

WHAT IT IS TO BE A LATTER-DAY SAINT

Discourse Delivered in the Finsbury Hall, London, on the Evening of August 26, 1906, by

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

(Reported by Elders Ben C. Rich and Willard R. Smith.)

It is a pleasure to me to listen to the testimonies of our young men. It is a simple thing for a young man to arise, as our boys have done this afternoon, and to testify to his knowledge of the divine mission of the Son of God, and of the divine mission of the Prophet. We do not have to be especially learned in relation to these principles in order for us to bear testimony to them; for we know but two or three, or just a few, of the principles of the Gospel, we can easily testify, and have a right to do it—it is perfectly consistent to do it—that we know, so far as we understand these things, that they are right, that they are true, that they are good. Now, these are the principles that are calculated to purify our thoughts, our hearts, our lives; if there is any principle in the world that is calculated to purify the heart, it is this. We can use it, or we can receive it, that can make us better than we are. This principle is a part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whether it be learned from the Elders, from the Book of Mormon, or from the Bible. It makes no difference. All truth belongs to the Gospel. In other words, the Gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth of the world. It embraces all truth in connection with our faith in God and His word and His promises. It embraces all scientific truth, all mechanical truth, all mathematical truth; indeed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth in the heavens and on the earth, whether it applies to man or beast, or to the mineral kingdom or to the vegetable kingdom, or to any other that exists here in the world; so that when we come to understand a little about what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, we cannot go wrong. If we know good, we know evil; if we know right, we know wrong; if we understand that which is pure and acceptable, if we understand that which will make us better in any way or that will accomplish more good to ourselves or to those with whom we are associated in the world, whether we know it or not, it is a part of God's truth or the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for its tendency is to enable man and make him better.

WHAT IT IS TO BE A SAINT.
Now, I have sometimes said, and I will say it here tonight, that to be a Latter-day Saint is very dear to me; it is one of the best of God's people or children in the world. A man cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and cheat his neighbor. He cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and lie, or steal, or take advantage of his brother or his fellow-beings. A man cannot be a right good up-and-down Latter-day Saint and be a bad citizen. He cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and be a bad husband, or a bad father, or a bad neighbor. A man cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and be a bad citizen, no matter whether he be a subject of Great Britain, the United States, Holland, Germany or any other country in the world. If he be a good Latter-day Saint he is bound to be a good citizen of the land which gave him birth or which he has adopted as his home. A man cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and not be a good husband, because a good Latter-day Saint makes a good husband, and a woman cannot be a good Latter-day Saint and not be a good wife. It is impossible, because so far as she lacks being a good wife she lacks just that much of knowing what the Gospel teaches. A citizen of God's kingdom should stand foremost among the best of God's people throughout all the world. Now, therefore, when you hear of a man denying the faith, denying the Gospel in any way, when you see a man that has not the spirit of testimony in his heart, and who does not believe in the divinity of these principles, you set it down at once that he is not a thorough Latter-day Saint. He is lacking in understanding, he is lacking in his character in some respects, so he would not have doubts in regard to the divine mission of him whom God chose in his childhood to lay the foundation of the great work which is to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times, and to consummate God's work in the earth. Now, my brethren and sisters, when these young men say they know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that Brigham Young was a prophet of God and an inspired man, they speak the truth. They can say absolutely that they know from the facts of the facts that Joseph Smith was an innocent, unpretending, humble man, and that he was not an impostor, but that he taught principles of righteousness, principles which the people of the world have fought most persistently for more than 70 years, with the full determination in their hearts to overthrow the work of God and to destroy it from off the face of the earth. And being all their efforts have ended in bringing us more prominently before the world, and causing us to be known. In this way the wrath of our enemies has been made by the overruling providence of God to serve His purpose and to frustrate the very purpose that the enemies of the Church had in view, and accomplish the end which God had in view.

