

THE DESERET NEWS.

Truth and Liberty.

VOL. V.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1856.

NO. 43.

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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

SEPTEMBER, 1842.

Sept.—Tuesday, 6.—I wrote as follows:—

"Nauvoo, September 6, 1842.

To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sendeth Greeting:—

As I stated to you in my letter before I left my place, that I would write to you from time to time, and give you information in relation to many subjects; I now resume the subject of the baptism for the dead, as that subject seems to occupy my mind, and press itself upon my feelings the strongest, since I have been pursued by my enemies.

I wrote a few words of revelation to you concerning a recorder. I have had a few additional views in relation to this matter, which I now certify. That is, it was declared in my former letter that there should be a recorder who should be eye witness, and also to hear with his ears, that he might make a record of a truth, before the Lord.

Now in relation to this matter, it would be very difficult for one recorder to be present at all times, and to do all the business. To obviate this difficulty, there can be a recorder appointed in each ward of the city, who is well qualified for taking accurate minutes; and let him be very particular and precise in taking the whole proceedings: certifying in his record that he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears; giving the date, and names, &c., and the history of the whole transaction; naming also, some three individuals that are present, if there be any present, who can at any time when called upon, certify to the same, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Then let there be a general recorder, to whom these other records can be handed, being attended with certificates over their own signatures; certifying that the record which they have made, is true. Then the general Church Recorder can enter the record on the general Church Book, with the certificates and all the attending witnesses, with his own statement that he verily believes the above statement and records to be true, from his knowledge of the general character and appointment of those men by the church. And when this is done on the general Church Book, the record shall be just as holy, and shall answer the ordinance just the same as if he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears, and made a record of the same on the general Church Book.

You may think this order of things to be very particular, but let me tell you that they are only to answer the will of God, by conforming to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead, who should die without a knowledge of the Gospel.

And, further, I want you to remember that John the Revelator was contemplating this very subject in relation to the dead, when he declared, as you will find recorded in Revelations, xx, 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

You will discover in this quotation, that the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; but the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; consequently the books spoken of must be the books which contained the record of their works; and refer to the records which are kept on the earth. And the book which was the book of life, is the record which is kept in heaven; the principle agreeing precisely with the doctrine which is commanded you in the revelation contained in the letter which I wrote to you previous to my leaving my place, that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven."

Now the nature of this ordinance consists in the power of the priesthood, by the revelation of Jesus Christ; wherein it is granted, that whatsoever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Or in other words, taking a different view of the translation, whatsoever you record on earth, shall be recorded in heaven, and whatsoever you do not record on earth, shall not be recorded in heaven; for out of the books shall your dead be judged, according to their works, whether they themselves have attended to the ordinances in their own propria persona, or by the means of their own agents, according to the ordinance which God has prepared for their salvation from before the foundation of the world, according to the records which they have kept concerning their dead.

It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of. A power that records, or binds on earth, and binds in heaven: nevertheless, in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation of the priesthood to any man by actual revelation, or any set of men, this power has always been given. Hence, whatsoever those men did in authority, in the name of the Lord, and did it truly and faithfully, and kept a proper and faithful record of the same, it became a law

on earth and in heaven, and could not be amended, according to the decrees of the great Jehovah. This is a faithful saying! Who can hear it?

And again, for a precedent, Matthew xvi, 18, 19. "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the summum bonum of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the power of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given, there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.

Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life. The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other. To be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead, in coming forth out of their graves; hence; this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead.

Consequently the baptismal font was instituted as a simile of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another; that which is earthly, conforming to that which is heavenly, as Paul hath declared, 1 Corinthians xv, 46, 47, and 48.

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord, from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And as are the records on the earth in relation to your dead, which are truly made out; so also are the records in heaven. This therefore is the sealing and binding power, and in one sense of the word the keys of the kingdom, which consists in the key of knowledge.

And now my dearly and beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles, in relation to the dead and the living, that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers, "that they without us cannot be made perfect;" neither can we without our dead be made perfect.

