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I S I T O F G O D ?

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P R E F A C E

Baptism for the dead in modern times is a distinctively Latter Day Saint doctrine. It was introduced into the church between the years 1839 and 1844, apparently not by any revelation or by any conference adoption of the doctrine, but by quiet and unauthorized practices among the elders which came to have the indorsment of the leading officers, for these baptism were being performed for some months at least prior to the submission by Joseph Smith of a purported revelation which lent justification to the procedure. This revelation was dated January 19, 1841, and in indefinite language seemed to acquiesce in the practice, and baptisms for the dead multiplied.

The purported revelation contained no formal or direct introduction of the doctrine of baptism for the dead, no defining of it, and no command to teach or practice it. It merely took cognizance of the practice which was in vogue, and impliedly yielded consent thereto.

On September 1, and again on September 6th, 1842, Joseph Smith wrote letters on the subject, the first being addressed to "all the Saints in Nauvoo," and the second "To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," giving some particulars as to the manner of recording the baptisms, and some discussion of the doctrine. By these letters with the revelation Joseph Smith became committed to the doctrine, and since he was the head of the church the church was likewise committed to it. The inclusion of this revelation and these letters in the next edition of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, though without conference enactment and yet with silent acquiescence more fully committed the church to the doctrine.

With the breaking up of the church into factions during the year

immediately following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, the practice of baptizing for the dead fell into abeyance, though the group under Brigham Young revived and developed it after settling in Utah. The church as reorganized under Joseph Smith, the son of the Seer, has never renewed the practice nor taught the doctrine, leaving it somewhat as a "dead letter." Yet the Reorganized Church has retained the doctrine in its Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which is held as Scripture, and thus is committed to it as a doctrine of the church.

After more than a century since the doctrine of baptism for the dead was introduced, its light shines more dimly than ever before. It has little appeal within the Reorganized Church, and the expectation of its revival has grown less and less. No man has risen to champion its virtue or necessity. No word of revelation has come from the Lord reproving the church for neglect in not teaching it, or commanding its revival. It nestles in the history of the church as a stowaway in the hold of a ship. Every other doctrine has been kept alive by the church, freely taught and practiced to the glory of God and the nurturing of the saints, but this remains as a dead form, serving no useful end, and remaining an ever growing embarrassment to the church.

At various times during the past twenty years the writer has made research touching the soundness and divinity of the doctrine with an open and unprejudiced mind, permitting neither belief in the doctrine which he formerly held, nor any upspringing of doubt or unbelief, to influence his conclusions, but seeking divine light in searching the scriptures, and forming his opinions strictly upon what was found there. It soon became apparent that there was something irregular in its coming into the church, and as the books held

by us as scripture became more and more clarified in his mind as to their teachings, the more doubt was cast upon the divinity of the doctrine. There is too much variance between it and the teachings of the books to justify in his mind any further belief in it as a divine provision. In the following pages are presented the evidences which to him unqualifiedly condemn the doctrine as false and unworthy of place within the church of Jesus Christ.

The writer is not unaware of the implications which this view places upon the founder and prophet of the church, upon the church itself, and upon the revelations recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. None can regret those implications more than he; but truth is of such value, and so vital to the interests of the church, that the smothering of it for policy's sake is not to be thought of. If mistakes have been made it is far better that the men of the church should be the first to discover, acknowledge and correct them, without hesitation or fear, rather than to await the work of an enemy or the judgment of God to reveal them to our mortification and shame, for we may well know that every evil thing will in time be revealed. The longer the delay the more painful will be the exposure when it does come. The church must sooner or later declare itself definitely upon the doctrine of baptism for the dead and that in accordance with revealed truth. Whatever implications may appear in the matter which follows spring not from the writer, but from truth itself, and to them we can well afford to give heed.

The view taken in no degree affects the writer's faith in the divine calling of Joseph Smith and the genuineness of the gospel and church which he was instrumental in establishing. One mistake can not destroy a life work which more than a century of years and the abiding faith of a million followers attest to be divine. The powers of

evil and darkness were strong in those days, and with inexperienced men pioneering in a new faith, it is to be wondered that more mistakes were not made. The Lord had warned the church that many false spirits had gone forth deceiving the world: "and also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you." (D.C.50:1). And again, "That which the Spirit testifies unto you, even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men, for some are of men, and others of devils." (D.C.46:3).

We should not be surprised if frail humanity sometimes errs, especially under conditions of great and subtle temptations such as the Lord warned of, and the warning shows the possibility of evil spirits, and doctrines of devils, with also subversive commandments of men, finding place in the church of Jesus Christ. The law of Christ makes the elders the guardians of the truth, and as such they must be the detectors of evil and error, and see that they are speedily removed in order to save the truth from traduction.

Faith sees through and beyond human frailty to the Divinity that over-rules all error, and in the face of which all evil must eventually perish, leaving truth and righteousness eternally triumphant.

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THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD: IS IT OF GOD?

(A Negative View)

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SECTION 1

REASONS WHY

- 1 Not Found in Bible. The Bible contains no word of revelation in either the Old or the New Testaments introducing or indorsing the doctrine of baptism for the dead, or requiring its practice.
- 2 Not Found in Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon, which was specially given of God to this generation, contains no mention of baptism for the dead either doctrinally or historically. Its silence is significant in the light of the statement of revelation that the book contains the fulness of the gospel.
- 3 Only Incidental Mention in Doctrine and Covenants Made after the Practice Had Invaded the Church. The doctrine of baptism for the dead is nowhere directly introduced, or its practice commanded, in the revelations published in the Doctrine and Covenants, though in what seems to have been the last revelation given through Joseph Smith, it is brought in incidentally and indirectly, the reference³ being to a practice already in vogue.
- 4 No Part of Basic Faith. The Lord says (D.C.16:1) that in the Book of Mormon are all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my Rock." If all things concerning the foundation of the church, the gospel, and the Rock upon which men are to build, are written in that book, and if the doctrine of baptism for the dead is not written there, then it becomes certain that

baptism for the dead is no part of the foundation of the church, the gospel, or the Rock of Christ.

5 Not Included In Principles Commanded to Be Taught. The Lord specifically commanded the elders of the church to "teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel." (D C 42:5). Since the doctrine of baptism for the dead is in neither of these books set forth as a principle of the gospel, there is no authorization for the church to make it an article of belief, to teach, or practice it. The commandment leaves no place for it in the church.

6 Forbidden to be Taught. Moreover the elders of the church were commanded that in their preaching they were to "say none other things than that which the apostles and prophets have written." (D C 52:3,8) Since the apostles and prophets did not write of baptism for the dead as a part of the gospel, it is therefore a forbidden doctrine which the church is not to teach or practice.

7 Paul's Reference Neither Indorsment nor Authorization. There is one reference to baptism for the dead in the Bible. It is in 1 Corinthians 15:29. Here the doctrine is neither taught nor indorsed, and in no degree offered as the word of the Lord. It does not carry the expressed indorsement of the author, nor when properly considered, even his implied indorsement.

The church at Corinth to which Paul was writing was torn with schisms, and a discarding of belief in the things which Paul had taught there, and his effort was to set the minds of the saints aright. He was presenting an extended argument on the doctrine of the resurrection which they were disbelieving, and in the midst of it referred to a practice which evidently had come into one of the schis-

matic groups of baptizing for the dead, and without stopping his all important argument to either approve or condemn the practice, pointed out their inconsistency in holding to that and at the same time rejecting the doctrine of the resurrection, asking "Why are they then baptized for the dead? Paul was not teaching baptism for the dead but the resurrection. The reference was not the word of the Lord, neither a matter that he had been accustomed to teach, but the stated practice of a people whom Paul was reproving and correcting. Such a reference is a most uncertain and inconsistent ground for the establishing of a doctrine. (See Sec.3).

8 Reference in Doctrine and Covenants Without Direct Indorsement or Command. The Doctrine and Covenants, in what purports to be the revelations of God, contains a single reference to baptism for the dead, though more extended than that found in Paul's writing. It is in section 107:10-11. Nevertheless the reference is meager, without formal introduction as a doctrine, mentioned only incidentally in connection with the more immediately important matter of building the temple; having no consistent explanation of the doctrine, and its introduction based on the implications that, 1st, it was already revealed of God, which was untrue; and 2d, that it was already known to the church, which was true. The statement contains no affirmation of Divine indorsement, and the best that can be said for it is that indorsement is implied. There is no command to teach or practice it.

9 Introduced Out of Season. Prior to the organization of the church in 1830 the Book of Mormon had been given of God, and a number of revelations including the ordinances. Immediately following the high priesthood was given, the inspired revision of the Bible accomplished, and other revelations received. All these things were clustered

around the organization of the church and constituted what we call "The Restoration." It was important that all fundamental doctrines and ordinances should have been revealed at this time, and the Lord so declares that all the fundamentals were revealed as the foundation upon which the church was to build up.

But this restoration did not include baptism for the dead; God did not speak of it. It apparently came up eleven years later as an after-thought, another doctrine; another ordinance; both diverse from the rest, as a child born out of due season. The foundation had been laid and the superstructure in process of erection when here comes another foundation stone for which there was no place. The church tried to use it but it would not fit, and now for a full century the church has left it lying out, half discarded, and half expecting that a place will yet be found for it. Did the Divine architect make a mistake in his plans?

New truths and new light may be revealed at any time for it is a cardinal principle of our faith that the channel of divine communication is ever open, but that is not to say that foundational principles which are altogether new are to be looked for perpetually. Such a view would leave no sure foundation and would destroy faith. The doctrine of baptism for the dead came too late to have become a part of the Divine foundation which had been laid in every essential part at the beginning of the restored church. (D.C.16:1).

10 Began Without Divine Authority. It is a well known fact that baptisms for the dead were being performed during some months prior to the reception of the document of 1841 in which the matter of baptism for the dead was contained. There is no record of Divine authorization for this procedure. Hence the procedure was unwarranted, es-

pecially in view of the commandment, "Thou shalt take the things which thou hast received, which have been given unto thee in my scriptures for a law, to be my law, to govern my church." (D C 42:16). The taking up of a new doctrine and ordinance which was not given in the scriptures was a violation of the law, for the scriptures were not only all-inclusive as to doctrine and ordinance, but were designed to be exclusive barring all that God had not given or which was contrary to his revealed will. This particularly in view of the fact that the Lord had forbidden the teaching of anything that was not found in those scriptures. (D C 52:3,8).

- 11 Not Provided for Anciently. If the doctrine of baptism for the dead be true, then innumerable millions of earth's inhabitants who have died without baptism -far more than the number baptized- are dependent upon it for salvation. But considering that in the light of the tremendous need for salvation of souls God failed to declare that doctrine in ancient times through the Bible, thus giving men a clear understanding of their responsibility toward the dead so that they might act in a way to save them; and failing likewise to make it known to the Nephite prophets so that it might come to us in the Book of Mormon; and its omission from the revelations associated with the restoration in 1830; the meager, inadequate, and altogether incidental mention of it which was made in 1841; and the leaving of the church without explanation or amplification of the doctrine; all suggest remissness and a lack of proper concern upon the part of God for these millions of lost souls. There is but one answer: the doctrine is not true; God is not remiss.

- 12 Belongs to the Temple Yet Unprovided for in Kirtland Temple. The reference to baptism for the dead in Doctrine and Covenants 107:

associates it with the house of the Lord -an ordinance that is to be performed within the temple. Yet in the temple at Kirtland, dedicated some years before, having been built by express command of God and according to divine plans, and which following the dedication was accepted by the Lord as his house, there was no provision made for baptizing for the dead, with never a hint of the coming doctrine. The only temple of modern times definitely accepted of God offers no trace of indorsement of baptism for the dead which is said to belong to the temple. The Kirtland Temple is the architectural symbol of all the doctrine and ordinance brought forth by the restoration, but not of baptism for the dead which never had a sheltering place there.

