

P O L Y G A M Y :

WAS IT AN ORIGINAL TENET OF THE CHURCH

OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS?

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Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,

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CHAPTER I.

The above question I expect to examine in some of its bearings, and I know of no better way of testing the matter than by an appeal to the standard works of the church, viz: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Times and Seasons. From these I shall bring my testimonies, and show, if I can, the inconsistency of the attempt made by some, to foist the principle upon the church, as a God-given one, under the claim that it was taught by Joseph Smith, the martyr.

I shall not attempt to reason upon the correctness, or incorrectness of the principle, from the Old and New Testament scriptures; for the reason, that my brother, David H. Smith, has prepared an article which has been published in pamphlet form, confining himself principally to the evidences derived from those two works.

In order, properly to answer the question, it will be necessary for me to state what were, and are now, considered to be the original tenets of the church, as those tenets were taught in the days of its organization by the martyred prophet.

Those tenets will be found in the

enumeration of the following principles:

“We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”

“We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.”

“We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all men may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.”

“We believe those ordinances to consist of the following fundamental principles:

“FIRST.—Faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“SECOND.—Repentance.”

“THIRD.—Baptism, by immersion, for the remission of sin.”

“FOURTH.—Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

“FIFTH.—The Lord’s supper.”

“SIXTH.—Resurrection of the body. That the dead in Christ rise first; and that the rest of the dead will not live again until the thousand years are ended.”

“SEVENTH.—Eternal judgment; which provides that men shall be judged, rewarded, or punished, according to the degree of good or evil they shall have done.”

“We also believe that a man must be called of God, and ordained by the laying on of the hands of those who

are in authority, to entitle him to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."

"We believe in the same kind of organization that existed in the Primitive Church, (*i. e.*), apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists, &c."

"We believe that in the Bible is contained a record of the word of God so far as it is correctly translated. That the canon of scripture is not full; but that God by his Spirit will continue to reveal his word to man until the end of time."

"We believe in the powers and gifts of the everlasting gospel, viz: The gifts of faith, discerning of spirits, prophecy, revelation, visions, healings, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, wisdom, charity, brotherly love, &c."

"We believe that all men have a right to worship God after the dictates of their own conscience; so long as such worship does not infringe upon the rights of others, or conflict with the laws of the land, or country in which they may live."

"We believe that marriage is ordained of God unto man; that it is lawful for him to have one wife, and that he shall love *her* with all his heart, and cleave unto her and *none else*."

With this brief summary of original tenets; which I have gleaned from the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and other standard works of the church, I will proceed to the examination of the text books. I also state here to avoid comment, that "we believe in the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants." The first, as the record of the words of God to the people that once dwelt on this continent; also as a history of that people, and that therein is revealed the "fullness of the gospel." In the latter, is contained the revelations of God to this church. In these last items of faith we are sometimes called a deluded and deceived people; but the

testimony of the Spirit is so great, that we have established our faith and built our hopes of eternal salvation on their testimony. In connection with the Bible they are our foundation.

CHAPTER II.

There is one clause of my statement concerning our faith that will not meet the views of some who profess to be Latter Day Saints, for some hold to the idea, that men are, by the Constitution of the United States, granted the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, *irrespective of the laws of the land*. To such I say, that a careful perusal of par. 4, sec. 112, D. & C., (old edition 110), which reads;

"We believe that religion is instituted of God, and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others;"

Also par. 5, sec. 58, (old 18),

"Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land;"

May change their minds on that point. The one is the declared faith of the church; the other a direct command of God. As the Book of Mormon is the first mentioned testator we will first examine it. The first chapter of the Book of Jacob, par. 4, reads.

"And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in *wicked practices*; such as like unto David of old, desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son."

Here is one testimony, of much importance, showing that the plural wife system is condemned as a wicked practice. The enquiry may be made, who is it that is speaking in the above condemnation of the principle? We are informed that it was Jacob, brother to Nephi, and that he received his teachings in the temple, "and first obtained

his errand from the Lord;” his authority is therefore good, and he calls this thing a wicked practice. If it is a wicked practice, then it is not of God. Notwithstanding his declaration of this inspired writer’s disapproval of the practice of polygamy, much stress is laid upon the history written concerning David and Solomon in the holy scriptures. The following from the Book of Jacob, second chapter, par. 6, should set this matter forever at rest, in the mind of every man who reads it;

“And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a *grosser crime*, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you. But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For, behold, thus saith the Lord, this people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David and Solomon, his son. Behold, David and Solomon, truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me saith the Lord.”

However much we try to think they did no wrong, and seek to excuse them, the Lord himself here says the principle is an abomination in his sight. This alone should forever silence the tongue of the caviler on the subject of David and his son; for a “Thus saith the Lord,” through a legitimate channel, is the end of all controversy; for he “Doth not vary from that which he hath said.” Book of Covenants, sec. 2, par. 1, (old edition 17).

We will now make answer to the argument, “That the principle of polygamy was given to raise up a righteous seed.”

As we are informed by revelation that,

“God doth not walk in crooked paths; neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left; neither doth he vary from that which he hath said; therefore his paths are straight and his course is one eternal round.” Doc. & Cov. 2 : 1, (old edition sec. 30.)

We can easily ascertain whether the above argument holds good or not.

In the same Book of Jacob from

which we have been quoting, par. 6.

“Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph. Wherefore, I, the Lord, will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old, *i. e.*, (David and Solomon.) Wherefore my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none.”

In this pointed and direct command of God, with the instruction that this He did for the express purpose of raising up a righteous branch, we see God’s way; and it so coincides with the cases of Adam and Noah, and what is cited by the prophet Malachi, that we are bound to accept God’s way in preference to man’s wisdom. From the same paragraph;

“Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes. For if I will, saith the Lord of hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people: otherwise, they shall hearken unto these things.”

Ah! Now you have it says one who holds to the principle of polygamy, there the Lord says he will command his people to have more wives than one if he sees fit to raise a righteous seed, or else they should hearken to those things. He says no such thing. He *has* commanded his people, and tells them they must obey him or he would curse the land for their sake, and that command is that they should have but one wife in order to raise a righteous seed. The things mentioned that they should hearken unto, will be found in the continuance of the paragraph, for there the Lord declares that he has heard the cries of the fair daughters of his people, and he will not withhold judgment, and will visit them with a sore curse, even to destruction, if they repented not of their grosser crime of multiplying wives unto themselves. Here let me say, that the inspired writer, Jacob, makes a just distinction between the crimes of pride and the

oppression of the poor, and that of polygamy, and calls the latter the "grosser crime."

