

DISCOURSE

BY

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REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

THE Latter-day Saints are often accused by the people in the Christian world of being very much deluded. Our religion is counted a delusion and a snare. I was thinking, however, during the meeting this afternoon about the great number of Christian preachers who to-day are standing up in various parts of the world informing the people who listen to them that simple belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary, is all that is necessary to save them and exalt them in the presence of God the Father. And it seems to me that if there is one delusion more pernicious than another it is that very doctrine, which seems to be a fundamental principle of all the various Christian sects. You will find, go where you will in the Christian world and listen to any of the great preachers of the day, that this is the common topic of discourse. Jesus Christ is preached—which is quite right, I am very glad that he is—as the Savior of the world. So we testify as Latter-day Saints. In connection, however, with this great truth which is proclaimed to the inhabitants of the earth by men professing to be sent of God, is preached the great error that mere belief in the work which Jesus Christ wrought out is sufficient for the salvation of the people. The inhabitants of the earth are informed that is is not by any works of righteousness which they may perform that they can gain any favor whatever in the sight of God, but that it is the righteousness of Christ alone which is acceptable to the Father and which they can gain the benefit of if they simply believe in him.

When we search the scriptures and read the sayings of Jesus Christ, and of his servants whom he sent forth to preach the gospel, we do not find any such statement as this. We find, it is true, that the Apostles of the Lord Jesus preached Christ and him crucified to the world wherever they had an opportunity; they directed the attention of the people, Jew and Gentile, wherever they went, to Jesus of Nazareth, who was slain on Calvary as the Redeemer of the world, and faith in him was declared to be absolutely necessary. But we do not find that in proclaiming faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to that generation they informed the people that a mere belief in Christ was all that was needful; we find that, in addition to teaching the principle of faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ, they taught the people it was necessary to observe certain rules, and commandments, to obey certain forms and ordinances, to comply with certain conditions that they might obtain the benefit of the shedding of Christ's blood. We find by searching the New Testament, which contains some of the teachings of the Apostles and some of their letters to the churches, that the doctrine was held forth by them that "the blood of Christ, cleanse us from all sin." We find that this applied, as they taught it, not only to what is called original sin, but also to actual sin. The sin which our first parents committed in the Garden of Eden is called original sin; and the sins committed individually by the inhabitants of the earth, are called actual sin, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The Apostles sent forth to preach the gospel by our Savior himself, taught the people that through the shedding of Christ's blood remission of sin might come to all, and that mankind might be redeemed from sin original and actual. But we find this distinction in their teaching in regard to original sin, that or redemption therefrom and their teaching in regard to individual sin; that the blood of Christ redeems mankind from the effects of the fall and will eventually bring up all who died in Adam—for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,"—but that while people had nothing whatever to do with the sin which Adam committed and therefore have nothing whatever to do with the work of atonement for that sin, yet for their own sins there is some action required on their part that they may obtain redemption therefrom, inasmuch as the blood of Christ was shed for original sin

unconditionally, but for the remission of actual sin conditionally.

God, when he placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden, put before them a certain tree, the fruit of which he said "they should not partake of, if they did they should surely die." They partook of that tree in disobedience to the divine commandment, and planted the seeds of death in their bodies, and that death has passed upon all their posterity. "It is appointed unto men once to die." This act of our first parents introduced death into the world. Death came by sin, and death has passed upon all the posterity of Adam and Eve. Jesus came in the meridian of time as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," to bring mankind up from the effects of the transgression of our first parents. Hence he is called "the Second Adam," and we are told that as in the first Adam all die, even so in Christ, the second Adam, shall all be made alive again. And he himself proclaimed that the time should come, "In the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," or in the words of the inspired translation, "they that have done good in the resurrection of the just, and they that have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust." It is through the transgression of Adam that we have to suffer what is called the temporal death. Through that transgression our spirits have become separated from our bodies; our immortal spirits held by these mortal tabernacles must be taken out, and our bodies must return to the ground and crumble into dust; but by the atonement wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ the time is to come when all who lived in the body shall live in the body again. Christ was raised from the dead and became "the first fruits of them that slept;" afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming will be brought forth. This is the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy," says the Apostle John in his vision, "are they that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of his Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." After that, John saw that the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works.

