

No. 222.

Joseph Smith; Has He Succeeded His Father, the Seer, in the Presidency of the Church?

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JOSEPH SMITH, the eldest son of Joseph, the Seer, is president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and recognized by that body of people as a prophet of God. He has been constantly and confidently sustained by them in this position ever since he was called to it by revelation of the Lord to himself in 1860.

This church now has a membership of 45,381 people. The General Conference which convened at Independence, Missouri, April 6, 1901, sent three hundred thirty-two missionaries to promulgate the gospel of peace to the nations of the earth. Branches have been organized and the work permanently established in every State in the Union, in the Canadas, Great Britain, Australia, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and more or less missionary work has been done in nearly every quarter of the civilized globe.

A complete reorganization of the church has been effected by divine direction, with a First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve Apostles, Patriarchs, Bishops, High Priests, and Quorums of Seventy, Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons.

The original Articles of Faith, as written by Joseph the Seer, and published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842, volume 3, pages 709 and 710, are again taught in their purity.

The Saints are gathering back to Jackson County, Missouri, and into the "regions round about," where the people of God were commanded to gather.

Immediately following the General Conference referred to, two stakes were organized by command of the Lord through the president of the church. One of these includes within its boundaries the city of Independence, Missouri, the site of the future "New Jerusalem." Its membership numbers nineteen hundred souls. The other embraces Lamoni, Iowa, the headquarters of the church, and the location of its principal publishing house and book-bindery. Twenty-three hundred people live within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the Lamoni Stake.

In the years that are past there has been a disposition, especially on the part of representatives of the church of the Latter Day Saints in Utah, to look with disdain upon the body of people over which the son of the Seer presides, because of its inferiority in numbers and material wealth when compared with themselves.

But time has wrought great changes in both organizations. With one there has been, comparatively, disintegration and decay; with the other steady development and constant increase in numbers and spirituality.

The missionaries of the Reorganized Church average about nine baptisms each yearly, as the statistical reports show. Those from Utah average two only!

October 7, 1900, deploring this state of affairs, Pres. George Q. Cannon said in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah: "Our elders spend two years or more in the missionary field, and they baptize on an average not exceeding four souls, or about two a year. I would

not dare to tell you how much money is spent as well as time to do this."—Report of 71st Semiannual Conference, page 66.

If the two churches continue, for any considerable period of time, to maintain this same ratio of increase, the day must soon come when the Reorganized Church can no longer be despised by our friends in Utah on account of its numerical insignificance.

Notwithstanding the gospel influence which the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, under Joseph's presidency, has attained in the world, and the consequent power it is wielding for good in the conversion of men, because the word *reorganized* is inserted as a part of the name of the church, the petty objection is still urged by some that Joseph does not really preside over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but over another body with another name.

It is only necessary to observe that the word *reorganized* expresses a condition, and is made to apply to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and not to some other church; hence another church is not implied, but the same one after having been reorganized.

In this tract we shall not enter into a detailed discussion of the technical points of difference between the two churches, the Reorganization and the organization in Utah. The work in hand does not demand this of us. The time of the last dispensation is now too far spent, and the work of the son of the Seer is already too nearly accomplished to require this at our hands.* Rather let

*We take pleasure, however, in referring those who desire to make a full examination of the differences between the two bodies to the book of Elder B. H. Roberts, entitled, "Succession in the Presidency of the Church," which can be obtained of the "Deseret News," Salt Lake City, and to the reply to this work, entitled: "True Succession in Church Presidency," by Elder Heman C. Smith. This can be secured by sending thirty-five cents to Herald Publishing House, Lamoni, Iowa.

us search the revelations of Joseph the Seer to ascertain the work his successor in office was to do. Then make the inquiry: Is his son doing that work; is it now almost finished, preparatory to the coming of the Lord? "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."—Matthew 24: 44.

"Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled."—Doc. and Cov. 1: 7; 1: 37.† "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."—Matt. 7: 16, 17. By the application of these rules let us test the prophetic head of the Reorganized Church.

"And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect, for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts; wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto *one place*, upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts, and be prepared in all things, against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked."—Doc. and Cov. 28: 2; 29: 7, 8.

"And I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise; a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; and I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts: and this shall be my covenant with you, Ye shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children for ever, while the

†To accommodate readers who have either the Lamoni or the Salt Lake edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, all references are made to both in the order named above.

earth shall stand; and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away."—Doc. and Cov. 38: 4; 38: 18-20.

The State of Missouri is "the land of promise" where the Saints are to "gather." "Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land which is the land of *Missouri*, which is the land I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints: wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion."—Doc. and Cov. 57: 1; 57: 1, 2. See also Doc. and Cov. 98: 9, 10; 101: 70-74.

So the gathering of the Saints to the "land of Missouri" and "the regions round about" is the work the first elders of the church, under the leadership of Joseph the Seer, were called "to bring to pass." They failed.

In anticipation of their failure, and to make further provision for the accomplishment of his work, the Lord said:

"Behold, I say unto you, The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel, for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be."—Doc. and Cov. 100: 3; 103: 15-18.

Dear Saints, do you know who this man is whom the Lord said he would raise up to do the very work the first elders failed to perform? Then follow us in a brief

analysis of the above revelation, noting: 1. The redemption of Zion and the restoration of the Saints thereto, paragraphs 11-13. 2. This redemption and restoration to take place after the church passes through tribulation and goes into bondage. 3. It is effected by power. 4. Through the leadership of a man whom the Lord promised to raise up. 5. This man to lead "like as Moses" did.

Respecting this last point, it is only necessary to quote the language of President Joseph Smith himself in his speech at the Amboy Conference, April 6, 1860, just prior to his ordination to the Presidency of the High Priesthood. He said: "I wish to say that I have come here not to be dictated by any man or set of men. I have come in obedience to a power not my own and shall be dictated by the power that sent me."—Church History, vol. 3, p. 247. He proposed to lead as Moses did, by revelation of the Lord. How faithfully he has done this we shall learn presently. 4. "Raise up a man." As this revelation was given in February, 1834, and Joseph Smith was born November 6, 1832, when this word came from the Lord he was a mere infant in his mother's arms. He was not yet "raised up." 3. The power to be displayed in the redemption of Zion was evidently to manifest itself through the wise leadership of the man whom the Lord would raise up. This is indicated by the use of the word *therefore*,—"for this reason,"—immediately following the word *power*, as follows: "The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto my people a man," etc. The manifestation of the "power" depended upon the "raising up" of the "man."

Among all the factions of the church which have

arisen since the death of Joseph the Seer, where is the leader that has manifested the power of the President of the Reorganized Church? Where is the leader, other than he, who has had power to build up the church in the land of Zion and in the regions round about; that is, in Missouri and the adjoining country, as the revelations of God require? Where is the body of Saints other than those in the Reorganized Church who have had power to find favor and grace in the eyes of the people of that section of the country so as to "rest in peace and safety" there, as promised by the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 102: 7; 105: 25?

The leaders of the church of the Latter Day Saints in Utah are just beginning to see their need and their lack of power to find this favor and grace to be permitted to "go back to Jackson County." October 7, 1900, President Lorenzo Snow said, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, as published in the report of the 71st Semiannual Conference, page 62: "Do you suppose the Lord would ever send you and me back to Jackson County until he could feel perfectly assured that we would do those things which the people of Jackson County failed to do for lack of experience and faith? Jackson County is the place, the point we should have continually in view. . . . Let us all exercise faith for the Lord to open the way that we may go back to Jackson County."

As "Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion," Doctrine and Covenants 98: 4; 101: 17, 18; as Zion is "a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon

which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh, Doctrine and Covenants 38: 4; 38: 18; a place for the Saints to gather "To prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked."—Doc. and Cov. 28: 2; 29: 8; "And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the Saints of the Most High God," Doctrine and Covenants 45: 12; 45: 66, the "power" to occupy that country, and establish the kingdom of God there is essential to the salvation of the Saints in this dispensation. God has said this power of occupancy would be accomplished through the instrumentality of a man whom he would raise up for this very purpose.

Of all the leaders who have arisen among the Latter Day Saints since his father's time, Joseph alone has had power to locate the Saints in Zion and in the regions round about.

Dear Saints, why is this? "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."—Acts 10: 34, 35. Does it not clearly indicate that the president of the Reorganization is the man whom the Lord promised to raise up to restore the Saints to their inheritances? He being this man, is it at all improbable that he only, of all the aspirants to the presidency of the church, is "accepted with God" in that position; that he only has "worked righteousness" therein?

Does not the following also point to Joseph as the man of this prophecy, viz.: "For inasmuch as they bring forth fruit and works meet for my kingdom, they shall dwell thereon; they shall build, and another shall not inherit it; they shall plant vineyards, and they

shall eat the fruit thereof. Even so. Amen.”—Doc. and Cov. 98: 13; 101: 100, 101.