In the foregoing command, to have but one wife, we see an example, and a striking one too, of the manner of God's way of raising up a righteous seed.

In the seventh paragraph, same chapter, we read that God gave this same commandment to Lehi; consequently the sin of Lehi's posterity was the greater, because they were not ignorant of the will of God on this subject; also in the ninth paragraph, same chapter, we are told, that the Nephites had made themselves more filthy than the Lamanites, because they neglected the direct command of God, and the Lamanites did not forget it.

The Nephites became filthy through their disobedience in this respect, and were swept off the face of this beautiful land of promise, and their enemies possessed their inheritance. Will God visit this people with like judgment? His ways, or course, is one eternal round. If they repent not, he most assuredly will; he cannot deny himself.

These testimonies are not all that can be brought from the Book of Mormon. If any should desire more, let them carefully peruse the Book of Mosiah, seventh chapter; and also the history of the reign of Riplakish found in the Book of Ether, fourth chapter.

From the foregoing testimonies it will be seen that the principle of polygamy cannot be sustained as a tenet of the church from the Book of Mormon; but to the contrary it is positively prohibited and condemned by the Lord God himself.

CHAPTER III.

There is another clause in the articles of faith that some may not approve of, and say, it was not the original doctrine of the martyr before his death, *i. e.* That a man should "have *one* wife and love her with all his heart and cleave unto her and none else."

To those from whom I may differ on this point, I say, come with me to the revelations of God, given through Joseph the Seer, as recorded in the Book of Covenants; let them decide the matter. "Let God be true and every man a liar," sooner than destroy his testimony, or doubt his word. Sec. 42, par. 7; (old edition sec. 13.)

"*Thou shalt love thy wife* [observe, singular number] *with all thy heart*, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out."

I wish it understood, that the above quotation is made from a law promised the church by direct commandment, for the express purpose that the Elders might know how to act in doctrine, for the purification of the church and the redemption of Zion; and when we consider the matter in this light we cannot but conclude, that the prophet understood that revelation to have been given for a law to the church so long as it remained a church. If need be till the coming of our Savior. But, to make assurance doubly sure, in sec. 65, old; (49 new), par. 3, the Lord makes it still plainer for the benefit of his ministry. He there says,

"And again, I say unto you, that whose forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, [observe, singular number], and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made."

Here it is plainly stated how many wives would be lawful, and to exceed this number would be a gross infringement of God's direct commandment, "Thou shalt not have *SAVE* it be *ONE* wife;" and subject the transgressor to the decision of the law, which is, "if he repents not he shall be cast out." This revelation, also completely explodes the far-fetched theory of Adam's being a polygamist in the eternal worlds be-

fore he took up his abode on this earth, with one of his wives. For in the last clause, man's creation before the world was made, was one man for one woman, or more properly speaking one woman for one man. I see no use of farther argument in regard to this theory, for when God so plainly states the facts in the case, it sets the matter at rest with me.

There is one more testimony to be brought from the Book of Covenants; the article on marriage found in sec. 109, old edition; 111, new edition, par. 2. Observe the marriage covenant made by the parties being married;

"You both mutually agree to be each others companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others during your lives."

Again, paragraph 4;

"Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband."

"Ah my friends," says the polygamist, "there you see that the law provides that the woman should have BUT one husband, and leaves the man at liberty. He should have *one*, but it does not say he shall not have more." Let me finish the sentence as it reads, "Except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." According to this declaration, the only chance for a man to marry the second wife in keeping with this law, is after the death of his first one.

It is stated that Brigham Young said, in the New Tabernacle, in Salt Lake City, Utah, last conference, (1869), before the whole church, that Oliver Cowdery had that article on marriage put in the book directly contrary to Br. Joseph's express wishes, and so it has no business to be there and is not binding on us. I challenge the statement of Pres. Young, or any other, who may hold such an opinion. It has a right there and is binding on all the

the church who believe in the teachings of Joseph Smith the martyr. In the first place;

"At a general assembly of the church at Kirtland, August 17, 1835, the Book of Covenants was accepted as the rule of faith and practice."—Compendium, by F. D. Richards, page 224.

This statement is taken from the history of the church, by their own authorities. On page 939, *Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, the whole article on marriage is copied, with the following note of the editor also inserted, which is very significant testimony, considering who the editor was at that time, October 1st, 1842, Joseph Smith himself being editor. I copy, *verbatim*, the note; the certificates of some dozen of the influential men of the church at that time; and also, the certificates of nineteen of the first and most influential women of the church of that day. I do this for three reasons.

First.—To rebut the story of Brigham Young in the Tabernacle.

Second.—To prove the law to be valid and of full force in the Prophet's time.

Third.—To rebut some affidavits of some who have sworn that a different marriage ceremony was known and practiced as early as 1840.

The note of the editor (Joseph Smith) reads thus:

"We have given the above rule of marriage as the only one practiced in this church, to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's secret wife system is a matter of his own manufacture; and further, to disabuse the public ear, and show that the said Bennett and his misanthropic friend, Origen Bachelor, are perpetrating a foul and infamous slander upon an innocent people, and need but be known to be hated and despised."

In support of this position we present the following certificates.

"We the undersigned, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and residents of the City of Nauvoo, persons of families, do hereby certify and declare, that we know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this

certificate to show, that Dr. J. C. Bennett's secret wife system is a creature of his own make, as we know of no such society in this place, nor never did. S. Bennett, Geo. Miller, Alpheus Cutler, Reynolds Cahoon, Wilson Law, Wilford Woodruff, N. K. Whitney, Albert Petty, Elias Higbee, John Taylor, E. Robinson, Aaron Johnson."

I also give the following :

"We the undersigned, members of the Ladies' Relief Society, and married females, do certify and declare, that we know of no system of marriage being practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; and we give this certificate to the public, to show that J. C. Bennett's secret wife system is a disclosure of his own make. Emma Smith, President; Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counselor; Sarah M. Cleveland, Counselor; Eliza R. Snow, Secretary; Mary C. Miller, Lois Cutler, Thyra Cahoon, Ann Hunter, Jane Law, Sophia R. Marks, Polly Z. Johnson, Abigail Works, Catherine Petty, Sarah Higbee, Phebe Woodruff, Leonora Taylor, Sarah Hillman, Rosannah Marks, Angeline Robinson."

