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The Book of Abraham - Its Genuineness Established, Chapter III

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Abstract: Abraham as a preacher of righteousness. The testimony of Paul. His ministry in Ur and Haran. God's covenant with him based on the Gospel.

for the application of the Gospel that God had sent to save sinners; and Peter said, "Repent, every one of you, and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now, this is the doctrine of the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: To every soul who believes in Jesus we say, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." This is a strange doctrine, but it is a scriptural one.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM—ITS GENUINENESS ESTABLISHED.

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

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CHAP. III.

Abraham as a preacher of righteousness. The testimony of Paul. His ministry in Ur and Haran. God's covenant with him based on the Gospel.

Paul, the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians writes: "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." The record of the covenant made by the Almighty, contained in the Book of Genesis, conveys no intimation that the promise that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, was in any way connected with the preaching of the Gospel; we must, therefore, conclude that the Apostle quoted from some other authority, or that the Book of Genesis, as handed down to us in the Bible, has been mutilated or abridged. It is quite possible that both views are correct. Paul had unquestionably other sources of information with regard to God's dealings with the father of the faithful, than those possessed by modern Christendom, it is also exceedingly probable that the early Scriptures have not been handed down to us in their integrity. No matter, this does not affect the subject under consideration, the point to which we desire to draw attention is, that the book of Abraham sustains the Apostle's statements that the covenant was based upon the preaching of the Gospel, whilst Paul's testimony on the

other hand, confirms the veracity of Abraham's record.

The covenant, as given by the latter, is as follows: "And the Lord appeared unto me, and said unto me, arise and take Lot with thee, for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession when they hearken to my voice. For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in heaven, the earth is my footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot; I say to the mountains, depart hence, and behold they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning, therefore my hand shall be over thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; and I will bless them through thy name: for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy priesthood) and thy seed (that is, thy priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy

seed after thee (that is to say the literal seed or seed of the body), shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal."

We would here ask, what salvation could be brought to the heathen, how could they be justified through faith by the preaching of the Gospel to Abraham, if power and authority were not given him to preach its glad tidings? and again, how could they be benefited thereby if he did not avail himself of the privilege thus given of becoming a preacher of righteousness to his fellow man? Furthermore, we ask, is it reasonable to suppose that he, who was to be father of that race in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed by the preaching of God's word, would not himself be a type of what such messengers of salvation should be? Is it supposable he would hold his peace and leave the work of regeneration entirely to his posterity, when it was promised that through the eternal truths revealed to him all mankind should regain the presence of their God? We think not, and further, we imagine that this record would lack consistency if some reference was not made to his ministry and labors. And several such references we actually find, more or less direct and conclusive, with regard to his acts as a priest of the Most High. In fact the whole of his writings are pervaded with this spirit and are full of his anxieties to be a preacher of truth and righteousness. The opening paragraph of his book abounds with this feeling, indeed it contains nothing else: he writes "finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same, having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace; and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir,* a High

Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers, it was confirmed upon me from the fathers; * * I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed." After the attempt of the priest of Pharaoh to take his life, the Almighty tells him, "Behold I will lead thee by the hand, and I will take thee to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee. As it was with Noah so shall it be with thee that through thy ministry my name shall be known in the earth for ever, for I am thy God." Still further on the Lord says: "I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land." Not only in Canaan was he to be a messenger of God's word, but the Almighty afterwards tells him, "I shew these things unto thee before ye go down into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words."

Thus, we find that Abraham having sought for the privilege of becoming a preacher of righteousness, in answer to his desire the priesthood was given to him with the command to magnify it. It is not probable that such a man would fail in the hour of action. The friend of God and father of the faithful was one "who knew no such word as fail," in carrying out heaven's commands. That he did proclaim the law of the Lord wherever he went, is evidenced by his statement that in his youthful home in Ur, his kinsfolk utterly refused to hearken to his voice. So earnest did he become in his advocacy of the truth, that his death was decided upon even by his father, and he did not flinch from the issue, but the angel of God reached him from the sacrificial altar; his work was not yet done. In another place he states, "I took the souls that we had won in Haran and came forth in the way of the land of Canaan." We shall presently discover by outside testimony

"the records of the fathers, even the Patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in my own hands." By this means, amongst others, he no doubt learned that he was "a rightful heir."

* Abraham, in another place, states that

that his ministrations were not alone confined to Ur and Haran.

We feel fully persuaded that Abraham was not only great in his unflinching integrity and his unswerving faith, but he was also great as a leader of men—he commanded his children and his household after him—and as a preacher of the divine word. We hold this opinion from the fact that his power in these directions is frequently referred to by ancient writers and because the effects of the preaching of God's holy word can be traced in Gospel ideas mixed with the follies of heathenism in the mythology and religions of almost every leading nation of antiquity.

We have shown from the Book of Abraham, that in early life the Patriarch desired to become a preacher of righteousness, that God conferred the

Priesthood upon him in answer to his desires, and commanded him to proclaim the truths He revealed, and furthermore, that Abraham joyously fulfilled his command. It is not to be supposed that strangers could tell the world much about Abraham's desires, or the Lord's covenants with him, but we can substantiate, from a multitude of sources, that as a preacher of righteousness the Patriarch has left his mark indelibly inscribed on the history of the world. That indeed as God promised so He has fulfilled and has made Abraham's "name great among all nations," and has also brought to pass His gracious promise "Through thy (Abraham's) ministry my name shall be known in the earth for ever."

To prove this will be our pleasure in the succeeding chapters.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

G E M S .

BAD COMPANY.—Did you ever touch pitch and find that it stuck to your fingers, so that you could not get rid of it for days? Such is the influence of a bad companion. His foul words and deeds may defile your mind and soul, so that you never can wash out the black stain.

Some one, speaking of New Year's presents, says: "The best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to your opponent, tolerance; to a friend your heart; to your children, a good example; to your father, deference; to your mother, love; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity; to God, obedience.

Just as a pebble dropped into a pond will cause a swell to pass over the whole surface of the water, so the personal influence of the individual will be felt in society, extending to an incredible distance. If, therefore, the success of or disaster to the individuals is felt by society, that which tends to improve his condition, morally, intellectually, or financially, contributes also to the general good, producing prosperity.

It is better that men should soon make up their minds to be forgotten, and look about them or within them for some higher motive in what they do than the approbation of men, which is Fame; namely, their duty; they should be constantly and quietly at work, each in his sphere, regardless of effects, and leaving their fame to take care of itself. * * * Fame comes only when deserved, and then is as inevitable as destiny, for it is destiny.—*Longfellow.*

Do instantly whatever is to be done; take the hours of reflection or recreation after business and never before it. When a regiment is under march, the rear is often thrown into confusion because the front does not move steadily and without interruption. If that which is first in hand is not instantly, steadily, and regularly despatched, other things accumulate behind, until affairs begin to press all at once and no human brain can stand the confusion. Pray mind this—it is one of your weak points, a habit of mind that is very apt to beset men of intellect and talents, especially when their time is not filled up regularly, but is left to their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion.