

DISCOURSE

By Elder JOSEPH F. SMITH,
delivered in the 13th Ward As-
sembly Rooms, Salt Lake
City, Sunday Afternoon,
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REPORTED BY D. W. EVANS.

While preparing the Sacrament the thought was impressed upon my mind to make a few remarks on the subject, although I will not promise to confine myself to it. I desire to be led by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a very important and sacred ordinance; however simple it may appear to our minds, it is one which will add to our acceptance before God, or to our condemnation.

It was instituted by the Savior in the place of the law of sacrifice which was given to Adam, and which continued with his children down to the days of Christ, but which was fulfilled in his death, he being the great sacrifice for sin, of which the sacrifices enjoined in the law given to Adam were a similitude.

The Lord designed in the beginning to place before man the knowledge of good and evil, and gave him a commandment to cleave to good and abstain from evil. But if he should fall, he would give to him the law of sacrifice and provide a Savior for him, that he might be brought back again into the presence and favor of God and partake of eternal life with him. This was the plan of redemption chosen and instituted by the Almighty before man was placed on the earth. And when man did fall by transgressing the law which was given him, the Lord gave to him the law of sacrifice, and made it clear to his understanding, that it was for the purpose of reminding him of that great event that should transpire in the meridian of time, whereby he and all his posterity might be brought forth by the power of redemption and the resurrection from the dead, and partake of eternal life with God in his kingdom. For this reason Adam and his posterity, from generation to generation, observed this law, and continually looked forward to a time when there should be provided for them a means of redemption from the fall and restoration from death to life, for death was the penalty of the law transgressed, which man was powerless to avert, the fiat of God being, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and this penalty was to follow upon all flesh, all being as helpless and dependent as he was in this matter. Their only hope of redemption from the grave and the power of death was in the Savior whom God had promised, who should suffer death, but being without sin, having himself never transgressed any law, being without blemish, pure and holy, he should have power to break the bands of death and from the grave rise to immortal life, thereby opening the way for all who should follow him in the regeneration to come forth to life again, redeemed from the penalty of the law, and from the sin of transgression to eternal life. In anticipation, therefore, of this great sacrifice which was to be offered for Adam and his seed, they offered sacrifices, more or less acceptably, and in conformity to the pattern given, in proportion to the knowledge of God and of the gospel which they had, and their faithfulness from generation to generation, to the days of Jesus.

They would take the firstlings of their flocks, the best fruits of their fields, and those things which were emblematic of purity, innocence, and perfection, symbolical of him who was without sin, and as "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and offer sacrifices unto God in memory of him, and the matchless and wonderful deliverance to be wrought out for them by him.

Undoubtedly the knowledge of this law and of other rites and ceremonies was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued with them, more or less pure, to the flood, and through Noah, who was a "preacher of righteousness," to those who succeeded him, spreading out into all nations and countries, Adam and Noah being the first of their dispensations to receive them from God. What wonder, then, that we should find relics of Christianity, so to speak, among the heathens and nations who know not Christ, and whose

histories date back beyond the days of Moses, and even beyond the flood, independent of and apart from the records of the Bible? The ground taken by infidels, that "Christianity" sprang from the heathen, it being found that they have many rights similar to those recorded in the Bible, &c., is only a vain and foolish attempt to blind the eyes of men and dissuade them from their faith in the Redeemer of the world, and from their belief in the Scriptures of divine truth, for if the heathen have doctrines and ceremonies resembling to some extent those which are recorded in the Scriptures, it only proves, what is plain to the Saints, that these are the traditions of the fathers handed down from generation to generation, from Adam, through Noah, and that they will cleave to the children to the latest generation, though they may wander into darkness and perversion, until but a slight resemblance to their origin, which was divine, can be seen. Yet this is a stumbling block to some and there are those who endeavor to make progress on this foundation against the work of God, but it is absolute folly. How do we know that the Bible accounts of Adam and the succeeding generations are correct? How do we know anything pertaining to God and his dealings with men anciently? We know many things by tradition, naturally, by intuition. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." There is an inherent principle in man that leads him to faith in a superior or a Supreme Being, who has designed and created all things. The Bible account, being the most rational and indeed only historical one of the creation and the dealings of God with men, we are constrained to accept it, in the main, as truth. Then we behold the wonderful works of God spread out before us, the starry heavens, the sun and moon, the earth on which we dwell, and its times and seasons, its fruits and grains, its herbs and varied productions, its fountains and rivers, mountains, valleys and plains, and the mighty deep, all teeming with life and animation; also the laws that govern these vast creations, and man, the crowning work of God, on this earth, the masterpiece, if you please, whom inspiration teaches us, is the offspring of that eternal being who is the Creator of all things, he being the most perfect in his organization, possessing greater attributes, powers of reason, and intelligence than all other beings, constituting him the "lord of creation" and the nearest in resemblance to the Creator. We look at these things and we cannot but come to the conclusion that this is not the work of chance, but the result of matured omniscient designs and purposes, that man is the son of God, possessing the attributes and image of his Father, and in the beginning much of this intelligence, inasmuch that he was the companion and associate of God and dwelt with him, and knew no sin. The Lord gave him the earth as a possession and an inheritance, and laws for his government, that he might fill the measure of his creation and have joy therein.