From the above testimonies I draw the conclusion, that some affidavits lately taken in Salt Lake City are false; and were made to deceive the people, and lead them further into disgrace and condemnation.

We also learn another fact from the above certificates and testimonies, viz: That in the brain of J. C. Bennett was conceived the idea, and in his practice was the principle first introduced into the church; and from this hellish egg was hatched the present degrading, debasing, and destructive polygamic system, known as "spiritual wifery," or the "celestial marriage," so called.

It is said that Joseph Smith, the martyr, received a revelation revealing the "celestial marriage" and instituting "plurality of wives." I have already examined the testimony of Joseph Smith, concerning the marriage ceremony; and he declares that he knew of no other system of marriage than the one quoted from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, on October 1st, 1842, those affidavits to the contrary, notwithstanding. In *Times and Seasons* vol. 5, page 423, I find the testimony

of both Hyrum and Joseph, in a notice given to the church and the public, February 1st, 1844.

"NOTICE.

"As we have lately been credibly informed that an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by the name of Hyrum Brown, has been preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the County of Lapeer, State of Michigan. This is to notify him, and the church in general, that he has been cut off from the church for his iniquity; and he is further notified to appear at the special conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges. Signed, Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith, presidents of said church."

But says one, "that was only a sham to blind the eyes of our enemies." Shame on the man, or set of men, who will thus wilfully charge the two best men of the nineteenth century, the two Prophets of the most high God, with publishing to the church and the public at large a lie, and signing their names to it.

"Oh! but it was done to save their lives." A very likely story, when those two men had faced death and the world for fourteen long years, preaching the word of God to a sin-cursed generation. No, no, it will not not do, you must meet the truth with better weapons than that, if you expect to make much of a battle. Besides all that. Is it not written, that "He who seeketh to save his life shall lose it, and he who loseth his life for my sake shall find it," and did not they know this. Yes, a thousand times yes; it was their hope, their consolation in times of danger.

To return to the written testimony found in the *Times and Seasons* concerning the principle, and its having been taught in the days of the martyrs' lives. I now quote a letter of Hyrum Smith, *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 474.

"NAUVOO, March 8, 1844.

"To the brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, living on China Creek, in Hancock County, greeting:—Whereas, Brother Richard Hewitt has called on me

to-day, to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your Elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here. I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught here, neither is there any such thing practiced here. And any man that is found teaching, privately or publicly, any such doctrine is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the high council, and lose his license, and membership also; therefore, he had better beware what he is about."

In this letter we have Hyrum Smith's protest against the principle; also, the fact, that he calls it a *false doctrine*, yet it is said that it was necessary for those men to lie in order to save their lives. Nonsense! Did those men lie to save their lives in the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon? Did they lie and deny their faith to save their lives in Liberty jail, Mo.? No! never! and it is a base subterfuge of lies to say so; and is only done to excuse men in their abominations, and is as mean and low a retreat as a sin-stained master could wish his followers to enter. I have now given Joseph's and Hyrum's own testimony, up to about three months before their death; and they positively declare it to be a *false and corrupt doctrine*. I am sure I would rather believe them, than many of the old woman's tales we hear so much of, of late.

CHAPTER IV.

Now, having shown that up to the time of their death, the two martyrs bore public testimony that the principle of polygamy was not sanctioned nor taught in the church, and that it was a false doctrine, I come to the conclusion that it *it was not* an original tenet of the church under their teaching. But says an objecter "What about the revelation that Joseph Smith received on the subject." The stories about that article are so numerous, and so conflicting, that I do not believe that he ever received a revelation from *God* on the

matter. The very fact that so much strong testimony had been produced, and did exist, as we have shown from the Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants, satisfies me that it is folly for any sane man to think that Joseph Smith needed to ask God concerning a matter that his will was so plainly manifest on as the one in hand. There are those who say that the revelation "was received over a five gallon-keg of whiskey." There are those who say "the original one was burned." There are others who say "it was a copy that was burned;" but strange to say, they all say, "that it was burned," and all seem to agree that one person burned it. It is evident that a supposed copy of a revelation has been palmed off upon the people, by a designing set of men, who have certainly lost the priesthood they once held, and have made money and women their only pleasure, that they might gratify to the fullest extent their lustful desires and wicked purposes. For the evidence concerning the revelation which so much has been staked upon; according to their own testimony, they only have a copy, written from *memory*, which, it is said, was locked up in some one's desk for nine long years, and only those most in confidence with the presiding head could enjoy the privilege granted by it. The very first clause of the supposed revelation is a direct contradiction of the Book of Mormon, for that book says, David's and Solomon's many wives were an abomination to the Lord; whereas the revelation justifies them in their acts in this particular. It is also a contradiction of the gospel plan of salvation, inasmuch as it purports to be a new and everlasting covenant, as "all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same, for behold I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant, and if ye abide not in that covenant, then are ye damned, for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into

my glory." Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," and does not mention the so-called celestial marriage, and as it comes so directly in contact with Jesus Christ and his gospel, we cannot but brand it as the doctrine of the adversary.

Should we admit the truth of this so-called revelation, there is not a man on earth, neither has there been since the death of the martyr, who holds the keys to administer the ordinances of celestial marriage according to the revelation itself, for it is stated emphatically that "There is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred." So by their own witness they are condemned. For Brigham Young has time and again said he was not a "prophet nor the son of a prophet," and none but a prophet can hold the keys of this priesthood. I give one more feature of the beautiful document.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder whereby they shed innocent blood, yet shall they come forth in the first resurrection and enter into their exaltation."

Here is license given to any one who enters this system of things to lie, steal, bear false witness, use the name of God in vain, blaspheme at will, and do all manner of wickedness except the shedding of innocent blood, and by them taught, if a man be a Gentile and unconverted, his blood is not innocent, he is a sinner, consequently there is no crime in killing him; provided, that you have a wife or two sealed to you by the holy celestial knot. This clause alone should reveal its origin.

This article purports to have been given July 12th, 1843. Joseph Smith pronounces the principle a false and

corrupt one in February, 1844, and cuts a man off from the church for teaching it. "Consistency, thou art a jewel," which is not found in that so-called revelation.

