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Truth Restored: A Modern Miracle!

THE EXTINCTION OF CHANCE.

MODERN man has become convinced as he has unravelled the mysteries of nature that intelligence and purpose rule the universe. No longer do thoughtful men deny the existence of a God. There is a new assurance that all things have come through and are directed by a high, a divine Power, and that man is upon earth in obedience to a plan, devised for human good, by this beneficent Power whom we call God. Chance is ruled out of life; law is replacing it. The Goliath of chaos has been laid low by the David of order.

This doctrine has been confirmed by an event, here to be told, the most remarkable and breath-taking within the last one hundred years.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHOICE.

The plan of life, ordained by the Lord, is for the good, the complete good of man. Why then are sorrow, suffering, poverty and bloodshed in the world? Because, within every man, as the very mark of his manhood, is the inviolable right of choice, of free agency. We are not compelled to obey law. We may stand in the way of destruction, a moving train, if we so choose. The long and sometimes unlovely history of mankind is chiefly a record of obedience or disobedience to law. Obedience has always led to progress; disobedience to retrogression. Consider the prodigious changes for human good during the last three centuries, since man began to search out and obey the laws of material nature. A new world of joy and comfort has been born. An even more notable progress in human welfare might be made if spiritual law were sought and obtained, for truths of the spirit rule earthly things.

TRUTH REJECTED.

The plan for man's life was formulated by the Lord. It was taught to man at the beginning of human history. Full justice could not do otherwise. In its various divisions, the plan provided for every need of man, bodily, mental and spiritual. Obedience to it would bring about perfect joy, which is full progress within human limitations. A divine instrument could produce no other effect. "Man is that he might have joy."

Man's free agency was left untouched. It must never be molested, else man becomes a slave. Soon, foolish man began to use this right of choice by disobeying the laws of the Lord's purposeful plan; temporary pleasures seemed more desirable than permanent joy. He drifted farther and farther from obedience to divine law. He apostatized from truth or a fullness of it. He retained only that which pleased his fancy; and as the memory of the full law waned and became dim, he substituted his own man-made, lifeless law for the vigorous, life-giving plan of the Lord. Against such unwisdom, such disregard for law, the prophets and lovers of mankind have spoken these many centuries.

TRUTH RESTORED.

The watchful eye of the Lord has ever been and is upon the children of men, else there is no God. Our divine Father tries to lead His children back, in spite of their stubborn wills, into the happy places of truth. Whenever, therefore, mankind has drifted away from truth, from the plan of life, into idolatry or untruth, the Lord has restored, through chosen spokesmen, a part, or the fullness, of the eternal truth that will yield man the joy, which, whether on earth or in the hereafter, constitutes salvation. The great teachers of righteousness have been inspired by the Lord.

The full plan of life and salvation encompasses all truth; and is in the earthly keeping of an organization known as the Church of Christ, which may be recognized by the possession of divine authority, the official right to act for the Lord on earth. When such authority is lost from the earth, as has occurred several times, special methods for the restoration of authority and the Church have been required.

A BOY'S DILEMMA.

All the above and more came to the surface more than a century ago in the wonder-provoking experience of a farmer's lad in the western part of the state of New York, by name, Joseph Smith. He was a few months beyond his fourteenth year. The whole neighbourhood was filled with religious revivalism. Several churches were bidding loudly for members. They were not always polite when speaking of one another. Each one possessed a principle or two of the divine plan; none possessed all. Most of their doctrine was man-made invention, and their churches of man's organization. None was the very Church of Christ.

These contending, jangling, warring, shouting churches, bade the boy, Joseph Smith, join them. Some members of his family had joined one church, others had joined another. The boy was perplexed. He loved truth, and would be content with nothing else. He recognized that spiritual truth from which all other truth is derived is of greatest importance. His youth and inexperience made it doubly difficult for him to decide which of all the factions possessed the full truth, including divine authority. What should he do?

In this dilemma he turned to the Author of Truth. He sought a quiet place in a grove of trees not far from his home. There he pleaded with the Lord upon his bended knees for the necessary light.

The result of that prayer was greater than expected.

THE VISION OF THE CENTURY.

Doubts and misgivings, emissaries of evil, distressed him to the point of defeat, as he thus sought the Lord. Every faith-destroying question was whispered into his ear. Is there a God? Can He speak to man? Does He concern Himself with small, human needs? It was the age-old battle between truth and untruth. The boy used his will for good, and evil was banished. In clear words, in the lonely, lovely grove, he spoke his need, with full assurance that the Lord who created earth and man would hear and somehow answer him.

The grove became exceedingly light; though the sun was high. The brightness was above anything he had ever known. He looked up. Before him stood two glorious personages, the appearance of whom, in his own words, defied description. One of them, pointing to the other, said, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." It seemed inconceivable to the boy that he was looking upon the Father and the Son, that the Lord had come to visit and instruct him.