We look at these things in this manner, and they appear rational and true, and we are convinced that they are true, that the Scriptures, the Bible and Book of Mormon, are of divine origin.

But is this all we have to convince us of the truth of these things, and to confirm upon our minds the principles laid down as the Gospel of Christ, which is called "Mormonism"? These are the only means of knowing in regard to the truth of religion that the world claim to have, or that we had prior to becoming acquainted with the doctrines of this church, and we were in a measure satisfied because it was the best light we possessed. There are thousands of the most intelligent and best educated men that live, and some of the greatest and brightest minds in many nations now engaged in the dissemination of what they believe to be the gospel of Jesus Christ, claiming no other means of knowing the truth, than tradition and reason, and they appear to be satisfied with their convictions and faith. Millions of dollars are expended annually in promulgating their religion, they "compass land and sea to make proselytes," with no other acknowledged evidence of the truth of the Bible, or of the divine mission of Jesus Christ, than that I have cited.

But we go farther than this, although to my mind this mode of reasoning is conclusive so far as it goes, and no doubt is left as to the existence of our Father and God, or that he created all things for a wise purpose, for his glory, and for the glory and happiness of his children, that the earth and the fullness thereof are God's, although designed for man and his use, and finally to be given to him as an everlasting inheritance, when he shall, through obedience, prove worthy of it. But, as I said before, we go farther than this—there is "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed." There is revelation, a means of direct communication from God to man, a power which can rend the veil between us and God, open the eyes of our understanding, and bring us into proximity to him, so that we may know him as he is, and learn from his own mouth and from the mouths of his holy messengers his laws and will concerning us, as anciently. This is the principle by which Adam knew God in the garden where he was placed in the beginning. God came to him day by day and conversed with him as one man converses with another, giving him instructions and counsel, for man was pure. And when he was cast out, God did not forsake him, but appeared to him, sent his angels to communicate with him concerning the plan of salvation, and gave him the Holy Ghost to be a light in his path through the world, made dreary to him by being banished from the immediate presence of God.

Men have enjoyed privileges from that day to this, in proportion to their worthiness, through every gospel dispensation, thereby obtaining a knowledge of God for themselves, not being left to the traditions of the fathers and to reason alone. From time to time the Lord raised up prophets, to whom he has appeared, either himself or by his messengers, as to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets from the beginning, revealing his will and making known his requirements, so that they have had a positive knowledge given to them of God himself.

We claim that in this dispensation this key of knowledge has been restored to man, and we stand upon the same footing with the ancients, and are not left in uncertainty or doubt, the truth of the gospel being confirmed upon our understandings by inspiration and revelation from God, "line upon line, and precept upon precept," until we have obtained a knowledge of God, "whom to know is life eternal."

The ordinances of the gospel have been restored in their purity. We know why the law of sacrifice was given to Adam, and how it is that relics of the gospel are found among the heathen.

When Jesus came and suffered, "the just for the unjust," he that was without sin for him that had sinned, and was subject to the penalty of the law which the sinner had transgressed, the law of sacrifice was fulfilled, and in the stead thereof he gave another law, which we call the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," by which his life and mission, his death and resurrection, the great sacrifice he had offered for the redemption of man, should be kept in everlasting remembrance, for said he, "This do in remembrance of me, for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, do ye show the Lord's death till he come." Therefore this law is to us, what the law of sacrifice was to those who lived prior to the first coming of the son of man, until he shall come again. Therefore we must honor and keep it sacredly, for there is a penalty attached to its violation, as we shall see by reading the words of Paul; 1 Cor. 11; 27, 30.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

And it is even more plainly given in the Book of Mormon, which I will read. Nephi 8th chapter, 9th v., page 471.

"And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he turned his eyes again upon the disciples whom he

had chosen, and said unto them, behold verily, verily I say unto you, I give unto you another commandment, and then I must go unto my Father, that I may fulfill other commandments which he hath given me. And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly, to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it, for whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood, ye shall forbid him."

These are some of the injunctions and commandments that are given in relation to the partaking of the Lord's Supper. Now let us be careful what we do, that we may not incur the penalty affixed to the transgression of this law, remembering that the ordinances which God has given are sacred and binding, that his laws are in force, especially upon all that have covenanted with him in baptism, and upon all unto whom they come, whether they embrace them or not, as Jesus said, "This is the condemnation of the world that light has come into the world, but ye love darkness rather than light." Therefore all men will be held accountable for the use they make of the light which they possess. For this reason we are commanded to preach the gospel unto every creature, that those who obey and are baptized may be saved and those who reject it may be condemned.

I bear my testimony to these things. I know that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of the living God, and President Young is also a prophet of God, and that by inspiration and revelation, and not of man. God bless you and help us to be faithful, in my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

BY TELEGRAPH.

EASTERN.

WASHINGTON, 16.—The President has signed the pension and Indian appropriation bills.

