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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

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Sunday, 20.—I preached to a large assembly in the grove, near the Temple, on the west. The body of a deceased child of Mr. Windsor P. Lyon being before the assembly, changed my design in the order of my remarks, a brief synopsis of which was reported by Elder Wilford Woodruff as follows:—

"President Smith read the 14th chapter of Revelations, and said,—We have again the warning voice sounded in our midst, which shows the uncertainty of human life; and in my leisure moments I have meditated upon the subject, and asked the question, why it is that infants, innocent children, are taken away from us—especially those that seem to be the most intelligent and interesting? and the strongest reasons that present themselves to my mind are these:—This world is a very wicked world; and it is a proverb that the 'world grows weaker and wiser;' if it is the case, the world grows more wicked and corrupt. In the early ages of the world a righteous man, and a man of God and of intelligence, had a better chance to do good, to be believed and received than at the present day; but in these days such a man is much opposed and persecuted by most of the inhabitants of the earth, and he has much sorrow to pass through here. The Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again.

What chance is there for infidelity when we are parting with our friends almost daily? None at all. The infidel will grasp at every straw for help until death stares him in the face, and then his infidelity takes its flight, for the realities of the eternal world are resting upon him in mighty power; and when every earthly support and prop fails him, he then sensibly feels the eternal truths of the immortality of the soul. We should take warning and not wait for the deathbed to repent, as we see the infant taken away by death, so may the youth and middle-aged, as well as the infant be suddenly called into eternity. Let this, then, prove as a warning to all not to procrastinate repentance, or wait till a deathbed, for it is the will of God that man should repent and serve him in health and in the strength and power of his mind, in order to secure his blessing, and not wait until he is called to die.

Also the doctrine of baptizing children, or sprinkling them, or they must welter in hell, is a doctrine not true, not supported in holy writ, and is not consistent with the character of God. All children are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the moment that children leave this world, they are taken to the bosom of Abraham. The only difference between the old and young dying is, one lives longer in heaven and eternal light and glory than the other, and is freed a little sooner from this miserable wicked world. Notwithstanding all this glory, we for a moment lose sight of it, and mourn the loss, but we do not mourn as those without hope.

My intention was to have spoken on the subject of baptism, but having a case of death before us, I thought proper to refer to that subject. I will now, however, say a few words upon baptism, as I intended.

God has made certain decrees which are fixed and immovable; for instance,—God set the sun, the moon, and the stars in the heavens, and gave them their laws, conditions and bounds, which they cannot pass, except by his commandments; they all move in perfect harmony in their sphere and order, and are as lights, wonders, and signs unto us. The sea also has its bounds which it cannot pass. God has set many signs on the earth, as well as in the heavens; for instance, the oak of the forest, the fruit of the tree, the herb of the field—all bear a sign that seed hath been planted there; for it is a decree of the Lord that every tree, plant, and herb bearing seed should bring forth of its kind, and cannot come forth after any other law or principle. Upon the same principle do I contend that baptism is a sign ordained of God, for the believer in Christ to take upon himself in order to enter into the kingdom of God, 'for except ye are born of water and of the Spirit ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' said the Savior. It is a sign and a commandment which God has set for man to enter into his kingdom. Those who seek to enter in any other way will seek in vain; for God will not receive them, neither will the angels acknowledge their works as accepted, for they have not obeyed the ordinances, nor attended to the signs which God ordained for the salvation of man to prepare him for, and give him a title to a celestial glory; and God had decreed that all who will not obey his voice shall not escape the damnation of hell. What is the damnation of hell? To go with that society who have not obeyed his commands.

Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God; and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to him to be saved, and enter into the kingdom of God, except faith in

Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is in vain; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

What is the sign of the healing of the sick? The laying on of hands is the sign or way marked out by James, and the custom of the ancient saints as ordered by the Lord, and we cannot obtain the blessing by pursuing any other course except the way marked out by the Lord. What if we should attempt to get the gift of the Holy Ghost through any other means except the signs or way which God hath appointed—should we obtain it? Certainly not; all other means would fail. The Lord says do so and so, and I will bless you.

There are certain key words and signs belonging to the priesthood which must be observed in order to obtain the blessing. The sign of Peter was to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost; and in no other way is the gift of the Holy Ghost obtained.

There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him; for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sceva: "Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are ye?" It mattereth not whether we live long or short on the earth after we come to a knowledge of these principles and obey them unto the end. I know that all men will be damned if they do not come in the way which he hath opened, and this is the way marked out by the word of the Lord.

As concerning the resurrection, I will merely say that all men will come from the grave as they lie down, whether old or young; there will not be "added unto their stature one cubit," neither taken from it; all will be raised by the power of God, having spirit in their bodies, and not blood. Children will be enthroned in the presence of God and the Lamb with bodies of the same stature that they had on earth, having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; they will there enjoy the fullness of that light, glory and intelligence, which is prepared in the celestial kingdom. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

The speaker, before closing, called upon the assembly before him to humble themselves in faith before God, and in mighty prayer and fasting to call upon the name of the Lord, until the elements were purified over our heads, and the earth sanctified under our feet, that the inhabitants of this city may escape the power of disease and pestilence, and the destroyer that rideth upon the face of the earth, and that the Holy Spirit of God may rest upon this vast multitude.