I shall now show by the church publications, that after the year 1844, the church did most emphatically deny the doctrine of polygamy. In an article written (*Times and Seasons* vol. 5, page 715) by an old man of Israel, and endorsed by the Editor as genuine, on page 711.

"The saints of the last days have witnessed the outgoings and incomings of so many apostates that nothing but truth has any effect upon them. In the present instance, after the sham quotations of Sidney and his clique, from the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants, to skulk off, under the dreadful splendor of 'spiritual wifery' which is brought into the account as graciously as if the law of the land allowed a man a plurality of wives, is fiendish. * * * Wo to the man or men who will thus wilfully lie to injure an innocent people. The law of the land and the rules of the church do not allow one man to have more than one wife alive at once, but if any man's wife die, he has a right to marry another, and to be sealed to both for eternity; to the living and the dead. There is no law of God or man against it. This is all the spiritual wife system that ever was tolerated in the church and they know it."

Dated, November 15th, 1844; five months after the martyrdom.

May 1st, 1845, John Taylor writes;

"For once let us say that Cain who went to Nod and taught the doctrine of a plurality of wives, and the giant who practiced the same iniquity, and Nimrod who practiced the common stock system, and the Jews who commenced crossing sea and land to make proselytes without revelation; and the christian sects who have went all lengths to build up churches and multiplying systems without authority from God are all co-workers on the same plan. When the reward for every man's work is given, this will be the everlasting answer to all sects, sorts and conditions, from Cain down to christian Israelites, I never knew you."—*Times and Seasons* vol. 6, p. 888.

On page 894, same volume, is an article copied from the Kalamazoo (Mich.) *Gazette*, and published in *Times and Seasons*, written by E. M.

Webb, then an elder in the church.

"The Latter Day Saints are charged by their enemies with the blackest crimes. Treason, murder, theft, polygamy, and adultery, are among the many crimes laid to their charge. * * * Mr. Rigdon's spiritual wife system was never known till it was hatched by J. C. Bennett who was cut off from the church for seduction. As to the charge of polygamy, I will quote from the Doctrine and Covenants which is the subscribed faith of the church and is strictly enforced. Article on marriage, sec. 109, par. 4. 'Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have but one wife and one woman but one husband; except in case of death when either is at liberty to marry again.'"

Also sec. 42, par. 7, (old ed. 13).

"Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart and cleave unto her and none else."

This was given to the public in May, 1845, eleven months after Joseph's death.

One more quotation from the *Times and Seasons*, and I shall draw this already lengthy article to a close. On page 955, vol. 6, Brigham Young himself sets forth the spiritual wife system as taught at that period.

"I would say, as no man can be perfect without the woman, so no woman can be perfect without a man to lead her. I tell you the truth as it is in the bosom of eternity, and I say to every man upon the face of the earth, if he wishes to be saved, he cannot be saved without a woman by his side. This is spiritual wifeism, that is the doctrine of spiritual wives."

From the foregoing, we learn what the principle of spiritual or celestial wifeism was, as taught by the church after the death of the prophets, with the contradiction of the principle as now taught in Utah; and from these testimonies we conclude that polygamy is not now, nor never was a tenet of the

true church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

In answer to the assertion so frequently heard in Utah, "That it was necessary for the prophets and members of the church to lie in the days of Nauvoo," I quote a few extracts from the words of God.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. [Speaking of the Holy City,] And there shall in no wise enter into it, anything that defileth; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Rev. xxi. 7, 8, 27.

"Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down into hell. Wo unto the murderer who deliberately killeth, for he shall die. Wo unto them who commit whoredoms for they shall be thrust down to hell. Yea, wo unto those that worship idols, for the devil of all devils delighteth in them."—2 Book of Nephi, par. 12.

Book of Covenants, sec. 42, par. 7, (old edition 13.)

"And again, I say, thou shalt not kill, but he that killeth shall die. Thou shalt not steal, and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out. Thou shalt not lie, he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out."

And from these testimonies we conclude there is no justification for the liar in the laws of God; and if some have, as they assert, a priesthood that justifies them in lying, they never received it of God, but from the devil who is the father of all liars.

Now may God save this people from this great plague spot that cankers and corrodes the soul, alienates it from God and fits it only for Satan's kingdom is the prayer of the author.

KIRTLAND TEMPLE SUIT

Findings of the Court in Lake County, Ohio.

THE following are the findings of the Court in which the late suit of the Reorganized Church or the quieting the title to the Kirtland Temple, was tried.

"In Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, February 23d, 1880. Present: Hon. L. S. Sherman, Judge; F. Paine, Jr., Clerk; and C. F. Morley, Sheriff.

Journal Entry, February Term, 1880.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Plaintiff. Against

Lucien Williams, Joseph Smith, Sarah F. Videon Mark H. Forscutt, the Church in Utah of which John Taylor is President and commonly known as the Mormon Church, and John Taylor, President of said Utah Church. Defendants.

Now at this term of the Court came the Plaintiff by its attorneys, E. L. Kelley, and Burrows and Bosworth, and the Defendants came not, but made default; and thereupon, with the assent of the Court, and on motion and by the consent of the Plaintiff a trial by jury is waived and this cause is submitted to the Court for trial, and the cause came on for trial to the Court upon the pleadings and evidence, and was argued by counsel; on consideration whereof, the Court do find as matters of fact:

(1st). That notice was given to the Defendants in this action by publication of notice as required by the statutes of the state of Ohio; except as to the Defendant, Sarah F. Videon, who was personally served with process.

(2d). That there was organized on the 6th day of April, 1830, at Palmyra, in the state of New York, by Joseph Smith, a Religious Society, under the name of "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," which in the same year removed in a body and located in Kirtland, Lake County, Ohio; which said Church held and believed, and was founded upon certain well defined doctrines, which were set forth in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

(3d). That on the 11th day of February, A. D. 1841, one William Marks and his wife, Rosannah, by Warranty Deed, of that date, conveyed to said Joseph Smith as sole Trustee-in-Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, being the same Church organized as aforesaid, the lands and tenements described in the petition, and which are described as follows:

[The description of the land is omitted.—Eds.]

And upon said lands said Church had erected a church edifice known as The Temple, and were then in the possession and occupancy thereof for religious purposes, and so continued until the disorganization of said Church, which occurred about 1844. That the main body of said Religious Society had removed from Kirtland aforesaid, and were located at Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1844, when said Joseph Smith died, and said Church was disorganized and the membership (then being estimated at about 100,000) scattered in smaller fragments, each claiming to be the original and true Church before named, and located in different states and places.

