

The BUSY MAN'S TRACT

Read in three minutes

SUBJECT: "FAITH"

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
Church of Jesus Christ
of
Latter Day Saints

GENERAL CHURCH HEADQUARTERS
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI
U. S. A.

FAITH

Text.—"Have faith in God."—Mark
11: 22.

What Is Your Mental Attitude?

A very ancient and wise preacher named Alma told his hearers that if they could do no more than "desire to believe," they should encourage that desire until faith came, and after faith, knowledge. Do you "desire to believe"?

A very modern philosopher named William James has a book entitled, *The Will to Believe*. He argues that it is perfectly logical to have the *will* to believe.

Faith offers all. Doubt offers nothing, and will take away that which you have. It is the creeping paralysis of all hope and all initiative.

Faith Dynamic in All Human Institutions and Activities

The home is the unit of civilization, yet marriage and the home are based

on faith. If a man can trust a woman with his name, his honor, and the souls of his children, he ought to trust the God who made the woman.

All democratic governments are based on faith. All business and financial systems and credits are based on faith. If you trust the promise of men on a slip of paper, why not trust God, whose promises stand sure forever?

By faith men plant, believing that they will reap. By faith men build, believing that they will occupy. By faith men explore, hoping to discover.

A Universal Human Instinct

All races have some form of religion. The religious sentiment is universal, and has always been so. Every idol, however crude, expresses an ideal. It testifies to the never ending search for God. Faith is natural. Atheism is an artificial culture.

Faith in Law the Basis of All Science

All sciences are based, first on faith in *continuity* of law; second, on faith in *universality* of law. We cannot go back beyond recorded history, yet we

believe that law has always been in force and will always continue. Lodge has a splendid lecture entitled, "Continuity." On that principle he bases his belief in the immortality of the human soul.

We are chained to this old earth, which is small compared to some of the heavenly bodies. If a man could journey toward the most distant visible star with the speed of the fastest express train, he would be old and dead long before he got out of the switch yard; and his bones would be turned to dust before the conductor came to take up his ticket. Yet we assume that law reigns supreme in that distant star and in other stars beyond it, as far as it is from this earth. We believe, in other words, that law is universal.

By faith astronomy weighs the stars. By faith geology reads earth's prehistoric records. By faith chemistry mixes her compounds.

Science rears her edifice on faith in continuous and universal law. Religion rears her temple on faith in the

great Law-giver, a self-existent, universal, never-changing God. "I am the Lord, I change not."—Malachi 3: 6.

The Testimony of Scientists

It has been assumed that science is in conflict with religion. This is not true. There is no conflict between true science and true religion.

Sir Oliver Lodge says, "Religion has its roots deep in the reality of things."

Lord Kelvin says, "Science positively affirms creative power."

Professor Larkin, of Lowe Observatory, says that there is not a great scientist living who is not aware of the existence of a dominant mind in the universe.

Faith Carries Her Own Credentials

Doubt is negative and destructive. Faith is constructive and affirmative. Why not join the builders? Ally yourself with those who believe and affirm and create. Christianity is creative.

Atheism leads only to chaos. Emma Goldman's creed began, "I be-

lieve in no God." It ran on very logically: "I believe in no God. I believe in no government. I believe in no marriage. I believe in no property."

The Sound Basis of Faith

Credulity has its root in ignorance. Any half-wit can be credulous.

Faith has its root in observation and revelation. It calls for the keenest minds, the biggest hearts, and the cleanest lives. Faith studies the known, and reasons from the known to the unknown. (Romans 1:20.) With its feet upon the known and the real it reaches into the unknown and discovers truth.

The universe argues the existence of a creator. A study of the universe leads to a belief in his existence. Revelation shows his moral nature and his will concerning man. Both study and revelation are necessary.

Faith Taught by the Revelations of God

Jesus, to whom the whole Christian world renders homage, gave as the first postulate of his creed, "Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22.

The whole body of the written revelations of God's word appeals to faith because it meets man's spiritual need. It brings him hope when otherwise there would be no hope.