And this, respecting that same country, “the land of Zion”: “Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days; and the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land.”—Doc. and Cov. 64: 7; 64: 34, 35.

Joseph is doing the work the man of this prophecy was to do. In the accomplishment of it he has absolutely no competitor! No other claimant to presidential honors is even attempting to occupy the land of Zion! “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”

The man whom the Lord promised to raise up as a leader unto his people will unquestionably be found among the posterity of Joseph the Seer. Read this: “Let my servant Joseph and his house have place therein, from generation to generation; for this anointing have I put upon his head that *his blessing* shall also be put upon the *head of his posterity* after him; and as I said unto Abraham, concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph, *In thee, and in thy seed*, shall the kindred of the earth be blessed.”—Doc. and Cov. 107: 18; 124: 56-58.

The church in Utah ardently expected the fulfillment of this prophecy. June 29, 1856 (*Journal of Discourses*, volume 4, page 6), Heber C. Kimball, first counselor to President Brigham Young, said: “The prophet Joseph’s boys lie apparently in a state of slumber, everything seems to be perfectly calm with them, but by and by God will wake them up and they will roar like the thunders of Mount Sinai.”

The blessing of Joseph the Seer, to be "upon the *head* of his posterity after him;"—the word *head* in this sentence can only be construed in two ways. It either means his eldest son as the first or "head of his posterity;" or else it means "a member of the body,"—the physical head of his posterity, viz.; any of his posterity. If the former construction be correct, the prophecy could only find fulfillment in Joseph, as the prophet's oldest son; if the latter rendering be insisted upon, still the prediction is fulfilled by Joseph and by him alone, as none of the other sons of the prophet claim the presidency of the church.

What was the blessing of Joseph the Seer? "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Doc. and Cov. 19: 1; 21: 1.

Surely this was the blessing which distinguished Joseph the Seer. Hence, this is the blessing which the Lord said "shall be upon the head of his posterity after him."

2. This man will lead the people out of bondage. How? By teaching them to "Remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom."—Doc. and Cov. 83: 8; 84: 57, 58.

What principle of the gospel contained in the Book of Mormon and the former commandments has Joseph failed to teach? Respecting marriage, one of the former commandments says: "Thou shalt love thy

wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else.”—Doc. and Cov. 42: 7; 42: 22. And yet another: “Marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, 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.”—Doc. and Cov. 49: 3; 49: 15–17. And this from the Book of Mormon: “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.”—Jacob 2: 6. “Behold, the Lamanites, your brethren, . . . are more righteous than you: for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our fathers, that they should have, save it were one wife: and concubines they should have none. . . . And now this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people.”—Jacob 2: 9, Lamoni edition.

These are some of the former commandments and teachings of the Book of Mormon, which the Lord said we must not only say but do: “Otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay.”—Doc. and Cov. 83: 8; 84: 58, 59.

Joseph has taught and practiced the above instructions and has found the promised favor and grace in the land of Zion.

Wherein, then, has he failed in his teachings? Respecting baptism, confirmation, and ordination for the dead? There is nothing written, no, not so much as one word, in either the Bible, Book of Mormon, or the Doctrine and Covenants concerning either confirmation or ordination for the dead. These, therefore, we may safely omit to practice until the Lord shall speak and record his will respecting them in written form. Besides, confirmation and ordination for the dead could only be practiced, if at all, in connection with baptism for the dead.

Baptism for the dead is not now permissible, as the following revelation clearly teaches, viz.; "For, verily I say unto you, that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead can not be acceptable unto me; for therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory. And after this time, your baptisms for the dead, by those who are *scattered abroad*, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord; for it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead."—Doc. and Cov. 107: 11; 124: 33-36.

Long years since the sufficient time the Lord granted for the building of the temple at Nauvoo, elapsed. Hence baptisms for the dead by those who are scattered abroad are not acceptable to the Lord.

Had they kept the commandments of the Lord, they would not have been scattered abroad; for, in 1841, the

Lord said to the church at Nauvoo: "And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place."—Doc. and Cov. 107:13; 124:45. They did not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, in consequence of which they were "moved out of their place" at Nauvoo and "scattered abroad." Under these conditions of transgression, removal from the last stake of Zion appointed by revelation through Joseph the Seer, and scattering abroad, the Lord plainly says: "Your baptisms for the dead are not acceptable unto me."