- 13 Lack of a Temple Incorrect. In the reference to baptism for the dead in Doctrine and Covenants 107:10 the Lord is reputed to have said, "There is not a place found on earth that he (the Lord) may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood; for a baptismal font there is not upon the earth; that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead; for this ordinance belongeth to my house."

Five years before this statement was written the Kirtland Temple had been dedicated with divine approval and was standing complete as it is today. Besides the Lord had pledged, "I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house; yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice," etc. (Ch.Hist.V.2, p 47). There was a house to which the Lord might come, and to which he had promised to come to meet with his servants. There is a complete contradiction of statement in these two quotations both purporting to have come from the Lord. Which are we to believe? The marvelous preservation of the Kirtland Temple after years of abandonment testifies

to the divinity of the second; the abandonment and desolateness of the doctrine of baptism for the dead is a tragic though mute witness to the falsity of the first. The doctrine came in with bad company.

- 14 Fulness of Priesthood Lacking Incorrect. The statement in Doctrine and Covenants 107:10, as quoted in Reason 13 above, refers to what "he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood," and says that there is ~~that there is~~ not a place (temple) on earth where he may come to restore it. The statement makes the practice of baptism for the dead dependent upon some higher priesthood which was yet to be restored, or, in other words, the fulness of the priesthood had not as yet been received from heaven but was to come.

It is a matter of history, as well as of revelation, that the fulness of the priesthood had been received from heaven, including the office of president over the high priesthood which held "the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church." (D.C.104:9). The highest priesthood had been given and none was lacking. The statement is not correct, and again the doctrine of baptism for the dead is in bad company.

- 15 Extreme Inconsistency Between Theory and Practice. Theoretically according to the statement in Doctrine and Covenants 107:10 setting forth baptism for the dead, the baptisms could be performed acceptably to God only in a temple, and under a priesthood higher than what had been received and which was yet to come. Yet with neither the temple completed, nor the higher priesthood received, the elders and officers of the church carried on these baptisms for the dead both before and after the statement was made. All such baptisms performed priorly were certainly unauthorized of God for outside this one statement there is no other scripture; and all such baptisms as were per-

formed afterward were in violation of two leading provisions of the statement governing in the matter, an extreme of inconsistency to say the least. The very instructions which gave the church its sole semblance of authorization and justification (weak and indefinite as it was) for baptizing for the dead, were nullified by being disregarded. Disregard of the rule requiring a higher priesthood, by continuing the baptisms without it, showed either an extreme lack of faith in the revelation itself, or a wicked disregard of what they accepted as divine.

16 No Historical Record of Ordinance. If baptism for the dead is what it purports to be, viz., a restoration, then it follows that this ordinance had been known and practiced in other dispensations of the gospel in former times. But there is no such record. In no dispensation of the gospel upon the eastern or upon the western hemisphere was the practice ever known to exist, (save the heretical and incidental baptisms of the schismatic group at Corinth alluded to by St. Paul), No prophet or apostle taught it, no people of God believed it, or practiced it, no scribe wrote it. It was not a restoration, neither can it be.

17 Not Had in Ancient Temples. Doctrine and Covenants 107:11 states that provision for temples "wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth," "was instituted from before the foundation of the world." It is most strange that a divine provision, made before the foundation of the world, involving the salvation of by far the majority of earth's inhabitants, and making divinely appointed temples the places for baptism for the dead, should have been in operation in the several temples known to have been built without leaving a hint of its existence. Baptism for the dead was not practiced in the taber-

nacle in the wilderness, nor in the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, nor in the later temples of Herod. It was not heard of in the first temple of Nephi in America, nor the later temples of the Nephites. It is not even mentioned in connection with the temples of apostate Nephites. In our own temple of modern times at Kirtland it has never been known.

Why, we may ask, the deathly silence of both heaven and earth, from before the foundation of the world to 1841 A D? Why no mention no archeological trace, of it in any temple divine or otherwise? Baptism for the dead is not a historical doctrine; it has no past, and its claim to be a part of the everlasting gospel in the present is fraudulent. It is an unworthy innovation having come in under a cloak of deceit.

Another perplexity arises. If baptism for the dead is necessary for so vast a number of humanity as is indicated, and that its performance is limited to temples, why has God provided so few temples for this purpose? In spite of the reputedly divine provisions the dead seem to be in a bad way, for the plan designed for their salvation has never worked, and is not working today.

18 Limited to Temple - Yet Permitted Elsewhere. It is said the ordinance of baptism for the dead "belongeth to my house," yet the Lord is represented as relaxing the rule and giving freedom for such baptisms to be performed elsewhere "in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me." This latitude means that baptism for the dead could have been carried on through most of the world's history without temples in which case the exception would have been vastly greater than the rule. Nor would temples have been particularly necessary. The exception is not consistent with the

rule.

19 Can Not Be Administered Impartially. The theoretical doctrine of baptism for the dead is impossible of impartial fulfillment. The names of but few of the dead, even of recent times, are known. To baptize for those known and leave the others who are far more numerous unprovided for would be unjustly partial. God is not partial, neither does partiality appear in any of his plans designed for the welfare of man.

Some have held that God would reveal the names of the dead for whom baptism should be performed, which revelation is in itself most impracticable when we consider that it would require a host of revelators spending their lives receiving and recording names for baptism. It would require a still greater host of administrators to baptize, besides the hosts of proxy candidates, and recorders. Even then centuries of time would be insufficient for the completion of the work. God does not involve himself in such a tangle as that.

20 Pre-requisites of Baptism Not Available. The efficacy of every baptism is dependent upon the manifest faith and repentance of the candidate. But the condition and attitude of the dead are not known to man, and God has never made a practice of revealing such except in general terms. It can not be known whether any man who has died outside the gospel is penitent or not, or whether he is a candidate for baptism at all. To baptize without evidence of repentance is in violation of the commandment of God. (D.C.17:7). The extreme difficulties in the way of knowing the condition and attitude of the supposed candidate make baptism for the dead an impossible doctrine.

In the baptisms performed at Nauvoo we have no evidence that revelation concerning the candidate was in any case received.

21 Vicariousness No Part of Gospel. The essential nature of baptism for the dead is vicariousness without which it would have no existence. But vicariousness is foreign to the whole spirit and purpose of the gospel. In no instance do the scriptures allow for one person performing the work which belongs to another. There is no crediting (or discrediting) of any man because of any work which another may have done for him. Jesus said, "Wherefore let every man stand or fall, by himself, and not for another." () The gospel admits of no proxy action. (See Section 8 of this work).

22 Violates Law of Judgment. The teaching of scripture is that men will be judged according to their works, the works which are done in the flesh or in this life. Every man is to be judged according to his own works, and not on the record of any other man. As before noted baptism for the dead rests altogether upon the principle of vicariousness, that is having another perform one's works for him, which principle is in violation of scriptural teaching as to the judgment.

23 Violates Free Agency. The doctrine of baptism for the dead violates the divine principle of free agency in that it attributes the act of one person to another, regardless of the latter's knowledge or authorization. Under free will every man is free to perform the works of his choice, good or bad, and he assumes the responsibility therefor. But these works can not be transferred to the credit or discredit of another; they can not be forced upon another, nor can another claim them as his own. A man and his works are inseparably bound together except as God by forgiveness and cleansing may remove evil from his soul, though even that is determined by the man's works. A proxy baptism would seem to be forced upon the non-knowing candidate

24 Places Upon Living Responsibility for Dead. The doctrine of baptism for the dead rests upon the assumption that the living are responsible to God for the welfare or salvation of the dead. By no word of revelation has God ever laid upon men any such responsibility. Under the law of God every man carries his own responsibility, and he still carries it after leaving this world, and will in the day of judgment. The dead are in God's hands and he deals with them as he wills. It is not for the living to perform any acts of intercession in their behalf, or even to pray for them, much less to be baptized for them. All such actions and prayers are quite gratuitous and beyond the law.

25 Not Supported By Ecclesiastical History or Tradition. There is neither historical nor traditional evidence showing that the doctrine of baptism for the dead ever had legitimate place in the early Christian church, such references to it as are found in the writings of the early Christian Fathers indicating that where it was present it was held heretically, and that by only one or two dissenting sects, and that long after the time of the apostles. There is no other mention of it in New Testament times other than the allusion of the Apostle Paul. Had the doctrine been a doctrine of the church it is inconceivable that it should have been without liberal mention.

26 Modern Introduction Without Later Indorsement of Revelation. Since the introduction of the doctrine of baptism for the dead in 1841 no confirming or strengthening revelation was given under Joseph Smith Jr., neither under the Reorganized Church with his son Joseph Smith at the head. After a century of opportunity no approving word has come from the Lord while the mystery of the doctrine deepens. In answering the question, Why? we can only say: The accepted scriptures already contain a full and clear statement of the doctrine of Christ,

covering all matters pertaining to the salvation of man, that the elders of the church are well able to rightly judge this doctrine by that which is written, especially when the Lord says that in the Book of Mormon "are all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my Rock." (D.C.16:1). A diligent and prayerful search would clarify the whole matter.

27 Grows Out of Wrong Interpretation of Scriptural Baptism. Baptism for the dead; baptizing the dead as is not infrequently done by Catholics; and consignment to everlasting death of those dying without baptism, whether infants or adults; all result from extremes of interpretation placed upon the scriptural doctrine of baptism. The interpretation is made on the theory that man was made for baptism and not that baptism was made for man, and is unwarranted. Baptism applies only to the living, and only to such of the living as are privileged to learn the conditions of the gospel of salvation and to know right from wrong as affecting their relationship with God. It is not required of infants in their innocence, living or dead. It is not required of the heathen who are without a knowledge of the law. It is not required of those who are non compos mentis. In no way does baptism apply to such, and it is never required of them. The perfect plan of redemption provides for them otherwise. Baptism for the dead fills no need in the redemption of man, and is a dead work.

28 Imputes Injustice to God. The language in Doctrine and Covenants introducing baptism for the dead into the church contains a statement utterly inconsistent with the nature and justice of God, in attributing to him the rejection (or threat of rejection) of the dead, with a cutting off of their supposed privileges and prerogatives af-

fecting their salvation, because of the relatively trifling fault of the church failing to complete the building of the Nauvoo Temple within a limited time. This language reads, "If you do not these things at the end of the appointment, ye shall be rejected as a church with your dead, saith the Lord your God."

By what strange quirk in the divine nature did God suddenly stop the work of redemption and salvation in the whole heavens, as affecting untold millions of souls, leaving them stranded upon the shores of eternity with uncertain hope? When did God so change his character that he should forsake the hosts of the dead ^{for} whom he had died to save just because a few thousand of his creatures upon earth were default in duty? The statement carries so much that is at variance with the known character and work of God as to render it incredible that it ever came from him. Justice does not punish, or put to disadvantage, the innocent for the acts or failures of others. It violates the justice and mercy of God. Again baptism for the dead is in bad company.

29 Puts Door of Kingdom in Man's Control. In practice, the doctrine of baptism for the dead usually depends upon a proxy candidate, generally a relative, offering himself for baptism in behalf of his dead friend. The proxy's selection of names of those for whom he wishes to be baptized is subject to his oversight, or his prejudices or hatred, so that any one of his relatives and friends whom he dislikes may be left without baptism. Thus the salvation of souls is often subject to the whims and foibles of the living, or the prejudices remaining from past troubles, possibly very petty ones. These proxies too, being self-appointed, mostly without priesthood authority, are irresponsible persons. Would the infinitely wise God place the salvation of souls in such uncertain hands?

Further, with humanity susceptible to apostasy, there are times when men depart from the faith and drift into error and sin until the church loses its standing before God; it becomes apostate, so that the times are few when authoritative baptisms could be performed at all. Does the Lord leave the hosts of the dead to suffer centuries of delay in their salvation because the living, through weakness and sin

have rendered themselves incompetent to act? All this is putting the door of the kingdom at the disposal of uncertain humanity. Salvation for the dead is subject to caprice and lapse. The door of the kingdom was supposedly opened for the dead in 1841 after it had been closed for centuries, and then in 1844 as suddenly closed because of the failure of the church. These things are not of God's doing but are the tangled web of men.