Finally, however, there is the great character of Jesus Christ which is the supreme revelation. He is the "word [the revelation] that became flesh." (John 1: 12.) The beauty, the wonder, and the importance of that revelation will grow upon you as you contemplate it. The forces and powers of nature reveal to you a God of power and of dominion. But Jesus came revealing to you a personal God of love and of mercy, "full of grace and truth."

The War Between Faith and Doubt

There is a never-ending war between faith and doubt. No thinking man can avoid taking part in it at some time. "There is no discharge in that war."

You cannot escape that war, but you may have your choice. You may fight against doubt and on the side of faith, or you may fight against faith

and on the side of doubt. You may stand in the shadow and in the darkness with doubt, and fight against the appeal of God that comes into your heart from time to time. Or you may stand in the light with faith and fight against the powers of doubt and despair that assail you. Why not fight under Immanuel's flag?

The follower of Jesus Christ has everything to gain and nothing to lose. The atheist has all to lose and nothing to gain.

This church calls you to have faith, and to serve a personal God, a universal, all powerful, all wise God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is willing to bless man, to heal man, and to reveal his will to man to-day just as he did in all past ages when man had faith. In him there is no variableness, neither shadow of changing. He is an ever present help in every time of need.

Accept, then, the first great fundamental principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and have faith in God.

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Read in three minutes

Subject:

"REPENTANCE"

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
Church of Jesus Christ
of
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GENERAL CHURCH HEADQUARTERS
Independence, Missouri
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Repentance

Text.—“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.”—Mark 1: 15.

Analysis of the Text

The message quoted is exceedingly personal and imminent. The time to repent is *now*: “The time is fulfilled.” The place is *here*: “The kingdom is at hand.” You are the person: “Repent, ye, and believe the gospel.” There are few men indeed who do not need to heed this admonition.

The message of the Lord comes to us first in invitation: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”—Acts 3: 19.

It comes to us next in warning: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”—Luke 13: 3.

The Nature of Repentance

There is a form of worldly repentance which consists merely in being

sorry when one is caught. The individual is not sorry that he did wrong. He is sorry that he is caught and is to be punished. That is the kind of repentance that Paul had in mind when he said, "The sorrow of the world worketh death."—2 Corinthians 7: 10.

That kind of repentance worketh death because all it does is to cause the individual to make up his mind that next time he will sin, but he will be more careful. From this state of mind has been evolved the worldly philosophy: "If you can't be good, be *careful*." The end of this philosophy is death, because man cannot escape consequences. Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap.

Then there is a godly repentance that Paul had in mind when he said, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."—2 Corinthians 7: 10. This repentance is sorrow for sin and not for exposure. It will "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."—Matthew 3: 8.

This repentance will cause a man to "Cease to do evil" (Isaiah 1: 16), and to "learn to do well" (Isaiah 1: 17).

This repentance leads to restitution wherever it is possible to make right that which was wrong. As an ex-

ample, Zaccheus stated that when he had taken anything from any man by fraud he had returned fourfold. (Luke 19: 8.)

The Objective

The first objective of repentance is to get right with God. The admonition in 2 Corinthians 5: 20 is, "Be ye reconciled to God."

The old confessions of faith that stated that Jesus Christ was made manifest in the flesh that he might reconcile God to man were entirely wrong. As one has said, "When a man's watch is wrong he does not set the sun by the watch, he sets the watch by the sun." The creeds may have attempted to adjust God to man, but the mission of Christ was to reconcile man to God. Faith and repentance are essential steps in this reconciliation.

The next objective of repentance is to get right with one's fellow men. It is truly said that it takes three to live the Christian religion—a man, his God, and his fellow man. That is the "eternal triangle," and fellowship must flow from every point.

The objective of repentance is greatly aided by confession.

Story of the Prodigal Son

In the 15th chapter of Luke we have the great and beautiful story of the prodigal son. Without doubt Jesus meant this story to represent God the Father and his erring children.

We note first the attitude of the son. He was blind with folly. No one could reason with him and he would not profit by any man's experience.