And now in relation to the baptism for the dead, I will give you another quotation of Paul, 1 Corinthians xv, 29. "Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead if the dead rise not at all; why are they then baptized for the dead?"

And again, in connexion with this quotation, I will give you a quotation from one of the prophets, who had his eye fixed on the restoration of the priesthood, the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an especial manner this most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, viz. the baptism for the dead, for Malachi says, last chapter, verses 5th and 6th, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

I might have rendered a plainer translation to this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purpose as it stands. It is sufficient to know in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link of some kind or other, between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other, and behold, what is the subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they or us be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fullness of times; which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete, and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed, from the days of Adam even to the present time; and not only this, but those things which have never been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this the dispensation of the fullness of times.

Now what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? "A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven, and a voice of truth out of the earth, glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy; how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things: and that say unto Zion, behold! thy God reigneth. As the dews of Carmel, so shall the knowledge of God descend upon them."

And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven,

declaring the fulfillment of the prophets—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca county, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book. The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light. The voice of Peter, James, and John, in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fullness of times.

And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places, through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And the voice of Michael the archangel, the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael, or Adam, down to the present time, all declaring each one their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little—giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope.

Brethren shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! let your hearts rejoice, and be exceeding glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prisons; for the prisoners shall go free.

Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your eternal King. And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills flow down with gladness. Let the woods, and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy. And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy. And let the eternal creations declare his name for ever and ever. And again, I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life, kingdoms, principalities, and powers.

Behold the great day of the Lord is at hand, and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth, for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us therefore as a church and a people, and as Latter Day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and let us present in his holy Temple when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation.

Brethren I have many things to say to you on the subject; but shall now close for the present, and continue the subject another time.

I am, as ever, your humble servant, and never deviating friend,

JOSEPH SMITH.

The important instructions contained in the foregoing letter made a deep and solemn impression on the minds of the saints, and they manifested their intentions to obey the instructions to the letter.

In the evening William Clayton and Bishop Whitney called to see me concerning a settlement with Edward Hunter. Also Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Amasa Lyman, called to counsel concerning their mission to the branches and people abroad.

The Newfoundland Dog's Vengeance.

The American brig Cecilia, Captain Symmes, on one of her voyages from New York to Rio Janeiro, had on board a splendid specimen of the Newfoundland breed named Napoleon. He was owned by a seaman named Lancaster, who was naturally extremely fond of him. Captain Symmes, however, was not partial to animals of any kind, and had an unaccountable repugnance to a dog; so much so, indeed, as if all his ancestors had died of hydrophobia, and he dreaded to be bitten like his unfortunate predecessors. This dislike he one day developed in the most unfeeling manner, for as Napoleon had several times entered his state-room, and by wagging his great banner of a tail knocked paper and ink off his desk, on the next occasion the captain seized a knife, and cut half the poor animal's tail off.

The dog's yell brought his master to the spot, and seeing the cruel cause and the author of it, he, without a moment's hesitation, felled Captain Symmes to the cabin floor with a blow from his sledge-hammer fist.

The result was that Lancaster was put in irons, from which however, he was soon released. Captain S. partly repented the cruel deed on learning that Napoleon had once saved the owner's life.

The white shark, as all my friends are well aware, is one of the very largest of the species. It averages over twenty feet, and I have seen it thirty-seven and a half feet in length. It is the fiercest and most formidable of all sharks.

But a few days elapsed after the catastrophe of poor Napoleon, ere he became the hero of a most thrilling occurrence. During the interval the noble beast was not at all backward in exhibiting his

wrath at the captain by low growls when he approached. In vain did his master, fearful for the life of his dog, essay to check these signs of anger. Captain Symmes, however, offered the noble dog no further harm.

One morning, as the captain was standing on the bowsprit, he lost his footing, and fell overboard, the Cecilia then running about ten knots an hour.