The opening and closing of the door of the kingdom are not left in the power of man. Jesus said, "I am the door," and Nephi wrote, "The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there." John points to Christ as "he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." Christ, who is without favoritism or prejudice, and whose judgments are always just, holds the key and opens the door to whomsoever he wills, and closes it to whomsoever he wills.

30 Dead Dependent Upon Christ Rather Than Upon Man. The scriptures do reveal that the dead who died without a knowledge of the gospel are dependent upon Christ for their salvation; that such who died before he came into the world had need to wait for their resurrection until Christ should have prepared the way by rising from the dead himself, at which time the worthy dead came forth and entered into glory. (Gen. 7:45, 64; Mos. 3:58-59). Enoch saw that at Christ's resurrection "as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth and

stood at the right hand of God." They came by the power of Christ, and were in no wise dependent upon their fellow man. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost."

31 A Human Substitute for God's Plan. The Lord has made ample provision for the salvation of the dead and that without baptism. The scriptures teach that little children who die in their innocence are saved through the atonement of Christ. They need no baptism. They also teach that the "heathen" or those who die having never known of Christ, and the mentally incompetents, are likewise saved. Baptism does not apply to them, and the mercies of Christ revealed in his atonement are sufficient for their salvation. Regarding others of humanity having varying degrees of knowledge of Christ and his gospel, he alone will judge, and his judgment is just. Baptism belongs to this life, is unto repentance and a new life here. The attempt to apply baptism to the dead is but offering a human substitute for the perfect plan of Christ. (See Section 12).

32 Imputes Sin To the Innocent. Baptism is "for" or "unto the remission of sins." But "sin is not imputed to those who have no law," and "all little children are alive in Christ, and also all them that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law." (Rom.5:13; Moroni 8:25-26). Wherever gospel baptism applies, sin applies; and where there is no sin, baptism does not apply. To urge baptism upon any soul is to impute sin to that soul, which as it affects those who die without a knowledge of the gospel is in conflict with the plain teachings of Christ. The Lord does not impute sin to such souls, and it is a grievous offense to him for man to do so. Baptism for the dead does just that.

33 Invades Christ's Prerogative As Mediator. Christ was "ordained

to be a Mediator between God and man; who is one God, and hath power over all men. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim.2:4-5). The one distinctive thing about baptism for the dead is that it brings a third party between a man and his Redeemer as no legitimate act under the gospel does. Christ is the only Mediator, yet this ordinance admits an imperfect man to enter in as a mediator for his brother in violation of the mediatorial rights and responsibilities of the Lord himself.

Some may ask, "Is not the elder or priest who baptizes a person acting as a mediator between God and that person?" The elder thus officiating is acting solely as the authorized representative of Jesus Christ, and baptizes in his name. He does not enter in ^{to} in his individual capacity, so that in baptism proper Christ is still the Mediator. But in the case of the proxy candidate in baptism for the dead, the candidate does not represent Christ at all. He does not act in Christ's name but supposedly in the name of a fellow man. The elder is still supposed to officiate as in other baptisms while the candidate acts in no official capacity whatsoever. Strangely too, while acting in behalf of a fellow man he is not acting as an agent, having never been appointed or authorized by the dead protegee, so that his service is self assumed. What an ordinance to offer to God!

34 Unconfirmed by the Holy Spirit. To the foregoing is added this final reason why we discard baptism for the dead as a doctrine of Christ, which is quite personal. Years of service in the church have brought to the writer some measure of discernment of the ministration of the Holy Spirit within him, and the power of distinguishing between it and the spirit of the evil one. The first ~~first~~ is the Spirit of truth, the second the spirit of falsehood and deception. The one brings light, the other darkness. During the years that this

subject of baptism for the dead has been under consideration he has been aware of the Spirit of light clarifying the truth in his mind, and confirming that truth in the writing of it and after. He credits this Spirit with most of what is contained in this presentation. Never has he found that Spirit shedding any light on the doctrine itself, or giving confirmation. Never, in his extended studies, has he had shown to his open mind one consistent reason why this doctrine should be accepted as true. These studies have not been without prayer for light and guidance.

The writer does not ask that the readers shall accept this testimony, but he would ask that they search the scriptures with prayer and supplication for light. Of the result he has no doubt.

SECTION 2

LAW OF BAPTISM HAS ITS LIMITATIONS

"Unto Every Law There Are Certain Bounds." -D.C.85:9.

Law has its bounds and limitations, as the Lord has said, and the law of baptism is no exception, notwithstanding it has been generally given a most rigid interpretation or application by its professed believers.

The statement of Jesus, that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned," has been applied to every soul regardless of conditions. The Catholic Church early adopted the view that any person, even infants, dying without baptism could not be saved, and was eternally lost. Protestantism generally followed the same view, some with modification, though of recent times baptism has come to be regarded as unimportant. The elders of our own church have put such emphasis upon baptism as to hold it universally necessary except as to little children many holding that all adults must be baptized if not in person, then by a proxy after they are dead.

Upon examination Christ's statement shows that ~~either~~ salvation and condemnation, as mentioned by him, were contingent upon, first, hearing the gospel; second, forming a decision to obey or reject. Damnation does not result from mere lack of baptism, but from rejecting the greater light and salvation when they are offered. The man who rejects Christ and his gospel is rejected of Christ. Baptism is the formal and outward evidence of one's acceptance of Christ and the means of salvation. There is no magic in the act which makes sal-^{vation} automatic regardless of the attitude and conditions of soul, but it is the act of the mind and will in accepting the way of life and de-

determining to walk therein, as attested by baptism, which secures salvation. This, the man who has not heard the gospel, can not do, it being altogether beyond his knowledge. He can not act inwardly or outwardly, and consequently can not be held responsible in the matter. Without the inward act of mind and will the outward act of baptism can not be required, neither is it required of God. It does not apply, and could it be performed it would be nothing less than a dead work.

Let us notice a few passages of scripture which indicate that belief and resolve on the one hand, and dis-belief (not unbelief) and rejection on the other, after the opportunity of salvation has been offered, determine the salvation or damnation of soul. Those who never hear do not come in this category.

He who believeth not is condemned already, ... And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light. -John 3:18-19).

Ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. -John 8:24).

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; who love not the truth, but remain in unrighteousness, after that which may be known of God is manifest to them. -Rom.1:18-19.

Even so will I cause the wicked to be kept, that will not hear my voice but harden their hearts. -D C 38:1.

Woe unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God, for salvation cometh to none such. -Mos.1:108.

The Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him, and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them. -Mos.8:61-62.

Thus damnation applies only to those who have known the truth and have wilfully rejected it. This condition can not apply to little children who die before they are capable of knowing or rejecting. It does not apply to adults who have never had an opportunity of

hearing the gospel. Baptism applies to the man who knows the gospel and knows that it is his duty to obey. If such a man refuses to obey it is the choosing of evil; his whole life of sin becomes chosen sin, wilful sin, and it is sin against light and truth which justifies condemnation. His refusal of baptism is evidence of his inward act of refusal, and of his choice to remain in sin.

Where no decision as to accepting or rejecting the gospel can be made because of not knowing the gospel, the man may do wrong things, but they are not done under light and truth, and do not bring him into condemnation. The Lord has covered all such sin by his atonement, and forgiveness is in a sense automatic; it is not held against any man. So long as a man lives ignorantly of the gospel baptism can not apply to him, and if he dies without knowing the gospel surely baptism can not be applicable afterward. His sin, which is without condemnation so that no guilt attaches to him, is covered by the atonement, so that he has no sin to "wash away." Under the gospel there is no possible excuse for baptism for the dead. (See later sections)

Baptism therefore, is not the rite rigidly and universally required of every born soul by the Savior of men, but it is an ordinance of the gospel adapted to mankind under carefully defined circumstances, and not adapted to those outside those circumstances. The ordinance is strictly one belonging to this world, that is, to men while in the flesh, and is designed to be the entrance upon a new life of righteousness and service under the gospel. Its virtue is in the new life of holy development which follows, and where there is no opportunity for life in the flesh the intent of baptism is lost. Such are death-bed baptisms; and such are baptisms for the dead to the absolute degree.

That baptism was to answer intents and purposes pertaining to this life in the flesh, and this life alone, is emphasized by Alma

in the baptismal covenant imposed upon his first candidate, and since his procedure was wholly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, his words can be counted as the words of God. He said, "I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead, as to the mortal body." ^(mossiah 9:44) Here the baptismal covenant had to do with this earth life and no other. When death comes its purpose has been served, and there is no occasion for baptizing for the life in the spirit world. Baptism is unto repentance, and Alma says, "Now is the time" of repentance; "This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God: ... For after this life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness, wherein there can be no labor performed." (Alma 16:227-230). Repentance and baptism, as well as belief and faith, are operative in the flesh. (Repentance is spoken of in the spirit world, but there its possibilities and effectiveness are very much limited as compared with this life.)

Paul teaches that baptism is unto a "newness of life;" "that henceforth we should not serve sin;" that sin should not "reign in your mortal bodies;" "that we should serve in newness of spirit;" to "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." All these have to do with this life. Its intent is to align men with Christ in a life of righteousness in this world; to develop strong souls in the likeness of Christ. It is a symbol and holds no virtue or power apart from that which it symbolizes - the entering into covenant with Christ to serve him while life shall last.

Baptism applied directly or indirectly to little children, and to those without the law, Mormon says, "is a mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, ... and putting trust in dead works."

(Moroni 8:27).

Baptism was made for man and that applying to this life, and not that man was made for baptism. Its operations are in time; its results eternal. Where it can not operate in this life it does not apply and is not required. Thus we see the limitations which attach to the law of baptism.

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SECTION 3

AN ANALYSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29

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"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

In making an analysis of Paul's statement relative to baptism for the dead it is necessary to take first a general view of the epistle, and then to note its immediate setting.

The epistle carries internal evidence of the dissensions and divisions in the church at Corinth, with schismatic groups rising up among the saints, contentions and loss of faith in many of Paul's teachings, and their indulgence in sins of immorality and idolatry. In the first chapter he writes that he had heard of their contentions and says, "I beseech you, brethren, ... that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." Some were saying, "I am of Paul," others, "I am of Apollos," others, "I of Cephas;" and still others, "I of Christ." They carried their contentions so far that they formed factional groups, even when they came together to worship. (11:18).

The intent of Paul's epistle was to break down the divisions which existed among the Corinthian saints and establish unity, and

he does this mainly in an affirmative manner, re-asserting the doctrines he had previously taught them when he labored among them, making his strongest arguments upon those points where they were most at variance. In chapters 8-10 he deals with idolatry, and advocates the oneness of Christ, his teachings, and his body the church. Chapter 12 is the climax of his discussion on oneness. In chapter 15 he takes up the question of the resurrection, discussing it at length, for it seems to have been upon this point of doctrine that the greatest controversy had arisen. This is his last argument and the climax of his epistle.

The reader may read for himself Paul's line of discussion, noting that he mentions the many witness^{es} of the resurrection of Christ, and then asks, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" and goes on to reason that "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen ... and our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain." He declares anew the doctrine of the resurrection.

It is here that the allusion to baptism for the dead comes in. In continuing his discussion he points out an inconsistency in some of his converts who were denying the resurrection, yet had baptized for some who had died. Baptism symbolized the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and of men, and they were inconsistent in holding to the one and not to the other. This inconsistency Paul pointed out by referring to the acts of some of these erring saints in using a living man to respond for one lying dead who had died without baptism. (This was the extent of baptism for the dead in those times, the act being performed in behalf of the dead before burial). He said, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead, rise not at all? Why are they then baptized

for the dead?"

This is the only reference to baptism for the dead found in the Bible. What are we to conclude from it? Are we to understand that this reference is authority for making baptism for the dead a doctrine and an ordinance of the church? Are we justified by this statement in supposing that baptizing for the dead was an approved practice in the apostolic church? Did Paul by this expression thereby manifest his approval of the practice?

