

**LECTURE**

ON THE DOCTRINE OF

**BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD;**

AND

**PREACHING TO SPIRITS IN PRISON.**

**BY ELDER G. J. ADAMS.**

MISSIONARY TO RUSSIA.

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Reported and Published by his friend  
**DAVID ROGERS.**

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TO THE READER.—Although the following pages are but an abridgement of the lecture as delivered by my friend, taken from notes scetched for my own gratification, yet on perusing them, I feel assured the reader will be delighted with many ideas advanced, and richly paid for an hour spent in reading the following lines.

THE PUBLISHER.

# A LECTURE, ON BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD, &c.

*And Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau,  
and the Kingdom shall be the Lord's. Obediah 1st. Chap. 21, Verse,*

FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:—I stand before you this evening agreeable to appointment to deliver a Lecture (for the first time) in this great City, on the all important subject of Preaching to the spirits in Prison, which stands inseparably connected with Baptism for the dead. A subject which I consider one of the most important and soul-stirring subjects that stands connected with the great work of God in the last days. And you all know, my friends, it is a subject but very little understood, and I may say not at all by the Religious world in general, and notwithstanding they lay such high claims to Learning and Piety, yet for want of an understanding on these glorious principles, they treat this doctrine with scorn and contempt; and as in every other age of corruption, superstition, priestcraft and bigotry, they feel disposed to condemn without a hearing; but Solomon has said that he that judgeth of a matter without a hearing is not wise; but I feel myself happy in having the privilege of addressing so many of the intelligent citizens of this city on this great and momentous subject, and “now to the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to that, it is because there is no light in them,” and if these principles can be established by Scripture, you, as an enlightened people, are bound to receive them as proofs of Holy Writ. Without making any further preliminary remarks we will come immediately to the subject under consideration; but before we go any further, you will be kind enough to pay the most particular attention to our text, “And Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion,” and first I wish to make a few remarks in relation to the great Zion of God in the last days. As you perceive the Saviours here mentioned are to come up on (this) Mount Zion. The first important truth which I wish to impress on your minds, is, that this Zion, here spoken of, is to be built in these last days, in order that the people of God may be gathered from all nations in fulfilment of the Scriptures, as a preparatory work for the ushering in of the Glorious Millenium of a Thousand Years Reign of Peace.

And I now say, before this congregation, if the prophetic declarations in the Book of God are true, in reference to these subjects, (this Zion which we now mention) is to be established a long time after the little Zion in Jerusalem was ploughed as a field : in proof of which I now call your attention to the latter part of the third chapter and first part of the fourth chapter of Micah, which reads as follows, "They build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity, the Heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money, yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say is not the Lord among us, none evil can come upon us, therefore shall Zion for your sake [that is this Zion at Jerusalem] be ploughed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the Mountain of the House of the Lord as the high places of the forest. But in the last days, it shall come to pass that the Mountain of the House of the Lord shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it, and many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord and to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Here you will notice that there are two separate Zions mentioned in the Scriptures apart from each other and you will have the goodness to bear this particularly in mind. You will perceive that this latter Zion (of which we are now speaking) is to be established a long time after the former Zion in Jerusalem has been laid in ruins by the Romans under Titus, who even ploughed the former Zion as a field in search for gold in fulfilment of the above named prophecy.

And before leaving this subject I will give you one more quotation, and point you to several others which you can read at your leisure. You will find in Jeremiah 31st chap. 6th verse "For there shall be a day that the watchman upon Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God." And as you all know, my friends, this cry has never been heard among the nations by any people until the elders of this Church came forth and solemnly declared to the inhabitants of the Earth that God had spoken from the Heavens and commenced to establish Zion, for the great gathering of his people in fulfilment of the scriptures.

I now refer you for further light on this part of the subject, to the following passages of scripture, which I hope you will read. Isaiah, 2d chap. 2d, 3d and 4th verses; and, also, in the 50th Psalm, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th verses; 102nd Psalm from the 13th to the end of the 22nd verse.

I will now offer a few remarks in relation to the reason why the House of God built in Zion is called the House of Jacob. You will notice by turning to the 48th chap. of Genesis and 16th verse, that Jacob named his name on the two sons of Joseph, but more particularly on Ephraim, and you will see in the 19th verse of the same chapter, that Jacob solemnly declares that the seed of Ephraim shall become, "a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth." Also, 49th chapter of Genesis and 26th verse you will understand that these descendants of Joseph (or Ephraim) are to inhabit the "utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." Again, you will notice, in the 33d chapter of Deuteronomy, in the blessing conferred by Moses on the descendants of Joseph, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th verses, that the seed of Joseph shall possess the fullness of the earth, but more particularly the descendants of Ephraim, as it shall be the tens of thousands of Ephraim that shall push the people together to the ends of the earth in the last days.