JOSEPH SMITH'S ONLY OFFENSE.
I can testify to you, my brethren and

sisters, and friends, that I know that Joseph Smith was a good man, I know that he was not guilty of any crime. I know that the greatest crime of Joseph Smith was guilty of was the crime of confessing the great fact that he was the voice of God and the voice of His Son Jesus Christ, speaking to him in his childhood; that he saw those heavenly Beings standing above him in the air in the woods where he went out to pray. That was the worst crime he committed, and the world has held it against him. He testified that he had heard the voice of the Son of God declaring unto him that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored to its fullness; that the holy priesthood was again to be restored to the earth in all its power; that all the sects of the world were wrong and had gone astray, for they worshiped God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him; that they taught for doctrine the commandments of men, and had but a form of godliness, and denied the power thereof. It was a crime, it was said, for Joseph Smith to receive a message of this kind and declare it to the world, but when you come to read the history of the world, and you come to test the doctrines of the churches of the world, when you come to weigh them in the balance against the teachings of Jesus Christ and the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you will find that the path that He set before all men when He was in the flesh, then you can easily see that that which was declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in his boyhood was indeed the truth, although Joseph did not dream that such a thing could be. Yet it is hard to convince people in the world that they have not the true Gospel of Christ. They have many things that are good, but they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is not sufficient. They do not understand that they do not accept that, for they teach today the doctrine that if a man commits murder, if he is guilty of all the crimes known in the catalogue of crimes, the punishment of which is death, and he goes upon the scaffold with the rope around his neck, and when he is about to be launched into eternity, if he will only believe in and confess Christ his soul will be ushered directly into the presence of God, and he will be saved. That doctrine is taught by professed teachers of the Gospel. Now there is no such doctrine in the Bible; there is no such doctrine in the Book of Mormon or in the Doctrine and Covenants.

CRIMINALS GO TO HELL.

But many people will point to the thief on the cross and say, "Where did he go?" Why Jesus Himself said to Mary, who met Him at the tomb after He had risen from the dead, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." Where had He been? He had been where the thief went. Where was he? In the prison house, in hell, in the place for criminals. That is where the thief went, and he has been there to fulfill the prophecies of the prophets. He went there to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to teach the Gospel to them that they might learn the truth and live according to God in the spirit, and have the Gospel taught to them the same as if they were in the flesh. There is no such Gospel taught in the Bible that the thieves on the cross, the malefactors who were crucified with Christ, went to heaven and were exalted. Nothing of the kind. They did not go there, and it is a false doctrine to say that we can get into heaven by simply confessing and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ; although that is good as far as it goes, for it is the name of Christ that is given by which we are saved, and there is no other name given us by heaven by which men can be saved.

FAITH ALONE INSUFFICIENT.

It is good to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but that is not all. That alone will not do. There is also necessary Faith in God, a true, living, working faith. Repentance of sin, and burial with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins. Then follows the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, that is to take all things of the Father and show them to the children of men, and that is to bear witness of the Father and the Son to the children of men, that they might know it is the doctrine of God and that Christ did not speak of Himself. All these things are necessary. Why, Jesus said, "Everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it." And because they heard what He said, and they did not do the things which He said, they were likened unto him that built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it. Then we must not only believe, but we must do the things that the Lord requires at our hands. We

must do the works of righteousness as well as believe in the works of righteousness. We must not only believe that Jesus was the Christ, but we must do what He said. We must be born again in order that we may see the kingdom of heaven; and we must be born of water and of the Spirit in order for us to enter the kingdom of God. The Gospel that we teach requires all those who embrace it to obey its principles. Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; and thou shalt not covet that which is not thine; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. And there are other commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy might and all thy heart; and thou shalt love the things that I command you and that I require at your hands that you may be my children.

SIN MUST BE ATONED FOR.

I want to tell you that the man who has lived a profligate life, a life of wickedness, and who is finally condemned to death, or even though he should not be condemned to death, such a one will find out that his belief on the name of Jesus Christ was only the first step, and that he will have to answer for his sins just as sure as the Lord Jesus Christ had atoned for the sins of the world. The man who commits a crime will have to answer for it; the guilty man will have to answer before the just God, the great Judge of the quick and the dead, for the crimes which he has committed, and he will have to make an atonement for them— if it is possible for an atonement to be made for them—before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven and receive an inheritance there. This is the truth. Now, if that little boy knows this principle, he can stand before you, my brethren and sisters, and say that he knows that that part of Mormonism is true. Suppose he knows only that, he knows that much; it is that much of the Gospel, and he can bear witness of it. He can bear witness of the truth as I can, with my greater experience in the Gospel, bear testimony to the truth of other principles.

INFANT BAPTISM NOT OF GOD.

