

SUPPLEMENT.

INDEPENDENT PATRIOT,

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SERMON,

BY PRESIDENT JOSEPH SMITH, DELIVERED AT LAMONI, IOWA, DECEMBER 4TH, 1887.

At the close of Christ's ministry, so far as his earthly career was concerned, he left the disciples to carry out the work which he had begun. He told them to tarry at Jerusalem for a certain length of time, until they should be endowed with the spirit or power from on high. After they had received this spirit they went out, preaching wherever opportunity was afforded them, exposing themselves to a great deal of animadversion, and a great many things that were not pleasant, judging things according to the view men generally take of them. There was in power a denomination of religious people, whose priests were oppressed with the thought that these disciples were preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead, and they forbade them from thus teaching. But this did not deter them from still declaring through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

It will be remembered by you that there were two prominent sects at that time which differed widely with regard to this proposition. One sect believed in the pre-existence of spirits and a resurrection from the dead; and the other denied both of these propositions;

and doubtless it was this sect which was wont to say, that when the "Fathers fell asleep all things continued as they were." No apparent change took place in the affairs of men; no one came back from the far off regions to certify in regard to them; and that while they admitted that the Fathers may have had a portion of the Spirit and were led by it, there was no such light at that time to the children.

Christians, so called, believe in the resurrection of the dead, and we agree with them in also believing in the resurrection of the dead. How it will be brought to pass does not matter for the purposes of this morning's conversation; nor is it for the purpose of discoursing upon the resurrection that I notice this text, found I think somewhere in the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where it recites the fact that certain parties "were grieved, because the disciples preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead;" but the thought that I desire to present from this connection is this: If the resurrection is to be brought to pass at any time hereafter for the benefit of all men, or for any classes of men, and the authority and power by which it was to be accomplished had been already conferred, and the design had been conceived in the mind of the Almighty and Jesus the Christ sent upon the accom-

plishment of that design, it must be a pleasurable thought, it is to me I know, and I presume to all others who believe in the Scriptures and have a hope of the resurrection, that until that effect is wrought, the same divine being that has designed the accomplishment of it and sent ministers for the purpose of bringing it to pass, also moves upon all existent things not only to make possible, but to make certain the accomplishment of this design.

We were in conversation the other day in regard to whether or not there was such a cognizance of the affairs of humanity by the Almighty, that every individual person that lived upon the earth was known by name, and the time and period of his birth, and the circumstances and conditions controlling him, and all things which he engaged in and accomplished, were not only foreknown but predestinated. We cannot agree in the thought of absolute predestination, in the sense that every individual act and every individual person and all the circumstances and conditions surrounding every man, were foreknown to the Almighty, but predestinated to take place; but that it must be that divine knowledge takes cognizance of the affairs of humanity in a general sense. Yet there are some things that give us to understand that it must be that for the accomplishment of some specific purposes that not only the instrument by which they are to be accomplished but the circumstances that will favor the accomplishment of them must have been foreknown and predestinated by the Almighty. We have striking instances in the Old Scriptures that are

indicative of this; and the prophecies seem to be but a fore-shadowing of what was in the mind of the Almighty, and the events which have transpired in relation to them have been of such a character that the prophecies have been fulfilled. It is a much easier thing for us, at least your speaker thinks so, to defend the character of the Bible in our own time and way, than it was for these disciples who preached through Jesus the resurrection. Some of them were not well informed in regard to even the Jewish Scriptures. This cannot be said of Paul or Luke, but can be of some of them. But they had that peculiar kind of presentation, if we may use the word to signify an assurance, an evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, and that it had been predicted aforesaid by the influence of the spirit through holy men of God, that a work was to be accomplished by the influence and power with which this man was endowed. It is a pleasing thought to me this morning, to believe that that power is still at work; that it has not been withdrawn, but is still at work for the accomplishment of the grand design. As a consequence, it takes in not only the final fact of the resurrection, but it takes in all the field that lies between the conceived design and the final accomplishment of it. I comprehend that to-day we stand in what may be termed an intermediate condition—both in point of time and geographical position; and that no matter what men may think about the Almighty; no matter whether they confess there is such a being or not; no matter whether they believe in Jesus Christ or confess there ever