When will baptism for the dead again be acceptable unto the Lord? When the Saints shall have gathered back to the land of Zion and to the regions round about; when stakes shall have been organized there by command of God through the man whom the Lord promised to raise up: "For it is ordained that in Zion and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead."—Doc. and Cov. 107:11; 124:36; not until then, and not likely till a house shall be built to the Lord, will baptism for the dead again be practiced acceptably to him. "For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and can not be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me."—Doc. and Cov. 107:10; 124:30.

Dear Saints, note well the preparatory steps which the revelations of God require, before baptism for the dead can be practiced acceptably to the Lord: 1. The Saints must gather back to the land of promise, so as to be no longer classed as scattered abroad. 2. To accomplish this the Lord promised to raise up a man. 3.

Stakes must be organized by command of God in order to be places which the Lord has appointed. 4. A house must be built.

All these conditions necessary before baptizing for the dead can be *legally* practiced, have been fulfilled by the Reorganized Church, except the last. No other organization has taken even one of these four steps which are necessary to qualify them to legally baptize for the dead. No other organization has a people gathered to the land of promise; no other organization has the man to be raised up and upon whom the Lord promised to place the blessing of Joseph the Seer, viz., the presidency of the high priesthood; no other organization has a stake which the Lord has commanded established; nor have they even a temple built by command of God; yet the Lord said, respecting houses in which temple ordinances are performed: "Which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name."—Doc. and Cov. 107:12; 124:39. If they have revelation authorizing either the organization of stakes or the building of temples, where is such revelation "written?" The Lord tells us "to do according to that which I have written." See Doctrine and Covenants 83:8; 84:57.

March 3, 1873, the Lord said, through the president of the Reorganized Church: "It is not expedient in me that there shall be any stakes appointed until I command my people. When it shall be necessary I will command that they be established."—Doc. and Cov. 117:11, Lamoni edition.

Not until twenty-eight years later did this necessity arise. Then the Lord commanded the organization of two stakes, as before mentioned. When it becomes

necessary for the Reorganization to take the only step now remaining to qualify the church to legally baptize for the dead, viz., to build a temple for that purpose, the command to build will no doubt be given.

THEY FULFILL PROPHECY.

The important prophecy concerning the "New Translation" of the Scriptures by Joseph the Seer was fulfilled through the instrumentality of the martyr himself, his wife Emma, and Joseph, the president of the Reorganization.

"The Holy Scriptures, translated and corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer," was published under the supervision of Joseph Smith, son of the Seer, in 1867. By the publication of this work, and the teaching of it to the nations of the earth the Reorganized Church is fulfilling the last item in one of the most important prophecies ever uttered by Joseph the Martyr, as follows:

"Thou shalt ask, and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety; and it is expedient that thou shouldst hold thy peace concerning them, and not teach them until ye have received them in full. And I give unto you a commandment, that then ye shall teach them unto all men; for they shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people."—Doc. and Cov. 42: 15; 42: 56-58.

Note the three principal points in this prophecy, viz.:

1. "The scriptures shall be given as I have appointed."
2. "They shall be preserved in safety."
3. "They shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people."

To prove that item "1" in the above enumeration was fulfilled through the instrumentality of the Seer himself,

we quote his own history recorded in *Times and Seasons*, volume 6, page 802: "We this day, (July 2, 1833,) finished the translating of the Scriptures, for which we returned gratitude to our heavenly Father."

As evidence that the work done by Joseph the Martyr, in correcting the Scriptures, had the approval of the Lord, and that the time had fully come for the publication of the manuscript, we cite the following revelation, given to William Law, January 19, 1841: "If he will do my will, let him . . . publish the new translation of my holy word unto the inhabitants of the earth."—Doc. and Cov. 107: 28; 124: 89.

This he failed to do, as did also the church under the presidency of the Seer. It remained for the Reorganization to publish the New Translation of the Scriptures in 1867. Since that time the representatives of the Reorganized Church alone have been teaching it to "all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people." Hence they only are fulfilling item "3" of the prophecy.

Where was the manuscript from the death of the Seer until its publication by Joseph? It was in the hands of Emma Smith, widow of the Martyr; where, providentially, it was lodged "in safety" to be "preserved" by this "elect lady" (Doc. and Cov. 24: 1; 25: 3), to be taught, finally, to all mankind, thus fulfilling item "2" of the prophecy.

Thus the three items of the important prophecy concerning the "New Translation"—the *receiving*, the *preserving*, and the *teaching* of it—have each had literal fulfillment through the instrumentality of Joseph the Seer, Emma his widow, and Joseph his son, the prophet-president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, respectively.