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LATTER DAY SAINTS.

A LETTER

FROM

THE REV. P. ALCOCK,

Baptist Minister, Berwick St. John's, Dorsetshire,

TO HIS NEPHEW,

E. H. WEBB,

*ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS,
BRISTOL, LATE OF CHELTENHAM.*

“The system altogether is rotten at the core, and therefore must come to the ground.”—See Page 3.

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LATTER DAY SAINTS

BY

WALTER G. BRADY

Author of "The Latter Day Saints and the Bible"

REVISED EDITION

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of the modern scribes and pharisees, made to evade the force of divine truth, I set as little value upon, as Paul the apostle did, on the things which while he was the persecuting Saul, he counted gain. The "attentive regard" I have "paid to the words of my gracious Redeemer" has led to the steps I have taken; for discovering, as I did, long before I knew that the Church of the Saints existed, that all Christendom was gone far away from the New Testament; when I found a people possessing that order among them, I had no power to resist such an appeal. I had for a long time like the prophet, "desired the first ripe fruit," but my soul had sickened with disappointment; but here I found a system of things, in every sense "congenial with my simple mind." And here, allow me for a moment, to remark, that had those *gracious cautions*" you speak of, been duly regarded, the falling away predicted by Paul, would not so soon have taken place, the man of sin, the antichrist, the wolves in sheeps clothing would not have made their appearance so soon in the christian era. The goers out spoken of by John; and the separatist alluded to by Jude, would never have risen up to produce schism and with it all its consequent evils. When those "*cautions*" were given, and indeed as long as they were *regarded*: there was "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; one body and one spirit," Eph. iv. 4. 5. But without going into a lengthy description of how the apostacy commenced, how the papal supremacy &c. had its rise, namely in the martyrdom of the Saints; and servants of Jesus Christ; the rejections of the simple truth; the substituting the doctrines, traditions, and precepts of men; in place of the doctrines of Christ; and uninspired men, mere hirelings for the priesthood, by him appointed: I say without entering into those particulars, the present state of the sectarian world, is, a sufficient proof, that the words of the *Redeemer* has not been heeded that his *cautions* has not been *regarded*; from the beginning, even from the days of our fathers, (the apostles) they have gone away from him, "and have turned the back, and not the face;" and the present generation are worse, for there was some distant resemblance to the oneness, and spirit of subordination; which is the true character of Christ Church, as long as the professing world held together, as in the instance of the papists: but the present generation spake every one out of the imagination of his own evil heart. And this, I consider, quite justifies me, in heeding the words of my "*precious Redeemer*," so as to leave Babylon with all her abominations; for truly, she is dreadfully fallen; and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Rev. xvi. 1. Time was, when the Church did well to beware of seducers; time is, the honest hearted will do well to forsake the harlots houses.

But doubtless you begin by this to ask if we condemn all besides ourselves?—I answer we condemn no man. But if by the Bible I can prove that all christendom—catholics, protestants, and dissenters of every cast, are without authority, departed from the order of the New Testament, and constituting the babylon (or confusion) of the Revelations; you must admit that the course I have steered is not only just, but laudable. Now all will agree that the papists being grossly corrupt, must be without any authority from God, for "*unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes.*" Ps. l. 16. So that admitting the Church of Rome to be originally pure, which was indeed the case, and possessing authority to administer in the holy religion of