There are on the Speaker's table seventy-five Senate and House bills with amendments waiting action. The Senate is similarly crowded, having the addition of others of importance, including the House bill for the distribution of the Geneva award. Although only two weeks remain of the present Congress the time is considered sufficient for the transaction of the requisite public business, besides acting on the reports of the special committees, including those affecting the character of members of Congress; also the reports in the Caldwell, Clayton and New Orleans cases. Both branches will meet an hour earlier than heretofore, and will also hold evening sessions. The majority of the members of Congress are opposed to an extra session unless something extraordinary and now unforeseen shall render it necessary.

ATCHISON.—Two men of a party of roughs, disturbing the peace at Sargent, were shot by a saloon-keeper. The party went to Dodge City, where the vigilantes killed two more.

CINCINNATI.—Heavy frauds, by the conductors of the Pan Handle Railroad, have been discovered; one of them has been arrested.

NEW YORK, 17.—It is stated that President Grant's southern tour will be of the greatest significance to the people in that section. The President contemplates starting on the 20th of March, and he will be accompanied by nearly all the Cabinet besides many distinguished gentlemen, Senators, members of Congress and others. Richmond, Va., will be the first stopping place. It is the President's purpose to make this the initial movement in his next administration of an attempt to harmonize the people of the North and South. He will look into the condition of the South socially, and into the local government of the States to be visited. At Richmond and other places along the line of his visit, preparations are being made to give him an enthusiastic reception.

The attorney general has sent the postmaster general an opinion to the effect that the section of the postal act which has been construed by the postoffice department as warranting the collection of double postage on unpaid letters, is not in accordance with the spirit of the act. The attorney general plainly says that only the amount of the unpaid postage can be lawfully collected.

NEW YORK, 15.—Robert Emmet, son of Thomas Addis Emmet, the Irish patriot, and nephew of the celebrated Robert Emmet, died at New Rochelle to-day. The deceased had long been an eminent lawyer in that city.

The text of Judge Davies' decision, granting a writ of error and a stay of proceedings in the case of Stokes, says that the exceptions are of such grave importance, and there being a doubt as to the correctness of one portion of the charge to the jury, it became his duty to give the prisoner an opportunity to present them. The case will go to a full bench of the Supreme Court for a hearing. This will probably involve a delay of a couple of months.

The ship *American Congress*, belonging to Grinnell & Merton, sailed hence for London on December 7th, and has not since been heard from. She had a crew of 21, and a cargo valued at \$72,000. Her owners think she is lost.

WESTERN.

LOS ANGELES, 15.—There was a full board at the special meeting of the common council on railroad matters last night. A telegram was read from Col. Hyde, agent of the Southern Pacific, asking the council to perfect the right of way in the city. Measures were adopted to complete the survey of the route through the city forthwith, and the speedy commencement of the railroad is looked for.

YREKA, Cal., 15.—From parties who have arrived from the front this evening, we learn that General Gillem had established his headquarters at Dorris Rancho. A company of artillery from Fort Stevens had arrived at headquarters. All was quiet awaiting the arrival of the peace commissioners. It has rained considerably during the last few days, making the roads bad, but of vast benefit to both agricultural and mining interests.

PIOCHE, 15.—A large and enthusiastic meeting was held at the Court House this evening, and resolutions were adopted, instructing the Representatives in the Legislature from Lincoln county to procure the passage of an act authorizing the commissioners of the county to issue bonds to the amount of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and exchange the same for stock in the Palisade, Eureka and Pioche Railroad.

SAN DIEGO, 15.—The Tuscon, Arizona, *Citizen* of the 8th, has the following:

"Private advices say that the railway engineers are making fine progress on the preliminary line now being extended up the Gila from the Colorado River. The party is nearly one hundred miles this side of Yuma."

"About a week ago James Beatty was killed by a man unknown to us, at Whitlow's station, on Salt River, below McDowell. The report is that the trouble began in a wordy dispute. Beatty made the first move to shoot and got the worst of it, the other not getting hurt; but he surrendered himself for examination at Phoenix. About the same time one Mexican killed another in a dance house in Phoenix, as is reported, in a most cold blooded and cowardly manner. The murderer is in jail at Phoenix."

"A resident on the Cochise reservation says that from what he hears and sees he is still hopeful that the present peace will be kept by that band which so long was a terror to everybody whose business made it necessary for them to reside away from towns, or to live in this section."

"The *Borderer* has news that the epizootic has caused a stoppage of the mails in Texas eastward from El Paso."

EUROPEAN.

PARIS.—*L'Univers*, a Legitimist organ, contradicts the report that a reconciliation has been effected between the two branches of the House of Bourbon; it asserts that nothing has been done towards a union.

MADRID, 15.—Among the measures contemplated by the ministry are the separation of Church and State and the appointment of judges for life.

Castellar, in a despatch acknowledging the receipt of congratulation from the South Americans in Paris, says they must cease to support the Cuban Separatists, now that Cuba is under a Republican Government.

Salteron, minister of justice, will present a bill for the abolition of capital punishment.