There are many people who still cling to the belief that little children, innocent babes, born into the world of sinful parents, if they die without having been sprinkled—baptized they call it—will go to heaven. They believe that God and he damned God only knows where people got authority to sprinkle and call it baptism. There is no authority within the inspired word of God for sprinkling or baptism. Paul tells us that baptism is burial with Christ in the water grave. We must go down into the water and come forth again out of the water, as Christ was buried and came forth from the grave; because baptism is like the burial and resurrection of the dead. As I have said, there are people who believe and teach that if a child, a new-born babe, died without baptism, without having been sprinkled, he will be damned and go to hell. Now, the Book of Mormon teaches the direct opposite. That sacred record states that it is solemn mockery in the sight of God to baptize little children; that little children do not need repentance nor baptism; that baptism is unto repentance for the remission of sins; that little children are alive before God, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God, and a respecter of persons, for how many little children have died without baptism. Wherefore, if little children could not be saved without baptism, these must have gone to an endless hell. What an awful thought! But the Book of Mormon teaches that they can be saved, that they can be baptized in the gulf of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity, for he has neither faith, hope, nor charity; and that if he should be cut off with such a thought, he would be damned. The Lord has told us in the Doctrine and Covenants that little children are not accountable for sins until they come to years of accountability; that they cannot believe nor repent, and therefore they will not be lost. If little children die before they are eight years of age they are redeemed by the blood of Christ, who was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. All children who die before reaching the years of accountability are redeemed through the atonement of Christ, and not one of them shall be lost. This is the Gospel, this is Jesus Christ's truth; it is the doctrine taught by the prophets and inspired men from Adam to Christ, and from Christ till this moment.

TRUTH IS TRUE RELIGION.

If you would be greatest among men, if you would obtain salvation in the kingdom of God, become like a little child—simple, having implicit faith, confidence and love, always depending upon the Lord. You who are grown, you who possess wealth, and who perhaps feel that you are not of necessity dependent upon God, having your hands full and your treasures full, if you desire salvation, become like little children, and you shall be exalted in the kingdom of God. Now, these are some of the things that the Gospel teaches, and they are the truth. There is no religion, there is no theology in all the world that can rise above truth or that is mightier than the truth. It is the truth that makes true theology; that makes true religion; and when you find a religion that is lacking in truth, there you find a form of godliness without the power thereof; but when you find the truth in religion, then you find virtue, truth, and the power and power. Truth will remain. Error will vanish; that which is untrue will be destroyed and will disappear; but the truth cannot be destroyed; the eternal laws of God are here, and no one can destroy the

truth. So we want truth for our religion.

REVELATION OF THE FATHER AND THE SON.

Is it true that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son came to the earth in the spring of the year 1820 and revealed themselves to the Prophet Joseph Smith? Is that true? If it is you ought to know it, we ought to know it. Joseph declared that it was true. He suffered persecution all the days of his life on the earth because he declared the truth. He carried his life in his hands, as we speak, every moment of his life until he finally sacrificed it in Carthage Jail for the testimony that he bore. He said that he was like Paul of old; Paul saw a light and heard a voice and he knew that he had seen the light and heard the voice, and the voice spoke unto him and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And the voice told him what to do that the scales might fall from his eyes that he might see the truth and become a minister of life and salvation for Christ, whom he had been persecuting. Who could convince Paul to the contrary? He knew what the voice declared to him. He knew that he saw the light, and no power on earth could take that knowledge away from him. It was the same with Joseph Smith. He knew that the Father had revealed to him, and, pointing to the personage by His side, had declared: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." Joseph knew this, and he knew that the Father had spoken to him and told him that he was to be chosen as an instrument in laying the foundation of the Church of God, that was never to be destroyed or given to another people; that the sects of the day had strayed from the straight and narrow path and were not walking acceptably before Him. Joseph never dreamed it. Joseph never discovered it. It was the Father who revealed it to him. I am simply repeating what God said or what God revealed to the boy Joseph Smith, and all my experience in the world has been to bear witness of the truth revealed by the Son of God to Joseph Smith. It was true, but Joseph was not responsible for it. Not only has he declared it, but you have the testimony of other witnesses in relation to it. They received a mission from John the Baptist, who was sent to confer on them the Aaronic priesthood, and who laid his hands upon their heads, and they are now hearing the voice of the Angel John Oliver Cowdery, in connection with Joseph Smith, saw the Angel John; Oliver Cowdery felt the hands of the angel laid upon his head, and he was the first to confer upon him and Joseph Smith the Aaronic priesthood, and Oliver Cowdery stands an unimpeached witness, and his testimony is in force in the world the same as that of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They have left their testimonies on record here as to the divinity of the Book of Mormon; they declared that they saw an angel come down from the presence of God, that he turned over the leaves one by one, and they saw the engravings upon them, and the voice of God declared to them that the record had been translated by the gift and power of God. We have these witnesses, and we have eight other witnesses whom God raised up to be eye and ear witnesses to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. They have left their testimonies on record and I believe it. I do not believe that these men testified falsely concerning these things; they dared not. During all the years that they were separated from the Church, they still cling to the truth of their testimony and still maintained, although they had weakened in the faith, that it was true.

TESTIMONIES OF THE TRUTH.