The atonement wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ for original sin will apply just as far as the effects of the sin are felt. As all the posterity of Adam died through that sin, even so all the posterity of Adam will be raised up again through the atonement. "But every man in his own order," says the Apostle, "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming;" and then after the thousand years have passed away, the rest of the dead, as John said, will be brought forth and judged each one according to the deeds done in the flesh. All must give an account unto the great Eternal Father. We are responsible for the acts done in the flesh, for like as it was in the case of our first parents, good and evil, truth and error, are placed before us, and every individual is left free to choose the good and refuse the evil, or to choose the evil and refuse the good, as he pleases. Both are set before us and, if we yield to either, it will lead us in either direction. There is however a spirit in man, born in him, which comes from God, the fountain of light and truth. This light is planted in the breast of every man and every woman who breathes the breath of life. It is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and if people would listen to the whispering of that still small voice, be led by that natural light and natural inspiration, they would be led up to God. By this natural light, by this general inspiration, if people would listen to its whisperings, and be guided thereby, they would be led up to the fountain of light. "Every good gift," says the Apostle James, "and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." But on the other hand there must be, as the Book of Mormon says, "an opposition in all things," and there is a spirit of evil, a spirit of darkness, which draws downward to death, and a spirit of light which leads upward to life; the one

leads to Satan and his works, the other to God and to righteousness. But the inhabitants of the earth generally have been more prone to listen to the inspiration of the spirit of darkness as did our first parents, than to listen to the still small voice of light and life in their souls.

All people must give an account of the deeds done in the body according to the measure of light they have received, and the opportunities they have had of obtaining that light, while they dwelt in the flesh. Some people have lived on the earth when God has sent his servants inspired of him to make plain his ways, while others have tabernacled in the flesh when no inspired voice was heard, when no communication was open between the heavens and the earth. And He who is just, who is the embodiment of the eternal principles of justice, will deal out to all according to their light and according to the opportunities they have had of obtaining that light, but all must be judged, all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for their individual works.

Now, we will take the case of an individual who has broken all the laws of God and perhaps all the laws of man, and finally has shed the blood of a fellow creature, and is condemned by the laws of man to die; he is, in fact, unfit to lie, unfit to associate with mortal beings, therefore, they must needs thrust him out of the world that he may mingle with immortal beings. Where do they send him to? A minister will come and preach to him, and tell him that all he has to do is to cast his soul on Jesus; that he has just to believe that Christ died for him, and the righteousness of the pure, immaculate, sinless, Christ will be grafted into that rotten branch, so that he will have the fruits of righteousness and peace. That is according to the modern gospel. The man believes this, he confesses Christ with his lips and acknowledges him with his tongue, and straightway is strung up between the heavens and the earth, and choked to death; his spirit is forced out of his body, and ushered into the presence of the Eternal Father to stand before his spotless throne, and is deemed fit to dwell in the society of the pure and holy ones on high. That is according to the modern gospel, but not according to the ancient gospel of Jesus Christ, the everlasting gospel which says that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

But some one may ask, "Is there no efficacy, for actual sin, in the atonement wrought out of Jesus Christ? Is there no method by which people can obtain a forgiveness of their individual sins?" Yes, there is a way, and that is the plan of the true gospel, but it does not consist in mere belief in the righteousness of another; mere belief in the righteousness of somebody else will not make us any better ourselves. What is to be done then? Here the gospel is very plain and simple, when pointed out by one who understands it. But "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" It is men who are not sent who preach the nonsense we hear in the world. It is men who are not sent who deceive mankind with their strong delusions, and then turn round and call the Latter-day Saints deluded. If they were sent of God they would not preach such nonsense, they would not deceive mankind and thus become the cause of so much sin and evil in the world. For while people believe that at the last moment, at the last gasp of their existence, they may cast their souls on Jesus, and by believing in his virtue escape the penalty of their sins, they will continue to sin on, like many of these false teachers who revel in sin up to their very eyes, and will die in their sins and go down into the pit where they must wait until they are released, in the time and way of the Lord. The doctrine of belief without works is a strong delusion. There is more to do, according to the gospel, than merely to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary. That is the foundation, it is the root of the matter, but it is not all the matter. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Why? Because if you have true faith in Christ, if you really believe on him, you will believe in his sayings and keep his commandments. Hear him: "If ye love me, keep my com-

mandments." "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one 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 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."

When Jesus Christ sent his Apostles unto all the world after he had risen from the dead, he commended them to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." They were to go out and preach to all the world, baptizing those that believed, and then proceed to teach all things whatsoever he had commanded them. Christ taught his disciples many principles while he tarried with them in the flesh, and after he had risen from the dead he continued his instructions from time to time. He also told them that when he went away the Comforter should come to reveal unto them the things of the Father and the Son, and to guide them unto all truth; for it is only by receiving truth and living it that people can be saved and exalted. "Sanctify them through thy truth," prayed the Savior, "thy word is truth." The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was to come, therefore, to make plain the truth, and to reveal things past, present, and to come. It is necessary, however, to have faith in Christ. Why? Because every blessing that flows to the inhabitants of the earth from God the Eternal Father comes through Jesus Christ. We must first of all believe in God, then believe in Jesus Christ, and if we really do believe in God and in Jesus Christ we will find out in ourselves that we have broken the commandments of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ, and the desire will enter our hearts to turn away from sin. Thus it is said "whosoever heareth these sayings, and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." It is taught by some that repentance is the first principle of religion, but, if a man does not believe in God, will he pray unto him? What has a man to repent of except the breaking of the commandments of God? and how shall he feel anything to repent of if he does not believe in God? It is necessary therefore to have faith first and then comes repentance, a determination to forsake evil, and this is what the ancient Apostles taught.