Paul had been discussing a number of unchristian beliefs and practices held by the schismatic groups at Corinth, and his pointing out, as a matter of argument, of an inconsistency in the attitude of one group which was performing baptisms for the dead, and at the same time denying the resurrection of the dead, can hardly be taken to mean his indorsement of both positions. Certainly Paul in pointing out an inconsistency in their holding two conflicting views, could not be said to indorse both views for that would make him as inconsistent as he charged them to have been. There is no doubt that Paul indorsed the doctrine of the resurrection; how could he then be said to approve also the very thing he was holding up as inconsistent with the first? If both were approved there would have been no inconsistency at least in the mind of Paul. No. Paul did not indorse an inconsistency; he did not indorse baptism for the dead.

It appears quite certain that Paul here took up a perverse practice of perhaps one group in order to make a point by argument against them and in support of the doctrine of the resurrection. Such use of the practice in argument does not imply indorsement. Paul expressed directly neither agreement nor disagreement with it, for the apparent reason that for him to stop in his main argument on the resurrection to declare against baptism for the dead, would have

been diverting from his main theme to the weakening of his whole argument on the resurrection. His silence does not necessarily imply indorsement.

In using the particular form of argument found in his statement on baptizing for the dead, Paul was but following a method that was somewhat common to himself and others. In this very epistle Paul confesses that "unto the Jews I became a Jew that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ... I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9:20-22). He used a form in which he momentarily for the sake of argument, as disputants still do, accepts the position of the unbelievers in order to make a point against them, and that without indorsing the position temporarily acceded to.

A like method was followed by Paul at Mars Hill, where, having passed the altar inscribed to the unknown god in the city of Athens, which he says was "wholly given to idolatry," instead of immediately and directly condemning their form of worship, he, for the sake of argument, and with a view of reaching by friendly approach the ears of the people, accepted the idea of the unknown god, and from that starting point proceeds to declare the Known God, saying, "Whom ye therefore ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." (Acts 17:23). In no measure did Paul indorse that form of worship followed by the Athenians in worshipping the unknown god.

This form of argument is known as argumentum ad hominem which means "an argument proving a conclusion from principles or practices of an opponent himself; often by showing them to be contrary to his argument." (Stand. Dict.). It was the form used by Christ himself when he replied to the scribes, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils,

(1000H.12.47)

by whom do your children cast them out?" For the sake of argument he assumed that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, yet no one would hold that the Lord actually admitted that to be true. Nor did he stop in his argument to explain that it was not true.

So when Paul wrote, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" he was but taking the erroneous claim and practice of a perverse group of saints, and using it to condemn their unbelief in the doctrine of the resurrection, pointing out the inconsistency of the two positions, and, as already pointed out, since he was arguing for the resurrection, his unexpressed position on baptism for the dead was clear and unmistakable, and he did not need to stop his discussion of an important doctrine to deny the unimportant and erroneous teaching of this faithless group.

Another point of considerable weight in considering Paul's reference to baptism for the dead is the sudden change of person from the first and second used throughout the epistle, to the third, and immediately after resuming the first and second again. It is "I" and "we" and "Ye" or "you" running all through the epistle, except when he comes to mention baptism for the dead he instantly changes to "they." "What shall they do?" "Why are they then baptized for the dead?" And as instantly in the next verse he returns to the "we" and "you." This sudden change can mean but one thing, viz., that in speaking of baptism for the dead Paul was, perhaps unconsciously, dissociating himself and the church from all connection with it. He was admitting that it had found place with some members of the church, but denying its acceptance by those with whom he was associated. In other words, Paul put this group accepting baptism for the dead so far away from the body of the church as to leave them virtually uncon-

needed. The saints of the church he referred to by the intimate terms of "we" and "you," but the moment he mentions the others who were practising baptism for the dead he refers to them as "they." They were a different class.

This change of person in referring to this factional group at Corinth is in effect a repudiation of them as proper members and representing the church; it was in effect a rejection of the practice in which they were indulging. Had these people been in good standing with the saints at large, and had their practice of baptizing for the dead been an accepted doctrine of the church, it is inconceivable that Paul should have so suddenly changed his attitude when referring to them; he would not have held them at arm's length as he did.

It is apparent that the only reason Paul mentioned baptism for the dead was for the purpose of argument, using it as an ad hominem. There is nothing in his statement which carries the indorsement of the apostle or the church of the doctrine. The evidence that is there points the other way. He does not mention it as having been taught by Christ or the apostles. He gives no suggestion of having of having taught the Corinthian saints this doctrine at the time of their conversion, but deals with it as something foreign to Christ and the church. The worship of the unknown god could be sustained on just as good grounds as a doctrine of the church as baptism for the dead. Paul nowhere affirms the doctrine, nor does he anywhere accede to it, neither does it appear by any approval of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECTION IV

AN EXAMINATION OF DOCTRINE AND
COVENANTS 107

Down to 1841 baptism for the dead had never been mentioned in any revelation from God so far as the scriptures or history reveals, nor taught by the authority of any of the prophets and apostles. In one instance only had it been mentioned, and that by the Apostle Paul, purely as a matter of argument, and not in advocacy of it. This mention did not carry either the divine indorsement, or the indorsement of St. Paul.

It appears, therefore, that from the beginning of the world through upwards of six thousand years the doctrine of baptism for the dead was unknown as a doctrine of God. It had never been introduced, never affirmed, never defined. It had no accepted place among the people of God in either the eastern or western hemisphere.

On January 19, 1841, Joseph Smith gave forth a purported revelation, which included a command and instructions relative to the building of a house known as the Nauvoo Temple, and it was under the wing of this instruction that baptism for the dead was most incidentally introduced, and indirectly presented. There is no formal statement of the doctrine, no defining of it, and only an implied indorsement of the Almighty. The statement is altogether incidental to the building of the temple. It is well to quote this statement here:

...Let all my saints come from afar; ... Come ye, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come may come, and bring the box tree, and the fir tree, and the pine tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth; and with iron, and with copper, and with brass, and with zink, and with all your precious things of the earth, and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein; for there is not a place found on earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or, which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priest-

hood; for a baptismal font there is not upon the earth; that my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead; for this ordinance belongeth to my house, and can not be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me. -Doctrine and Covenants 107:10.

Thus entered into the church of Jesus Christ in latter days the doctrine of baptism for the dead. It did not come by introduction but by assumption, for the first mention of it, "for a baptismal font there is not upon the earth; that my saints may be baptized for those who are dead," assumes that baptism for the dead was an old established doctrine; it is spoken of as something that already existed, thus giving it the force of antiquity, when in reality it never had been known to the people of God, and was not found in his scriptures. It seems to have crept in under cover of the leading theme of temple building, and came in under the cloak of assumption, both of which methods tended to divert the critical mind from the thing itself, and thus gain admission without protest.

But there is a more serious fault which tends to condemn the doctrine: The purported revelation says in connection with this matter that "there is not a place found on earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood." Five years before this statement was made a temple which the Lord had specifically commanded, (D.C.92:2), and planned, was dedicated at Kirtland, Ohio; in which the Lord appeared in person to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery shortly after, declaring, "I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house," etc. By no word or sign had the Lord indicated a discarding or rejection of that house, which still stands, a house which he claims as his own, and to which he is not only free to come, but has pledged that he will come. Yet in order to justify the bring-

ing in of baptism for the dead the Lord is made to say "there is not a place found on earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you." The Kirtland Temple stands today as a mute but powerful witness against this statement. Here the words are put into the Lord's mouth saying he had no temple to which he might come, when the Lord had himself declared five years before that he had an accepted temple to which he would come, thus attributing to the Lord a flat contradiction. First, there was a temple; then, there wasn't. Can such a contradiction come from the Lord's mouth? The doctrine of baptism for the dead in its asking for recognition and acceptance as a doctrine of the church is found in bad company. It is associated with, and leans upon, a false statement. In its pleading for place in the church it assumes the need of a temple other than, and different from, the one temple which the Lord had accepted, and in which no font was allowed for the practice of baptizing for the dead. This is not the manner of the Lord's dealing.

Reverting to the statement that "a baptismal font there is not upon the face of the earth; that my saints may be baptized for those who are dead," we can only ask, "Since when has the Lord made himself dependent upon a baptismal font made by human hands for the execution of his ordinance? The divine requirement in baptism is that the candidate shall be immersed in water, and no word of revelation has ever specified whether the water used should be a flowing stream or an unruffled pool; a placid lake or the heaving sea. An ordinance such as baptism for the dead is supposed to be, applying to untold millions of souls including every nation and every people, would hardly be restricted to one, or a few temples containing fonts. Such a restriction would cramp both the church and the Lord in the execution of his purposes. The Lord does not bind his own hands.

There is another serious fault which casts a dark shadow over the doctrine of baptism for the dead. The quotation already given suggests that this new house was necessary that therein the Lord might restore "even the fulness of the priesthood." The implication is that baptism for the dead required some power of the priesthood beyond what had been previously given, and that the priesthood already possessed was but partial. This is in direct conflict with the revelations and with the facts of history.

The high priesthood was restored in 1831, concerning which the historian writes:

Taking these testimonies together it is evident that both Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight had reference to the fulness of the Melchisedec priesthood being bestowed for the first time in June 1831. -Ch.Hist. Vol.1, p 193.

The highest office in this high priesthood was established in the church on January 25, 1832, when Joseph Smith was ordained president of the high priesthood.

Centering in the president of the high priesthood are all the powers, gifts, and authority, belonging to that priesthood, and necessary for the accomplishing of the Lord's work upon earth. The following quotations are in point:

...My servant Joseph Smith Jr., unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belongeth always unto the presidency of the high priesthood. -D.C.80:1.

The power and authority of the higher, or Melchisedec priesthood is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church. etc. -D.C.104:9.

The duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses. Behold, here is wisdom, yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet; having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church. - D.C.104:42.

A study of these scriptures leave no other conclusion than that the holy priesthood had been restored in its fulness, and that no ad-

ditional authority was to be received. If, as stated in the quotation relating to baptism for the dead, there are yet to be revealed some higher powers of priesthood essential to baptizing for the dead, then these quotations do not mean what they say. There is much of truth yet to be revealed, but not of priesthood which is basic. Light and truth will continue to flow from God in their ever varying aspects, but the power of the priesthood by which these things come is fixed and unchangeable. A railroad may perpetually transport varying and often altogether new supplies, but the road itself must be established in completeness before these supplies can pass. Likewise the telegraph line must be complete before messages can be conveyed. The blessings of Christ's church flow through a fully established priesthood.

The suggestion therefore that "the fulness of the priesthood" is yet to be restored conflicts with the revelations previously given.

There is yet another point to be noticed in the quotation from Doctrine and Covenants 107:10. The additional priesthood by which baptisms for the dead were to be made effectual was not to be received, or could not be given, only in the temple then in contemplation. By what change in the ways of Divinity did it come to pass that God was limited to the interior of a building made by human hands in the giving of heavenly powers to man as conveyed by priesthood? Did he not send his angel to the wooded hills of New York where his servants were praying, and there in the "glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature," conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood? Did he not speak by the voice of his Spirit in the home of "Father Whitmer" and give the authority to ordain to the Melchisedec Priesthood? Why then this change of method? Why should it become necessary in order that some additional priesthood might be given of God that he must have a temple as the only

place in which it might be given? The requirement is inconsistent with previous procedure.

The temple was never completed. History records no reception of any additional priesthood authority. Yet notwithstanding the document bringing in baptism for the dead made these, together with the font, necessary to its performance, the church proceeded to perform such baptisms, and continued to perform them probably up to the time of the exodus from Nauvoo in 1846. The faction in Utah continues their performance to this day. From the date of the purported revelation to the present time the practice has been grievously at variance with the requirements. This fact may not prove the doctrine untrue but it does reveal strong grounds for believing that the provisions of the document were unworkable. It shows a further inconsistency.

It may be truly said of the entire reference to baptism for the dead in Doctrine and Covenants 107:10-11 that there is not one sentence or phrase in it that is not open to severe criticism.