I shall now call your attention for a few moments to the prophet Hosea in relation to the descendants of Ephraim, 7th chap., 8th and 9th verses "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people, strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not. Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him; and he knoweth it not." We see from the above quotation that the descendants of Ephraim were to mix themselves among the nations of the earth by marrying and intermarrying with the gentiles; and we know it is a historical fact that the tribe of Ephraim "was lost in the day of rebuke, among the tribes of Israel," and that their genealogy or history has been lost to both, Jews and Gentiles. But there is an eye that never sleeps, the great *Eternal*, who has watched this blood in all its windings for ages, and has in these last days, by his own voice, by revelation and prophesy, made known unto his People that they are the true seed of Jacob of the House of Ephraim, that have been mixed for ages among the Nations of the Earth; and the Elders of this Church are the tens of thousands of Ephraim that are to push the People together in these the last days. They, also, are now building the House of God in Zion, which is called the House of Jacob, because Jacob named his name on their forefather Ephraim; and these are the Saviours which were to come up on Mount Zion in the last days, holding not only the keys and power of salvation for the living, but also for the dead. And as salvation is the subject under consideration we shall first speak of the means ordained of

God by which salvation can be obtained, or in other words by which a sinner can be adopted into the Church and Kingdom of God.

I now wish to call your attention to the words of Jesus Christ himself, recorded in the 3d chap. 5th verse of the Gospel according to St. John, namely: "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And I wish you to understand that the Saviour has positively declared that Heaven and Earth may pass away but his words cannot pass away.— Therefore we all see from the foregoing passage that Baptism in water is a Eternal fixed principle or Law of adoption into the Kingdom of God, so much so that even the Son of God himself entered into his own Kingdom through the door of Baptism, although he had no sins to wash away. But having laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, he having humbled himself to fulfill all Righteousness that he might be the head of the Church, in *all* things having pre-eminence; for it is emphatically called the door, the truth, and the way. Also, if we for a moment notice the Gospel as preached in its purity on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand exclaimed with one accord, "what shall we do to be saved?" the answer of divine inspiration was, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

We also read in the writings of Paul, that as "many as have been Baptised into Christ, have put on Christ:" and in another part of his writings we read that as many as have been "planted in the likeness of his death, shall come forth in the likeness of his resurrection." Also, in his Epistle to the Colossians, he declares "we are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in Baptism, wherein we are risen through faith in him and the operation of the Spirit of God, having blotted out the handwriting that was against us." Paul, also, in the history he has given us of his own conversion, tells us that Ananias declared to him that he (Paul) "was a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before kings and rulers; but first he was commanded to arise and be baptised, calling on the name of Jesus and wash away his sins." Let it also be remembered by his enlightened congregation, that this great Apostle to the Gentiles has said "though we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel let him be accursed."

Having clearly shown by the foregoing quotations that the doctrine of Baptism for the remission of sins, is inseparably connected with the salvation of the Human Family. And having clearly proved from the Scriptures that no man can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he is born of water as well as the Spirit, we shall now leave this part of the subject for a short time, and take into consideration the doctrine of preaching to spirits in prison, which, in the wisdom of God, stands inseparably connected with the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead.

1st. I will call your attention to the 3rd chapter of the 1st Epistle of Peter, 18th and 19th verses: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

The above quotation shows clearly that while the body of the Savior lay confined in the tomb, his spirit had gone forth to the world of spirits to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. And by reading the first part of the 4th chapter of the same book, commencing at the 6th verse, you will clearly understand the reason why the Gospel was preached by our Divine Redeemer to the spirits in prison, it reads as follows; "For, for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."— Here you will see clearly that many have died that never heard the Gospel in its fullness while in the flesh, and as the Scriptures plainly teach us that God has appointed a day in the which he will judge all men by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it would be unreasonable to suppose that God would judge men by principles that they never had an opportunity of hearing; but as the spirit is the intelligence of man we see the propriety of the argument of the Apostle Peter, wherein he has plainly told us the cause why those spirits which were deprived the privilege while in the flesh of hearing the Gospel, should be ministered to in the world of spirits, namely; that they might "live according to God in the spirit," but come forth in the Day of Judgment and be judged according to men that had heard the Gospel in the flesh.

