

THE TRUE CHRIST

18 November 1981

I shall speak of the Lord Jesus Christ who has bought us with his blood and by whom salvation comes.

The true doctrine of Christ is almost unknown in the world and is a mystery even to many members of the Church. It is something that is and can be known only by personal revelation.

The Holy Scriptures chart a course for us by recording what others have learned about the Lord Jesus and his mission and ministry, but if we are to stand where they stood and fain the blessings poured upon them, we must receive the same revelation. Paul himself said: "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but [it came] by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:12.) And as it was with Paul, so must it be with us.

Paul also said that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," and that Christ was sent him "to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words," but by the power of the Holy Ghost, "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness," he said, but unto the saints who have a hope of salvation, "it is the power of God."

Our mission is not to entertain; it is not to tickle the ears of men; it is not to build ourselves up as great personalities. Our commission is to "preach Christ crucified," unto some "a stumbling block," unto others "foolishness." (1 Cor. 1:17-23.)

Then our ancient apostolic friend said of himself: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2.)

And that is where we stand as modern apostles; our feet are planted alongside this of our ancient friends; we believe what they believed, and we preach what they preached.

We know as they knew that our Blessed Lord was the Firstborn of the Father; that in that primeval day he was like unto God; and that he, under the Father, was the Creator of this earth and of worlds without number.

We know as they knew that he was the Great Jehovah who made covenant with Abraham, his friend; that he was the God of Israel of whom all the prophets testified; and that he, as the Promised Messiah, was destined to be born of Mary, as the seed of David, in Bethlehem of Judea.

But, above all this, our preaching and our testimony, the very gospel we preach is "that Christ died for our sins; . . . And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day."

(1 Cor. 15:1-4), and that he has revealed himself anew to modern prophets through whose instrumentality his earthly kingdom has once again been established among men.

Salvation is in Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. By him redemption comes. He it is “who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Tim. 1:10.)

Of himself he said: “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” (Matt. 18:11.) And of him Paul said: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. 1:15.)

There is no way to overstate the glory and power and blessings of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If there had been no atonement there would be no resurrection, no immortality, no redemption from death. All men would remain forever in their graves.

If there had been no atonement there would be no eternal life, no redemption from spiritual death, no salvation, no continuation of the family unit in eternity. Instead, all men would become devils, angels to a devil, damned souls forever.

If there had been no atonement the very purposes of God would have been frustrated; there would have been no purpose in creation; God would have failed and thus ceased to be God.

And yet all these things must be placed in their proper perspective and in their relationship to the Father.

The Father is the Supreme Being. He is God above all. He is the one of whom the scripture says: “There is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them.”

He is the one who gave commandments unto men “that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.”

He is “the Almighty God [who] gave his Only Begotten Son” to be “crucified” for the sins of the world. (D&C 20:17-23.)

We glory in Christ, but we worship the Father. He is the ultimate source of all things and it is by him that all things are. The very atonement of Christ was brought to pass by the power of the Father.

The Father is the Author of the plan of salvation. It is his gospel that saves men. He ordained the laws whereby his spirit children—Christ included!—might have power to advance and progress and become like him.

Paul calls this the plan of salvation, “the gospel of God,” meaning the Father, “concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 1:1-3.) We now call it the gospel of Jesus Christ because he, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, through his atoning sacrifice, gave efficacy, virtue, and force to all its terms and conditions.

The Father is our God and he is Christ’s God. We worship the Father as also does the Son. It was to Mary Magdalene that the Risen Lord said: “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and to your God.” (John 20:17.)

We worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost. “True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth,” Jesus said, “for the Father seeketh to worship him. For unto such hath God promised his Spirit. And they who worship in spirit and in truth.” (JST, John 4:25-26.)

We pray to the Father and to him only. We do not pray to Christ; our prayers do not go through him or anywhere else while enroute to the Father; we do not pray to Jehovah; we do not pray to anyone except the Father; and we always pray in the name of Christ.

We do not seek some special relationship with Christ because he is our Elder Brother or our Redeemer or for any other reason; such is mark of spiritual maturity. Rather we follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus whose whole ministry was one of revealing the Father and inviting men to love and serve him as the prophets of old had done.

God sent his Son to atone for the sins of all men on conditions of repentance. This he did and if it were not for this atonement even our righteous deeds would be no more than filthy rags, as the biblical expression has it.

But God also sent his Son to reveal and make known the Father. God was in Christ manifesting himself to the world. Christ is the way to the Father and no man cometh into the Father but by him and by his law.

In the true and full and final sense of the word salvation is of the Father; it comes from him; it is his plan and system to save us and to save Christ. But salvation is available because of Christ and his atonement.

What then saith the holy word with reference to us, and to Christ who hath redeemed, and to God who is our Father and whom we worship?

It says that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” and that “all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.” God and Christ unite in bringing salvation to man.

It says that God “hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation,” which ministry us “that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” We have the holy gospel by which salvation comes.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though”—note it well—“as though God did beseech you by us.” Therefore, because we are the servants of the Lord “we pray you in Christs’ stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:17-20.)

And the holy word also says that Christ “is the Only Begotten Son of God,” who alone was “ordained to be a Mediator between God and man.” (JST, 1 Tim. 1:4.) He mediates our cause with the Father from whom we have been estranged through sin.

It says he makes “intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.” (2 Nephi 2:9.)

It says that he is our “advocate with the Father,” that he pleads our cause in the courts above. “Spare these my brethren that believe on my name,” he pleads, “that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.” (D&C 45:3-5.)

Who then is the true Christ whom we preach?

We preach a Christ who was God before the world was and who was foreordained to perform the grandest work known to men or Gods.

We preach a Christ who was born of Mary, whose Father is God, and who “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And [who] being formed in fashion as a man”—these are Paul’s words —“humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philip. 2:7-8.)

We preach a Christ who bore an unbearable burden in Gethsemane, which caused great gouts of blood to gush from every pore, as he took upon himself the sins of all men on conditions of repentance.

“We preach Christ crucified.” (1 Cor. 1:23), crucified with Roman nails held by Jewish hands, crucified on Calvary where during the last three hours of his mortal life, while darkness covered the earth, he suffered again the agonies of Gethsemane.

We preach a Christ who “was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up unto glory.” (1 Tim. 3:16.)

We preach a Risen Christ, one who burst the bands of death and came forth in glorious immortality, one who ascended to his Father to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and one who has revealed himself and his holy gospel to men again in our day.

And we also preach a Christ who shall soon come again to judge and rule and reign, a Christ, a Christ who now has all power in heaven and on earth, a Christ who is our Lord, our God, and our King.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philip. 2:10-11.)

And so now, because we have received the true knowledge of God and his Son we raise our voices in the Song of the Redeemed and say, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13.)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.