SECTION 5

LETTERS OF JOSEPH SMITH EXAMINED

(D.C. 109 and 110)

The purported revelation containing the only statement of baptism for the dead with the name of Divinity attached ever known up to that time, was given January 19, 1841. The statement was brief, indirect, assumptive, lacking in definition, and without direction or command as to its practice. The incompleteness and inadequacy of this supposed revealment were tacitly admitted by Joseph Smith when on September 1st and on September 6th, 1842, one year and eight months later, he wrote letters to the church amplifying what had previously been given. These letters we now examine.

The first letter contains nothing in explanation of the doctrine, or justifying its introduction, but deals only with a secondary and incidental point, viz., the necessity and manner of recording such baptisms, and suggesting a need for extreme care in making the record that "whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven."

In the second letter the main theme is still that of recording, the entire discussion centering in the idea of priesthood authority, under which that which is bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and that which is recorded on earth would be recorded in heaven, while that which is not recorded on earth would not be recorded in heaven. The author says, "You may think this order of things to be very particular, but let me tell you that they are only to answer the will of God."

The preciseness of this instruction regarding recording, and the great importance attached to it, are in severe contrast with the instruction given at the organization of the church relative to the recording of the baptisms of the living - a simple commandment that

the names of those baptized should be kept, and submitted to a general recorder for recording. (D.C.17:25). This was but to mention a common custom of all organizations and was sufficient. But why such particularness in the names of the dead above those of the living? Are not both, the living and the dead, of equal concern with God, both being entitled to the same care and consideration? The giving of such minute and particular instructions regarding the recording of the names of the dead for whom baptism had been performed, should also have been given as applying to the living persons baptized, if they were necessary for either one.

The position taken in this letter that "whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the books shall your dead be judged," and that the judgment will be "according to the records which they have kept concerning their dead," is open to serious question on two counts; First, the inconsistency and unjustness of leaving the eternal salvation of any soul upon weak and erring man; second, the things spoken of by Christ in the statement, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," (Matt.16:20), can refer to no other acts than those divinely authorized through the priesthood, and performed in accordance with the will of God, and which are set forth in the divinely appointed scriptures, and can not include such incidental matters as the keeping of books.

We can not doubt but that all acts performed by priesthood authority in righteousness are recorded in heaven and that they will determine the course of judgment, but if the great Judge depends upon earthly recordings for his judgments then judgment will be far from just. Man is too liable to err for any record of his to be absolute.

To interpret the words of Jesus as applying to the matter of recording baptisms for the dead is indeed to attribute to him a meaning which he did not express.

Again, the letter offers an interpretation of Revelation 20:12 concerning the books out of which the dead were ^{judged,} and the book of life. The books are said to be those "which contained the record of their works, and refer to the records which are kept on the earth." The book of life "is the record which is kept in heaven." How these books made on earth, containing the names of the dead for whom baptisms have been performed by the living, can be the records of those dead, out of which they will be judged according to their works, is beyond comprehension. The scriptures clearly teach that men will be judged according to the works done "in the body," "in this life," etc. Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," and Paul said they shall be judged "by Jesus Christ according to the gospel." To Nephi the Lord said, "I command all men ... that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world) ... according to that which is written." (2 Nephi 12:65-66). The basis of judgment is the word of God in the scriptures to all who have them.

There is no suggestion that a mere record of names evidencing proxy baptisms will be used in the day of judgment by which men will be judged. As in earthly courts so in the heavenly, men will be judged according to the law under which they have lived, and not according to what others have done for them after they were dead.

The letter contains another inconsistency. After referring to the baptism provided for in the gospel as being "in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves," it goes on to say, "hence this ordinance was instituted to form a re-

relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in the likeness of the dead." What! the baptism of gospel teaching formed in relation to baptism for the dead, making the latter primary and the former secondary! Baptism for the dead first formed in the mind of the great Author of salvation, and baptism coming as an after-thought! Thus the baptism of the scriptures is but a secondary adaptation of baptism for the dead to the living. Not a hint of such a view is to be found in the accepted scriptures of the church. It is too far removed from the truth as to be worthy of consideration.

It is further said that "the baptismal font (for baptising for the dead) was instituted as a simile of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble." We know of no record of such baptismal font, nor of any command as to where it should be placed. The temple of Solomon had its "molten sea," and ten other "lavers," but there is nothing to indicate they were used for baptism in any form. No such font was had in the Kirtland Temple which was built by divine direction.

Again, in this letter we read concerning the dead, "For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers, 'that they without us can not be made perfect.'" Has Joseph Smith used that version of the scriptures made by himself and Sidney Rigdon in former years by the Spirit of revelation, his supposed scriptural support would not have been there. This inspired version says "For without suffering they could not be made perfect," -a quite different statement. Even taking the translation he did use, "that they without us can not be made perfect," the salvation of either the living or the dead is not made dependent either one upon the other. Salvation is to be gained every man for himself and not by another. Every man makes his own record by his life works and by these he will be judged according to the gos-

pel. No man will or can receive more or less glory because of any works done by another. This whole point is summed up in one sentence by the Apostle Paul, "Work out your own salvation." (Phil. 2:12)

These letters reveal no great truth. They are without light, Every prominent point leads us into difficulty with the scriptures. They attempt to amplify the doctrine of baptism for the dead but drift to a side issue, viz., the matter of recording while leaving the main question largely unconsidered. The great mistake in these letters is in putting the emphasis upon the wrong thing, that is, upon the incidental matter of recording rather than upon the ordinance itself. Inspiration would hardly have done that. The importance of recording official and legal acts is not to be minimized, but on the other hand, it is not to be magnified above the acts themselves. Should any act of baptism through oversight fail of record, there would be human testimony in the day of judgment to establish the fact, besides the Infinite Judge who knows all things, and it need not be assumed that because of human lapse in recording the obedient candidate is to lose his salvation, or even be put under disadvantage. A man's own works are known to God and by these he will be judged.

The letters leave the subject of baptism for the dead undefined, and it is still an unravelled mystery. It is to the church as a stow-away to a ship, having come in surreptitiously, unidentified; a presence with which the church does not know what to do.

S E C T I O N VI

Fulness of the Gospel Revealed at the Restoration

The building of the Nauvoo Temple with its baptismal font was said to be that the Lord might "come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood." That which was taken away and lost points to the practice of baptizing for the dead, and marked the entering in of a new doctrine into the church, which during the previous eleven years had not so much as been known, except for some months in which the practice antedated the doctrine. Yet the scriptures are clear in showing that at the founding of the church the fulness of the gospel had been restored.

In June, 1829, nearly a year before the organization of the church, the Lord gave commandment to Oliver Cowdery, who had been acting as scribe for Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon, saying, "that you rely upon the things which are written; for in them are all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my Rock." (D.C.16:2). This refers to the things he had been writing -the Book of Mermen. But in this work containing all things fundamental to the church and the gospel, baptism for the dead is not found. It was not a part of the restoration. The Lord was particular to supply the foundational doctrine before permitting the organization of the church, for the church must have a foundation, and had previously said of these scriptures that they "shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine." Since baptism for the dead is not found therein the only consistent conclusion is that it was not a point of true doctrine.

In Doctrine and Covenants 26:2 the Lord says he had sent Moroni to "reveal the Book of Mormon containing the fulness of my everlasting-

ing gospel." In 39:3 he commanded one called to the ministry "Thou shalt preach the fulness of my gospel which I have sent forth in these last days." He affirmed that in the Bible, and the Book of Mormon is contained the fulness of the gospel. (D.C.42:5).

The entire gospel as pertaining to its essential principles and ordinances, had been revealed at the beginning of the latter day work. It was necessary that they should be for the church could not consistently or safely be organized upon an unrevealed and uncertain faith. The foundation must be laid before the superstructure could be built. All these essential principles were found in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon, each confirming the other, both ancient records, but the latter newly revealed in reaffirmation of the testimony of the former and which had become so largely discredited in the Christian world. The message of the gospel was clear and complete. The Lord evidently designed to give to the people a definite account of his gospel, so clear, so positive, and so complete that none need fail to understand what the church stood for even from the day it was organized. Neither did the Lord leave any of his gospel principles or ordinances for later revelation. Baptism for the dead, coming in eleven years later, was out of bounds.

In these scriptures were "all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my Reck," and upon that foundation, and that foundation only, was the church to build. It was "to do according to that which I have written;" (D.C.83:8), not what the Lord was going to write. True, it was a doctrine of the church that the avenue of communication between heaven and earth was to remain open and that the church was to continue to receive instruction in the building up of the organization and the conduct of its work, but the matters which were fundamental to the organization

were of necessity given full and complete beforehand, so that the church was not to expect new fundamentals. Had this great fact been understood and remembered baptism for the dead would not have invaded the church in after years.

In taking up first the practice, then the doctrine of baptism for the dead, without divine authorization, the church undoubtedly erred. Like the ancient Jews its sin was in "seeking for things that they could not understand," and in "looking beyond the mark." (Jacob 3:22). Had the elders sought for truth in the scriptures they might have found to their complete satisfaction that the Lord had already made ample provision for the salvation of those that died not knowing the gospel, and that there was no need for baptism for the dead at all. Instead of "relying upon the things which are written," they delved into things which were not written. Instead of building upon the foundation which the Lord himself had laid, they attempted to lay foundation stones of their own, or of Satanic, making. Instead of adhering strictly to the commandments given them of God to cry repentance and baptism to the living, they reached over and began to devote their attention to the dead. They forgot the "all things" of the Lord's planting and substituted other things of their own choosing. Is it strange that disaster overtook them, and that the church was made to suffer the wrath of an offended God?

SECTION VII

DIVINE LAW ON WHAT TO TEACH

When Jesus gave his final commission to his apostles to go to all nations, he specified this: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Likewise, when the church was established among the Nephites, the Prophet Alma, after ordaining men to preach to the people, "commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets." (Mosiah 9:52).

Following this ancient policy the Lord in giving his law to the latter day church included this commandment: "The elders, priests, and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel; ... and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit." (D.C.42:5).

And again; "Thou shalt take the things which thou hast received, which have been given unto thee in my scriptures for a law, to be my law, to govern my church." (D.C.42:16).

The things written in the sacred scriptures were to govern both the teaching of the elders and the government of the church. In this the law is explicit. But the Lord gave warning against the intrusion of extraneous matters into the preaching of his gospel, commanding his servants to "say none other things than that which the apostles and prophets have written, and that which is taught them by the Comforter." (D.C.52:3).

Thus the Lord gave to his church a definite, limited, and distinctive message to carry to the world, and forbade preaching either less or more. In the Book of Mormon, one of the scriptures which contains this message, the Lord counselled the ancient church rela-

tive to his personal ministry among them, "But whose among you shall do more or less than these, are not built upon any rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation." (3 Nephi 8:44). He has said that the "Book of Mormon is given for your instruction" which applies today.

These instructions should have been sufficient, but knowing the danger the Lord gave strong warning in addition. The elders were "commanded in all things to ask of God; and to follow the leading of the Spirit, "that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men, for some are of men, and others of devils. Wherefore, beware, lest ye be deceived." (D.C.46:3). And again the Lord warned, "Verily I say unto you, that there are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world; and also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you." (D.C.50:1). That the men of the church were not free from the danger of deception by false spirits is further revealed when the Lord said unto them, "Unto what were ye ordained? To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter, which was sent forth to teach the truth; and then received ye spirits which ye could not understand, and received them to be of God, and in this are ye justified?" (D.C.50:4).

Let no man say that it was, or is, impossible for false spirits to enter the church of Jesus Christ, bringing false doctrine, and creating errors of policy and method. Ancient history belies it. The history of the restored church of latter days refutes it. The overthrow and breaking up of the church proclaims it more loudly than words can do. The doctrine of baptism for the dead has never been defined nor understood, and is just such a doctrine as the Lord warned against. In the mind of the writer it was one of the things which wrecked the church. Diligent prayer in seeking counsel from God in

every new move, a righteous obedience to every law and commandment, and a humble following of the Holy Spirit as it leads with a corresponding restraint in matters where the Spirit does not lead, were the safeguards which the Lord gave to the church.

