

Lord speedily and humble ourselves before Him, that we may regain it.

The Gospel is positive in its character. Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." That was a positive declaration. Peter expressed himself with the same positiveness when he said, on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Whenever the Gospel has been presented to man on the earth these positive terms have been used. Consequently men have something to rely upon. It is not a possibility or a probability that such may be the case; but it is made as positive as language can make it. If a man will do the will of the Father, he shall know of the doctrine. If men will repent of their sins and be baptized for the remission of them, they shall receive the Holy Ghost. These are positive statements, and they were spoken by men who were not mistaken. The Son of God was not mistaken. His words were reliable. Peter's words were reliable; for he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost; and any man who speaks by the Holy Ghost speaks scripture, speaks the mind and will of God, and it cannot be questioned.

But in order that we may obtain what is thus promised there is a very careful charge given in the modern revelations through the Prophet Joseph, that I wish to call to the attention of our leading brethren in the stakes and wards; for the Presidents of Stakes and the bishops, particularly the latter, are the men who have the jurisdiction over these organized Departments of the Church. There are no baptisms, no confirmations, no blessings of children, or anything of that kind done in a ward without the consent and full approval of the Bishop, Elders, High Priests and Seventies, although thoroughly endowed with authority to baptize, confirm, ordain, and to bless children, are subject to the man who presides over them in the ward. In order that baptisms may be properly administered and acceptable to Him, the Lord made plain, in April 1830, that men and women should be in a certain condition before they should be received into the Church. The Bishops, who are common judges, are entitled to know whether men are prepared for baptism or not. If a man comes to them who is unprepared and not worthy to receive that sacred ordinance, they are just as competent to say, "No, my dear friend, you are not ready to be baptized," as they are to say, "Yes, we shall be glad to baptize you." The Bishop and his counselors are the ones to whom all these matters come in a ward. Of course, in the world, these things come to the traveling Elders, and they then are constituted the judges, and they are entitled to the spirit of judgment and wisdom, to enable them to judge all men and women when they present themselves for baptism. It is not well that men should be received prematurely and before they are ready. As Paul says, "lay hands suddenly on no man." I believe to that injunction might be added, baptize no person suddenly. We do not want to baptize people into this Church who have not faith, who have not repented, and who do not

come forth with the broken heart and the contrite spirit; for when we do that we bring reproach upon the Church, because the promises we make to them are not fulfilled. They do not receive the Holy Ghost; they do not obtain knowledge of God and of this work; they do not receive a testimony, as we promise them they shall, if they have not faith. And if a man has not faith, then he has not repentance; for faith precedes repentance. There is no incentive for repentance unless there be faith in God. Repentance is the fruit of faith, and the fruit of repentance is reformation. Where there is no repentance there is no reformation. The Lord has laid down plainly in the 37th paragraph of section xx of the Doctrine and Covenants, the conditions, necessary to baptism. He says:

And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—All who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve Him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into His church.

The Church is entitled to know that candidates for baptism have truly repented of their sins and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve Him to the end—not for a little season, not for twenty years or fifty years, but to the end. It is an eternal obligation that they take upon themselves, and if a man does not intend to serve God throughout eternity his obligation is void in the sight of the Lord. There is no promise of eternal life and salvation unless a man's repentance is genuine—a repentance which needs not to be repented of. If a man be a liar, he must lie no more; if he be a thief, he must steal no more; if he be corrupt, or in any manner wicked, he must cease that and from henceforth and forever serve God.

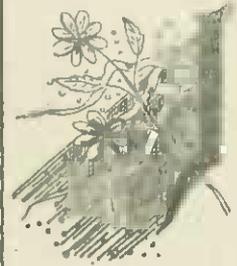
I have been brought to think of this subject when I have met with members of the Church who do not know the Gospel is true. Of course, there are many who know the Gospel is true, but they do not know that they know it. But there are some who really do not know and have never learned that the Gospel is true. Why? Because they have not done the will of the Father as they should have done. You rarely find an Elder who goes out in the world but he soon finds out that the Gospel is true and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord. He is very soon able to bear testimony to the truth of this work, and that the Lord lives. He has that testimony strong and burning in his heart. What is the reason? It is because he has been on his knees before the Lord. He has felt his weakness, that he needed the assistance of the Lord to preach the Gospel, or he could not officiate in the name of the Lord acceptably. Therefore, he humbled himself before the Lord in the very dust; he prayed fervently; he read and studied; he sought the Lord, and found Him. That is the reason he has that testimony. The Spirit of the Lord came to the rescue and bore record of the truth and established a testimony in his heart. And this will be so at home as well as abroad. Where we find brethren who have not obtained a knowledge, it is because

they have not been as devoted as they should be. I recommend all those in the Church who have not yet got a testimony to apply themselves now. Their baptism has been administered to them by the proper authority, and it rests with them to fulfill their part of the obligation. They are not entitled to the knowledge nor the blessing until they have fulfilled their part. No doubt, many have been brought into the Church who were as pure and honest as could possibly be, but without proper instructions and counsel. It may have been the carelessness of Bishops, or of parents, or of Elders. Possibly they were born in the Church, and baptized at the age of eight years, and have not been brought to a proper and thorough understanding of the Gospel. I repeat, however, if there are any in the Church today who lack a testimony, or question in their minds as to whether the Gospel is true or not, let them humble themselves before the Lord; let them perform the duties devolving upon them; let them meet together often with the people, and serve God faithfully and devotedly, and in a very little while the Spirit of the Lord will come in upon them, and they will begin to see as they have not seen and know. It is important that they should do this. And when the light once shines in upon us, it is important then that the Holy Spirit should be kept with us, that His influence and power should abide with us constantly, and that we never live in the dark. I want to say to my brethren and sisters, not to be satisfied with a membership in the Church, with our names upon the record; but let us be aggressive and positive in our knowledge of the truth, so that we may always have a testimony to bear and a reason for the hope that God has established in our souls. God bless you, Amen.

Written for this Paper

THE LAND OF SUGAR.

(Copyrighted 1896 by Frank G. Carpenter.)
RACELAND, La., November 18th, 1896.



WRITE this letter on the biggest sugar plantation of the south. Surrounding me are miles of sugar cane. I can stand in the fields and see nothing but sugar, sugar, sugar, as far as my eyes can reach. I am on the chief sugar plantation of Leon Godchaux, and Godchaux is the sugar king of the south. He has more sugar land than any other man in Louisiana. He owns 2,700 acres here and he has eleven other big plantations, aggregating in all more than 30,000 acres, of which fully 10,000 acres are now in cane. It takes something like one thousand men to run this plantation, and his army of employes all told is greater than that of Xenophon when he made his famous retreat. Leon Godchaux lives in New Orleans. He is now worth many millions of dollars. He came to Louisiana when he was a boy of seventeen, with a peddler's pack upon his back, and he sold goods on many of the rich planta-