

## Religious and Other Blights Which Lead to Destruction

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Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake  
City, October 5, 1903, by

ELDER JOHN W. TAYLOR

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My dear brethren and sisters, I humbly pray that the Spirit of the Lord which is the spirit of truth and righteousness, may prompt me in all that I shall say this morning, and I trust you will pray unto our Father for me, that He will enable me to talk in such a way as shall be pleasing in His sight. I am a firm believer in inspiration. I believe the statement in the Scriptures that the word of God "came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

On my way to this meeting I met a neighbor of mine, and he said, "Brother Taylor, have you noticed any blight in your pear orchard?" I told him I had not noticed it particularly, and asked him what it was. "Why," said he, "if you will notice carefully, there will be a few limbs toward the top of the tree where the wood begins to wither a little bit, and the leaves then wither and drop up." I asked him what the effect of this blight was upon the tree, for he seemed to be well posted on the subject. He replied that it had the effect, if the blight is not corrected in its incipency, to kill out not only the tree affected, but the entire orchard. What is the remedy? said I. He answered promptly, "The remedy is to cut off the blighted part about one foot below where it is decayed, and be careful to gather all the leaves and branches, take them out of the orchard, and burn them up." I have since been thinking about the trees in my orchard, and I remember that several of them have some dead limbs, and are evidently blighted a little. It would be well for us all to look after our orchards carefully.

Now, my brethren and sisters, I have imagined I can see a blight, not only upon our orchards, but in some of the families of the Latter-day Saints, and that is much more serious than having our orchards blighted. Christ said: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." If the families in Salt Lake City were an orchard, and each one represented a tree, I can imagine there are a few dead branches that may be likened unto the blighted trees referred to in my conversation this morning. The Apostle John, in writing to the Saints in his day, used this expression:

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed."

"For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds."—II John, 9-11.

This is one of the best guides we have received from inspired men of olden times. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." We are also told:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."—John, 17:3.

"No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."—Matthew, 11:27.

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."—I Corinthians, 12:3.

We learn, then, that if we abide in the doctrines of Christ we have both the Father and the Son, and being in fellowship with the Father and the Holy Ghost, which constitute the Godhead, we are heirs of glory, immortality and eternal life.

Various doctrines are being promulgated among the Latter-day Saints at the present time that I would like to refer to briefly. One of these is Christian Science, which has spread to some extent in this city, and to my mind it is the blight upon the pear tree. If it is not "cut off about one foot below the dead branches," it may kill the tree and affect the whole orchard. Let us reason together a few moments upon this. In olden times, certain gifts and blessings were promised the Saints. One was the gift of prophecy, another the gift of healing, another the gift of tongues, another the gift of wisdom, another the gift of knowledge, etc. Now, I say to you there is not one of these gifts that is a principle of salvation in and of itself. Though they were promised by the Savior, and exercised by His Apostles, and always exist in the true Church of Christ, there is not one of them that, if itself, will save and exalt the children of men in the kingdom of God; for they are not principles of salvation when segregated from the doctrines of Christ.

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE FALLACY.

Take Christian Science, as it is called, and it rests largely upon the principle of "being happy." The healing of their bodies when afflicted, I testify to you, as a servant of the Lord, that you may lay hands on the dead and raise them to life again, as Christ did the widow's son, or you may heal the afflicted by the power of God, and the fact that they are healed or brought

Warning Against Blighting Influences of Evil—Spiritual Gifts Not Principles of Salvation—Christian Science Fallacy—Hypnotism Not of God; the Doctrine of Satan, on Par With Ancient Sorcery of Soothsayers—Modern Revelation—World Accepting Gospel Light—God's Financial Plan—Israel Shall be Gathered and Zion Established.

The Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood or the authority of that man."

This hypnotic power is not of God. It is an evil gift. A short time ago I was in the Mall at Salt Lake, where a man had been studying this art of hypnotism, and he proposed to the children of our God, to take them to the place that he could hypnotize the people to make them do as he pleased. My brethren and sisters, that is the doctrine the devil proposed in heaven, when the Lord of our God was preparing to take away the agency of men, and to exercise unrighteous dominion over them. But the Lord rejected his plan, and chose His Son Jesus Christ to come into the world with the plan of life and salvation that we now teach. The doctrine of Christ are plain and simple, and they do not sanction the use of unrighteous dominion upon the souls of the children of men. Therefore, I say unto you, hypnotism is not of God.