That one of said fragments, estimated at ^{over} thousand, removed to the Territory of Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young, and located there, and with accessions since, now constitute the Church in Utah, under the leadership and Presidency of John Taylor, and is named as one of the defendants in this action.

That after the departure of said fragment of said church for Utah, a large number of the officials and membership of the original church which was disorganized at Nauvoo, reorganized under the name of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and on the 5th day of February, 1873, became incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois, and since that time all other fragments of said original Church (except the one in Utah) have dissolved, and the membership has largely become incorporated with said Reorganized Church which is the Plaintiff in this action.

That the said Plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is a Religious Society, founded and organized upon the same doctrines and tenets, and having the same church organization, as the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, by Joseph Smith, and was organized pursuant to the constitution, laws and usages of said original Church, and has branches located in Illinois, Ohio, and other States.

That the church in Utah, the Defendant of which John Taylor is President, has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of Celestial Marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-God worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original Church.

And the Court do further find that the Plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is the True and Lawful continuation of, and Successor to the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property.

And the Court do further find that said defendants, Joseph Smith, Sarah F. Videon and Mark H. Forscutt, are in possession of said property under a pretended title, derived from a pretended sale thereof, made by order of the Probate Court of Lake County, on the petition of Henry Holcomb, as the administrator of said Joseph Smith, and the individual property of said Smith; and the Court finds that said Smith had no title to said property, except as the Trustee of said Church, and that no title thereto passed to the purchasers at said sale, and that said parties in possession have no legal title to said property.

And the Court further finds that the legal title to said property is vested in the heirs of said Joseph Smith, in trust for the legal successor of said original Church, and that the Plaintiffs are not in possession thereof."

EPITOME OF THE FAITH AND DOCTRINES

— OF THE —

REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, at Lamoni, Decatur County, Iowa.

We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. Matt. 28: 19. 1 John 1: 3. St. John 11: 26.

We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression. Ecc. 12: 14. Matt. 16: 27. 1 Cor. 3: 13. Rev. 20: 12-15.

We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all men may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. 1 Cor. 15: 3. 2 Tim. 1: 10. Rom. 8: 1-6.

We believe that these ordinances are:—

(1st). Faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Heb. 11: 6. 1 Pet 1: 21. 1 Tim. 4: 10. John 3: 16, 18, 36. Mark 11: 22. John 14: 1.

(2d). Repentance. Matt. 3: 2, 8, 11. Luke 13: 3; 24: 47. Ezek. 18: 30. Mark 1: 5, 15. Acts 2: 38. Rom. 2: 4. 2 Cor. 7: 10.

(3d). Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. Matt. 3: 13-15. Mark 1: 4, 5. Luke 3: 3. John 3: 5. Acts 2: 38. 22: 16; 2: 41; 8: 12, 37, 38. Mark 16: 16. Col. 2: 12. Rom. 6: 4, 5. John 3: 23. Acts 8: 38, 39.

(4th). Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Deut. 34: 9. John 20: 21, 22. Acts 8: 17; 19: 6. 1 Tim 4: 14. Acts 9: 17. 1 Cor. 12: 3. Acts 19: 1-6.

(5th). We believe in the Resurrection of the Body; that the dead in Christ will rise first, and the rest of the dead will not live again until the thousand years are expired. Job 19: 25, 26. Dan. 12: 2. 1 Cor. 15: 42. 1 Thes. 4: 16. Rev. 20: 6. Acts 17: 31. Phil. 3: 21. John 11: 24. Isa. 26: 19. Ps. 17: 15.

(6th). We believe in the doctrine of Eternal Judgment, which provides that men shall be judged, rewarded, or punished, according to the degree of good, or evil, they shall have done. Rev. 20: 12. Ecc. 3: 17. Matt. 16: 27. 2 Cor. 5: 10. 2 Pet. 2: 4, 13, 17.

We believe that a man must be Called of God, and ordained by the Laying on of Hands of those who are in authority, to entitle him to preach the Gospel, and Administer in the Ordinances thereof. Heb. 5: 1, 5, 6, 8. Acts 1: 24, 25; 14: 23. Eph. 4: 11. John 15: 16.

We believe in the same kind of organization that existed in the primitive church, viz: Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Evangelist, &c. 1 Cor. 12: 28. Matt. 10: 1. Acts 6: 4. Eph. 4: 11; 2: 20. Titus 1: 5.

We believe that in the Bible is contained the word of God, so far as it is translated correctly. We believe that the canon of scripture is not full, but that God, by His Spirit, will continue to reveal His word to man until

the end of time. Job 32: 8. Heb. 13: 8. Prov. 29: 18. Amos 3: 7. Jer. 23: 4; 31: 31, 34; 33: 6. Ps. 85: 10, 11. Luke 17: 26. Rev. 14: 6, 7; 19: 10.

We believe in the powers and gifts of the everlasting gospel, viz: the gift of faith, discerning of spirits, prophecy, revelation, healing, visions, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, wisdom, charity, brotherly love, &c. 1 Cor. 12: 1-11; 14: 26. John 14: 24. Acts 2: 3. Matt. 28: 19, 20. Mark 16: 16.

We believe that Marriage is ordained of God; and that the law of God provides for but one companion in wedlock, for either man or woman, except in cases where the contract of marriage is broken by death or transgression. Gen. 2: 18, 21-24; 7: 1, 7, 13. Prov. 5: 15-21. Mal. 2: 14, 15. Matt. 19: 4-6. 1 Cor. 7: 2. Heb. 13: 4. D. & C. 42: 7; 49: 3.

We believe that the doctrines of a plurality and a community of wives are heresies, and are opposed to the law of God. Gen. 4: 19, 23, 24; 7: 9; 22: 2, in connection Gal. 4th and 5th c. Gen. 21: 8-10. Mal. 2: 14, 15. Matt. 19: 3-9. The Book of MORMON says:—"Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be ONE WIFE, and concubines he shall have none, for I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me, saith the Lord of hosts."—Jacob 2: 6-9.

We believe that in all matters of controversy upon the duty of man toward God, and in reference to preparation and fitness for the world to come, the word of God should be decisive and the end of dispute; and that when God directs, man should obey.