He yielded to the lure of "the far country." That far country today may be under the great white lights of New York, or in the vice district of Chicago, or it may be just around the corner in some low den where men gather to drink and play cards and exchange evil stories, or where sinful women assemble. It is a "far country" in the sense that it is far from our Father's house and from the teaching of that mother who is praying for her wayward son or daughter.

Next came the disillusionment of the prodigal son when his fortune was squandered. He discovered then, as many men do, that those who seemed to be his friends had deserted him.

Next the prodigal "came to him-

self." He returned to reason. He became exceedingly humble and truly repentant, and returned to his father saying, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son: Make me as one of thy hired servants."—Luke 15: 18, 19.

Now notice the attitude of the father. Never at any time had he cast the son off. This represents the attitude of God, of whom it is said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." He was always filled with love and compassion for man.

When the prodigal son returned, he was received with joy. The father ran to meet him and kissed him and said: "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

In like manner we are told that there is joy in heaven over one repentant sinner. (Luke 15: 10.)

The results were that the son made a new start. He started from where he was. Some one has offered the trite saying that if you would go anywhere "you must start from where you are." The prodigal son did not have a good place to start from. He started from the pig sty. But he found himself there. He was

willing to make the start and return to his father's house.

Are you ready for a new start? Start now; start right.

The Lesson of the Gospel Mirror

In the first chapter of James the gospel is compared to a mirror. Some men look into it and immediately go away and forget what manner of men they are; but he who looks into it and heeds the lesson is compared to the man who is not merely a hearer of the word, but also a doer. Are you content to *listen* to the word of God alone, or do you wish to *do* the will of God?

The mirror serves a double purpose. It shows us what we are, and so arouses a divine discontent. It shows us what we may be, and so points the way to salvation, or as Paul says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."—2 Corinthians 3: 18.

The Good and Bad in Men

There is good and bad in all men. Whittier wrote about the "two voices" that held debate within him. Tennyson wrote of the "moods" that

struggle within man. Paul complained of the evil that was "ever present" with him when he would do good.

The human soul is a battlefield. The moral struggle distinguishes man from the animals and vegetables. It is the province of the gospel to kill the beast in man and redeem the man.

Repentance is one of the first steps towards God and towards that clean, true life, which means salvation.

It is one of the six vital, fundamental, gospel principles. Others of these principles will be discussed in this series of tracts.

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The
BUSY MAN'S
TRACT

Read in three minutes

SUBJECT: "BAPTISM"

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
Church of Jesus Christ
of
Latter Day Saints

Independence, Missouri

BAPTISM

Text.—“Repent, and be baptized 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.”—Acts 2:38.

We are told that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. (Matthew 18: 16.) We are also told, “To the law and to the testimony.” (Isaiah 8: 20.) Very well:

Let the Witnesses Testify

The first witness is John, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”—John 1: 6.

John’s testimony is explicit: “he that sent me to baptize with water.” (John 1: 33.)

The second witness is Peter. The disciples were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. (Luke 24: 49.) On the day of Pentecost, fully endowed with this power, Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you.”—Acts 2: 38.

The third witness is Paul. It was said of Paul, “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the

Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”—Acts 9: 15.

This special witness to the Gentiles, for our benefit, names baptism as one of the six cardinal principles of the gospel. (See Hebrews 6: 1, 2.)

The fourth witness is Philip. He was a “preacher of Jesus.” He was commanded of the angel to go on a certain mission. (Acts 8: 26.) Beholding an Ethiopian, a eunuch of great authority, he was commanded of the Spirit to go and preach the gospel to this man. (Verse 29.) This man, having heard Jesus preached, said: “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” And Philip said, “If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.”—Acts 8: 37. “And they went *down both into the water*, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”—Acts 8: 38.

The fifth witness is Ananias, described as “a devout man according to the law, having a good report.”

At Paul’s conversion he was told by the Master to go to Jerusalem, and there “it shall be told thee what thou *must do.*” (Acts 9: 6.)