was such a being, the events which have transpired and are transpiring are of such a character within the line and circle of knowledge, that one need only to feel that assurance to plant himself as stood the apostle, and boldly say unto all men, "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that in the latter days he shall stand upon the earth, and I shall see him as he is." The presentation of the gospel economy is a part of that preparatory work; and the New Translation gives us to understand that him whom he did foreknow he did predestinate, and for the accomplishment of a specific design. The Apostle Paul, one of the most astute lawyers of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and doubtless one of the sharpest reasoners of the New Testament, does not fail to arrogate to himself that he was predestinated, yet he gives the disciples to whom he wrote to understand, that they were predestinated in that they were born into the gospel economy, and by this means put themselves into a position to enjoy this power of redemption.

Your speaker believes that all men will be resurrected for the purposes of judgment; and he differs somewhat from his brethren in this, that he believes there is not one that has ever lived upon the earth, or ever will live upon the earth, or that now lives upon the earth that will be permitted to escape the judgment. That all must go unto that judgment; but there will be some who will go to this judgment without either fear or dread, because there has been a divine interference on the part of Jesus Christ in their behalf; and that through this they not

only have the power of the resurrection, but the power of the first resurrection, and shall be permitted to live in the light, and shall not be condemned when they are brought to judgment. I have ever been fully persuaded to this thought; and it seems to me it is one of the strongest guarantees that the United States and the State of Iowa can have of the good citizenship of them that believe in this doctrine. Man was created but little lower than the angels; and in time the Infinite One revealed himself to him, that he might partake of the power of God, and feel the influence of his Spirit that moves upon creation. Thus opportunity is afforded them to prepare for the judgment to come; when they shall ultimately give account to the great judge, not only for everything which they may have done, but for every idle word they shall have spoken, and every idle thought that has been at work in their busy brain. The very thought of such accountability once thoroughly impressed upon an intelligent man, must be one of the strongest guarantees that men can ask that he will keep his feet in the way of life that he may finally meet with a glorious reception.

We often find many who do not understand our peculiar faith, while we comprehend the resurrection and living upon the earth if we have this spirit within as if we were as sure of that judgment taking place as if it had already come; and expect to stand before the great judge who has his eye upon us, and will exercise such divine care over us if we shall be within the line of his promises, that no power in earth and no power in hell, can prevent

us from receiving all that humanity can aspire unto. This seems to be one of the strongest guarantees that humanity can ask of them that profess Jesus Christ.

I find a class in this world who were grieved at this hope and it still grieves them. There are two classes, and it grieves one more than the other. This is what surprises me most. It would not surprise me much that a profession of faith in Jesus Christ should grieve the unbeliever; but for those to be grieved who profess to follow Jesus Christ, and to find fault with their co-believers, and be grieved because they do, is what surprises me. I have never been reconciled to it, and I do not think I ever will be.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

There is a class of religionists at the present time who are absolutely grieved because the Latter Day Saints preach through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Why? Because they preach that there is to be a resurrection before the final resurrection, and that in this resurrection the just, those who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be raised to reign with Christ upon the earth; they preach this through the power of Christ, and make the statement unto the world that they believe that it is only by a severe preparation of body and spirit that they shall be fitted to arise in that resurrection and receive that for which they are hoping, praying and laboring.

I remember some years ago hearing a

discussion upon the resurrection of the dead by a blind man named McComb. He preached the resurrection and held up clearly the terrors of the judgment day. I remember well the effect which it produced upon my mind. I said in my spirit if that is to be the line upon which men are to be invited to Jesus, I will never be scared into that church. I will never be frightened into obedience to him whom I recognize as all goodness. I can not bring myself to think that he has no other use for me than to throw me down the pavements of hell. I could not consent to serve such a God as that, and I would not consent to be directed by his so-called servants.

It just troubles that class of people that the Latter Day Saints preach the resurrection through Jesus. They are grieved also because we preach that every man, no matter where he may have been born, under what stars or in what climate, or under what circumstances, no matter what part of the heavens under which he has been compelled to stand, he shall receive a reward for the good he shall do in the world. Every man must necessarily receive the place which he deserves, and the reward which he merits. Those that shall do good to their follow-men, though they never worship God in Jesus Christ's name, I can not call wicked. I am glad the Bible does not call such men wicked.