We believe that the religion of Jesus Christ, as taught in the New Testament Scriptures, will, if its precepts are accepted and obeyed, make men and women better in the domestic circle, and better citizens of town, county and state, and consequently better fitted for the change which cometh at death.

We believe that men should worship God in "Spirit and in truth;" and that such worship does not require a violation of the constitutional law of the land. John 4: 21-24. Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 58, par. 5.

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

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What is True Orthodoxy?

WHAT IS AN EVANGELICAL CHURCH?

Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, at Lamoni, Decatur County, Iowa.

Dear reader, will you help us to decide these questions by an appeal to the Bible. Examine our quotations carefully.

TRUTH is God's word; His laws and commandments. John 17:17. Psalms 119, 142, 151, 160.

True or genuine ORTHODOXY is the ancient Apostolic doctrine, the "One Faith."

An EVANGELICAL CHURCH is one that corresponds to that of the days of Paul and other apostles, in faith, in practice, in organization and experience. To these statements doubtless all agree. Now what was the faith, practice, organization, and blessings of the early church?

1. It believed in One living and true God. Isa. 44:6-9. 1 Cor. 8:6. Eph. 4:6. 1 Tim. 2:5.

2. In Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God. John 3:16. Gal. 4:4. Heb. 1:1-3. Rom. 8:2.

3. In the Holy Spirit—the Comforter and gift. John 16:7-14. Acts 2:38, 39. Rom. 8:14, 26, 27. 1 Cor. 2:10-13.

4. It believed that all men can be saved by the gospel. Mark 16:15, 16. Rom. 1:16, 17. 1 Tim. 2:4. Rev. 22:17.

5. It believed the principles of the gospel to be:—(A) FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the "things of the kingdom." Acts 8:12; 20:21, 25; 28:30, 31. Mark 1:14. Matt. 24:14. (B) REPENTANCE of Sin and from dead works. Luke 24:47. Acts 2:38; 3:19. Heb. 6:1. Isa. 55:6, 7. (C) BAPTISM by immersion for remission of sins. Mark 1:4, 5. Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 22:16. Rom. 6:4. Col. 2:12. (D) The gift of the Holy Spirit, through LAYING ON OF HANDS. Acts 8:14-19; 9:17; 19:5, 6. Heb. 6:2.

6. It believed the Kingdom of God to be: (A) The Church. Matt. 13:24, 31, 38, 43, 45, 47; 16:19; 20:1-16; 22:2-14; 25:1-13, 14-30. Luke 16:16. Dan. 2:44. (B) The restored kingdom of Israel. 1 Chron. 12:11-15. 29:23. Isa. 9:6, 7. Ezek. 21:25-27. Amos 9:8-15. Luke 1:31-33; 22:28-30. (C) Finally the whole earth. Dan. 7:13, 14, 27. Matt. 25:24 compared with Gen. 1:26. Matt. 6:9, 10. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. Rev. 5:9-13.

7. As an organization, the Church presented the following gifts or offices, viz: Apostles, the Seventy, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Elders, Teachers, Bishops, Deacons, &c., &c. Luke 6:13; 10:1. Acts 13:1; 21:8, 9. 1 Cor. 12:27, 28. Eph. 4:11-13. Tit. 1:5.

8. That Church enjoyed various SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Rom. 12:5-8. 1 Cor. 12:4-13; 14:1, 12, 13, 39. Mark 16:17-20.

9. It had hope in the RESURRECTION of the

dead. Luke 20:35, 36. John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40, 54. Acts 24:14, 15. 1 Cor. 15:12-54. Rev. 20:4, 5, 12, 13.

10. It believed and hoped for Christ's SECOND, PERSONAL ADVENT. Matt. 24:30; 25:31. John 14:3, 18, 28. Acts 1:10, 11. 1 Thes. 4:16. Rev. 1:7; 22:12-20. Zech. 14.

11. It expected to BE REWARDED at His COMING. Matt. 16:27; 25:31-34. Luke 14:14. Col. 3:4. 2 Thes. 1:7. 2 Tim. 4:8. 1 Pet. 1:7; 5:4. Rev. 22:12.

12. It looked for the Judgment Day at His coming. Matt. 25:31, 32-41. John 12:48. 2 Tim. 4:1. Jude 14:15. 2 Pet. 11:9. Rev. 22:12.

13. It believed in the restoration of Jerusalem; and the conversion of the Jews, at Messiah's coming. Luke 21:24. Zech. 1:16, 17; 2:4, 5, 12; 8:3-8; 9:9; 12:5, 6. Matt. 1:21; 23:39. Acts 3:19-21. Rom. 11:25-27. 1 Tim. 1:16. Zech. 12:7; 13:1; 14:1-21.

14. It believed in the restoration of the land, and all the House of Israel. Isa. 49:13-21; 60:1-22; 62:1-12. Jer. 32:36-42; 33:1-26. Ezek. 20:33-44; 36:6-38; 37:21-28. Amos 9:7-15. Matt. 19:28. Luke 22:28, 30. Rom. 11:25-33.

We thus discover what is genuine Orthodoxy, or sound doctrine, and what was the faith, practice, organization, experience and hope of a truly Evangelical Church. And such, kind reader, is the faith, practice, form of church government, experience and hope of The REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, commonly called Latter Day Saints.

But before you turn away with disdain, please understand that this Church is in no sense connected with Salt Lake Mormons, who are improperly called Latter Day Saints. Polygamy never was, nor ever can be, a doctrine or practice among those who follow the teachings of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Hear what the Book of Mormon says on polygamy: "No man among you shall have save it be ONE WIFE, and concubines he shall have none, for I the Lord God, delight in the chastity of woman." It also calls it "A GROSSER CRIME" than pride, &c. The voice of God to the true Latter Day Saint is, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and cleave unto her and none else."—*Doctrine and Covenants*.

Polygamy originated with the leaders of the Utah Church; and that Church has "departed from the faith" of the pure gospel system as taught by the Church of Christ, both of former and latter days; and the Utah Church has clearly fulfilled the prophecy of Paul. 1 Tim. 4:1, and Jer. 17:5, 6.

LAYING ON OF HANDS.

Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

LAYING ON OF HANDS.