Ananias coming to Paul said, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”—

Acts 22:16. That was what Paul "must do" to be saved.

The sixth witness is Jesus Christ, the Lord, of whom the Father said, "Hear ye him."

His testimony must stand, and he it was who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."—Mark 16:15, 16.

He also said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them."—Matthew 28:19.

He himself was baptized in the river Jordan, and he says to us, "Take up thy cross and follow me."

Our first glimpse of him as a man was on the bank of the river Jordan, where he was baptized. We catch our last view of him before his ascension where he is saying to his apostles, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

The last great witness is God the Father. When Jesus was baptized the heavens were opened and God said, "I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11.)

Do you wish to please God? We ought to please God rather than men. (See Acts 5:29.)

The Mode of Baptism

The Bible tells us: "Therefore we are *buried* with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised

up from the dead . . . so we also should walk in newness of life.”—Romans 6: 4.

If a few grains of sand were sprinkled upon your coffin no one would consider you buried. There is no misunderstanding the figure used.

So we may understand why it was that “John was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salem, because there was *much* water there.”—John 3: 23.

The historic form of baptism was by immersion. For two or more centuries after Christ it was practically the *universal* mode. Finally in rare instances sick people were sprinkled, which method in such instances had sanction by the pope in 754 A. D. But it was not until 1311 A. D. that the Council at Ravenna authorized a change.

“The Question Box,” by A Father, Bertrand L. Conway of the Paulist Fathers, published by the Paulist Press, with preface by Cardinal Gibbons, says:

“The Catholic Church, therefore, as the *infallible* interpreter of the gospel of Jesus Christ, declares that all three ways of baptizing are equally valid, by immersion, by pouring, or by sprinkling. The present mode of pouring arose from the many incon-

veniences connected with immersion, frequent mention of which is made in the writings of the early Catholic Fathers.”

For thirteen hundred years immersion was the accepted method. Then who made the change? A Roman Catholic council and a Roman Catholic pope. Did they have a right to do so? No Protestant dare so contend; no Catholic can defend such claims. We prefer to go back to the primitive church, back to Jesus and the apostles for our pattern.

Considering the historic mode and the scriptural statement that Christ came “up out of the water” (Mark 1: 10), there is no doubt at all that he was immersed. “The servant is not greater than his master.” Who am I to hesitate on the bank and quibble. Let me follow him into the stream.

“They that *gladly* received his word were baptized.”—Acts 2: 41.

The Significance of Baptism

Man has always used symbols. The wedding ring, the crown, the scepter, prostration in prayer, these and a thousand other ancient material or ceremonial symbols come to mind. God recognizes that trait and speaks to man in a language that he can understand.

Baptism is a symbol of cleansing. All can understand it. Man has always cleansed his body with water, and though water cannot actually touch the spirit or cleanse it, it becomes a symbol of spiritual cleansing. Ananias, sent of God, understood this perfectly and said, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."—Acts 22: 16.

Baptism by immersion in water is a beautiful symbol. It is ruined by any changes. Why change what God gave?

Baptism a Beginning

Baptism is the door to the kingdom. Jesus said, "Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John 3: 5.

There is one baptism: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."—Ephesians 4: 5. But this one baptism is dual in its nature—baptism of the *water* and of the *Spirit*, as Jesus said.

If the baptism in water is important and vital as a symbol of cleansing, certainly the baptism of the Spirit is even more important, but baptism in water is the prelude and prepares the way by cleansing for the Spirit to enter in, as we are told that the Spirit will not dwell in unholy temples.

Jesus, in the passage quoted, clearly associates the two, water and the Spirit.

Peter, endowed with power, on the day of Pentecost said, "Repent, and be baptized 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 to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—Acts 2: 38, 39.

Baptism is the prelude to a new clean life in Christ Jesus: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Romans 6: 4.