Yet, why should he have been surprised? Cannot the Lord move or speak? Has He no will? The modern world is weary of a God whose main concern is about the mandates of professional preachers, who teach for hire. It was a revelation comporting with the great period of enlightenment then beginning in the world.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CENTURY.

The Son, being thus bidden by the Father, spoke to the kneeling, but peaceful boy. The story of the plan of life was outlined, as it had been done in earlier ages, even by Jesus Christ Himself, during His ministry on earth. The boy was told that all the churches were wrong; they had corrupted the doctrine, they had broken the ordinances, and had lost the authority of the Priesthood of the Lord; the leaders of the man-made churches were displeasing to the Lord, because they made a money-making business of that which should be given freely. He was also told that the time of the restoration of all truth and authority had come, including the organization of the Church. And he was further informed, to his infinite astonishment, that he, Joseph Smith, humble, unlearned, young, was to be the instrument through whom the Almighty would re-establish His work in these, the latter-days, a work never to be thrown down again.

A chastened, humble, but gloriously satisfied boy went to his home that day.

Such is the first paragraph of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Every part of it, every pronouncement, is defensible by the Holy Scriptures, by the profane knowledge and the natural reason of man.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Some three years later, when maturity was beginning, Joseph Smith had another heavenly visitation, this time from an angel called Moroni. This messenger revealed to the young man the resting place of a set of golden plates upon which certain ancient inhabitants of America had recorded the history of their peoples. In course of time, this book was translated by "the gift and power of God," and published in 1830. The Book of Mormon is one of the remarkable books of the world from the historical, doctrinal or philosophic point of view. Its integrity has been assailed with senseless fury, for a century, yet its position is to-day more impregnable than ever.

AUTHORITY RESTORED.

While the translation of the Book of Mormon was under way, Joseph Smith and his faithful companion, Oliver Cowdery, were visited by various heavenly messengers with important commissions pertaining to the great work to be instituted. John the Baptist conferred upon them the lesser Priesthood, and the ancient apostles, Peter, James and John conferred upon them the higher Priesthood, all to be conferred in turn upon every faithful man within the Church to be re-established. These acts gave the authority which always accompanies the fully organized, authoritative, Church of Christ. No step necessary in the re-establishment of the Church of Christ was omitted.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.

On April 6th, 1830, the Church of Christ was re-established, with doctrine, ordinances and authority identical with those of the Church established by the Christ when He dwelt on earth. Joseph Smith, now called to the prophetic office, received revelation after revelation, which banished the dark errors which had entered the Christian belief during long

ages without genuine priestly authority or direct voice from heaven. The true purpose and method of the Gospel, to make men joyful every day and to supply their every need, were again in the possession of mankind. Light poured into darkness and showed clearly the road to happiness, if man would but travel it. Thus came into existence the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

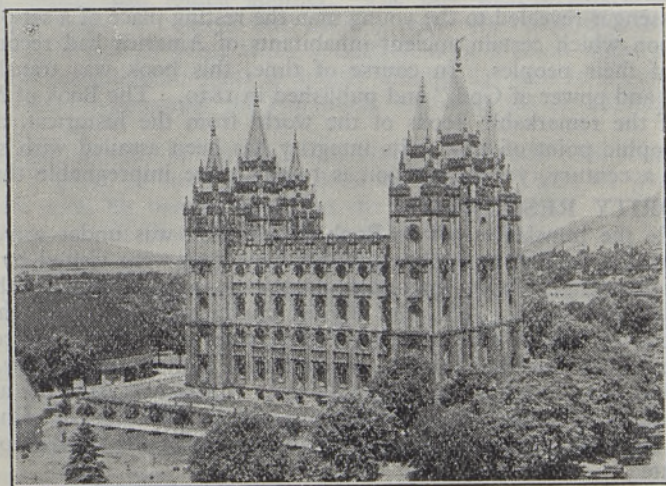
THE FRUITS OF RESTORATION.

It is a marvellous story. People who are hemmed in by part truth ask if such an origin of a Church can be believed. Why not? God who made the heavens and the earth can show Himself. That cannot be doubted. And He can show Himself to whomsoever He pleases. He certainly does not need man's permission to accomplish His purposes. That can not be gainsaid. Heavenly beings can be directed by their Master to whatever work is needed, else faith in the unseen world is false—and the evidence of an unseen world has never been greater than in our day.

The results of the activity of the Church in its century of existence is astonishing. A body of doctrine, clear, coherent and powerful for human good; an almost unequalled record of accomplishment in economic and social fields; a sane and everlasting spiritual fervour, unparalleled in the present world—these and other wonders have come out of the latter-day work. It is "a marvellous work and a wonder;" the greatest miracle of the nineteenth century.

The work thus established invites scrutiny; it bears investigation; it is growing rapidly; it holds the principles of life for which every nation is seeking.

Do you love truth enough to investigate, so that you may decide, intelligently, for yourself, upon the merits of "Mormon" claims?



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JOHN A. WIDTSOE,
Centennial Series No. 14.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
British Mission Office, 43 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.