

THE FULNESS OF THE GOSPEL

Rev. Joseph H. Smith

Bread, water, clothing, rest, education, employment and company are all assured the Christian in the gospel: "I am the Bread of Life." Let him come unto me and drink." "Buy of me white raiment." "I will give you rest." "Learn of me." "Take my yoke upon you." "We will come unto him and make our abode with him."

These analogies tell us that the requirements of our bodies are but illustrative of corresponding requirements of our souls. As nature is but a material and physical facsimile of the spiritual universe, man's body is an earthly vestment of his immortal spirit. So well fitted is the vestment to the being within it, and so well adapted to its temporary environment and employment, that the functions and demands of the one disclose the nature and needs of the other. My body, however, does not fully express my soul; but only its relations to this earthly arena. Christ would impress us that, "The life is more than meat." That water has no lasting satisfaction and that we will thirst, and must drink again. The water that he offers will continue to "spring up to everlasting life." That what we labor for here will perish with the using; but that the industry he proposes for us will be for that which endureth. That they even who ate of the bread that Moses gave are all dead; but those who eat of the Bread which he giveth shall live forever.

The tragedy of humanity is that men act and live as if they were only flesh, whereas the body is but our shell. They look at the world as if it were the universe, whereas it is only a floating bubble soon to be pricked. They regard themselves either as if they were going to continue thus and here always, or else were altogether mortal and death will end all.

Now, the true importance of the present life is that it furnishes man's only chance to secure the life eternal for which his immortal nature capacitates him. This is the only world in which Christ ever appears as a Saviour. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the Judgment." It is altogether for the deeds done in the body that we must give account. Hence the relative significance of the body is incalculable, while the intrinsic value of the same is but infinitesimal in comparison with that of the imperishable soul. Besides supplying the instruments with which the soul is to decide its character and determine its destiny in earth's arena during the short tenure of time, the body would acquaint us with the soul's needs in order to life eternal, by its own demands for the life that now is, as the body must eat and drink and sleep for its earthly ends. The soul must have the Bread of Life, and the Living Water, and the Rest of God in order to live forever. These they can find in Jesus for he says: "I am the Bread of Life," "Come unto me and drink," "I will give you rest." And only while here on earth can we come to him.

But as yet we have only touched the needs of the flesh, not those of the mind. Listen then again: "Learn of me." Is there a similar correspondence between our brains' need and cravings for knowledge of the things and laws of this world, to the soul's demands for the knowledge of him that made the world and of the Kingdom of heaven? Yes! The truth is that knowledge is essential in order to eternal

life. No more surely do we need the knowledge of the senses to get along at all in this world, and the knowledge of reason, than we need spiritual knowledge to enter heaven. Christ had spoken plainly on this: "This," says he, "is life eternal that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And when he presented their names to the Father as eligible to the blessings of perfection here and of glory hereafter, he said "They have known that I came out from thee and thou hast sent me." This was their credential and capability. When Paul was outlining the church's way to the "fulness of Christ" he said it was "by the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God." Hence, no invitation of Christ is more to be prized or more eagerly accepted than this where he says, "Learn of me."

He is not only "Bread" and "Water" and "Rest;" he is made unto us Wisdom. As the Water he gives our souls in infinitely and eternally more refreshing than that our bodies drink and then thirst again, so the wisdom of God in Christ Jesus is heaven higher than the learning of the princes of this world. God is quite content to let us find the learning of this passing world in halls of Science even as he allows us to find the means we need in mines of gold, but for the treasures that are imperishable and incorruptible, and the wisdom that is "from above," and that shines upon the Way of Life, we must "Come unto Christ."

The cardinal branches in the Learning of Christ are: The knowledge of God, the knowledge of Redemption, the knowledge of Holiness, the knowledge of the Hereafter.

The character of this knowledge is as transcendent as its themes. It surpasses not only the senses, but the reason as well. It is of the nature of a divine demonstration to our highest intelligence, so that it becomes a settled cognizance of the truth, somewhat like and much more certain than our consciousness of physical life or of earthly relationships and possessions. Jesus said of it: "We testify that we do know." "We know that we do know." Paul testifying for himself as to one classic in the course, notes these three stages in his progress: "I am instructed," "I have learned," "I know."

Christ is both Teacher and Lesson in this school. We are to learn from him and to learn of him. He invites us to study himself saying: "I am meek and lowly in heart." We are not only to know this about him, we must learn it of him. His crucifixion is to be transmitted into us, so that the pride of our nature is to be lost in his lowliness. The stubbornness of our self-will is to vanish in his meekness. Nor must we be "ever learning and never coming to the knowledge."

A crowning prophecy concerning Christians in this dispensation was that: "They shall be all taught of God." A leading feature in the Lord's promises of the Comforter was that: "He will guide you into all truth." "Bring to your remembrance the things that I have spoken unto you." All may have the Comforter thus to teach them. This too is seen in words written by Paul to the Ephesians, who most probably had never seen the Lord in the flesh, yet he speaks as though they certainly had, saying, "Ye have heard him and been taught by him." (Eph. 4:21). So we may all "learn of him." What the personal teaching of Christ was to the apostles the teaching of his Spirit is to us.

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM"

"That I might know him"—let this be life's aim,

Still to explore the wealth stored in His name.
With heaven-taught intelligence to trace
The glories that light up His sinless face:

That I might know His power day by day—
Protecting, guiding in the upward way:
That I might know His Presence, calm and
pure,
Changeless midst changes, and midst losses
sure.

To dwell with Him, in spirit, day and night,
To walk with Him, by faith, if not by sight,
To work with Him, as He shall plan—not I,
To cleave to Him, and let the world go by.

To live on earth a life of selfless love,
To set the mind and heart on things above,
Till I shall see Him without vision dim,
And know Him, as I know I'm known of Him.

—Max I. Reich

TITHING

Low W. Woods

Ministers are criticized for speaking of money or the tithe, by those who think the tithe was only for those under the Old Testament economy.

Have you ever stopped to consider that the subject of money to some degree entered into the majority of the sermons and parables of our Lord? One verse in every six in Matthew, Mark and Luke speak in some way of money; and sixteen of Christ's parables, thirty-eight in all, speak of the right and wrong use of money. The majority of folk need to get out their Bible, dust it off, and get down to the business of finding out the real scriptural basis of giving.

Remember to "bring all the tithes" into the storehouse (Mal. 3:10), and give liberally unto the Lord, regularly, every week, as directed in I. Cor. 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II. Cor. 9:7). Let us give according to God's Word, as in Deut. 16:17, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee." We should give without ostentation, "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matt. 6:3). Let us give freely and with all simplicity (Rom. 12:8).

Obey God, my friends, and remember that when we really get right with God spiritually we will have no difficulty in getting right with Him financially, and will cease robbing Him. One is not truly right with God spiritually unless he is square with Him in the matter of finance. Let us not forget for a moment that we must walk in the light and obey the Word. Perhaps you would not think of cheating someone out of some money, for that would be robbing him of that which is rightfully his; yet professing Christians today continue to rob God without giving it any thought, by withholding the tithe. Awaken now!—Church Herald—and Holiness Banner.