

529

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DISCOURSE

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

Arising to address this vast congregation, I earnestly desire a continuation of that liberality of spirit which was enjoyed yesterday by those whose privilege it was to minister unto us, realizing that without it we shall no be edified in the truth and the knowledge of God. In arising to speak up and testify of the work of God, it is desirable to know what to speak about as well as what to say about it. Yesterday I felt peculiar pleasure and joy of spirit in listening to the testimonies of the brethren, because of the simplicity and force of many of the truths that were uttered. One of them came forcibly to my mind, as we do to the rest of the hearers, concerning the value and importance of the living oracles to the Church of God on the earth as being the principle of precedence in the midst of God's people over written instructions that are given by men. Inasmuch as the Elders speak by the Holy Spirit, the word of the Lord is that their instructions should be scripture—"shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord and the power of God unto salvation." When the declaration was made concerning the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants how deficient they would be in administering salvation, if they alone were enjoyed by the people. Now we know just how it has worked with all Christendom, to have the Bible without having authority to administer the ordinances mentioned in it. Now we may possess either of these books, or all of them, and they can not baptize a single man, or woman, into the Church. There is not power enough in all the books to do it, nor is there power in all the books to give any man authority to do it. Consequently, then, it requires the authority from the Lord to be present to administer in all His ordinances. The highest authority that we have known—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, stated, that it was not possible without the birth of the water and of the spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven. Said He to the learned Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of the water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That was a declaration of principle that was inexorable. He who created this earth and causes it to travel round the sun every three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours, established those great eternal principles that rule the heavens, also the law that except a man be born of the water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and one is just

as much a law of nature as the other. The latter is the law of nature and of grace to man. Who could administer these ordinances except they received the authority from God to do it? These books can neither baptize, nor confirm us. They cannot confirm upon us the Holy Ghost nor a membership in the Church of Christ, neither can they administer to us any other of the ordinances which we are receiving, and in which we rejoice so much, in the house of our God. It requires nothing less than a present living minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to administer in all the ordinances, in counsel, and in directing all the affairs of the Church of Christ. We have learned this, and understand it, or else we do not know where our safety lies.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a system of things which, in order to be known and understood, must be lived. A man cannot preach with effect and power to another the forgiveness of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or baptism for the remission of his sins, unless he has himself been baptized for the remission of his sins and has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. No man can administer in the ordinances of the Gospel of Christ with effect and with power, unless he has first been made partaker of them himself; and that is how we cannot, any of us, preach the power of the resurrection, because none of us have been raised from the dead. When, by and by, the time of the resurrection comes, men will teach it to us who have been raised from the dead, and who understand and have the power of it and the keys of it. That is why you cannot be baptized for your dead in the house of the Lord, until you have been first baptized and received ordinances yourself. The Gospel has to be lived in order to be realized and its power received. The man who goes forward with real repentance of heart for all his sins and covenants with God that he will serve Him the rest of his days, according to the best of his ability, with the grace of God bestowed upon him, and goes forward and receives this ordinance, rejoices in this Gospel; because this is the first step in it, and when a man does this with full purpose of heart and enters upon keeping the commandments of God he receives the Holy Spirit. The promise made to him is true, and is fulfilled, and everybody under the sound of my voice that has ever pursued that course knows that it is true. They know that in entering into the service and keeping the commandments of God they receive the Holy Spirit, when administered to by those who are authorized of God; and it gives to one the gift of tongues, to talk in a language that he does not know himself. That same spirit gives to another the gift of interpretation of what the first has been talking about, to the edification of all who have listened. It gives to another the gift of healing, that if he is sick, afflicted and distressed,

and is living his religion, he can call upon the Elders, receive their blessing and be healed. If he is a minister, of the Lord himself, and labors to receive it, he will have the gift to administer the anointing to others, and they will be healed; or he may receive the gift of prophecy, of faith, of wisdom, of visions, of dreams, or to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit giving inspiration to his soul. It requires a man to live in the continual state of humility and obedience towards God, of repentance for every imperfection, folly and vanity, and an effort to depart therefrom, and to sanctify himself by the working of the Spirit and the belief of the truth unto everlasting life. This Gospel brings with it the gifts, the blessings and the grace of God, so that the faithful Saint, as he goes along in the straight and narrow path, knows of the goodness of God, that he is in fellowship with the Lord; that he is not alone and without God in the world, but that the angels are about him, and the care of the Lord is over him.

Well, now, we have a Gospel that is full of joy and consolation. It opens up principles of intelligence, and revelation, of the knowledge of things past and present and to come. There are a great many other religions in the world, and some very powerful ones. For instance, there is the Mohammedan religion, and those people have a faith of their own, and they are very numerous, about 175,000,000, they estimate, I believe. They have their prophet, they have their faith, they have their ideas of futurity, and they are a sort of cousin in the relation to father Abraham's family. His son, Ishmael, and Isaac's son, Esau, in their seed, constitute a great portion of that class of people. They have had apostles raised up among them, from the seed of Abraham as they say, and they entertain a certain amount of faith. In fact, the promise of the Lord, wherein he said he knew Abraham, that he would command his children after him, is manifest in that people, in that they believe in one God, and they claim one prophet, Mohammed. Then, again, we look to the eastern world, in China, for instance, where are said to be about four hundred millions of human beings, and they believe in doctrines given them by Confucius and by Buddha, and others. But those four hundred millions are given up to the worship of idols. They are idolaters, with the rest; and so we may go on over the world, and find scores of these great branches of religion that have had their heads and chiefs, their faiths and beliefs. What I want to call your special attention to in this connection, is this: Has any one of them ever had a man of their number pass through death, rise again from the grave and declare to them the principles of having obtained through him or by him, a resurrection—been lifted up to immortality through their faith? We do not find it in history anywhere in the earth that they have ever had such a