Women go from house to house, and say they were healed, or their children were healed, by Christian Science; or they had been hypnotized and got such great relief from it, and "it was wonderful how happy I've been ever since." I say to you, my friends, we should not seek in this life to become happy by exercising evil gifts among the children of our God. You need not the magicians in ancient times casting down their rods, and through the exercise of the evil gift, their rods became serpents, as did the rods of Moses and Aaron. But when I came to slaying the firstborn, the Lord said in my heart, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further. The firstborn of the children of Israel were saved, while the firstborn of the children of Amrah and the other Egyptians were destroyed." I speak of this to show you that the wisdom of the Lord is greater than the cunning of the devil, and the power of the priesthood is pre-eminent over every other power which men can exercise.

There are Latter-day Saints who apparently place their whole faith upon one of the gifts of the Gospel. Some may place their faith upon the gift of tongues, others upon the gift of healing, others upon the gift of tongues or the interpretation of tongues. I say again that these gifts, in and of themselves, are not principles of salvation. They are given to the Saints for the comfort of the Saints. But the Holy Priesthood is without beginning of days or end of years; it will remain with the Saints throughout the eternal ages to come.

The Apostle Paul says:

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."—I Corinthians, 13:8-10.

That is perfectly natural; for when that which is perfect is come, we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. We will be able to prophesy what shall take place, for we shall all see and understand it. In that day it will not be necessary for one to say to another, "Know ye the Lord; for all things which I would know shall be revealed unto me by the knowledge which will be enjoyed by all. We shall see eye to eye, and be of one heart and mind in the kingdom of God. It will not be necessary for any to have the gift of tongues, or the original Adamic language will be restored, and all shall speak in the one tongue. Hence how consistent it is to say, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." These gifts are now given to us as a lamp to lighten our pathway, to encourage us when our spirits are drooping, to heal our bodies when we are afflicted, and to give us knowledge of things to come, that we may be buoyed up and go on to perfection.

### ON PAR WITH ANCIENT SORCERY.

My brethren and sisters, this doctrine of Christian Science is not of God. Hypnotism is displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and those who practice it may be likened unto the charmers, soothsayers, sorcerers, and idolaters of ancient times. They were so repugnant in the sight of the Lord that He gave special laws to Israel in relation to them. Now, shall we, who have received the Holy Spirit into light, turn away as the cow to wallow in the mire, or like the dog to his vomit? Shall we go back to the beggary elements of the world? I say unto you, the Lord will not permit that those who bear the vessels of the Lord be clean. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

### MODERN REVELATION.

I testify unto you, my friends, that the Lord our God has raised up Joseph Smith the Prophet in this day. He has delivered unto the world the Book of Mormon, which is a history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent. It is the word of God to the people of the earth. It is the writings of prophets who have lived upon this land, but are in the Bible the writings of prophets in the land of Palestine, and a history of the dealings of God with ancient Israel. The heavens have been opened in our day. The Father

and the Son appeared unto Joseph Smith, and the Gospel has been restored. This Gospel is being preached according to the commandment of the Father, "that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." How can we keep the commandments of God? By keeping His voice, and doing His will. There are those in the world who are blighted with the idea that if they only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ they can be saved. This is a convenient and very popular doctrine. But Jesus said:

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."—Matthew 7:22, 23.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 7:21.

### WORLD RECEIVING GOSPEL LIGHT.

This is the true doctrine of Christ. The world today are adopting some of the principles revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. A short time ago a great convocation of ministers met at Los Angeles for the purpose of remodeling the old world. Did you ever hear of the prophets of God in any age meeting to remodel the revelations of God, the Eternal Father, or His Son Jesus Christ? He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The word of God never changeth. The Lord our God revealed unto His Prophet in this day the principle of infant salvation. What about infants? Why, it has been preached by sectarians for generations, that little infants who died without being baptized would be damned. Is there any man under the sound of my voice who can deny that this doctrine has been taught? You cannot deny it, because it is in the sacred writings. Yet Joseph Smith proclaimed the doctrine that little children come into the world pure and innocent, and they are not responsible for sin until they arrive at the years of accountability. I am very glad to see these ministers beginning to receive a little light. I believe there are no men so reluctant to get light into their heads as ministers. That is why they have received light during the last sixty years. But, they are gradually beginning to observe the light; and I am glad they have, in a measure, adopted in their creed the revelation of God to Joseph Smith concerning infants. Another thing: Joseph Smith, under the command of God, taught the principle of tithing, and now some of our Christian friends are beginning to recommend the payment of tithing in their churches. I tell you the time will come when every principle that was revealed to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, in this last dispensation, will be adopted, one by one, until the world will receive the doctrine of the living God. I have just had handed to me written evidence of that I had long been waiting for. It is a card published by one of the churches, and reads as follows:

### GOD'S FINANCIAL PLAN.

Believing that all Christians should systematically and sacredly set aside a certain proportion of their income for the cause of Christ; and furthermore, that it is the plain teaching of God's Word, in His financial plan, that one-tenth of our income belongs to Him;

Therefore, we hereby covenant with God and one another, that we will set aside one-tenth of our income, hold it as a sacred trust, and give it for the cause of Christ.

That we, who make this covenant, by attaching our names hereto shall be known as members of the Tithing Band of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church of Los Angeles, Date . . . . . Name . . . . .

If I had been printing it, I would have had it like this:

"We hereby pledge ourselves, and sign our names, as members of Joseph Smith the Prophet Tithing League. Another thing: If I was going to do away with that wicked and corrupt thing, I would not get together a lot of ministers and learned men to make a fuss about it, as if they had made some wonderful discovery; but I would get up like a straightforward, honest man, and say, Joseph Smith, the Prophet, taught this years ago. I know it is true; therefore, let us adopt it. I say once more, my brethren and sisters, every principle which has been revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet will have to be acknowledged by every man, woman and child who desire to enter into the kingdom of our God, or they will never get there. This is my testimony unto you, and I have spoken. This is not the work of man. It is not the work of these men who sit upon this stand. It is the work of the great Jehovah. And that day is at hand which was spoken of by the ancient prophets, and emphasized by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who said:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

"For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Matthew 6:17, 18.

### ISRAEL SHALL BE GATHERED.

There are some portions of the law, and some prophecies, that have not been fulfilled, while others are being fulfilled; and the day is at hand when these words of the Savior will be fully verified. Jeremiah the Prophet, after speaking of the scattering of the house of David for the sake of the wife of Uriah the Hittite, writes these words of the Lord:

"And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their fold: and they shall be fruitful and increase."

"And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord."

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David, a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness."

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

"But, the Lord liveth, which brought up and led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own lands."—Jeremiah 23:3-8.

"Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."—Jeremiah 16:16.

"I will take you one of a city, and two a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."—Jeremiah 3:14, 15.

My friends, this is the destiny God has in store for His people.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

"And many people shall go up, and come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of our Father in heaven. He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."—Isaiah 2:2, 3.

This is the word of God, and the gathering is now taking place. Jesus would have gathered the people in His day, but they would not receive Him. He said:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—Matthew 23:37.

The day, my friends, has arrived when Israel is being gathered from the four corners of the earth, and when Zion is arising and will shine, and will become the light and brightness of the whole earth. This is the word spoken of by the Prophet Daniel. He saw that "a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands," which "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." The proclamation of it this work will go from nation to nation, until every soul that lives upon the earth will have the privilege of hearing the sound thereof, and every honest man and woman will have the privilege of embracing it and becoming heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The blood of our Lord and Savior was spilt, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and it is only through His name we can be saved.

### GOSPEL ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION.

My brethren and sisters, the work is growing. We have with great power to perform, and we should not waste our time on hypnotism, or Christian Science, or evolution, and such things. We have believers in evolution in the midst of us, and some of us are sitting on the top of the trees in this regard. As a servant of God I tell you mankind can not be redeemed, worlds without end; can not evolve, or crystallize, or get into the condition of entering them to become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and to partake of the fulness of His glory; can not go on to perfection, and sit down in the council of heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and those bright intelligences who created this world and others, only through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the evolution in the world will not save a single soul; neither will all the Christian Science, neither will spiritualism, nor hypnotism, nor any other ism that is not of God. The Gospel of Christ is so plain that a wayfarer man, though a fool, need not err therein. Do you think the Lord was mistaken when He said light had come into the world, and that the children of men might be known by their rejection of the light? Some of them acknowledge the principle of tithing, and some of them reject the principle of tithing; but what is the effect of it? Just like the Savior said—they put a new patch on an old garment, and it only makes it the more unsightly. When they begin to accept the principle of tithing, the question arises, Where is your Prophet, the mouthpiece of the Lord, to guide and direct the people in the use of tithing? Some of them, I suppose, will say, "Let us go to the Pope or someone else to get instructions. Let me say to you, these are matters which should be considered seriously. If you allow any man or woman to come into your house and teach false doctrine, you are responsible. I do not want anyone to come into my house and teach doctrines that are not of God. Just as soon as I hear of them coming I lift up my voice against them. The idea of people assuming to teach the Latter-day Saints principles of salvation is to me the very height of absurdity. We are commanded to live by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then if I want the word of God concerning His kingdom, to whom shall I go? To His mouthpiece. I will go to President Joseph F. Smith and say, 'What is the word of the Lord concerning tithing? That is my duty, for he is the mouthpiece of the Lord, and it is his right to direct me, to bless me when I keep the commandments of God, and to admonish and correct me when I do not.'"