The laying on of hands, for the blessing and setting apart of persons for religious services, was a practice in primitive Bible times, by those said to have received divine guidance. Jacob laid his hands upon Manasseh and Ephraim and blessed them. (a) And Moses, by the command of God, laid his hands upon Joshua, and blessed him as his successor, in the leading of the Israelites. (b)

This ordinance has become almost universally discarded by modern worshipers, as something of no value, especially in some of its most important services; nevertheless, we have the most ample and satisfactory proofs that it was believed in, taught and practiced by Jesus and the Apostles, as something of importance, and of very essential benefit to believers.

I. THE HOLY GHOST IS GIVEN BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

We read in the book of Acts, that one Philip went down to Samaria and preached the word, and the people received his teachings and were baptized.

"Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he had fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.* And when Simon saw that through *laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given*, he offered them money, saying, Give me this power, that on whomsoever I *lay hands*, he may *receive the Holy Ghost.*" (c)

"And when Paul had *laid his hands* upon them, the *Holy Ghost came on them*; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (d)

Comment upon these texts could not make them plainer; for the first, and most palpable thought that impresses the mind while reading them is, that the Apostles *laid their hands* upon those who had been baptized, that *they might receive the Holy Ghost*; and that they did, through obedience to this ordinance, receive the Spirit. Not before baptism, but after; not without the laying on of hands, but with. Will any one take the responsibility of saying that those who were baptized would have

received the Holy Ghost, otherwise than by the laying on of hands; or that they received it before baptism? Was not the laying on of hands a means; and the receiving of the Holy Ghost, the result?

The mission of Peter and John to Samaria was, that the baptized believers there might be confirmed by being endowed with the Holy Spirit. If they could have received the Spirit without prayer and the imposition of hands, the mission of Peter and John was of no consequence—a journey in vain—a superfluous labor.

To them was committed the responsible duty of teaching "all nations" to "observe all things" whatsoever Jesus had commanded them. (e). And they taught the people of Samaria to observe the laying on of hands for the receiving of the Holy Ghost; the people obeyed the injunction, and thus received the promise made by John, when he said,—

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (f)

When the laying on of hands, as taught in the New Testament was made obligatory upon believers, that they might become the recipients of the joys of the Holy Ghost, it was enjoined as a duty by commandment of the highest authority; and he that will show his faith by his works, and thus manifest the love of God in his heart, will keep this ordinance.—For Jesus says:—

"If a man love me, he will keep my words." (g). For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (h).

I do not wish, here, to speculate with reference to the philosophical relationship existing between those officiating and those receiving this ordinance; for it is sufficient for me to know that the Bible teaches it. Still, to obviate the difficulties that may arise, in the minds of some, (as this is peculiarly a speculative age), and to answer the queries of others, I will say, that it is not held that the Holy Ghost is given by the power and will of those officiating, as though they by some magnetic influence emanating from themselves, were able to communicate to, and influence believers, as some are wont to believe; but that the Holy Ghost is given of God,

(a) Gen. 48: 14. (b) Num. 27: 18-23. (c) Acts 8: 14-19. (d) Acts 19: 6.

(e) Matt. 28: 20. (f) Matt. 3: 11. (g) John 14: 23. (h) 1 John 5: 3.

through prayer and the imposition of hands. Man is the instrument to officiate; God is the great source from which the Spirit comes. Hence, it is written: "They spake in tongues and prophesied."

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us." (i).

Paul wrote to Timothy, saying:—

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, [body of Elders]." (j).

Again he wrote:—

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." (k).

Here, we are informed that Timothy received a gift by prophecy, through the laying on of hands.

Paul, being a man of God, laid his hands upon Timothy and prayed; God, respecting his prayer, sent down the Holy Ghost upon them, and Paul was enabled to predict concerning Timothy's future usefulness, if faithful, and manifest his most excellent gift. Not by any wisdom or subtle power belonging to Paul's nature, or the attendance on that occasion of his deceased friends, but by the Holy Spirit of God. For

"Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (l).

II. IT IS A DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

If it can be shown that Jesus taught the laying on of hands as a doctrine—a commandment—this ought to satisfy the most doubting mind, who believes the Bible, of its essential character and binding force at the present time. For what Christian is there, that can believe that the Savior would impose a doctrine upon men which was of no validity; or which was not essential to their good? Paul wrote:—

"Therefore [not] leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (m).

Here, the laying on of hands is declared to be a principle of the doctrine of Christ. And Jesus said:—

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (n).

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I

should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting." (o).

The teachings of Christ were the commandments of the Father, wherein is promised "life everlasting." Hence, Paul, who did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, wrote concerning the gospel,

"I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (p).

By revelation, then, Paul was taught that the fourth principle of the doctrine of Christ, was the laying on of hands; as found in the sixth chapter of Hebrews. And if it was considered to be of such great importance and benefit that God revealed it unto men for their good, is it not singularly strange that it is almost universally discarded by the late reformers? Who can say that it is not binding now? To reject it is to be left destitute of the Holy Spirit, that giveth utterance.

III. LAYING ON OF HANDS, FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE HOLY GHOST, WAS PRACTICED BY THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS.

Tertullian, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, says that,

"After baptism, succeeds the laying on of hands, with prayer, calling for the Holy Ghost."

Cyprian, a writer of the third century says:—

"Our practice is, that those who have been baptized in the Church should be presented, * * * that by prayer and imposition of hands they may receive the Holy Ghost." (q).

Chrysostom, who wrote in the fourth century, says,

"That confirmation * * gives us the Holy Ghost."

Augustine, who also lived in the fourth century, says that they

"Still do what the Apostles did, when they laid their hands on the Samaritans and called down the Holy Ghost upon them."

And Mosheim, and Gahan, Church historians, say in substance that, the laying on of hands for confirmation and reception of the Holy Ghost was practiced in the third century. (r)

These authors are quoted, not because the New Testament does not speak sufficiently plainly and positively on this subject, but to show that primitive Christians, who lived immediately after the death of the Apostles, taught and practiced what the Apostles enjoined,—that this doctrine was of universal belief and practice, and

(i) Acts 15 : 8. (j) 1 Tim. 4 : 14. (k) 2 Tim. 1 : 6. (l) 2 Peter 1 : 21. (m) Heb. 6 : 1, 2. (n) John 7 : 16.

(o) John 12 : 49, 50. (p) Gal. 1 : 12. (q) Epistle lxxiii. (r) Gahan's C. H. page 93. Mosheim's C. H. vol. 1, page 91.

received with as much faith and reverence, as any ordinance taught in the gospel.

