

have been the originator of that revelation. I want you to understand that I have denied it, I suppose, a hundred times, when I have been inquired of about it. It was gotten up by some mysterious person who undertook to create a sensation and lay the responsibility upon me. I am not guilty.

When the Lord reveals something to me I will consider the matter with my brethren, and when it becomes proper I will let it be known to the people, and not otherwise.

The ridiculous story about the red horse, and the black horse, and the white horse, and a lot of trash that has been circulated about and printed and sent around as a great revelation given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, is a matter that was gotten up, I understand, some ten years after the death of the Prophet, by two of our brethren who put together some broken sentences from the Prophet that they had heard him utter from time to time, and formulated this so-called revelation out of it. It was never spoken by the Prophet in the manner in which they have it put forth. It is simply false; that is all there is to it.

#### KNOW THE TRUTH

Now, these stories of revelation, that are being circulated around, are of no consequence, except for rumor and silly talk by persons who have no authority. The fact of the matter is simply this: No man can enter into God's rest until he will absorb the truth, in so far that all error, all falsehood, all misunderstanding and misstatement he will be able to sift thoroughly and dissolve, and know that it is error, and not truth.

When you know God's truth, when you enter into God's rest, you will not be hunting after revelations from Tom, Dick and Harry all over the world. You will not be following the will-o'-the-wisp of the vagaries of men and women who advance nonsense and their own ideas. When you know the truth you will abide in the truth, and the truth will make you free. It is only the truth that will free you from the errors of men and from the falsehoods and misrepresentations of the evil one, who lays in wait to deceive and to mislead the people of God from the paths of righteousness and truth.

God bless you. Amen.

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##### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

The burning questions of good and evil constitute the most important problem that has ever confronted the children of men. There is no end to the variations in which this problem presents itself. There are so many manifestations of it that one is almost lost in a labyrinth of confusion.

These questions are often asked: What is good and what is evil? What is sin? What is the cause of sin, and what is its cure? Vice, or gross immorality! What is vice? Listen to the poet:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Monday, April 4

Second Day

Many varied opinions are given in answer to these questions, and it is astonishing to see how much misinformation and wrong conceptions are entertained by those who attempt to answer. Even those who are trying to solve the problem of vice and how to deal with it are greatly confused in regard to the real causes that lie under all of these evil manifestations.

We hear remarks like this, "that it is highly improbable that gambling, alcoholism, prostitution, drug addiction and other forms of vice can ever be stamped out." Among the reasons given the first is "the unchanging nature of human appetites" and that "as long as that shall remain there will be vice."

It is rather disheartening to hear such things as this, especially when they further say that there will probably be no change—no appreciable change—in the next few millennia, or next few thousand years.

How well do I remember my father's family prayer and the impressions made upon me in my childhood of the impending judgments which were about to be poured out upon the wicked and ungodly. Let me repeat a part of it as I recall it to my memory :

Remember the young and rising generation. May they not wander into by and forbidden paths; but may they walk in that straight and narrow way that leadeth unto life eternal. Hold them, as in the hollow of thy hand, that no harm or evil may befall them. Frustrate the plans and machinations of the evil and ungodly; may they fail in all their evil undertakings; may they be caught in their own snares, and fall into their own pits, which they set and dig at the feet of thy people. Hasten the day when sin and iniquity shall be banished from the face of the earth, and righteousness shall predominate and cover the earth, even as the waters cover the mighty deep.

Well, that day is not yet come; but I am still looking for it and feel now as I did then that it is at our very doors and still entertain the thought that I may yet live to see it for I am still quite young—only four score years and three. But, whether I live or not I feel quite sure we shall not have to wait for another three or four thousand years in order to witness that glorious day when Christ shall appear in the clouds of glory—when this earth shall be renewed and receive its paradisaical glory, and inaugurate the great millennial reign of peace—when sin and iniquity shall be banished from the earth, and truth and righteousness shall prevail and Satan shall be bound—that old serpent, called the devil who, with his angels, was cast out of heaven into the earth and has wrought great havoc among the children of men, but now shall be bound, and sin shall be no more.

What absurd misconceptions men have of sin! They blame it on human nature. When they make such statements as that, it is a libel against Deity. Human nature is not evil. Man has been fashioned and formed in the image of God, not only in his physical image, but in all of his divine attributes. There are no evil ones. Man possesses every one of them; as a child of God he has inherited them from his divine parents. We are God-like—not sensual and devilish—by nature.