At the close of the meeting, President Smith said he should attend to the ordinance of baptism in the river, near his house, at 2 o'clock, and at the appointed hour, the bank of the Mississippi was lined with a multitude of people, and President Joseph Smith went into the river and baptized 80 persons for the remission of their sins, and what added joy to the scene was, that the first person baptized was Mr. L. D. Wasson, a nephew of Mrs. Emma Smith—the first of her kindred that have embraced the fullness of the gospel.

At the close of this interesting scene, the administrator lifted up his hands towards heaven, and implored the blessing of God to rest upon the people; and truly the Spirit of God did rest upon the multitude, to the joy and consolation of our hearts.

After baptism, the congregation again repaired to the grove, near the Temple, to attend to the ordinance of confirmation, and notwithstanding President Smith had spoken in the open air to the people, and stood in the water and baptized about 80 persons, about 50 of those baptized received their confirmation under his hands in the after part of the day.

While this was progressing, great numbers were being baptized in the font.

After this, I baptized a large number in the font myself.

AN EPISTLE OF THE TWELVE TO THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS IN ITS VARIOUS BRANCHES AND CONFERENCES IN EUROPE, GREETING:—

Beloved brethren:—We feel it our privilege and a duty we owe to the great and glorious cause in which we have enlisted, to communicate to you at this time some principles, which, if carried into effect, will greatly facilitate the gathering of the saints, and tend to ameliorate the condition of those who are struggling with poverty and distress, in this day when the usual means of support seem to be cut short to the laboring classes, through the depression that everywhere prevails in the general business mart of the civilized world.

Our situation is such in these last days—our salvation spiritually is so connected with our salvation temporally, that if one fail, the other necessarily must be seriously affected, if not wholly destroyed. God has made us social beings; he has endowed us with capacities for enjoying each others society, and it is our duty to bring those powers and privileges into exercise, so far as we can obtain, and for this it is our duty to strive by all lawful and expedient measures within our reach.

While we remain in this state of existence we need food and raiment, habitations and society, and without these our enjoyments must be greatly limited, and the real object of our existence diminished, if not wholly destroyed. Though the saints should possess all the common gifts of the Spirit of God, and yet remain destitute of those comforts so much needed for the sustenance of their bodies, they would be comparatively miserable; but when they arrive at that state of perfection, and are clothed upon with the more special gifts and power of increasing the widow's oil and meal, or of receiving their food from the ravens, like Elijah, they will not need to bestow so much attention on every trifle of the passing moment, as they now do; and until that period arrives, they will recollect that to be in the exercise of the fullness of spiritual blessings, they must be watchful and careful to provide things honest in the sight of all men for the sustenance and comfort of these frail perishable bodies. That we may be instruments in the hands of God of thus promoting your present and future temporal and spiritual welfare, we write you at the present time.

Many of you are desirous of emigrating to this country, and many have not the means to accomplish their wishes, and if we can assist you by our prayers and our counsel to accomplish the desires of your hearts in this thing, so far we will rejoice and be satisfied. You not only wish to emigrate to this section of the earth, but you desire also to have some laudable means of comfortable subsistence after you arrive here, and this also is important. How then shall these things be accomplished and your souls be satisfied? We answer, by united understanding and concert of action.

You all, or most of you, have trades or different kinds of business to which you have been long familiarized, and in which you would like to continue for the purpose of procuring a subsistence; and a great proportion of your occupation is such that no employment can be had in this city or vicinity; for instance, there are no cotton manufactories established here, and many of you know no other business. You want to come here, and when here, want to continue your labors in your accustomed branches of business; but you have no means to get here, and when here there are no factories, and yet factories are needed here, and there would be ready market for all the fabrics which could be manufactured.

Now comes the concert of action; if the church will arise unitedly; if the brethren will individually feel that the good work of the Lord is depending on themselves as instruments to assist in carrying it forward; and will unite all their means, faith and energy, in one grand mass, all that you desire can speedily be accomplished. A short time only will elapse before you yourselves will be astonished at the result, and you will feel that your desires are more than realized.

While the saints are united, no power on the earth, or under the earth, can prevail against them; but while each one acts for himself, many, very many, are in danger of being overthrown. God has promised all things to those who love him and keep his commandments; then why be afraid that one should get a little more than another, or that one should gain, for a little moment, what another might lose; when Jesus has promised that the faithful shall be one with him, as he is one with the Father, and shall possess all things in the due time of the Lord; not by stealth, not by force, not by the sword, but by the gift of the Father, through faithfulness to his commands; and the more they shall suffer, while they work righteousness on the earth, the greater will be their reward, the more glorious their kingdom, the more extended their power, when they shall arrive in the celestial paradise.