But says some one, there is such a strange anomaly here. You preach the resurrection of some in particular. To be sure we do. We preach the power of the resurrection unto all men but especially unto them that believe.

Quite a wide difference. I believe in a general resurrection, and I might be content to wait for it, but if I do, I am not entitled to a single promise made to them that obey the commandments of God through Jesus Christ, not one. Only through that philosophy which Jesus brought, and which He authorized and commanded the apostles to go everywhere and preach, only by obedience to this am I given to understand that I will be made acceptable in the divine courts. When that commission is presented to me my responsibility begins, and just as soon as I shall forget that responsibility, or if I shall by any means disallow that responsibility, then my judgment begins. I must continue to be outside of the pale of mercy, so far as Christ is concerned, until that final judgment sits, at which my own deeds will be passed upon and rewarded. Says one, if I could believe that I do not think I would care about the preaching of Jesus Christ. Perhaps not. But if you served in the army you would a great deal rather your name appeared upon the roll showing that you had been attending to your duty as a soldier. There would be a reward for you then. But if you have not served in the army, your name is not enrolled there. There is not a man but what would rather have a pension than not. So we say in regard to Jesus Christ. There is not a man but what would rather have that glory and that reward which is to be given to him that obeys, which he that does not obey cannot receive. For that reason we preach Christ; for that reason we preach a resurrection through Jesus; for that reason we conceive that when this de-

sign was reached, God sent Jesus Christ, who took upon himself a body, and became fitted for the work he had to do, and gave a special power unto those who follow him by both precept and example, that in the flesh they might work out their salvation, and have at last the power of a better resurrection and of an endless life in glory. When we preach Jesus as the justifier of them that believe, we do not believe in preaching him as the justifier of them that believe not. When we preach Jesus as the power of the resurrection unto all men but especially of them that believe, we believe that this word especially conveys the thought that there is something better for them. The Apostle seemed to have this thought clearly before him when he said, "There is a crown laid up for me." I know of men in the world that I believe are just selfish enough to have stopped right there. But Paul did not do that. What a gentleman he was. The word gentleman means a man that is gentle. Paul was gentle because in his spirit he was gentle, and in the wide comprehension of that which he said, "And not only for me, but for all who shall love his appearing." Our lives are crossed by a kind of fear. Men are afraid that they might see an angel. Women are afraid that they might hear the voice of an angel. Afraid they might wake up and see an angel by their bedside. There are some young women who are afraid if they hear a noise, and will cover their heads. Why? I believe if we were prepared to understand the plan of salvation from the first to the last, it would not only be within the range of possibilities, but

within the reach of probabilities that there might be angels surrounding us and we might see them. I would like my children to be educated in the gospel work in such a way that they might not only be prepared in their thoughts and acts for life's duties and responsibilities, but so that they would not be alarmed if perchance a gentle voice should wake them from their sleep and they should behold an angel. I can remember the first one I ever saw. I was only a child then. I was not half as fearful then as I am now. I had hardly passed the line of accountability when I saw the first one. I never shall forget how it looked. It was the face of a child, a beautiful child. It did not speak to me; but as I looked upon its face there was that peculiar look of comprehension, of care and anxiety, that peculiar expression we call rapport, or as Bro. Crawford expressed it, the sense of apperception. He and I were having an argument, and I asked him how he knew a certain thing, and he said by the sixth sense, the sense of apperception. I believe that the gospel is preached that men may have this power by which they shall be secure from being deceived by the presentation of false doctrine. This is the peculiar province of the sense of apperception. I saw the face of this angel. I was not afraid. I was taught in Sunday School that it was practicable for angels to appear. Our Sunday School teacher many times presented to us this thought. I shall revere his memory as long as I live. Almon W. Babbitt. Many of you know him. At Sunday School there was a class of us boys of about 60 of about the same age.