Conclusion

We cannot conclude with any better exhortation than that found in the Scriptures, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Baptism is one of six fundamental gospel principles taught in the Scriptures, (see Hebrews 6: 1, 2,) and believed in by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

THE
BUSY MAN'S
TRACT

Read in three minutes

SUBJECT:
"THE LAYING ON OF
HANDS"

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
Church of Jesus Christ
of
Latter Day Saints

GENERAL CHURCH HEADQUARTERS
Independence, Missouri
U. S. A.

The Laying on of Hands

Text.—"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—Hebrews 6: 1, 2.

A better version of the text just quoted renders it, "Therefore *not* leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." No one would argue for a moment that we should leave faith behind, or that there is no further need to preach repentance.

Importance of This Ordinance

At first glance it might seem that the doctrine of the laying on of hands is not important. Really it is of great importance, for the following reasons: first, because of its *origin*; second, because of its *significance*; third, because of its *association*.

The ordinance of the laying on of hands is very ancient in human practice under divine direction. By commandment of God, Moses ordained

Joshua and set him apart with the laying on of hands. (See Numbers 27: 18-20).

Furthermore, the Lord chose to make it a part of his ritual under the gospel covenant. (Hebrews 6: 1, 2.)

It is important because of its *significance* as a symbol of power and authority. The human hand is the symbol and implement of man's power. With it he wields the sword, guides the pen and the brush, steadies the plow, directs the course of the steamship; in fact, executes all of the designs of his spirit and will upon matter.

It is also the symbol of God's power. We are told, "God came from Teman . . . he had horns coming out of his hand; and there was the hiding of his power."—Habakkuk 3: 3, 4.

This language, of course, is highly figurative, yet symbolical. Man has always used symbols. God appeals to men on the plane of his own understanding. The laying on of hands is a symbol, in the church, of authority and power.

It is important because of its *association*: being associated in all biblical history and religious experience with the act of blessing: being associated further with the act of healing of the body and of the soul.

In the Blessing of Children

Infant baptism is unscriptural and unreasonable. Baptism is for those who can understand and believe. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."—Mark 16: 16.

For little children not old enough to understand the gospel or the significance of baptism, Jesus had a very beautiful ordinance. He took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. (See Mark 10: 13-16.)

In Ordination

As already cited, Moses ordained Joshua by the laying on of hands. (Numbers 27: 18-20.) That was the custom for many centuries, and it continued with new meaning in the church of Christ.

An example: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."—Acts 13: 2, 3.

Another example is found in Acts 6: 5, 6.

It was the universal custom in ordination in the church of Christ and

is still observed by many of the churches. Why should they not observe the laying on of hands in other ways, as was done in the church of Christ? As, for instance,

In Divine Healing

Christ set the example in this particular, "Now, when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."—Luke 4: 40.

His ministers were to do likewise: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also."—John 14: 12. Also, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—Mark 16: 18.

The method of healing is thus set forth: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."—James 5: 14, 15.

This work was not to be limited to the twelve apostles. As an example to the contrary, note that Ananias, who was not one of the twelve, came and laid hands on Paul and healed him of his blindness. (Acts 9: 17.)

People should not entertain wild or fanatical ideas concerning divine healing; neither should they neglect sanitation and rational methods of treating the sick, yet it remains a fact that divine healing had its place in the church of Christ and must continue to have its place unless we are to admit that the power of God has departed from his church.

Healing is contingent on faith. There were places where even Jesus could "do no mighty works" because the people lacked faith. Divine healing is for the believer. It is not to make converts. It is a "sign" of the gospel. When not associated with the gospel, healing has much less significance or interest.

To Confirm Members and Bestow the Holy Ghost

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is to follow baptism in water: "Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5); also "Repent, and be baptized 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 to your children, and to all that are afar

off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”—Acts 2: 38, 39.

When the people of Samaria received the gospel and were baptized, Peter and John were sent unto them from Jerusalem and it is said that when they had arrived, “Then *laid they their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.” (See Acts 8: 14-19.)

Paul, finding certain believers at Ephesus who had not been properly baptized, baptized them, and afterwards it is said, “And when Paul had *laid his hands upon them*, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”—Acts 19: 6.