The powers of evil are strong as compared with the strength of man, their methods deceptive, and their aims far-reaching; while the limitations and laxities of human flesh reveal a weakness which makes possible human failures and overthrow. This justifies the rigid instructions and warnings of God given in all ages, expressed concisely in Isaiah's statement, "To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." The Lord's warnings were not without meaning and not without force, and to them we may well give heed.

In the restoration the Lord had laid the whole groundwork upon which the church was to be built up, saying, "Wherefore, if you shall build up my church upon the foundation of my gospel and my Rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you." (D.C.16:1). But he also warns that "inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them." (D.C.100:2). This groundwork was in the divinely given scriptures, the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the revelations and commandments given in connection with the organization of the church. The church was to be governed in all things according to these scriptures.

The doctrine of baptism for the dead was not then found in the scriptures, and was no part of the foundation upon which the Lord said the church was to be built. It was later added as an extraneous doctrine, and was at variance with the clear teachings of those scriptures as we shall more fully show in a later section.

Baptism for the dead did not come into the church boldly in its own name, nor independently by itself, but as an unlawful and timid entrant, under the cloak of temple building. Its form was deeply veiled in mystery and was never clearly revealed. Its voice bore false testimony in affirming that there was no place on earth where the Lord might come and restore what he wished, when the Kirtland Temple stood clean and with open doors for him. And again it betrayed its falsity in declaring that the fulness of the priesthood had not yet been restored. Its message was indirect, assumptive, without clarity, and in conflict with the revealed truth of God. Against the background of light which came with the restoration it appears as a dark shadow. Its place of observance was chosen to be in a dark place "underneath where the living are wont to assemble," rather than in the pure sunlight of heaven. (The Utah Church still confines its baptisms for the dead to the lower recesses of their temples which are not open to the public.)

A search of Doctrine and Covenants 107, and of the letters in sections 109 and 110, reveals no command of God to the church and its elders to preach or teach the doctrine of baptism for the dead. There is no command to perform such baptisms. Neither in any other place is there found any such commandment. In the light of the accepted commandments "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and "saying none other things," where can we place baptism for the dead? We violate the law if we teach it or practice it without a commandment. And what of the men of the church who in the early day did teach it, and who performed such baptisms without a commandment authorizing them so to do? In the presence of a broken law, and a church defiled by subvertant doctrines and practices, is it to be thought strange that the anger of God was revealed in judgment and the church brought to disaster?

The Book of Mormon teaches a very clear plan of salvation for all who die without a knowledge of the gospel. This plan is set forth directly and positively, showing that all such are redeemed and saved through the atonement of Christ according to his purposes from the beginning. But these are the very ones for which baptism for the dead is said to have been instituted, (D.C.110:5), but baptism for the dead is not taught as a part of the Book of Mormon plan and is not found there. On the other hand the Book of Mormon is positive, almost to the point of vehemence, that "unto such baptism availleth nothing," but "is mockery before God," and "putting trust in dead works." The Book of Mormon, says the Lord, was "given of me for your instruction," (D.C.32:3), and "contains .. the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ," (D.C.17:2), and in which "are all things written concerning the foundation of my church, my gospel, and my Rock." (D.C.16:1). A part of the gospel concerns the salvation of the millions who die without law. That part is taught there. But baptism for the dead comes up as a parallel doctrine, a different plan for the very same purpose for which the Lord's plan was given, and seeks to supplant the divine plan. God never designed it or gave it as any part of his gospel. It came into the church as Satan entered the garden of Eden for no other purpose than to destroy what God had made. (For full discussion of this point see sections 12 and 13 of this work).

SECTION 8

VICARIOUSNESS - SUBSTITUTIONALISM

Baptism for the dead is essentially a vicarious ordinance in which a living person acts as a proxy in baptism in the behalf of another who is dead. It is an act supposedly required of the other but which he is unable to perform.

Baptism is an ordinance imposed by divine law upon all men who come to know the law of God, and by that knowledge are obligated to repent from sin and enter into covenant with God to do his will. It is a purely personal work which can not be shifted to another. Neither does the law of God make any allowance for this or any other personal requirement being performed by any other person than the one to whom it belongs. Vicariousness involves one person substituting for another.

Substitutionalism has no place in the gospel. God has not required it, neither does he permit it. What is necessary and proper according to the plan of salvation God requires of every man, but God does not require the impossible or the unreasonable, and where because of the unavailability of the gospel and the innocent ignorance of a man, the usual gospel requirements, including baptism, are not required -so the scriptures teach. Hence there is no need for a substitute or proxy in baptism or any other thing under the gospel. There is no instance of it in the scriptures.

It may be urged that a precedent was established in substitutionalism when Christ died for man. Some theories of the atonement hold that Christ's death was vicarious, and that he died in our stead, and many people think of it that way. But Christ's death was not substitutional. In dying he did not perform a work which God required of man to perform for himself. It was not man's personal work to

to die to save himself, much less to die on a cross or to be assassinated. Christ's death was in behalf of men but not in substitution for men.

As to man's physical death, notwithstanding Christ died for him he still dies the physical death. But what of spiritual death? If any man is delivered from that through Christ will any one say that Christ died spiritually to save that man? Hardly. Through the transgression of Adam the whole human race was innocently involved in the death that followed. Men were helpless. Nothing they could do of themselves could deliver them from that death, and what was impossible to them they were in no wise required to do. But Christ, because of his divinity was able and he assumed the task in mercy and love, even though he had to suffer death to accomplish it. He died that men might have life. That death was not vicarious.

We do occasionally find in human affairs that a man occasionally acts as the proxy for another. By appointment an executor executes a will in the place of the deceased; A man signs a deed to convey title of another's property, having received a power of attorney to do so; a certified form enables a man to vote in the stead of an absentee; all of which acts are such as the other would normally do but is prevented by circumstances. They are acts which belong to the other but because of difficulties involved he yields to a proxy by legal authorization to do for him. It is to be noted that even in common human affairs proxy acts are or can be performed only by the appointment or approval of the original. Baptism for the dead admits of no such authorization.

There are other deeds which men do in behalf of others but which are in no sense proxy or substitutional deeds. A man plunges into the river to save a drowning boy, and as the boy climbs the bank his sav-

ior falls back exhausted and drowns; a soldier goes out into no-man's land to rescue his wounded and dying buddy, and as he lowers him safely into the trench a bullet pierces his own heart; a physician drives a dog-sled over hundreds of miles of Klondike snows, suffering frost-bite and amputation, in order to save a helplessly sick man. These are acts done for others in which the actors suffer but not as proxies. The acts they do are not acts which the others ought to have done, or which the others delegated them to do, but acts of mercy and compassion which were needful and which could not be done without suffering. It is the spark of divine compassion in men which impels them to sacrifice self in the interests of others. That is what the divine Son of God did in coming to earth, enduring the sufferings of life and death because of his great mercy and love for man in his need. The death of Christ offers no precedent for baptism for the dead.

Baptism for the dead violates that essential nature of the gospel which gives to every man his own responsibilities which none other can perform for him. This principle was clearly stated by Jesus, "Therefore let every man stand or fall by himself, and not for another." (Mark 9:44). The scriptures teach that every man must answer for his own sins in the day of judgment; that every man will be judged according to the works done "in the body," "in the flesh," "in this life." He will not be judged by the works done by another either good or bad, nor is it said that he will be judged for any works done after he leaves this world. There's no room for proxy-ism here.

Baptism is one of three related requirements essential as initial steps in entering into covenant relation with God. They are, faith including belief, repentance, and baptism. They are in reality but three phases of one movement of act, each of which must be perform-

ed in relation to the others. Engagement, obtaining legal authorization or license, and the final ceremony, are all necessary phases of marriage. So with faith, repentance, and immersion, which all are essential phases of baptism, and without all of which the immersion would be void. These three stages are absolutely personal, that is they develop within the soul of the individual notwithstanding each may be shown by outward signs. Every man must of himself exercise faith and be believing; every man must of himself repent and get rid of his sins; and every man must of his own volition determine to enter into covenant with God to serve him to the end of life. These are things that must be done together. The immersion is but the final ceremony which confirms and seals the three steps. How then can they be separated, one man doing one and another another? It is most inconsistent; it is impossible.

A man can not believe for another, or repent for another. Much less can a man be baptized for another. These are strictly personal matters between a man and his God. If we admit of vicarious baptism why draw the line there? Why not let my brother believe for me, and confess my sins in my stead, and repent for me? Why not let my brother partake of the emblems of the Lord's body and blood in my stead? The doctrine of vicarious baptism became but the entering wedge opening the way of what might have been a train of proxyisms. Satan would never stop after getting one false doctrine established in the church of Jesus Christ. He would seek to enter others. *

* Having once opened the doors of the church to vicarious performances in the matter of baptisms, the church was inevitably led to extend the principle to other acts. Women were married to men who were dead, through living proxies, the proxies assuming the prerogatives of the supposed husbands and begetting children in their behalf. What a travesty upon the divine order! The seeds of this proxyism were sown in Nauvoo, but apparently did not have their full development until Brigham Young's faction had settled in the Salt Lake Valley. This was one phase of polygamy.

When a man dies his responsibilities and duties, as pertaining to this life, die with him. He no longer carries the responsibility of family, of business, of office, or church. Even his debts are left with others to settle. He releases all claim to property, to contracts. He becomes completely divorced from the world and all that is in it.

Reversely, when a man dies the responsibilities of his fellow men whom he leaves behind as pertaining to his person also cease. The tie of relationship which is broken for him is also broken for them. There is nothing more that they can do directly for him. His unfulfilled obligations toward God can not be performed by others. In the very nature of things proxy baptisms for the dead are without virtue. They are dead works; folly to the living, unprofitable to the dead, and despised of God.

In this life men are their brothers' keepers; responsibilities are inter-related and these responsibilities are God-appointed. But God has never laid upon men any responsibility pertaining to the dead. Prayers, masses, ordinances, and works, and all such in behalf of the dead are not required, and when they are offered they can be none other than an offense to God. In performing them men are assuming things that do not belong to them.

Another point previously mentioned needs to be further noticed. No proxy act can be performed in any legal matters except it be by specific and legally approved authorization of the principal. But what about baptism for the dead? All such baptisms are performed without any authorization whatsoever from those who have passed from this life. The act is performed not by the will, direction, or consent of the principal, and consequently can not be even a true proxy action. The principal has a right to be heard in the matter. If there is anywhere a dead work surely this baptism for the dead is the greatest

of all. It purports to be a legal act performed vicariously in behalf of another, binding upon the other so that he must answer for it in the day of judgment, yet performed without his knowledge and consent. No court on earth would maintain the legality of such an act. Will God?

S E C T I O N 9

ANTECEDENTS AND EARLY PRACTICES

Baptism for the dead had its antecedents among the Jews, the Romans, and the Greeks. Among the Romans and Greeks lustrations for the dead were practiced for purification and expiation. (Mentioned in Ovid; Fasti Book 2, 267, 452). Tertulian refers to these Roman and Greek lustrations as very much on a level with the Corinthian baptism for the dead. (-Adv. Marcion, Book 5, Chap. 10). "A like practice was familiar to the Jews. With them if any man died in a state of ceremonial uncleanness, which would have required ablution; one of his friends performed the ablution; he was washed, and the dead man was accounted clean." (-Rev. S Cox in "The Resurrection," p 114, from which some other information in this section has been gathered).

So far as is known baptism for the dead as it existed among one or two sects in the early Christian Church was nothing more than an occasional instance where one had died without baptism, whose relatives were Christians, and out of their love for him, and desire for his salvation, they proceeded to carry out the form of baptism after his death and before burial, but using a living person as a substitute. St. Chrysostom describes such a baptism, "After the catechumen was dead, they hid a living man under the bed of the deceased;

then, coming to the bed of the dead man, they spake to him and asked him whether he would receive baptism: and he making no answer, the other replied in his stead, and so they baptized the living for the dead." (The Resurrection, p 112).

