be born. "Could we but make men aware of the meaning of their inheritance, a newer and better spirit would," we are informed, "preside over the destinies of mankind." It is true we need more education, education better adapted to the needs and nature of our times. The main body of people in a very large sense is untouched by the culture of the past. The masses go through life utterly unaware of the forces which shape their destiny, and they are an easy prey, consequently, to every glib tongue or electric personality, and to catch-phrases or façades which glitter with unreality. Any charlatan who can persuade the unthinking to accept his nostrum to alleviate their ills becomes successful. The needs of the masses are not known to the masses, and even if they were known, it is not likely they are trained sufficiently to make their

needs known. A new spirit in education can only come when men admit the evils which a lack of it has brought about, and when the changes which the new spirit of education would bring, would be welcomed by the majority. But this is precisely what is impossible. There are vested interests who pay heavily to foster ignorance, and half-truth, and any attempt to eliminate those vested interests means war—civil war.

If lack of education is not the cause of our trouble, what is? "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, from your lusts that war in your members?" For the works of the flesh are . . . idolatry . . . hatred . . . wrath . . . strife . . . seditions . . . heresies . . ." The fact is that human nature is in need of deep reconstruction. "Our natures have become evil before thee continually . . ." Our need is rebirth and redemption. It is not fundamentally enlightenment and education. These are secondary, they are not primary. *Until a person is, how can he become?* We cannot "grow up unto Him in all things . . ." until we are born. The Christian doctrine of world-redemption begins with rebirth. "Except a man be born again . . ." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, *hath begotten* us again unto a lively hope . . ." "According to his divine power *hath given* us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . exceeding great and precious promises, that by these, ye may be made partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust . . ." "Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, (the seed of the flesh) but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which is alive, and abides forever . . ."

Clearly, then the Creator has to do something for men which they cannot do for themselves. As one ancient king put it, "Men must have this wicked spirit rooted out," and "receive his image" in their countenances. John W. Rushton has put

it this way—"Social reformation through individual regeneration." There can be no true and lasting reform, capable of bringing in the "new world struggling to be born" unless individuals are begotten unto God. That leads us to the illustration of the principle of incarnation so vividly portrayed in Christ.

THE BASIS OF THE NEW LIFE

The modern doctrine of evolution utterly repudiates the idea of the virgin birth as told in the Scriptures. If man gradually evolved from the slime, and if his struggle upwards to the rational purpose thought to be inherent in life itself has been by his own efforts, then, clearly, there is no need for a special intervention of a supernatural and transcendent personal God such as envisaged in the doctrine of the incarnation. In that case all we need is time and education. But that is not what Christianity teaches. Christianity says that man's nature has been perverted through sin, and the Creator, seeing his work endangered, moved by supernatural (although not unnatural) means to counter the threat. Christ came into the world. He came into the circle of our flesh, flesh which ever has been since the fall of Adam, under the sentence of death. He came into the ken of our spiritual life, spiritual life which, ever since sin entered the frame of man, has been darkened by separation from God. Sin is not the "relic of man's rise," as the evolutionary theory says. Sin is the cause of man's degradation. Sin is not the "ape and tiger" within us. It is humanity corrupted and made vicious through a misuse of freedom. No man has the power within his own body, or within his own seed, to overcome death. No man has the power, according to the Scriptures, to "ascend into Heaven," or, in other words, to live on the moral planes outlined in the Sermon on the Mount; unless his nature is changed. Unto this vicious circle of death, so Christianity says, comes Christ who "dwells in Heaven." Since this level

of power, or this manifestation of the divine energy was not in man, it was sown there by God himself. Plainly, the seed of life in Mary, the mother of Jesus, was quickened by the Holy Ghost, and not by human seed. This is the cardinal doctrine of redemption and the archetype of every new life.

Christ is a new level of humanity. He is what God originally intended man to be. He is truly man, because real man was destined to be brought forth by the power of the Spirit unto immortality and eternal life. Sin has robbed him of his heritage, and so wars, disorders, disease and famine come upon him, and the whole creation is perverted. Education will not help him to overcome this radical reversal of the course of Nature. Where, today, is the culture of Europe? It is buried in a bloody shambles. To restore man to his true nature requires that he, too, shall be born of the same spirit that made alive the seed of the flesh when the "power of the Highest" overshadowed Mary, and, as a result, Christ was born.

How can this restoration take place? How can man's nature be changed? I come now to the second of the agencies involving the new birth. The answer is plain. By reason of obedience to the ordinance of God's choosing and ordaining. The first man who fell from his own better nature was the first to be restored to them.

And it came to pass that when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and thus he was baptized.

And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened (or made alive) in the inner man.

And he heard a voice out of heaven saying, Thou art baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and forever; and thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.

Behold, thou art one in me, a Son of God; and thus may all become my sons.