Jesus himself sent Ananias to lay hands upon Paul: “And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and *putting his hands on him* said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, *hath sent me*, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”—Acts 9: 17.

The importance of the birth of the Spirit which witnesses of our adoption, testifies of Jesus, guides us into all truth, cannot be overestimated. Associated with it in the New Testament Scriptures was the beautiful ordinance of the laying on of hands of a ministry authorized to represent God.

Why Scoff at This Principle?

This ordinance has always been associated with great and holy experiences. It has a most deeply religious significance. God himself chose to make it part of his ritual. (Hebrews 6: 1, 2.) Who are we that we should withstand God? (Acts 11: 17.)

This series of little tracts thus far has treated upon four fundamental gospel principles—the four to which men may yield obedience in this life, namely: faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands.

The other two of the six mentioned in Hebrews 6: 1, 2, are doctrines having to do with the events towards which men look with faith, and hope, namely: the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment. Those two doctrines will be treated in subsequent tracts.

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SUBJECT:

“THE RESURRECTION AND
THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT”

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
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GENERAL CHURCH HEADQUARTERS
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI
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THE RESURRECTION AND THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT

Texts: "The dead in Christ shall rise first."— 1 Thessalonians 4: 16.

"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world."— Acts 17: 31. "The doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection, and of head, and of eternal judgment."—Hebrews 6: 2.

God threw King Belshazzar into the balances and weighed him and declared that he was "found wanting." (Daniel 5: 27.) That ended the reign of Belshazzar. When God tires of the folly of a king it is an easy matter to take him from the palace and set him to sawing wood in Holland or brooding with the sea gulls on Saint Helena.

If kings are not spared, how may ordinary mortals hope to escape? In fact, God is "no respecter of persons," and king and peasant will be treated without partiality.

A Day Set

There is to be a great final time of judgment, happy for some, sad for others.

"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in

righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.”—Acts 17: 31.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”—Revelation 20: 12.

“Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”—Daniel 7: 10.

Events Preceding the Judgment

Certain momentous events are to precede the final judgment. First is the second personal advent of our Lord. Jesus told his disciples: “I will come again.”—John 14: 3.

This coming is to be personal. The angels said: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven.”—Acts 1: 11.

Closely associated with his coming is the “first resurrection.”

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in

Christ shall rise first.”—1 Thessalonians 4: 16.

Then follows the millennial reign of a thousand years:

“And they lived and *reigned with Christ a thousand years*. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.”—Revelation 20: 4-6.

Following the thousand years reign comes the resurrection of the wicked:

“And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the *rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”—Revelation 20: 4, 5.

The idea of two resurrections is carried out in other scriptures:

“They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John 5: 29.

“A resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—Acts 24: 15.

“Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”—Daniel 12: 2.

We have then the following events in their order: The second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the just;

the millennial reign; the resurrection of the wicked; and then the great judgment pictured by John.

Theological Blunders

Concerning this judgment many blunders have been made in the name of God. Not the least of these was the old dogma of predestination which fain would have sent some men and angels to hell and others to heaven quite irrespective of anything they might have done—merely “for the glory of God.”

Another blunder is the idea that there are but two places, one for endless torment, one for endless bliss, and all men divided into two classes.

Let us in imagination arrange a line of men before us for judgment. At one end of the line is the meanest man that ever lived. At the other end is the best man that ever lived. They are graded down morally from the best to the worst, and stand scarcely an inch apart physically and morally.

Where can you put your hand down in this line and say that all on this side shall go to heaven and all on that side shall go to hell?

If God fixes the dividing line between two certain men, will he say that this man who has missed hell

only by the thickness of a hand shall go into heaven and share celestial glory equally with the best man who ever lived? And that this other man who has lost heaven by an inch shall go to hell and suffer the same punishment that is meted out to the worst man who ever profaned the human form?

We do better than that here, in our high schools and our police courts. We at least try to give reward in proportion to merit, and mete out punishment according to degree of guilt.

As a matter of fact, God has an infinite variety of rewards and of punishments to meet the needs and deserts of all men.

