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Universal Salvation.

ARE MEN PAWNS?

WERE men pawns in a great game, it might be thinkable that the Lord would crush some and lift up others as they move over the chessboard of life. But, men are not pawns; they are the very children of God, begotten in the spirit world. The eternal plan of the Lord, the Gospel, is to save and exalt all of His children, from the first to the last man. Any other view is of a merciless, cold divinity, presenting an insurmountable handicap in life's efforts. True religion is marked by the doctrine that salvation, that is, unending happiness and joy, is within the reach of all men and will be measurably reached by all. The Gospel offers eternal hope to every soul, in spite of weakness and failure and folly. The Lord has said, "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." Salvation is absolutely universal.

WHAT IS DAMNATION?

If all men may be saved, what is the meaning of damnation, a scriptural word of terror throughout the centuries? In the light of true knowledge the simple answer lays low one of the gross errors of man-made religions.

Faith alone does not save; works must be added. Faith and works together build the road to salvation, on earth and in heaven. So speaks truth.

In the day of our judgment, whether before men or God, our faith, our intent, will not reward or punish, but our works, our active faith will determine the judgment pronounced upon us. Faith, translated into works, becomes the eternal measure of man's worthiness.

If our works are poor, the reward will be small; if our works are good, the reward will be great. While all will be saved, some will receive a higher glory than others. That is the higher justice, alone worthy of a heavenly intelligence.

Punishment is the effect of evil deeds, as reward is the effect of good deeds. Cause and effect operate in the spiritual as the material domain. The punishment inflicted upon those who

have done evil is damnation ; but its nature we do not know. It is often written everlasting punishment. That is, punishment by Him who is everlasting. Damnation at its worst is the fair and just punishment meted out by our loving, merciful Father to His wayward children. It is not everlasting torture of unspeakable pain. Over this truth, truant Christianity has stumbled and fallen these many centuries. It is high time to redefine in common sense the word damnation.

THE UNBELIEVING DEAD.

Many men have defied truth and passed into death without faith or good works. They, also, must receive judgment. What will happen to them ?

There is ready answer in the words of truth. Man takes with him into the spirit world his personality and all the essential marks of manhood—such as the ability of understanding and the power to choose between offerings placed before him. Life on that “other side,” in all its relationships, is much like life on earth.

In the world after death, man may increase in knowledge if he so desires, the sinner may repent, the wise man may progress, as upon earth. No one stands still on the other side of the grave, for life, which is present there as here, compels progression or retrogression.

The sinner may learn after death the truth of the Gospel, and tame his wayward will ; he may repent and be forgiven. Thus, the sinner, after death, may move towards salvation. Time is long. Who may conjecture the changing of the hard heart throughout the ages ? So runs the plan of our loving Father.

THOSE WHO DIED IN DARKNESS.

What is the fate of those who lived without hearing truth, the Gospel plan, who therefore could not accept or reject its ordinances ?

They will have the opportunity to hear the truth in that real, spiritual world which they have entered, and, if of righteous, willing desire, will accept the proffered truth ; or, if unwilling, will turn their backs on truth—as they might have done on earth. There is no compulsion in the kingdom of God. Man remains a free agent throughout eternity.

They who did not hear the truth on earth, but accept it and use it in the hereafter, will receive the blessings of the Gospel. The scales of eternal justice do not falter with respect to time or place or person.

UNBAPTIZED INFANTS.

What of infants, baptized or unbaptized, who die before they can comprehend truth? Infants should not be baptized, for baptism is the symbol of a covenant with God which can not be entered into by one who has not reached years of accountability.

Such infants, coming clean from the presence of God, entering a mortal body, but having no chance to exercise their free agency and accountability, return to the Father, clean, pure and sinless. They will be judged as those who committed no sin on earth.

Truth condemns, without reserve, the hellish doctrine, born of an unholy zeal, that unbaptized infants go into an eternity of burning horrors. Such judgment would be unworthy of an earthly father, more so of a divine Father.

THE PORTALS OF HEAVEN.

The Lord Jesus said, "Except ye repent and are baptized, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of God." Entrance into the promised place of the Lord, requires of all that certain requirements be accepted. These first requirements are three: Faith in God and His plan; Repentance, or the turning away from evil and the use of truth; Baptism, or a covenant to obey the law of the Lord by the symbol of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These requirements are not suspended for the dead. Salvation in the spiritual world requires faith and repentance. Only those whose souls are turned toward truth and away from error in their beliefs and works can expect the blessings of the Lord.

Water is of the earth—then how can the unbaptized dead, who acquire faith and practice repentance be baptized? Simple enough. Those on earth may be baptized for the dead, and when the vicarious act is accepted by those who have passed beyond, it becomes effective for them. It is as if they had been baptized. The law has been complied with. By such means all who belong to earth, living or dead, can yield obedience to the same law. Through the long centuries, the loss of this doctrine, belonging to the Church of Christ, has led men into grievous errors and horrible doctrines.

VICARIOUS SERVICE.

There is nothing new in the doctrine of vicarious service. Jesus Christ suffered and died for all mankind, that all men might live fully, after death. But the abundant life that He promised comes to those only who accept His mission and ordinances. In like manner faithful men and women may be baptized for their dead, and so make possible the completion of the law for our departed ones.

It is an enthralling prospect! To serve our ancestors, so that they may win all that the plan of the Lord offers the children of men.

Such vicarious work can be done only in sacred places, temples dedicated for such purposes. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has several such temples in which vicarious work for the dead is being done.

Such sacred temple work is performed with validity, only under full and secure divine authority. Men can not take upon themselves the right to perform ordinances extending into eternity. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has had the necessary authority conferred upon it. The work done in its temples is authoritative, and bridges the gap between time and eternity.

So may mortal men win the keen joy of being "Saviours on Mount Zion" for their loved ones. And so may all who have lived on earth come under the one law of the Lord.

THE FINISHED WORK.

When all, living and dead, shall have been taught the Gospel, when all have had the door of baptism and the other necessary requirements opened before them, the work for which the earth was created, may approach completion.

Salvation, eternal happiness, is intended for all. Not all will receive a fullness of it, for their wills have led them into forbidden places; but all will be judged according to their works, and the meanest sinner will be given a glory greater than he could expect.

Under such a doctrine, hell vanishes, and its equivalent will be the genuine sorrow of being, because of evil works, in a lower glory than was possible of attainment. Contrition and sorrow are the elements of hell, and they may be ameliorated, though not banished, by the forgiving goodness of our Father in Heaven.

The many philosophies of men fade before eternal light of such a doctrine. Such eternal hope, such universal love, thrill the human soul with their infinite possibilities.

Are you acquainted with the system of truth, known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in which these and other equally inspiring doctrines are found?

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