This is fully explained in Section 20, verses 18, 19 and 20 of the

Doctrine and Covenants, where it is stated that in the beginning God gave holy commandments unto men, but because they transgressed those holy commandments they have become sensual and devilish.

It is true that men have become devilish and sensual through transgression, but they are not by nature so; that is quite a different matter. By nature they are divine, formed and fashioned in the image of God, inheriting from him all of his divine attributes. God possesses those attributes fully developed—in their perfect form;—mankind, the children of God, possess them in embryo and in very imperfect form, but with infinite potentialities for development, and in the course of our eternal progress there is opportunity that we may perfect them and become indeed like God—which is the divine purpose in our being here on earth. Then do not blame it upon human nature, for our appetites, our passions, and natural urges are divine and are all designed for our happiness and well-being, and only through transgression do they become evil—when perverted, distorted or corrupted.

In considering the problem of sin, if we are to have proper understanding there are some things that must be understood which are frequently lost sight of by those who undertake to discuss this vital and ever present subject. Let me explain:

While it is true that these attributes may be developed to their divine perfection, it is also true that they may be perverted, distorted and counterfeited until they become vices, all depending upon the individual and his choice, in the exercise of his free agency—whether he chooses the good or the evil. In this conflict there are two influences that are brought to bear upon him. On the one hand “the spirit of Christ is given to every man that he may know good from evil.” (Book of Mormon, Moroni 7:16.) This spirit is ever striving to lead us to God. And, on the other hand “that which is evil cometh from the devil, for the devil is an enemy unto God and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin and to do that which is evil continually.” (Moroni 7:12) Thus, it will be seen that God is ever present to guard and protect us and deliver us from all evil. He is unchangeable for he has said: “I am the Lord, I change not.” And then, too, Satan, with unrelenting zeal is endeavoring to carry out his evil purposes in leading men away from God and hence unto darkness and the bondage of sin, and “to do that which is evil continually.” He shows no signs of reformation. The devil is absolutely incorrigible, and this is what the criminologists sometimes overlook and blame to “the unchanging nature of human appetites.”

Are God's purposes failing simply because sin and iniquity continue to exist among us? Nay, not so. This is an individual fight against sin. The generations of men come and go and each generation and each individual member is in the position where he must act for himself and choose between good and evil. Some choose the good and some choose the evil. Some choose to walk in the “light” and others “love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil”—and all shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

How could we be judged unless we had a knowledge of good and evil? If we had no knowledge of good and evil we could commit no sin. Without free agency we could commit no sin. The spirit of Christ is striving with the children of men always. That is the light of Christ that has been given to every man. "That is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." "If we walk in the light," we are told, "even as he is in the light, then have we fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

But, the devil came also, and his power and influence is manifest among us and we see how he has made havoc with many; but always because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord. We meet our adversary every day of our lives. We may not see him, nor his angels, for they kept not their first estate and have no bodies of flesh and bones. We may not see them with our natural eyes, but they are here. We feel their presence, and we know that we are in the midst of them.

All evil comes from that source. Every temptation to do wrong, every allurements to sin, every departure from the will of God is inspired by those evil spirits who are abroad in the world, seeking to draw men and women away from God. To hearken unto the devil and his followers is sin. To draw nigh unto God is virtue. Drawing nigh to God is faith. Resisting the devil is repentance. Therefore: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh to you." These two principles then—faith and repentance—should be the governing principles of all human conduct whether in the Church or out of it.

There is no virtue in doing good under compulsion and likewise there is no vice in doing evil under compulsion. And, furthermore, if we had no knowledge of good and evil, sin would be impossible. Where there is no law there can be no condemnation. We are only responsible for that which we do in the exercise of our free agency, and according to the light—or knowledge of good and evil, which has been given us.

For this reason God has endowed us with these divine attributes and our problem is to develop these and all the others through obedience to the will of God and to reject the devil's substitutes or counterfeits.

Let me enumerate a few of these divine attributes which our Heavenly Father has transmitted to his sons and daughters dwelling upon the earth and to indicate how they may become vices under diabolical influences. Every virtue has its kindred vice. For example:

1. *Economy* becomes stinginess. Some men think they are economical when, as a matter of fact, they are only stingy. How I hate a stingy man.

2. *Self Esteem* becomes egotism, a miserable substitute for a divine attribute.