Another blunder is to assume that the mere profession of religion is the determining factor. Here is a case from actual life: Henry Clay Bates murdered his young wife in cold blood. On the eve of his execution he called for a minister, "accepted Christ," was told that he was "saved," and said, "I die happy." Theologians send him to heaven with John the Beloved and Stephen the Just. His poor wife, though a good woman, had not accepted Christ, so perforce, she is consigned to torment forever and forever.

No, there is quite a different basis of judgment, and profession is not the only factor.

The Basis of Reward and Punishment

That judgment is to be absolutely just. No errors will be made. Rich and poor, small and great, will have justice. And this is the basis of judgment:

“And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works.*”
—Revelation 20: 12.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be.*”
—Revelation 22: 12.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body . . . *whether it be good or bad.*”—2 Corinthians 5: 10.

This idea of merit as a basis of reward appeals to common sense. It is just, as God is just.

The Glory of the Stars

The rewards that God will bestow are as diverse as the sun, the moon, and the multitudinous stars.

“The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is an-

other. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."—1 Corinthians 15: 40-42.

Paul tells us that every man shall be rewarded according as he has builded of "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble." (1 Corinthians 3: 11, 15.)

It is clear, too, that God will differentiate in punishment as in reward. Jesus said of certain people: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matthew 10: 15.)

The human race has long struggled to develop and attain justice. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is glad and proud to proclaim a gospel of justice and judgment.

We warn you of judgment to come. Accept Jesus—he makes salvation possible. Obey his gospel, for it redeems and regenerates. Diligently give yourself to works of righteousness, for by your works and by the word of God you will be judged; and *according to your works* you will be rewarded.

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THE
BUSY MAN'S
TRACT

Read it in three minutes

Subject:

"The Great Restoration"

By Elbert A. Smith

Reorganized
Church of Jesus Christ
of
Latter Day Saints

GENERAL CHURCH HEADQUARTERS
Independence, Missouri
U. S. A.

The Great Restoration

Texts: "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder."—Isaiah 29:14.

"This is the lesson science has to teach theology—to look for the action of the Deity, if at all, then always; not in the past alone, nor only in the future, but equally in the present. If his action is not visible now, it never will be, and never has been visible."—Sir Oliver Lodge, in Science and Immortality.

This church believes in present-day revelation. It is not enough to look for the manifestation of God in the past or in the future alone. Look for it now.

Jesus came and organized a church. He said: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matthew 16:18.

In one sentence he announced that he would organize a church, and intimated that all the powers of hell would attempt to destroy it, but in the end should fail.

The Great Apostasy

Following the death of the Master there ensued a great apostasy. It began during the lives of the apostles and progressed to completion during the "Dark Ages."

This apostasy was clearly foretold by the prophets. Paul said that for three years, with tears, night and day, he warned the church. (See Acts 20: 28-31.) Other texts may be studied, as follows: 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-7; 2 Timothy 3: 1-5; 4: 3, 4; Galatians 1: 6-10; 2 Peter 2: 1-3; Amos 8: 11, 12; Isaiah 60: 2.

Both secular and ecclesiastical histories record this dark apostasy. The light of literature, art, and religion went out. The world reeked with corruption. The church became as bad as the world, even selling indulgences to commit sin.

This apostasy must be admitted by all Protestants—otherwise there is no excuse for the existence of Protestant churches.

The Way of Recovery

What was the way of recovery from this condition? The gates of hell were not to prevail, though they seemed to do so for a time.

Two ways suggest themselves: Reformation or Restoration. For those who did not believe in continued revelation the only course was reformation. We believe in continued revelation and in restoration.

If a man had married a lovely bride and had gone to a far country and during his absence his wife had been driven away and her place taken by a degraded wanton—when the time came to return, which would he choose, reformation or restoration?

John says (Revelation 12) that he saw a beautiful woman, clothed in the glory of the sun. She represented the church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. A monster made war against her so that she fled away to a place prepared for her. The church was taken away. He saw her place taken by a dissolute woman (Revelation 17) sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, herself decked in gaudy colors, having a cup in her hand filled with abominations. Another church had taken the place of Christ's church.