Before leaving this subject I will call your attention to the 24th chapter of Isaiah and 21st and 22nd verses, when the Prophet is speaking of the desolation of the last days and the building of Zion and Jerusalem, he tells us, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the Earth upon the Earth, and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit; and they shall be shut up in prison, and after many days they shall be visited." From this it will be plainly seen that many spirits shall, even in the future, go into prison who shall afterward be visited and ministered unto. And surely the Lord would not have them visited unless he had some object in so doing; and it is reasonable to suppose the object

will be a good one, and one worthy of the character of a Holy God. Dear hearers, we see as clear as the sun ever shone in the heavens, that the doctrine of preaching to spirits in prison is a scriptural, heavenly, and soul cheering principle, and who will find fault with this glorious doctrine? is there any wickedness attached to it? No! for the Almighty is its author.

We shall now turn our attention directly to the doctrine of Baptism for the dead. Paul in reasoning with his Corinthian brethren on the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, 15th chap. 29 verse, exclaims "else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Could we succeed in getting this generation to believe the glorious truths contained in the Bible, according to the plain and simple meaning of language, there would be no need of so much exertion on my part on this occasion, but as we are living in an age when the most sublime truths of the Book of God are covered with mysticism and the tradition of our fathers, and the doctrine of Baptism for the dead having shared the same fate as many other great truths. I shall now undertake to show that this doctrine is scriptural, reasonable, and Godlike. I am aware that whenever this doctrine was taught it was always attended with persecution, even Paul himself, with all of his advantages, jeopardized his life in preaching these things. As to its being a scriptural doctrine unless we admit the fact, the language above quoted is entirely devoid of meaning, for it is plainly and solemnly declared, "else what shall they do which are Baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all, why then are they baptised for the dead," the Apostle's reasoning goes to show that this was a doctrine believed and practiced, and we know that his reasoning on this subject is powerful, as who would not say with him, if the Dead rise not at all, why then are we Baptised for our dead friends, for if their dead bodies rise not. what good would it do for us to be Baptised, in behalf of them if they are Eternally to sleep in their graves; we are only wasting our time in paying a debt for them, they never had a privilege of paying for themselves, the payment of which cannot effect them unless they hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth in the resurrection of the just, this seems to be the whole course of the Apostle's reasoning, and it appears to me to be unanswerable, and you all know it. In relation to this doctrine being reasonable I will introduce a figure to illustrate the subject. We will suppose for argument sake that we are living under the old Continental Law of imprisonment for debt, which law, when once a man became involved in debt, and his creditor demanded payment,

and the debtor being unable to comply with said demand was seized by virtue of judgment and execution, carried to prison and there compelled to remain until "he had paid the utmost farthing." And now beloved hearers, you will bear in mind that this law knew no difference between good man and a bad one. The law does not take into consideration the circumstances that involved this man in debt and ruin. Suppose for instance that two debtors were thrown into the same prison under different circumstances, the one a wicked, profligate, spendthrift, and swindler and justly deserving his fate, the other a mild, amiable, industrious, and virtuous man, but unfortunate in business, became involved in debt under circumstances over which he had no control; these men are both seized and confined in prison, the law knows no difference between them, but being a fixed principle, it is impossible for either to get out of prison "until they have paid the utmost farthing," and neither of them having any thing to pay with, being confined under the penalty of the law they have no opportunity to search for employment, and the longer they remain there the poorer they become; and oftentimes it has fallen to the lot of unfortunate debtors to die in the prison house and be buried under the prison walls. We will now suppose, still further, that this good man although involved in debt has a friend, this friend undertakes his deliverance, goes to the office of the judge, pays the debt for his friend, that his friend could not pay for himself, has it entered upon docket, and receives the receipt for the full amount: his friend as yet remains ignorant of the circumstance he goes to the jailor, presents the receipt, the prison doors are thrown open his chains fall off--his friend demands and obtains his liberty; having paid for him what he could not pay for himself, as the law demanded that he should remain in prison "until he should pay the utmost farthing." But his friend having done for him what he never could have done for himself leads him forth to liberty and freedom: becomes his deliverer and presents him to the bosom of his family.

Now let us for a moment make an application of this figure. You will recollect my friends, we have already proved that Baptism is the only means of adoption into the Kingdom of God; and it is a self-evident fact that ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, have passed from the stage of action into the land of forgetfulness, that have never had the privilege of hearing, or embracing this doctrine, and the eternal law of adoption must be held sacred. Under these circumstances God has established in his church the doctrine of Baptism for the De-