3. *Pride* becomes vanity. I think it must be vanity "that goeth before the fall."

4. *Fear* is a divine attribute and must not be confused with coward-

ice. "Be not afraid of the face of man, but fear God and keep his commandments." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Even the Lord would fear to do evil.

5. *Acquisitiveness*, or thrift—the faculty that enables one to acquire wealth; but when perverted becomes greed and avarice, these soul destroying vices—the love of money which we are told is the root of all evil. What will not men do when this divine attribute is perverted into greed and avarice—into the "love of money"? They will lie for it; they will cheat and misrepresent for it; they will steal for it; they will kill for it; and thus it becomes the cause of all our strife and contention, our wars, and destroys the peace and happiness of mankind.

6. *Faith*, a sublime and saving attribute of Deity. A minister, not orthodox however, once said to me: "There is one thing you have in your Church which I don't like." "And what is that?" I inquired. "That is what you call faith." "What's the matter with faith?" again I inquired. "Just think," he said, "to believe everything you hear." "But sir, you have mistaken faith for credulity. The Lord does not want us to believe everything we hear." What does the Lord want us to believe? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

7. *Love*—This is the greatest of all the divine attributes—sometimes it is called Charity—which is the pure love of Christ. The biggest thing in all the world. Even *this*, under diabolical influences becomes *lust*—the very embodiment of everything that is vile—the devil's counterfeit. The greater, the holier, purer and nobler the divine attribute may be—all the more contemptible, vile and degrading is the devil's counterfeit.

Are there any virtues that may not be perverted or distorted? Any divine attributes that may not be corrupted? Any good thing whatever that some devil does not try to counterfeit?

Our government issues currency in various denominations—one, two and five dollar bills, ten, twenty, fifty and one hundred dollar bills (at least so I've heard), and these are legal tender all over our broad land, and easily exchanged in foreign lands, but some devil will make counterfeits and palm them off for genuine. Our government also issues gold and silver coins in various denominations, but some devil will take a baser metal and gild it over with gold and palm it off for genuine, but they are all counterfeits. Then do not despise the pure gold of religion because the devil makes a counterfeit of it in hypocrisy. Beware of counterfeits, there are many, many false religions. There is only one that is genuine, namely, the religion of our Lord, the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity as restored to the earth in the day and age in which we live, through Joseph Smith, the Prophet.

The trouble with many men is that they resist God and draw nigh unto the devil. Even many men of science say "We cannot admit God into our laboratories." Why not? Let me say to them: "When you close the front door, against God, automatically you open the back door and let the devil in."

Let no man think that I disparage the scientists. Nothing could

be farther from the truth. Nor do I underestimate the wonderful achievements they have rendered and are now rendering in service to humanity. On the contrary—I glory in their achievements in bringing truth to light, and sincerely wish that success may crown their efforts even though I may discount some of their vague theories.

Inasmuch as we are God's children, possessing his divine attributes, there is real meaning in the Savior's admonition: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Let me now revert to the previous question, propounded at the beginning of my remarks. What is sin? What is its cause and what is its cure?

In what I have said I have endeavored to make answer to these questions.

All this, however, suggests another question: What is the purpose of it all and why does the Lord permit this evil opposition? For a direct answer to this question, let me cite to you the following:

And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.

Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other. (2nd Nephi 2:15, 16.)

We have also seen the two opposing influences, the one the spirit of Christ leading and enticing us to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, thus leading us to God; and the other, the devil enticing men to partake of the forbidden fruit, thus leading us away from God and to our destruction.

The divine purpose, therefore, is made plain: Our Heavenly Father like any natural father desires to bring us back into his presence, to dwell with him in his celestial kingdom throughout the endless ages of Eternity; but before this can be brought about we must be sanctified from all unrighteousness that we may be prepared for celestial glory. (See D. and C., Sec. 88:18) No unclean thing can enter there. Obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the necessary preparation, for in this provision is made for the remission of all our sins, "even though they be as scarlet, yet shall we be made as white as wool," washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God. Now, therefore, here is the cure, a panacea for every ill: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ whom God hath sent to atone for all our sins. Repent, for "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." And be baptized by immersion for the remission of your sins by one who is duly commissioned of Jesus Christ to perform that sacred ordinance, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by a duly authorized servant of God.

This is God's plan—it is the only way. Let all men give heed and may the Lord add his blessing I humbly pray, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.