That embodies the doctrine of the Restoration. First, revelation. "When the Lord had spoken with Adam . . ." Second, baptism of water and spirit.

Now this emphasis on the redemptive power of God is precisely what the modern temper of mind refuses to contemplate or admit. It is opposed to miracles (although there are thousands of them). It is even more violently opposed to the need of humility in morals, which the process of redemption assuredly presupposes. Men do not like to be told they are sinners. They would prefer to be informed that their wickedness is "just human nature," or "natural." What a welter of sin and crime has been committed under that word—"It's only natural." Well, it may be only natural, but it's bringing untold misery. We are told, also, "you can't change human nature." No, *you cannot*. But God can, if you'll let him.

Thus it is that Joseph Smith said, "Being born again, comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances." Baptism is designed precisely to objectify the facts of repentance and rebirth, and it liberates within those submitting thereto, forces and powers which remake man. The baptismal font was instituted as a type of the grave. The candidate submits himself to the minister voluntarily, enters that grave as a symbol of his spiritual death, yields himself to the representative of Christ in the person of the minister, and thus symbolizes his trust and confidence of being able to emerge from the grave and walk in newness of life.

We are educated by what we do. What we do remains with us. All we have is what we do.

Only let men be exposed to the life and ministry of Jesus, and his life, power will quicken them into a consciousness of their need—as deep answering to deep. Then let them be led into the watery grave so that they may freely register in their own

natures their determination to die to sin, and then the most significant of all processes will take place, and silently, from those realms unseen, the Divine nature will be vouchsafed.

How silently . . .
The wondrous gift is given.
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heaven.
No ear may hear his coming
But in this world of sin
When weak souls will receive Him still
The Dear Christ enters in.

Let us so live then that it will please God to reveal his Son in us, so that men may be prepared to receive the gift of life.

LETTERS

Wants Experiences of Older Members

I have enjoyed having the *Herald* in my home for many years; it is one of the visitors I look forward to seeing each week. While discussing the pioneer work of the church during General Conference, a friend suggested that I share some of my experiences with *Herald* readers, and so I write this, my first contribution, for the letter column.

My great-grandparents were driven from Missouri; some years later my grandparents, both father's family (the D. S. Bowens) and mothers (the James Farrows) moved to Independence. My parents were there during their courtship days, and helped in the building of the old brick church on East Lexington. When this church became too small, Grandfather Bowen was told in a vision that he had been directed to come to Independence and buy land, because the Lord wanted it for His church. Stone Church now stands on property donated by Grandfather. I was born there; the house we were living in had to be moved before the basement of the church could be dug.

Several years of my early school life were spent in Chillicothe, Missouri. There we were isolated, but our home was always open to missionaries, who came and stayed from two to ten weeks at a time. It was then that I began my work in the children's department; later I taught a class in Stone Church, and finally in Lee's Summit. Altogether I have spent forty years in teaching and supervising church school work; in 1942 I was forced to resign because of illness.

I believe that my health is now being

restored, and that, as I am told in my blessing, my days will be lengthened, and I shall live to complete the work God has assigned me. Whatever it is he requires of me, I pray for strength, wisdom, and willingness to complete the task.

I wish to thank those who have sent me their personal testimonies; I hope others will send theirs. These testimonies and spiritual experiences will be made into a book for the Pioneer's Club. Before his death, President Frederick Smith said, "It's a wonderful work. I pray God will bless you in it, for so many valuable testimonies are being lost to the church with the passing of our old, faithful Saints who don't write down their blessings before it is too late."

I pray always for God's people, and ask to be remembered in your prayers.

Daisy Bowen Brown,
Vice-president and Secretary of
Brick Church Pioneer's Club.
Lee's Summit, Missouri

Receives Blessing Through Prayer

I should like to tell of a blessing I received on March 20, 1945. Ten days before that date I was seriously injured, and the doctors said nothing but an operation could save my life. Because of my heart, however, I was afraid to have the operation, so my husband took me to Brother V. R. Chandler's home in Birmingham for administration. On the way back I prayed for relief, and immediately felt my injuries being healed. I shall never forget the feeling of peace that came over me; I had been blessed many times, but that was the first physical aid I had experienced through prayer.

We are isolated, and I miss the Saints very much. I know, however, that God answers when we call, regardless of where we may be. I ask an interest in the prayers of all who read this, that my health may improve, and that someday I shall again be permitted to live among Saints.

MRS. CHARLES BOWMAN.
Route 4, Box 288
Jasper, Alabama

Would Like to Hear From Saints

I am isolated from church privileges, and would appreciate getting letters from any of the Saints who care to write.

Ella Crockett
Fox Lake, Illinois

Asks for Prayers

I want to thank all who wrote to me for their wonderful letters. I returned home from Rochester on June 25; my cure now lies in the hands of God. I should appreciate the continued prayers of the Saints that I may be healed.

MRS. ED RODIFER.
Tomah, Wisconsin Rural Route 4