Knowing and feeling these things as we do, and having respect unto the recompense of reward to be revealed hereafter, regardless of all necessary privation and labor to accomplish what our Master has given us to do; and desiring not to possess the kingdom alone, but that all the honest in heart should be united with us in the great and glorious work of building up Zion and her stakes, we call upon you, dear brethren, to unite with us, all with one accord, to do what? To do the very things you desire should be done; to convey you in the place where we are, and then put you in possession of all the means you may need for your support; so that you may enjoy the fullness of the blessings belonging to the sons and daughters of Zion's King.

Had we means, we would not ask your aid; we would gladly send the ships of Tarshish to bear you across the great waters; we would bring you to our homes, to our firesides; we would provide you habitations, lands and food, when you arrive among us. Our hearts are large enough to do all this, and a great deal more; but we have not the means; we have to labor for our own

subsistence, as well as attend to those things which are laid upon us of the Lord, and which concern the whole church as much as ourselves.

It is not the will of heaven that any one should be put in possession of all things, without striving for them. Where much is given, much is required; and he who has but one talent, must be as diligent in the use thereof as he that has ten, or he will lose his talent and his blessing; and it becometh him who hath but one, five, or ten, to appropriate it in the most economical manner possible, or he will not have enough to bring him hither; and that he who hath but five pounds may have enough and to spare to him who hath but one, or in other words, to help the brethren to accomplish with a little, what otherwise would require much more than they can command, is the object of this Epistle.

Had we the means, we would send vessels of our own, laden with flour, meat, fruits, and all sea stores necessary for the comfort of the brethren on the water, so that they would have nothing more to do, than go on shipboard, and land at New Orleans; from thence we would take them on our steamers, and bring them to this place, for this is the best place for the Saints to stop at, for the present.

There may be other places where individuals might have the prospect of adding at once more rapidly to their pecuniary interest, than they could here; but we can only say that it is the will of the Lord that the Saints build Nauvoo, and settle therein, or in the vicinity; and we know assuredly, that those who give heed to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, will be richer, eventually, and not far distant, than those who may seem to prosper more by following their own inclinations.

Brethren, we wish not to control you or your means; it is not for our peace or interest; nay, rather, it is a source of labor, trouble, and anxiety to have ought to do with the pecuniary business of the Church, which we would gladly avoid, could we do it, and do our duty; could we do it, and the things desired be accomplished, and we stand guiltless where God hath placed us; and for this reason we desire to make such arrangements as will most tend to leave the business in your own hands, or in the hands of those whom you shall select; men of your own acquaintance, in whom you can repose confidence that they will execute their trust in righteousness; and that our plans may be understood by you, and carried into execution, we have sent unto you our beloved brother, Elder John Snyder, the bearer of this Epistle, and other Epistles also previously written by us to you; and we beseech you, brethren, to receive him as a servant of the Most High, authorized according to the order of the kingdom of heaven, and assist him by all lawful means in your power to execute the mission entrusted to him; for great events depend upon his success; but to none will they be greater than to yourselves.

Our authority for thus sending brother Snyder to you, is found in the "Book of the Law of the Lord," page 36, as follows:—

"Nauvoo, December 22, 1841.—The word of the Lord came unto Joseph the Seer; verily thus saith the Lord:—Let my servant John Snyder take a mission to the Eastern Continent, unto all the conferences now sitting in that region, and let him carry a package of Epistles that shall be written by my servants the Twelve, making known unto them their duties concerning the building of my houses, which I have appointed unto you, saith the Lord, that they may bring their gold, and their silver, and their precious stones, and the box tree, and the fir tree, and all fine wood to beautify the place of my sanctuary, saith the Lord, and let him return speedily, with all means which shall be put into his hands: even so, Amen."

In this revelation, the brethren will discover their duty in relation to the building of the Temple of the Lord in Nauvoo, and the Nauvoo House; and we call upon them with united cry to give heed unto the things written, and help to build the houses which God has commanded, so that brother Snyder may speedily return with means to strengthen the hands of the laborers, and adorn and beautify the Tabernacle of Jehovah.

Brethren, while you are thus preparing to send up your offerings to this place, if you will act in concert with our well beloved brother, Elder Parley P. Pratt, and the regular constituted authorities of the church in England; and collect as great an amount of cotton, linen, and woolen goods, silks, cutlery and hardware, &c., even all the varieties of goods which might be useful in this country, and which can be obtained by the brethren in this time of monied scarcity, and forward the same to us by brother Snyder, or your own agent, in company with him, or otherwise, and at other times, we will pay you for those goods, in lands, in or out of the city, in house, cattle, and such kind of property as you may need; and with those goods we will purchase lands, &c., flour, meat, and all things necessary for a sea voyage, which can be had cheaper here than in England, and charter ships, and forward the same to England, or such places as emigration may require, and bring back in return a ship load of emigrants, at a cheaper rate than they can now emigrate; while, at the same time, those who remain can continue to collect