What next? We find that wherever the Apostles went, whenever they found a people who believed in Jesus and repented of their sins they baptized them. By sprinkling a little water in their face, or by making the sign of the cross upon their foreheads? No. They were taken down into the water and buried there in the likeness of Christ's death and burial and raised up in the likeness of his resurrection, that henceforth, having "put off the old man with his deeds," they might walk in newness of life, observe his laws and keep his commandments, and follow his footsteps, for he "left us an example, that we should follow in his steps." Then the Apostles laid their hands upon those that were baptized, and we read that they received the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the spirit of truth, which opened up a communication between each individual soul and the fountain of light and eternal truth, which testified that they had been washed clean from their sins. How washed? By water? Yes, and no. Water does not wash away sin, but if people desire remission of their actual sins they must be baptized. Thus it must be, "to fulfil all righteousness." Even Christ himself had to be baptized to fulfil that commandment, and if he had not obeyed it there would have been no manifestation of the Holy Ghost resting upon him in the sign of atonement, and a voice from heaven declaring "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Christ left us this example, and his Apostles followed in his footsteps, baptizing according to the commandment for the remission of sins. John the Baptist also taught this same doc-

trine when he went out to preach in Judea, and when the people came to him confessing their sins he baptized them in Jordan for the remission of sins. "I indeed baptize you," says John, "with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Baptism for the remission of sins! "Why," says one, "I thought the blood of Christ redeemed us from our sins." And so it does. Water itself will not wash away guilt. If a person has no faith in Christ, and has not repented of his sins, baptism will be of no avail. But baptism properly administered by one who has a right to administer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, will avail. The person to be baptized must go down into the water and therein be buried for a remission of sins, having repented, and having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in his atoning blood, for the blood of Christ was shed "for the sins of the whole world." But the "whole world" will not receive the benefit of the atonement unless they comply with the conditions laid down, namely faith, repentance, and baptism. They who do not receive this ordinance cannot enter into the presence of the Father, for "except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So said Jesus. This is a little different from the teachings of modern divines, is it not? Yes, but it is according to the teachings of Christ and his Apostles.

Now, then, in regard to the administration of this ordinance. Men must have a right to administer before they do anything in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. I ask who has that right? There are a great many ministers standing up in the various chapels and churches to-day administering in the name of this holy trinity. You can see men in the Christian world stand up, before a congregation and sprinkle a little water upon an unconscious babe, and call it baptism, and actually do it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Who sent them? Who told them to do this sprinkling? Did God the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost? No. Did any person to whom God has spoken, having authority from God to ordain, appoint them to that office? No. Why? Because for hundreds of years communication with the eternal world has been shut off, inasmuch as the people who profess the Christian religion have not even believed in the doctrine of present communication with God. They have been contented with the old revelations contained in the book we call the Bible, which only contains a few of the things that God revealed hundreds of years ago. They do not believe in having communication with the heavens. How did they get this authority, then? When did a man ever get authority from God to sprinkle and call it baptism, or to baptize an infant in any form? It is not to be found in the Bible. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," so Christ said. And you will find that wherever the apostles went, faith was the first principle they taught. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," said Philip to the eunuch who sought to be baptized. Baptism without faith and repentance is valueless, it is void; and baptism administered by one who has not the right to attend to that ordinance in the name of the holy trinity is also void. Supposing men were to come to us with as groundless claims in temporal things as they do in spiritual. Supposing a man came from Germany to this country and professed to be a minister from the German court. We would ask to see his credentials, and if he had been sent as an ambassador for that people, he would be able to show his authority. Supposing all that he had to prove his right to represent the German Empire was, he felt called in his heart to do so. We should consider him a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. But there are men administering in these sacred things (administering in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost), ordinances to which God never appointed them, for they say there is no communication between them and God, nor has there been among the inhabitants of the earth for hundreds and hundreds of years. They say the canon of scripture is full; God talks no more with the inhabitants of the earth. Where, then, do they get the right to administer in the name of the Lord? I tell you as sure as they do this the