And if, as has been shown, the Apostles, with their inspired wisdom and authority, instituted confirmation by the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, may any one with impunity slight and condemn it? Are we competent to determine better than they, what we—*“must do to be saved?”*

IV. WHY DOES BAPTISM PRECEDE THE LAYING ON OF HANDS?

For the best of reasons. The Holy Ghost will not dwell in the heart of the sinner. For this reason, John came preaching “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;” with the promise, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” (s)

None could expect to receive the Holy Ghost, save those who attended unto the “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Hence, Ananias said to Saul, the convicted sinner,

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” (t).

Peter said to the multitude who had not received the “washing of regeneration,” “Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jusus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (u)

The Holy Ghost was promised after the remission of sins; and baptism was declared to be “for the remission of sins.” No wonder then that Peter and John did not lay hands on the Samaritans until they had been baptized by Philip!

Jesus said, “I will send you another comforter, which the world cannot receive,”—sent expressly for the Disciples, who had been “translated,” by the remission of their sins, “from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (v)

The Disciples were not of the world, but had been created anew in Christ, by “putting off the old man, and putting on the new,” by the remission of their sins; and were therefore entitled to the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of hands.

V. FOR THE BLESSING OF CHILDREN.

“Then were brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. * * * And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” (w).

Jesus said of little children, “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (x). They are without sin, having been made alive by the power of the atonement; hence, they are holy without baptism, having committed no sin, and are therefore entitled to the blessing of the Spirit.

The perversion of this doctrine and custom may be seen in an ordinance now of such universal prevalence, that of *sprinkling infants*; called by moderns, baptism. Not a single text can be found in all the Bible, to warrant and sustain this custom. “Of such,” said Jesus, “is the kingdom of heaven.” And to those of mature years he said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Of course, with their children. Jesus says, little children are “of the kingdom of heaven.” But these modern worshipers present their children to be sprinkled, as though they, by this practice, could make them any more the children of the kingdom than they were before, holding that such as receive not this rite, and should die in such a state, would be lost; as though God was such an unjust being as to save, or think more of a child that was sprinkled, than of one which was not; when neither one nor the other, could have, or manifest any desire as to whether it would or would not be sprinkled.

VI. FOR THE HEALING OF THE SICK.

“And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” (y).

“Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.” (z).

“And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.” (a).

“They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (b).

It is here very plainly taught that the Savior practiced the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick, and that the sick were by this healed.

It is also just as plainly taught, in the sixteenth chapter of Mark, that the *believers*, in every age and time, should be blessed with signs, “They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”—Hence, James says:—

“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” (c).

The regular order seems to be, as here set forth, that the Elders are to be sent for, and they are to anoint with oil, lay their hands upon and pray over the sick; and the promise is, “the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up.”

James here but confirms what Jesus had

(s) Matt. 3: 11. (t) Acts 22: 16. (u) Acts 2: 38. (v) Col. 1: 13. (w) Matt. 19: 13, 15. (x) Matt. 19: 14.

(y) Mark 6: 5. (z) Luke 4: 40. (a) Luke 13: 13. (b) Mark 16: 18. (c) James 5: 14, 15.

before taught, when he said, "these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils, * * they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Thus showing that this ordinance and blessing was not confined to a favored few, at any one time or place; but was made to all believers; hence the language, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders," etc. Hence, all believers in Christ have equal claims upon him, in the hour of distress and pain, for the restoration of their health, through the prayer of faith and the imposition of hands. And although this promise is not enjoyed by many professed Christians of the present day, it is not because it is not taught and promised to the believers, but because their prayers, for some reason, do not seem to be efficacious when made in behalf of the afflicted. And now, for a long time, this custom has been discarded; not because there were no sick and diseased who needed to be healed; but, in the language of the great reformer, Mr. Wesley, the Christians "turned heathen again," and had only a "dead form left." The power of God was not made manifest among them.

VII. ELDERS ARE AUTHORIZED TO LAY ON HANDS.

The New Testament does not speak very plainly concerning the *duty* of Elders, yet it is quite certain that they held a very worthy and responsible position, for Paul exhorted them, saying,

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God." (d).

And Peter wrote to the Elders,

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof." (e).

Thus we learn that the Elders had the chief charge of the flock in the absence of the Apostles, and were authorized to "feed them." They convened in council with the Apostles in investigating important matters, and had a voice with them. (f) Indeed, the office of an Elder seems to be so nearly related to that of an Apostle, that the Apostles themselves frequently used the term Elder to designate their own office. In fact, an Apostle is an Elder. For Peter says:—

"The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder." (g).

John commenced his Second and Third Epistles, "The Elder unto the elect lady."

(d) Acts 20: 28. (e) 1 Peter 5: 2. (f) Acts 15: 6. (g) 1 Peter 5: 1.

"The Elder unto the well beloved Gaius."

The Elders had important duties to perform, but they are not mentioned in detail. But if there is one thing made clearer than another, it is that they were authorized to lay on hands.

James says:—

"If any are sick among you, let him call for the Elders of the church; and let them pray over them; anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord."

And Mark informs us, that the praying for the sick is to be accompanied with the laying on of hands. Hence, "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." (h)

We learn from this, then, that it is the duty of the Elders to pray over, anoint with oil, and lay hands upon the sick.

Philip was authorized to baptize the Samaritans, but probably not to lay on hands that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For if he could have done so, why was it necessary for Peter and John to be sent down to attend to that ordinance? The most reasonable conclusion that could be drawn from this transaction is, that Philip was not authorized to lay on hands; but that Peter and John held that authority; hence they went to do that which Philip could not do. Because Peter and John were the ones who officiated on this occasion it has been supposed, even by the learned, that the Apostles only, were authorized to lay on hands. But this is a mistake. The case of the Samaritans is the only one mentioned where the Apostles were called upon to render that service.

Ananias came to Paul and said:—

"The Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." (i).

This instance utterly defeats the idea that none could lay on hands but the Apostles; for Ananias was not an Apostle, but in all probability an Elder. And he was especially sent, that Saul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost; hence, he put his hands upon him.

Hence, we learn that others than the Apostles, laid on hands for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, and the healing of the sick; and every proof goes to show that they were Elders.

To present the authority for the doctrine of "laying on of hands," these lines have been written. And we think there can be no difference of opinion arise, when viewed dispassionately and with candor.

(h) Mark 16: 18. (i) Acts 9: 17.