Hastings Dictionary of the Bible says, "In 1 Corinthians 15:29 Paul refers to a practice of persons allowing themselves to be baptized on behalf of the dead. Such a practice seems to have had analogies in the Greek mysteries, from which it may have crept into the Christian Church. As such it may be regarded as a 'purely magical, and wholly superstitious, vicarious reception of the sacrament.' Of such a practice the apostle expresses no approval, but 'simply meets his opponents with their own weapons without putting their validity to the proof.' (Rentdorff)."

Baptized for the dead - a very obscure allusion. There was somewhat a later practice, among certain sects, of vicarious baptism: when a man died unbaptized, a friend would receive baptism in his stead. This may already have existed and be meant here. St. Paul mentions "Baptism for the dead", without expressing his approval; but some think the practice sprang up later from a perversion of this passage." -The one Volume Bible Commentary, by Dummelow.

Dr. McGiffert in A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, says of baptism for the dead, "It never became common in the Christian Church," and in a footnote adds, "The practice is reported to have existed in the Marcionite and Cerinthian sects ... but we hear of it nowhere else."

As to baptism for the dead in the Christian Church, some form of it existed among the Marcionites - a Christian sect which flourished A D 130 to 150, as stated by Tertullian in De Resurrect Carnis, Chap.48. "Epiphanius relates that a similar custom prevailed among the Cerinthians, a still earlier sect." (The Resurrection, p 112.

From the Bible and history one thing is certain, viz., that baptism for the dead was neither a general doctrine, nor an accepted

practice of the early Christian Church. It also appears that the practice of it was in relation to occasional and isolated cases, and never applied as a principle covering all the dead. As practiced then it appears to have been nothing more than the application of the common baptism in occasional instances to some who had just died, using a proxy in the place of the dead person.

Baptism for the dead as introduced into the practices of the Church of Jesus Christ at Nauvoo is a quite different thing from that we have just described as existing in the ancient church, so much so that the nineteenth century version may be said to be altogether original. This version makes it an established doctrine in the gospel of Christ, applicable to all the dead who have died outside the gospel from the beginning of the world; a doctrine ordained of the Redeemer from before the foundation of the world; of even greater importance than the regular baptism taught by John the Baptist and others. Corinth may have conceived it, but it took the latter day church to bring it to the birth after centuries of incubation, changed in its nature, and in its scope. It has antecedents but no precedents.

SECTION 10

THE DEAD ARE IN GOD'S HANDS

The Catholic Church performs masses and offers prayers for the dead. They pray to the righteous saints, and pray for the unrighteous souls in purgatory. The ancient Greeks and Romans performed certain ceremonies in behalf of the dead, as also the Jews. Ancestral worship is common in the East. Many peoples perform various rites and ceremonies in manifesting their continuing interest in the departed. The Mormon Church not only baptizes for the dead, but also performs marriages for the dead and bring forth children in their name. The disposition to do something for the dead seems to be universal.

The first works performed for the dead in the Christian Church was in baptizing for the dead, at Corinth, and which was later found among at least two other groups. In later times this practice crept into the restored church at Nauvoo, in about 1841. In all such prayers and works men assume more or less of concern and responsibility for the dead, making the dead a perpetual burden upon the living. Such assumption is needless, unwarranted, and useless.

Never has God imposed upon the living any burden of responsibility as pertaining to the dead. The care of the living and the affairs of this world tax the full energies of the living and the faithful performance of these duties is all that God requires. Between this world and the next God has placed an impenetrable wall, so that men in the flesh may not go to the world beyond, neither may the spirits of the departed return here. Neither is there any line of communication whereby information can pass between the one and the other. The separation is so utterly complete as to remove all direct responsibility of either one for the other. Likewise all de-

pendency between either one and the other ceases. One verse in the common versions of the Bible suggests that such dependency exists, "That they without us should not be made perfect;" (Heb.11:40); but this is changed in the inspired version to read, "that without sufferings they could not be made perfect." The Spirit of the Lord leaves no ground for dependency here.

What little the Lord has seen proper to reveal concerning the spirit world justifies the conclusion that God holds the spirits of all men in his own hands. Paul wrote, "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living." Abinadi said, "The Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead." (Mos.8:54). Jesus said to John, "I hold the keys of death and of hell." It was revealed to Alma "that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, ... are taken home to that God who gave them life. ... The spirits of the righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise. ... The spirits of the wicked ... shall be cast out into outer darkness." (Alma 19:43-46). Christ deals with all these according to his will and purpose, and it is written of him that "he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," and Peter says "the gospel is preached to them that are dead." These all are dependent upon Christ, the one Mediator between God and man, the Redeemer and Savior. They are in no wise dependent upon their fellow men.

Supposed correspondences between the dead and the living are but the deceptive work of evil spirits who are in the world but were never in the flesh. Against such the scriptures decry. Isaiah speaks of those who say, "Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter;" and adds reprovngly, "should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to hear from the dead." (Isaiah 8:19). The only source of information concerning the dead

is through the revelation of God. The rich man of the parable who found himself in hell desired keenly to send back to his brothers a warning that they might avoid coming there, but he was not permitted to do so.

In a few instances the Lord has used departed prophets or other holy men, sending them to men on earth on appointed missions, which suggests that the righteous retain an interest in the welfare of men on earth. They come as messengers of Christ and not on any affairs of their own. Otherwise the grave is silent. The import of this great silence between the dead and the living is that at death the opportunity for mutual help ceases; all social responsibility comes to an end. We are neither advised nor commanded to pray for the dead much less to perform ordinances for them. Whether the dead pray for the living we do not know. Perhaps the righteous do. We do know that "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us," and "Christ that died .. also maketh intercession for us." (Rom.8:26,34).

With the removal of all responsibility of the living toward the dead; all dependency of the dead upon the living; and the practically complete severing of all communication between the two, baptism for the dead remains an unnecessary and useless provision, and an unwarranted human intervention in the affairs of God and his subjects. It seeks to go beyond the bounds of human responsibility and righteous endeavor appointed of God, to enter realms beyond the veil which man has never seen, and where God is supreme and abundantly able to do according to his will.

A point of inconsistency arises here in connection with baptism for the dead, in that, while it performs a physical ordinance supposedly to change their status in some way in the spirit world, yet those who perform such ordinances can do nothing else to improve

the status of those for whom they are baptized. Baptism implies previous guidance and subsequent help, but in this case man supplies neither. If all the preliminary and subsequent help belongs to the Lord to provide, is he not also able to perform all that is requisite in and for the souls of these discarnate spirits? After all, does not the change of status wrought by baptism, spring from within the soul through willing obedience, and not by the magic of some formal and outward act, notwithstanding the act may be necessary to evidence the inward change? There is no magic in baptism. Its virtue lies in what has transpired within the heart of the candidate before the act, and what transpires afterward. The change of status is by process rather than by act, baptism being but the outward expression of that inner change. But baptism for the dead is a thing so far separated from the soul of the supposed candidate and its inner processes as to have no connection.

In the case of men who are discarnate, and a physical baptism impossible, could not the Lord accept other evidences of the change in their souls, and by the manifestation of his Spirit make them sons of God? The scriptures so indicate. Those who are redeemed and saved in the terrestrial glory include some who have the gospel preached them by the Son in the prison, and who, the Lord says, "received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterward received it," that is in the spirit world. (D.C.76:6). The

The gospel is adaptable to any and every condition affecting men in this world or the next. Baptism belongs to this world and this world only. It does not apply to discarnate spirits; it is not required of the dead. Human souls belong to God and he will save whomsoever he will by the varying means ordained from the beginning of the world. Baptism for the dead is not required and has no place in the gospel.

S E C T I O N 11

SIN NOT IMPUTED TO MEN WITHOUT THE LAW

SAVED THROUGH THE ATONEMENT

Baptism is related to sin. It was instituted because of sin and applies to such as are under sin and guilt. Some sin brings guilt and some does not, and where there is no guilt there is no need for baptism, as in the case of little children, who, the scriptures say, have no need of baptism.

Sin exists in two forms, original and personal. Original sin is the wrong that springs from impulse due to inherent evil resulting from the fall of Adam, and committed in ignorance of the law, or without discerning its evil nature. Personal sin is that wrong which men commit intentionally, knowing that it is sin.

Original sin is that portion of human wrongs for which men are not directly responsible, which attaches no guilt to them, and leaves them within the divine favor, or as described by Mormon, "alive in Christ." The atonement of Christ extended to all men the remission granted to Adam, full and unqualified as pertaining to original sin. Hence, men are not held to account for it in the day of judgment. To such baptism does not apply.

Personal sin, or intentional sin, is not included in the broad forgiveness applied automatically (as it were) by the atonement of Christ, but comes under a different provision of the gospel law. It results from deliberate choice under conditions of light and understanding wherein the transgressor is aware of right and wrong. It involves a man in guilt and condemnation, estranging him from God, and can be forgiven only by the law of repentance the first fruits of which is baptism. (Moroni 8:29). "The fulfilling the commandments

bringeth remission of sins." (Ibid).

Thus it is that children whose wrongs are innocent wrongs are without guilt, and always acceptable to God; and if they die they die in Christ and are saved. In much the same class are the adults who have grown up without a knowledge of Christ and his law. They may do many wrong things but not discerning right from wrong they are without guilt. The wrongs are not held against them; the mercy of Christ through his atonement covers them, and they are acceptable to God, and when they die they are saved. Since baptism is "unto the remission of sins," and since sin is not imputed to such as we have just described, it is apparent that baptism does not apply to them. They have no need for it. The baptizing of infants, and the attempt to fit baptism to those who have lived and died without knowing the law, by having a proxy baptized in their stead, is altogether beside the gospel requirements. The prophet is justified who said that "such baptism availeth nothing .. is mockery before God, " and is "putting trust in dead works." (Moroni 8:26).

In section 2 we showed that baptism has its limitations, and here we have shown more fully what those limitations are. It has its purpose and place in the gospel, but the Lord never instituted baptism for the guiltless, and he has declared infants and those who knew no law to be such. God's work of salvation fits the varying conditions of men.

Moses established a law in Israel providing that if any man sinned ignorantly he should be forgiven, but if he sinned presumptuously he should be cut off from the people. (Num.15:27-31). The principle involved here belongs in the gospel though with greater mercy to the presumptuous man. The sin of the ignorant was not to be held against him. The Lord deals differently with sin committed in ignorance from that committed wilfully.

In this section we are giving a list of the scriptures which set forth the will and purpose of God regarding those who die without a knowledge of the gospel, including infants, and show what provision he has made for their salvation. These scriptures leave no other conclusion than that baptism does not enter in to the lives of these persons in any way whatsoever. Baptism for the dead is never mentioned.

Jesus

Matt.18:11, But these little ones have no need of repentance, and I will save them. (See Ins.Ver.verses 1 to 14).

John 9:41, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

John 15:22, If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.

John 15:24, If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.

Matt.23:35, Behold your fathers did it through ignorance, but you do not; therefore their sins shall be upon your heads.

Paul

Rom.3:20, For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Rom.4:15, For where no law is, there is no transgression.

Rom.5:13, Yet sin is not imputed to those who have no law.

Rom.7:7, I had not known sin, but by the law.

Rom.2:12, For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

James

Jas.4:17, Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Nephi

2 Nephi 6:50-66 Wherefore he hath given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment, there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement: for they are delivered by the power of him; for the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all

those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel. But woe unto him that has the law given; yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation; for awful is his state! And woe unto the deaf that will not hear: for they shall perish. Woe unto the blind that will not see: for they shall perish also.

Mosiah

Mos.1:106-124, (Referring to the scourging of Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection, and his standing to judge the world), And behold, all these things are done, that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men. For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died, not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned. But woe, woe unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God; for salvation cometh to none such, except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. ... Little children ... they are blessed; for behold as in Adam, or by nature they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins. For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just, and the infant perisheth not, that dieth in his infancy. ...