"Man over-board! Captain Symmes over-board!" was the cry, and all rushed to get out the boat as they saw the swimmer striking out for the brig, which was at once rounded to, and as they felt especially apprehensive on account of the white sharks in those waters, they regarded his situation with solicitude. By the time the boat touched the water, their worst fears were realized, for at some distance beyond the swimmer, they beheld advancing upon him, one of the dreaded monsters—a white shark.

"Hurry! hurry, men, or we shall be too late!" exclaimed the mate. What's that?

The splash that occasioned this inquiry, was caused by the plunge of Napoleon into the sea. The noble animal had been watching the cause of the tumult from the bow of the vessel—he had noticed the captain's fall and the shout, and for a few moments had vented his feelings in deep growls as if conscious of the peril of his late enemy, and gratified at it. His growls, however, were soon changed into those whines of sympathy which so often show the attachment of dog to man, when the latter is in danger. At last he plunged in, and rapidly making his way to the now nearly exhausted captain, who aware of his double danger, and being but a poor swimmer, made fainter and fainter strokes, while his adversary closed rapidly upon him.

"Pull, boys, for dear life," was the shout of the mate, as the boat now followed the dog, whose huge limbs propelled him gallantly to the rescue.

Slowly the fatigued swimmer made his way, while frequently his head sank in the waves, and behind him the back of the voracious animal told what fearful progress he was making, while Lancaster, in the bow of the boat, stood with a knife in his upraised hand, watching alternately the captain and his pursuer, and the faithful animal who had saved his own life.

"Great God! what a swimmer!" exclaimed the men who marked the speed of the splendid animal. "The shark will have one or both, if we don't do our best."

The scene was of short duration. Ere the boat could overtake the dog, the enormous shark had arrived within three oars' length of the captain, and suddenly turned over on his back, preparatory to darting on the sinking man, and receiving him within his extended jaws.

The wild shriek of the captain announced that the crises had come. But now Napoleon who seemed inspired with increased strength, had also arrived, and with a fierce howl leaped upon the gleaming belly of the shark, and buried his teeth in the monster's flesh while the boat swiftly neared them.

"Saved! if we are half as smart as that dog is!" cried the mate, as all saw the voracious monster huddling in the sea, and smarting with pain, turn over again—the dog retaining his hold and becoming submerged in the water.

At this juncture the boat arrived, and Lancaster, his knife in his teeth, plunged into the water where the captain also had sunk from view.

But a few moments elapsed ere the dog rose to the surface, and soon after, Lancaster with the insensible form of the captain.

"Pull them in and give me an oar," cried the mate, "for that fellow is preparing for another attack."

His orders were obeyed, and the marine monster was foiled by the mate's splashing water in his eye, as he came up again, and but a few seconds too late to snap off the captain's legs, while his body was drawn into the boat.

Foiled a second time, the shark passed the boat, plunged, and was seen no more, but left a trace of blood on the surface of the water, a sure token of the severity of his wounds from Napoleon.

The boat was now pulling towards the brig, and not many minutes elapsed before the captain was on deck again, feeble from his efforts, but able to appreciate the services of our canine hero.

"I would give a thousand dollars," he exclaimed, as he patted the Newfoundland who stood by his side, "if I could only repair the injury I have done to this noble fellow. Lancaster, you are now fully avenged, and so is he, and a most Christian vengeance it is, though it will be a source of grief to me as long as I live!"

HEARING PRAYERS THROUGH A CRACK.—The following from the Bangor Journal well illustrates the quality of some peoples' piety:

Recently a girl came from the country to this city to work in a family that worships in one of the tall steeped churches. At morning prayers, the door of the room in which the family reading of the Bible and prayers were had, communicating with the kitchen, was opened about two inches in order that she might have the privilege of hearing. She shut the door. It was again opened in the same manner, when it was again indignantly shut. The next morning the girl requested leave to return home, as she was not accustomed to hearing prayers through a crack, and she did not care to become so. This little story has its moral.