"Oh, but," some will say, "we will not receive it, and we do not believe it." But I defy the world to say it isn't true. They cannot deny these testimonies because they do not know that they are true. I know that their testimonies are true; these boys know that they are true, and they can say, "I believe in this and I know that it is true." But, still more, the Lord Jesus Christ said, and it was one of the first principles laid down in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, that if we would know the will of the Father we would know of the doctrine that it was of God. Joseph Smith laid down the same as Jesus did, and there is a test by which we may know that the Gospel is true, it is the privilege of every man to know that the truth is true. Now, then, comes the final great test. Who shall say to me, "You do not know that the testimonies of these men are true. You believe it." Certainly I do; I believe it with all my soul. "But how do you know?" We have a number of good illustrations of this in our midst. It is hard to define to you that do not know; it is hard to explain to outsiders how I know the truth of these things; but I say to you in all sincerity and honesty of heart that I know that the work is true, because the Lord Almighty, through the power of His Spirit and His impressions upon my soul, has made me to feel it from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. God has shown it to me and removed all doubt from my mind, and I accept it as I accept the fact that the sun shines at day-day. As I look into the heavens and see the light of the sun I know that it is light; I know that the sun casts forth its light into the world. Who can make me deny it? No one.

MORMONISM CANNOT BE DENIED.

One other point and I will conclude tonight. You cannot, no one can, destroy Mormonism or prove it to be false without destroying Christ and proving Him and His mission false. It cannot be done. Why? Because Mormonism is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. Mormonism embraces the whole of the truth of the Son of God as He taught it, and it is the only answer in this dispensation. He restored the priesthood of God with its gifts and powers and sent Peter, James and John to bestow the Melchisedek priesthood and John the Baptist to restore the Aaronic priesthood, the keys of which he held, and which he still holds as the forerunner of Christ; and the day will come when the Son of Man shall return to the earth in His glory.

and power, not as a lamb to be slain, not to be crowned with thorns and crucified on a cross, but when He comes again He will come as the Master of the world, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and He will rule here, for the prophets have said it. Then God will destroy those who are not walking in His way, for He has said that when that Prophet comes, even Christ, whosoever shall not confess Christ shall be destroyed.

THE GOSPEL ALSO FOR THE DEAD.

The same principles that apply to the living apply also to the dead. "For this cause," said the apostle, "was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." And so we are baptized for those that are dead. The living cannot be made perfect without the dead, not the dead be made perfect without the living. There has got to be a wedding together and a

joining together of parents and children and children and parents until the whole chain of God's family shall be welded together into one chain, and they shall all become the family of God and His Christ. The Lord revealed this doctrine to Joseph the prophet; in fact, the Lord Almighty has revealed things that have been kept hid from the foundations of the world. He has revealed them now because now is the time that they should be revealed, and now we are commanded to build temples and to go into them and minister for the living and for the dead. Even the malefactors shall be looked after, and work shall be done for them and the doors will be opened unto them, that is if they repent. I want to say that there is no salvation without repentance; there is no forgiveness without repentance. God will not remit your sins and cleanse you from your sins unless you are worthy of a remission of them. God bless you, my brethren and sisters, my friends, and peace be unto you and yours. May you grow up fully aware of the great responsibilities that rest upon you as living souls.

Brother Grant has been appointed as the president of this mission, and all the presidents of the conferences and of the branches are under his direction; they are all subject to his counsel, and it is his right, as president, to instruct and counsel them, and I want you to hearken to his counsel. He is appointed here by proper authority, if you expect a man that the Lord has appointed to preside in that position, the Lord will respect you. If a man will not respect the authority of God he will never obtain the privilege of en-

tering into the presence of God, for the house of the Lord is a house of order and not a house of confusion. These elders who are preaching the Gospel to you, brothers and sisters, remember that they have good homes in Utah or elsewhere where they have come from. They have left their homes and labor and have come here in obedience to the call of the priesthood, to sacrifice, as to speak, or better, to contribute to the Lord, two or three or more of the years of their life for the salvation of your soul and of the souls of men generally. You ought to be charitable toward them. Now, boys, listen to what I tell you. Be kind to the saints. Keep yourselves unspotted from the stain of the world. Remember you are here now on trial. God has you in His power and His hand is over you, and it is now the day for you to prove your integrity to the work. Keep yourselves clean and unspotted from the sins of the world and from secret vice, and from every abomination and every sin, and refuse to hearken to the tempter and to the insinuations of the evil one. I pray you to listen to my counsel in relation to these things. If a man commits a deadly sin upon his mission he cannot recover from it. I have never yet in all my experience of more than 50 years seen a man rise after having committed such sin. It hangs over him like a spell, and he never grows, he never advances if he yields to that temptation; it sticks to him and dulls his ambition and his spirit. Amen.

Lord bless you. Amen.

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