Would Jesus want this church reformed to be his bride? Or does he, too, stand for restoration? Undoubtedly the latter.

The Reformation

There can be no question that the reformers were, many of them, brave and noble men. But they did not claim to restore the church. And they seemed to look for something in the way of a great restoration.

John Wesley said that the time of "latter-day glory" would come when God would "arise to maintain his own cause, and set up his own kingdom."

Roger Williams said: "I conceive that the apostasy of anti-Christ has so far corrupted all that there can be no recovery out of that apostasy till Christ shall send forth new apostles to plant churches anew."

Alexander Campbell said: "Do not . . . the practical result of all creeds, reformations, and improvements and the expectations and longings of society—warrant the conclusion that some *new revelation*, or some new development of the revelation of God must be made, before the hopes and expectations of all true Christians can be realized, or Christianity save and reform the nations of this world? We want the *old gospel back, and sustained by the ancient order of things.*"—Christian System.

The Restoration

Walter Rauschenbusch says of the prophets of old: "They went to school with a living God who was then at work in his world, and not with a God who had acted long ago and put it down in a book."

Another such a prophet arose in modern times. He has been called "The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century."

A great revival service in which the leading denominations cooperated had been held in what is now western New York. This revival, happily begun, ended in a shameful quarrel over the division of converts. The young prophet-to-be had been "converted," as the term is, and was greatly distressed over this glimpse of internal darkness and dissension. He says:

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'

"Never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the

heart of man than this did at this time to mine. . . . At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs; that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to 'ask of God,' concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

"So in accordance with this my determination, to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"After I had retired into the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God.

"I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness

gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

“But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, (not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in my being,) just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun; which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other,) “This is my beloved Son, hear him.’”

The Keynote

That was the keynote of the message: “Hear him.” It is the keynote

of our message today: "What does Jesus say? Hear him."

To his surprise the young prophet, then only fifteen years old, was told that the creeds of the day were wrong, and that he should join none of the churches. God was moving to restore his church.

Three years later he received another vision, described in part as follows:

"When on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, [1823] after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation as I had previously had one.

"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God I discovered a light appearing in the room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

"He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a white-

ness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant; his hands were naked, and his arms also a little above the wrist. So also were his feet naked, as were his legs a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open so that I could see into his bosom.

“Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person.

“When I first looked upon him I was afraid, but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.”

The Church Organized

Many things were told him regarding the coming forth of the great work of restoration. Subsequently the right to represent God in the ministry (priesthood) was restored by angelic ministration.

And on the sixth day of April, 1830, the church was organized by direct commandment from heaven, the only church in modern history so organized.

The prophets had predicted such a restoration. Isaiah had said that following the "gross darkness" of apostasy the Lord would arise and shine upon the people (Isaiah 60: 2). A "marvelous work and a wonder" was to be done in the latter days (Isaiah 29). An angel was to come, bringing back the everlasting gospel to all people in the day of God's judgments (Revelation 14: 6, 7).

Reader, the prophet's name was Joseph Smith. Do not reject his testimony because of prejudice. Have you heard his name slandered? The angel told him it should be had for good and evil in all the world. Remember, most true prophets have been slandered and killed. Jesus commented on that fact. (Luke 11: 47-

49.) The very thing happened to Joseph Smith that you might expect to happen if he were indeed a true prophet.

Be that as it may, we ask you to believe the work "for the very work's sake." We present to you a restored church. A church teaching all the original Christian doctrine. A church organized with all the original officers, including apostles, prophets, elders, evangelists, bishops, pastors, teachers. A church enjoying all the ancient gifts and blessings: such as wisdom, knowledge, healing and prophecy. A church that has returned religion to the present tense and looks for the revelation of God now and not in the past alone. A church that believes in the Fatherhood of God and in the brotherhood of man in a real, vital, practical way. A church that is trying to build Zion today.

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