My brethren and sisters, let us walk in the light of the everlasting Gospel, and not be cherishing a dead faith. Let us not be haggling and talking about tithing, and the principle of tithing, but let us build a temple, let us be on hand to fulfill the requirement. If we are called upon to build a sugar factory, let us build it, or if we are called upon to build a city, town or village, let us do that. That is the Spirit of the Gospel, as I understand it. Joseph Smith the Prophet said: Show me a man or woman who has the Spirit of the Gospel within them, and I will show you a man or woman whose greatest desire is to build up the kingdom of God upon the earth. Jesus admonished His disciples not to seek after houses and lands, gold and silver, but to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Do we want anything more than that?

There are some people among the Latter-day Saints who have a little blight upon them in another way. When Lehi, in his vision, saw those who perished from the fruit of the tree of life, he beheld that the great multitudes pointed the finger of scorn at them, inasmuch that some turned their faces away and felt ashamed. I say, never let the blight of shame come upon your countenance on account of having kept the commandments of God. He will sustain you, and give you strength according to your day.

I for one will in my labors in the Church of Christ. I am thankful I am considered worthy to be numbered among you; and I hope to be humble and diligent in the performance of my duty as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust there will be no duty required of me that I will not be able to respond to. We all should feel alike in regard to these things. The Lord is no respecter of persons. He thinks just as much of you as He does of me. Which of you having children

can justify any, I love this one, and hate the other? Neither is it so with our Father in heaven. He loves all His sons and daughters, and is willing to open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon our heads that we shall not have room to receive. But no blessing will come unto the children of men, except by obedience to law. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." Let us not attempt take any part of the Church of Christ away, nor add anything thereto. Let us accept it in all its beautiful symmetry; and then work in harmony with the authorities whom God has placed in His Church. Who are they? There need be no question about that, the Apostle said: "God hath set some in the church first apostles, secondarily prophets, etc., thirdly teachers." etc. What for? "For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ laid His hands upon Peter and said unto him:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The other day I heard of a young man—an exemplary young man as far as I can understand—who was about to marry a wife, and he was so busy with his labors (he is a school teacher, I think) that he had not time to go to the temple—which was only half a day's journey—to be sealed with an eternal union and bond that never should be broken; but he intended to pass by the temple, go to the court house, get out a license, and then be married for time. Do you not know that people married for time are among those spoken of by Isaiah the Prophet when he said, "They have broken the everlasting covenant"—the everlasting covenant of marriage; for in ancient times they were married for time and eternity. God bless you. Amen.

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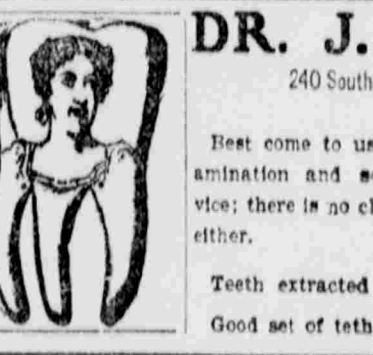


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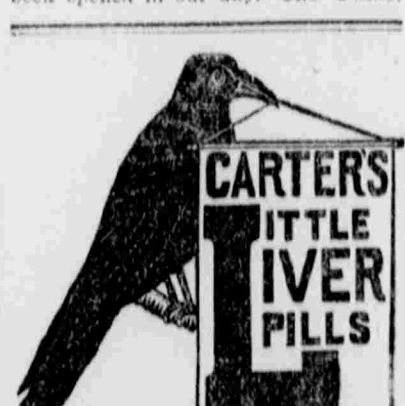
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