whereby the living can be baptised, for and in behalf of their dead friends, that never had the privilege of hearing the fullness of the Gospel in this world, and their spirits being preached to in the world of spirits by those that have died in this dispensation, and as well as others in former dispensations, holding the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood. I now appeal to every honest man and woman that hears my voice this night; and ask them solemnly in the name of Jesus Christ, my Master, if they see any thing more unreasonable in the thought that God should devise a plan in relation to the salvation of the dead, whereby one can do for another that which he never had the privilege to do for himself. I say again do you see any thing more unreasonable in this, than there was in the laws of the land, where one had the privilege of liberating another, who never could have been liberated in any other way, I answer no! are you willing to allow that poor, blind, fallen, depraved, men, can invent laws in relation to the liberation of the body more glorious than those devised by our Eternal Father in relation to the salvation of spirit and body both. You will all exclaim no!! and who of all this congregation are not ready with one consent to cry great is the Lord and Glorious are his purposes in relation to the salvation of both the living and the dead. As it regards the doctrine being God-like, surely the Lord delights in mercy as well as justice. Is there any thing in this doctrine that would tarnish the justice of the Almighty. You must answer answer no!! The Angels of heaven would answer no!! The Scriptures and all intelligence unanimously respond o!! But it is worthy the glory and grandeur of a God.

In conclusion, let me say to this congregation, who have listened to me with so much attention on this highly exciting subject, that if we have proved any thing we have clearly proved the fact that God will establish a place called Zion, for the gathering of his people, and the commencement of the great work of resurrection in the last days, in order to prepare the way for the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And let me further say the principles of truth have now been revived in their primitive simplicity and beauty, and among other truths, the doctrine of Baptism, as an initiatory ordinance into the Kingdom of God. I have also dwelt at some length, on the doctrine of preaching to spirits in prison, which was a doctrine of Apostolic times, and is also believed in by this Church. As to the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead, I have dwelt upon it, at length, and rejoice that you have listened to me with such profound attention on this occasion.

If an entrance into the kingdom of God can only be obtained by being born of water and the spirit, and thousands of honest people have died among all nations, without having the privilege of hearing, understanding, and embracing, this doc-

trine, should we not rejoice that the Lord has put it into our power to become "Saviours" even to save our dead friends and relatives: oh! how beautiful and glorious this doctrine must appear to every lover of truth, and how consistent it is with the mercy, and justice of our Heavenly Father. You will also perceive by our remarks how closely the doctrine of preaching to spirits in prison and baptism for the Dead are linked together; the spirits are Preached to in prison by the spirits of those that held the priesthood on the Earth, and their living friends are baptised for and in behalf of them and become their Saviours, fulfilling the words in our text, namely, "And Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion," if then these things are eternal truths and have emminated from a Holy God, it becomes us to lay them seriously to heart, and do as Paul has said "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." I now bear testimony to you all, in the presence of my Heavenly Father, Holy Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, that this doctrine is of God, and has been established in his Church in these last days, and will stand when Heaven and Earth shall pass away. Previous to the time that we look for a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and peace forever.

And if these things are brought forth for and in behalf of the dead, is it not time that the living started, I answer, yes! then you that have not yet embraced the fullness of the Gospel, come forth with broken hearts, and contrite spirits, and be Baptised for the remission of your sins, that you may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which will guide you unto all truth, and enable you to save yourselves, and your dead. Which may God grant may be your happy lot. Even so, Amen.

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I will here add a brief outline of the faith and doctrine of the Latter Day Saints.

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The first principle of Theology as held by this Church, is Faith in God the eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, who verily was crucified for the sin of the world, and who rose from the dead on the third day, and is now seated at the right hand of God as a mediator, and in the Holy Ghost who bears record of them, the same to day as yesterday, and forever. The second principle is Repentance towards God; that is, all men who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are required to turn away from their sins, to cease from their EVIL DEEDS

nd to come humble before the throne of grace with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The third principle is Baptism, by immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for remission of sins, with the promise of the Holy Ghost to all who believe and obey the gospel. The fourth principle is, the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus Christ, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. This ordinance is to be administered by the apostles or elders of the Church, upon all those who are baptized into this Church. Through these several steps of faith and obedience, man is made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and numbered with the children of God. Through this process man is adopted into the Church and kingdom of God, as one of his Saints: his name is then enrolled in the book of the names of the righteous, and it then becomes his duty to watch, to pray, to deal justly; and to meet together with the saints as oft as circumstances will admit of; and with them partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the broken body, and shed blood of Jesus Christ; and in short, to continue faithful unto the end, in all the duties which are enjoined by the Law of Christ. Fifth, it is the duty and privilege of the saints thus organized upon the everlasting gospel, to believe in and enjoy all the gifts, powers, and blessings which flow from the Holy Spirit. Such for instance, the gifts of revelation, prophecy, visions, the ministry of angels, healing the sick, laying on of hands in the name of Jesus, and in short all the gifts as mentioned in scripture, or as enjoyed by the ancient saints.

This is a brief outline of the doctrine of this Church, and we believe that it is the only system of doctrine which God ever revealed to man in a gospel dispensation, and the only system which can be maintained by the New Testament.