

should take upon ourselves physical conditions in order to obtain experience that would enable us to advance in intelligence, in the scale of being, and thus be prepared for a "greater and more exceeding weight of glory" in the eternities to come.

The work that was performed by Christ when He came and took on mortality, as the Son of God, relieved us from all responsibility regarding the transgression of Adam, and He opened the way before us whereby we might be freed from our own transgressions, for which we are responsible. This freedom from sin is attained by following in the footsteps of the Savior, keeping the commandments which He gave, and offering our lives, so far as necessary, as a sacrifice for the sake of truth and righteousness. All who profess Christianity accept of the atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as a fact applicable to the whole human race; and this is the beginning of the Christian faith.

It is not difficult to ascertain what is required of us in following in His teachings if we peruse the Scriptures and accept the truth as it there stands, without prejudice, without pre-conceived notions and ideas. I lay it down as an incontrovertible proposition, from a scriptural standpoint, that in addition to this belief in the atonement, it is necessary to exercise faith in all things pertaining to the Gospel of our Redeemer.

Following this is the doctrine of repentance "unto the remission of sins" that we may be freed from that load, and realize the saying of the Savior that His "yoke is easy" and His "burden is light." Then follows obedience to the ordinance, also clearly defined in the scriptures, known as the Christian rite of baptism for the remission of sins. Succeeding this is that he who has taken the steps already described shall have the hands of authorized servants of the Messiah laid upon his head that he may receive the Holy Ghost, and thus by these two baptisms—the baptisms of water and of the spirit—he may become a new creature, born of the spirit into a new and spiritual element, in consonance with the declaration of the Lord Himself when interrogated upon points pertaining to His doctrine—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." This, then, is a universal rule, to which there is no exception made.

Now, in relation to the operation of faith by many people who profess to be Christians, the exercise of this power is exceedingly limited. For instance, it is fashionable to proclaim that if men will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ they will be saved, without taking into consideration the comprehensive character of that statement, without accepting of it in the spirit instead of the letter. To believe on Him is to have faith in Him, and faith is the underlying principle or motive power of all action in intelligent beings. Without it there is nothing; there is no motion, no activity, no life.

It is common among those who are rated among unbelievers, who are infidels, to scout the idea of faith in spiritual things; and yet faith is a principle that is natural and that is accepted in all the conditions of life. Suppose there was no faith—if that were supposable; for to imagine such a condition would be to presume that there would be no looking forward to the future; no attempt to grasp it and to act in order to produce results which are not at present seen or understood. Paul's definition of faith is clear and beautiful; it commends itself at once to the understanding. "Faith," he says, "is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Suppose that Newton and Herschel had not possessed this power within them, they would not have comprehended by the principle of that faith or understanding which was in them that there was still another planet that had not yet been discovered; they would not have searched among the heavenly bodies in order to make the further discoveries which they did. It is common among unthinking people to say that they will not believe in things that they cannot see, feel, taste, or smell, that they cannot comprehend through the natural senses; yet neither Newton nor Herschel had handled, tasted or smelled the planet Uranus. Those objectors to the principle of faith themselves believe that tomorrow will arrive, though they cannot grasp it by any other process. So we may cast about and reason upon natural things, and we comprehend that faith is a natural principle. Why, then, not have faith in things that are spiritual?

Having faith in this grand basic principle of the Christian religion, the atonement, it is natural that that position would be followed up. Having accepted of Christ, it is essential that those who do so and undertake to follow him shall place themselves in unison with Him and with His Spirit, purify themselves and rectify their moral and spiritual natures. How is this done? Necessarily by the process of repentance of sin, which is also a natural as well as a spiritual principle, being a process of rectification.

If, for instance, a man injures his physical nature by indulging in drunkenness, licentiousness, or if he break any of the laws of his physical being in order to gratify his sensual appetite, it is necessary that he should repent by ceasing from such acts. Then his system will begin to recover from the effects of those broken laws. In relation, therefore, to physical things, so is man's nature morally and spiritually. Ceasing to do those things which are opposed to morality, to spiritual requirements rectifies and purifies the spiritual and moral nature.

Now we have brought the believer in Jesus Christ to the point where it is requisite for him to make his acceptance of the theory of Christianity more valid and binding by a practical act. The question is what shall be the character of that per-

formance? The Latter-day Saints take the position—and it is sustained by the scriptures—that the individual shall be immersed in water, taken there by one authorized by Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and by obedience to the requirements which have preceded this operation and the operation itself he comes out of that element freed from his load of transgression.

Why should the rite or act by which the believer makes his theoretical position valid and binding be baptism? It is common in all the ordinary affairs of men to make agreements binding by acts of various kinds. The most general method adopted is to submit the agreement to writing, entering on the document the stipulations involved. Both parties attach their names to the writing. Frequently this is done in the presence of witnesses, who attest the operation by also attaching their signatures. Now, what shall be done by the Christian in entering into an agreement with the Lord Jesus Christ? What more beautiful, what more consistent than that the act which he performs should typify the death and burial of Christ, His rising from the tomb and opening the way to life eternal by being the "first fruits" of the resurrection?

The Savior shed His blood for the sins of the world. He died and went into the grave, when His body was quickened in the Spirit by which also He went and preached to the spirits that were bound in prison, that they might be liberated therefrom by the freedom that the Gospel gives, that they in the spirit might live according to God in the spirit and be judged, as the Apostle says, "according to men in the flesh." The judgment upon them would be similar to that on those to whom the light was imparted here, according to the course that they took in accepting or rejecting it. Then after He had performed that mission in the spirit world His body laid aside corruption and arose in the bloom of immortality, purified, a God, as He was, having had a power that we do not possess. He had the power to lay down his life and take it up again. We only have the power to surrender our lives and take them up again through His merits and not through our own.

See, then, how sublimely typical of this process is the baptism of the believer. I refer not now to the baptisms which have been adopted by many professing Christians—sprinkling or pouring, or the baptism of infants—but the birth of water, the scriptural baptism, which represents a birth or a burial of an adult who receives it intelligently. It must be a voluntary act, a result of its operation being a remission of sins. No infant can perform this act of intelligent volition and an infant has not sinned. This is the scriptural baptism; there is no other. There is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

A great many people think that there are numerous Lords, a great many faiths, and a multiplicity of baptisms. The baptism to which I