Mos. 8:54-88 ... The Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead. (Refers to those who rose from the dead at the time of Christ's resurrection as being those who were obedient to the law, and then refers to others) ... And these are they who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus God bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord. And little children also have eternal life. ... The Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him, and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection. ... Salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord redeemeth none such. (See full text).

Mormon

Moroni 8:4-28, ... Little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; therefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them; ... baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins. But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world. ... All little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law; wherefore he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, can not repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing. But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works. Behold, my son, this thing ought not to be; for repentance is unto them that are under condemnation, and under the curse of a broken law.

Alma

Alma 15:56, ... He that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires; whether he desires good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.

Joseph Smith

D C 28:13,14, Little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world, through mine only Begotten; wherefore they can not sin. ...And again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent? and he that hath no understanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written.

D C 76:6, (Terrestrial order), These are they who died without law; and also they are they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited and preached the gospel unto them.

D C 45:10, Then shall the heathen nations be redeemed and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection.

This last is not from the scriptures but from Church History, Vol.2, p 16. "Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me saying:- All who have died without a knowledge of the gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; and also all that die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desires of their hearts."

These are scriptures which the elders have largely overlooked in their study of the plan of salvation, but they stand as the word of the Lord and are true. Had they been understood baptism for the dead would never have for a moment been considered, much less received by the church. These alone refute the whole doctrine of baptism for the dead. The Book of Mormon is particularly clear upon this matter, and had the early church sought more diligently and discovered its teachings on this point it would not have been led astray. As it was, the Lord reproved the church for having "treated lightly the things which they had received." Let us review the leading points of these texts:

Children are alive in Christ having no sin, need no repentance and baptism, and are saved through the mercies of Christ.

Those who grow up without a knowledge of Christ and the gospel

do not have sin imputed to them, and consequently are without guilt, can not repent, and are altogether outside the requirements of baptism. The power of Christ's redemption by the atonement saves them.

Those who have the knowledge and opportunity of the law by which sin is defined to them, and by choice continue in sin, such sin being strictly personal and not attributable to Adam's transgression, come under condemnation, having guilt attaching to them. These are they of whom repentance is demanded, and of whom baptism is required which if they observe bring forgiveness and salvation. If they reject these requirements they die in their sins and can not be saved.

Those who have lived faithfully under the gospel law will come forth in the first resurrection and be with Christ.

Those who lived and died not knowing the gospel law, who are saved through the mercy of Christ by the atonement, will also come forth in the first resurrection, though separately from the saints. They "have part in the first resurrection." (D.C. 85:27-28 and 45:7, 10, show that the first resurrection will be in two parts).

In the light of this wondrous display of revealed truth showing the great mercy, wisdom and power of Christ in bringing about the salvation of man, baptism for the dead appears for just what it is: an inferior, unworthy, incompetent, and inept doctrine; ineffective, having neither power or force; and lacking the authority and approval of God. It reveals not one redeeming feature, the one feature which it claims for itself, viz., that it is the means of saving the dead who otherwise would be lost, being in direct conflict with the divine plan previously revealed of God by which such dead are saved. It appears as a contradictory, perverse, and substitutional doctrine, having its origin in other than divine sources.

SECTION 12

GOD'S METHOD OF SAVING THOSE WHO DIE WITHOUT
A KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel was designed of the Lord from before the beginning of the world, and Christ the Son of God was prepared to carry out its provisions. It was adapted to every condition of every man in every age; there was or would be no soul whose needs were not fully covered by it, the Lord knowing beforehand what those needs would be.

Since the greater part of mankind would live and die without knowing of the plan of salvation and without being able to fulfill all its requirements, it is certain that their needs would be met by God's perfect plan. The scriptures tell us how God provided for them.

The modern doctrine of baptism for the dead is said to be the way of God's provision for such as die without opportunity of coming to God in this life, their obedience to the law of baptism being carried out through a proxy or substitute person being baptized in their names. We have already shown that this doctrine is not according to the scriptures, and is in conflict with the divine plan revealed therein.

Those who die in ignorance of the law are not left without opportunity for ever. Peter declared that the "gospel is preached to them that are dead." Christ himself preached to the spirits in prison, and Enoch was shown that many of them found mercy in Christ and came forth with him in his resurrection, and stood on the right hand of God. (Gen 7:64). Joseph Smith likewise saw the terrestrial world, "they who died without law, and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto

them;" and they were saved in the terrestrial glory, having come forth in the first resurrection. Abinadi, speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost, told of those who had died "not having salvation declared unto them," and said "They have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord." All these came under gospel ministration in the spirit world and were brought to salvation, having never been baptized on earth; neither is there any hint of any others having been baptized for them.

The gospel of salvation designed from before the foundation of the world provided that those who had no opportunity in this life should be redeemed by the atonement of Christ "without the works of the law." Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The righteous are those to whom sin is not imputed, little children, and those who never knew the law. They are without guilt, and need neither repentance nor baptism. The call of God to them in the spirit world is not to repentance and baptism; they are saved through justice and mercy made operative through the atonement of Christ, and by the resurrection "sin" of Adam is taken away from them, while personal sin does not attach to them. There is no reason why they should not be saved; and there is no reason why they should be condemned.

Let us look a little closer into human nature. Original sin, as it is usually called, has two phases; First, inherent evil which comes to every soul born into the world, being inherited from ancestors as far back as Adam. This evil, which is a perversion of nature, is not laid to the charge of men. They are innocent of it. This inherent evil belongs to the flesh and dies when the body dies, in fact death is God's plan for getting rid of it, and when he re-creates the bodies of men in the resurrection this evil element is not restored; the perversity has been destroyed for ever. This is

the divine purpose in death, it being a part of the gospel process as much as is the resurrection in restoring man physically to his pristine estate.

The second phase of original sin consists of wrongful actions or attitudes which normally result from inherent evil, the wrongfulness of which is not discerned by those who commit them. Children do many wrong things from impulse without knowing the nature of them. Heathen peoples follow many ways and customs which are utterly at variance with truth and right, not knowing that they are wrong but believing them to be proper and right. In more civilized and even so-called Christian lands no doubt many actions of many persons come within this class of sins, that is, committed through ignorance, not understanding the law of God. (The Lord alone is able to judge of all these). It is this class of sins which is given a blanket remission by the Lord under the atonement, for they add no guilt to those who commit them. The statement of scripture is, "I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the garden of Eden. Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents can not be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world." (Gen.6:55-56).

Thus all evil and sin which is not wilful is removed by Christ, who came into the world to "take away the sin of the world." Such evil and sin do not come under the gospel law of repentance and baptism, these requirements being provided to cover intentional or wilful sin, or those guilty of personal sin. Baptism is not arbitrary as applying to every soul regardless of the conditions under which he lived and died. It is a law which has its bounds and limitations. Where it applies it is required, and where it does not apply it is not required.

God is a God of justice and of mercy. Justice is governed by mercy, and mercy is always just. With God it could not be otherwise. The justice of God would not permit the hosts of human souls whose only sin was that they were born under the curse of Adam, to go down to eternal death. God sent them to this world to inherit this condition of evil, and where they were left in ignorance of anything better they were not responsible for their condition. It remained God's responsibility to redeem them, and this he purposed to do. It is said that Christ died to satisfy the justice of God, and an ancient interpretation of this statement which grossly misrepresents God still persists, viz., that God was so offended at the infraction of his law that he must demand a penalty, so that his Son came to suffer and die in expiation of man's sin, and to satisfy the anger of God. Such an interpretation gives to Christ a character superior to that of the Father. It is wrong. God saw that men would innocently suffer a perverted nature because of Adam's transgression, together with the transgressions of others in the line of ancestry, and because of this evil they could not dwell in the presence of God nor in his kingdom. This would work an extreme injustice upon the human race which God could not stand by and permit without violating his own quality of justice. So Christ came to redeem man from this condition thus preserving the justice of God. Mercy was the means of satisfying justice.

In all this great plan there is neither need nor place for baptism for the dead. It denies the mercy of God and makes his justice like Shylock's, arbitrary and exacting. It makes the law of God so unyielding that there is no adapting of it to the varied conditions and circumstances of human life. It is no part of the gospel of Christ.

SECTION 13

THE BOOK OF MORMON ON BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

Baptism for the dead is not mentioned by name in the Book of Mormon, yet that book does contain the clearest, strongest teaching on that subject of any of our books of scripture. That teaching is in condemnation of the doctrine and appears to have been given as the last word direct from the Lord as a warning to the church of latter days against the innovation that was to come.

Mormon received this instruction, in part, as the direct word of Jesus Christ, and in part as the revealment of the Holy Spirit, in answer to his petition. Baptism of little children had been introduced in the Nephite nation which was then dissolving in apostasy, and Mormon sought the mind of the Lord upon it. Apparently he was not able to reach the people with his message, but wrote it in a letter to his son Moroni who kept it during his many years of wandering and in writing the closing chapters of his father's book incorporated it therein. This was just prior to his depositing the sacred record in the hill in New York where fourteen centuries later it was revealed to Joseph Smith.

This remarkable message is recorded in Moroni the eighth chapter, and covers two phases of the subject of baptism. First, the baptism of infants; second, baptizing for the dead, though not directly named as such.

The high points of the message on infant baptism are that it is "a gross error," that "little children are whole," and "not capable of committing sin," that inherited evil or "the curse of Adam is taken from them" in Christ. That the baptism of children is a "solemn mockery before God. That baptism applies only to those who are

"accountable and capable of committing sin," and "little children need no repentance, neither baptism," and "they are partakers of salvation."

Mormon, without a break, gently passes from the first phase of his message to the second dealing with adults. He had just said, "I speak boldly, God hath commanded me. Listen unto them and give heed, or they stand against you at the judgment seat of Christ."

"For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law."

Here he moves over from his consideration of children to another class of humanity -those who did not know the law of Christ, and from here on his message deals with this class in relation to baptism.

After making it clear that little children have no need of baptism because they are alive in Christ, he applies this with all else he has said of them to the other class in saying "and also all they that are without the law." The second class come under the same provisions as the first. Both are alive in Christ. Neither can repent, nor be baptized, having no knowledge of such things, and if or when they die they are saved. Listen further:

For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, can not repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing. But it is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works.

The very ones for which it is said baptism for the dead was instituted, viz., those "who should die without a knowledge of the gospel," (D.C.110:5), are here declared to have no need for baptism, that they are saved by the mercies of Christ, that unto such baptism availeth nothing. We have here a plain contradiction between the teaching of the Book of Mormon and that of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Will those who hold to baptism for the dead explain?

But why should Mormon bring in those who know not the gospel, and know nothing about repentance and baptism in this life, while discussing baptism? These people are not perverting the ordinance. The sin of the Nephites was in baptizing infants, not in baptizing adults who knew nothing about it, so that this instruction and warning against baptism for the ignorant who died without the gospel, did not concern the people of that day. Neither is the doctrine of baptism for this class of people taught in modern times by either the Catholic or Protestant churches. There is one place and one only where this sharp warning message of Mormon applies - to the restored church of latter days. By its acceptance of the doctrine of baptism for the dead, and the practice of it, it became the only people, ancient or modern who were applying baptism to those who had died without a knowledge of the gospel. The warning is not against the dead; it is not against Catholic or Protestant, but against those who are baptizing for the dead.

Under the power of the Holy Spirit Mormon speaks with all the energy of his soul. There was somewhere an urgent need for his message as was known to the Spirit of God and Mormon was chosen as the messenger to convey it. It comes by the will and power of God to the church of latter days, declaring that baptism, as pertaining to the dead, "is a mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works." He further warns that "this thing ought not to be; for repentance is unto them that are under condemnation, and under the curse of a broken law."

Thus baptism for the dead stands condemned by God and by Mormon. It is no part of the gospel, but rather vitiates that part of the gospel covering the salvation of those who knew not of Christ.