I remember one day he was teaching us when the subject of Samuel came up, and he told us the whole story. It was a grand thought that we boys might see an angel that night. So peculiarly aroused were we, that since that time there has not seemed to be so much standing between us and the heavenly world. Another time he drew our attention to the thought that we must comport ourselves in such a way as to be worthy to receive the heavenly visitants. I believe in this as a part of the economy of the Son of God, that angels should keep watch on the world, and when circumstances require it they should stand by them that need help, and turn away the powers of evil, and throw around them such circumstances as will make possible the accomplishment of the work whereunto they are sent. Realizing to a certain extent this condition of things, last Sunday when I was preaching in a place where a great and strong prejudice has existed against this work, insomuch that one man arose and closed the doors through the influence of a man who has gone out from among us, I felt the blessing and protecting influence and the power by which men preach the resurrection through Jesus Christ. Away back in the times of the Apostles we read of their preaching Christ, and the Chief Priests and the captain of the temple came upon them for preaching Christ. There are people who want to forbid us from preaching Christ also. Now I hope you will pardon me for presenting this peculiar phase of it. When the army of the world surrounds us we must take things as they are and comport ourselves in accordance with

the conditions surrounding us. Some four or five years ago one of our brethren was brought before the people of this county for their suffrages, and one of the disqualifications urged against him was, that he was a Mormon, a Latter Day Saint, educated in the strange philosophy taught by this people, that disqualified him in the eyes of a good many people, notwithstanding he would make good Representative. This same class expect it to be improbable that this same class of men should vote together as one man at the polls. They are opposed to that, It is a credit to them to oppose the man because he is a Mormon; but a discredit to the Latter Day Saints who happen to vote together as one man. People who are careless and indifferent make this special plea against a man because he believes as I do, and seek to carry the impression that I have exercised, or somebody else has exercised an undue influence over this people to cause them to all vote as one man—you can contradict that if you please, I will not do it unless it is necessary. If you all vote as I tell you you will do better than you do in your religion; for you do not all do as I tell you in that. It is a part of the message we declare concerning the resurrection of the dead, that those who are to have part in the better resurrection of the dead, that those who are to be worthy of a nobler part in that resurrection, must make a special preparation therefor. How many of us are making preparation for that resurrection? I do not know how many are hoping for a condition of usefulness in that time and resurrection. I have not the least idea that my portion there will be

to make music, for they will have better material for quires than I am. They will have the faculty of music grandly developed. They may possibly put my pen into my hand, they may give me a position on the heavenly editorial staff; I do not know, but certainly I will be better fitted for that than for singing. I believe there will be conditions of usefulness; there will be something to do; men will be engaged in righteous undertakings, and it seems to me that we ought now to be preparing ourselves so that in that time we may be fitted to be useful unto the Master in whatever station he may see fit to place us. In order to do this, spiritual regeneration is required. These bodies must be brought into subjection to the spiritual law. I believe this work is to be accomplished by and through means designed and appointed of God, of which Jesus Christ is the supervising architect or power, if I may use the expression. He has a supervising influence and power by which this work is to be accomplished. Everything which shall be necessary to the accomplishment of it, will be prepared for those who are honestly engaged in the work. This statement comes to us almost every day from those who are brought into the fold by the preaching of the word. Barriers have been raised before them over which they could not see that they had power to conquer, and those barriers have been removed by the influences which have been at work. Down here in Missouri where Bro. H. C. Bronson has been at work, the arch-enemy, the adversary of souls set about to destroy the work. What is the result? Bro. Bronson has baptized five.

So he says, "Come again, Bro. Braden." Some people are a great deal more afraid of his Satanic Majesty than we are. I do not know but it is because we have seen him so often we have ceased to be afraid of him.

The conclusion of this whole matter so far as I am concerned is this: God has designed through Jesus Christ to accomplish this work. That he was amply qualified of God for laying down the conditions for the accomplishment of the work. He came down and taught the philosophy by which we might be prepared to work for the accomplishment of the great object had in view and finally be worthy to have part in the first resurrection. "Unto them that believed on him, gave he power to become the sons of God." If this is true, then if a man does not believe on him, he will not be given power to become a son of God, in that same sense. But to them that receive him and believe on him to them will be given power to become the sons of God. Christ had

the power of an endless life in himself and this has been made manifest unto us by his resurrection from the dead. And it shall be given to every one that believes on him, that he shall have the power of endless life; and when the time shall come that has been signified, those that have been laid in the grave shall come forth unto glory and power and immortality and shall finally enter into an endless life. I thank you for kindly listening to these scattered remarks. Give me credit for wanting to do some good anyway. Think about these things, and prepare yourselves for the good you are hoping for.

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