Jesus Christ; when she fell from that purity, she lost that authority. Now the fact that she is fallen is proved, but then how came protestants and dissenters with authority or priesthood, seeing it was sinned away by the papists, before the protestants or dissenters were known; "*no man taketh this honour upon himself, saith Paul, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.*" Heb. v. 4. Now is it clear Aaron was called by revelation, and was ordained by one who possessed authority. Exo. iv. We might trace this subject through the new testament, and prove that all the apostles, and all who possessed any authority to administer in the ordinances of God, were called in like manner, that is to say by revelation; but then, all protestants and dissenters deny the possibility of receiving any revelation later than the Bible! and in doing so they prove themselves to be destitute of all authority, but what they derived from the mother of abominations! and their present multiplied sections, and their diversified opinions, are the natural results of having no *apostles*, "*nor prophets, nor gifts of the Holy Ghost!* &c. which God has put in the Church for the work of the ministry; the edifying of the body; the perfecting of the Saints, until we all come in the unity of the faith. That we be henceforth no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." Eph. iv. Mark, the Lord has set in the Church apostles and prophets, and the gift for this purpose. But where are the gifts; where are tongues; where are interpretations; prophesyings; healings; discerning of spirits and miracles; where are prophets; where are apostles; where are evangelists, &c.? And if these are not, where is the Church? or allowing for the sake of argument, the present *confusion* to be the Church; how can it be edified; how can the Saints be perfected; how can the members be preserved from being carried about by every wind, when the means (or instrumentality) appointed by God himself is wanting, or not to be found? No wonder then, that all should be built upon the sand, or mere opinion; no wonder that such an abundance of conflicting jargon should be continually teeming forth from the pulpit and the press! no need to wonder, at all the attempts of such multitudes of men made priests, to spiritualize or explain away the sacred scriptures. And I ask, was it any wonder that God having opened my eyes to see all this, and discovering where the true Church of Jesus Christ did in reality exist; where were apostles; prophets; pastors; evangelists; teachers and the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and holy men and women walking in all the commandments of God; blessed with communion with the father and the son; endowed with revelations from heaven; favoured with the company of holy angels; and in fellowship with the spirits of just men made perfect; all of one faith; combined together by one order of things, and walking in love? Was it I ask, any wonder that I should leave such a mass of confusion, as that of which the present world with all its boasted pretensions is made up of, to join a people possessing every qualification to constitute them the Church of the Lamb?

Respecting the sermon, which you say was delivered by a simpleton, &c. I beg leave to observe that as you did not hear it, and had not the means of knowing its contents, it never having appeared in print; the manner you have spoken of it, reflects but little honour upon yourself. It led me to reflect upon the words of the apostle Peter, these as natural brute beast, spake evil of things they understand not &c.; thus you have been pleased to designate what you had not the means of *understanding*,

A COPY OF A LETTER

FROM THE

REV. P. ALCOCK, BAPTIST MINISTER,
&c. &c.

My Dear Nephew,

Yours of the 20th inst. came duly to hand, and it is indeed a long time since I heard from you, but not so long since I heard of you. And I assure you I am extremely sorry, that I should have a nephew who once professed to love the precious Redeemer, and yet so inattentive to his gracious cautions, in his blessed word.—Certainly you must have read Matt. xxiv. 4, 5, 11, &c. with many other such important cautions.

I would quite as soon have heard Balaam's ass roar, as to have heard the Latter Day Sermon you spake of; and it would have done you quite as much good: for be assured it was a composition of nonsense, and an awful perversion of God's word; and delivered by a novice, and a simpleton. How, in the name of common sense, could you be so simple, as to let such a poor weak deluded creature, commit such *blasphemy*, as to put his hands on your head, and tell you that you should have the Holy Ghost descend upon you?—I would much rather have a pig's foot on my head, if it was well boiled. You, to be so simple as to leave God's faithful minister, and his Church and people, to associate with those that I hope you will live long enough to be ashamed of. The Lord give you timely repentance for your folly, and bring you back to run from them while you can. God forbid that your Uncle should ever come into your secret; what would your poor mother think of you. The system is altogether rotten at the core, and therefore must come to the ground.

Pray, who has commanded you to baptize people living in sin; is not repentance for sin, and faith in the blessed Jesus, necessary qualifications for baptism? You go on to say you have brought about one hundred into the church, &c. the Lord forgive you, and those poor deluded creatures also! I consider the elder and the younger to be upon a level, and as much out of their right minds, as any inmate in any madhouse in the nation. Can you please to inform me how long you

think it will be before the kingdom of the simple Saints will break in pieces every other kingdom?

My advice is, that you preach your farewell sermon to them next sabbath, and be sure to tell them how sorry you are for your folly.—If you do not do this, you will soon; for they will be sure to come to nothing; for they have turned from nothing to nothing, and I should fear there was not a Saint among them; if so, he must be under strong delusion. But setting aside the nonsense of the simple Saints, write soon.

Our united regard to yourself, wife, &c.

Your affectionate Uncle,

Berwick St. Johns, near Shaftsbury,
Sept. 27, 1842.

T H F R E P L Y,

My dear Uncle,

Your's of the 27th I received, and was pleased to find that you are all well; which I feel grateful. I am able to say is our case. The chief reason I did not write to you before was because I wished to have a personal interview with you first, knowing the power and readiness of satan to pervert, or misrepresent, a sentence or a clause that is given in writing, or in any way, where the author is not at hand to correct an apparent mistake; besides feeling assured, that the Lord has the same way of saving now, as in the Apostles time, which was "*by the foolishness of preaching.*" 1. Cor. i. 21. I therefore put very little confidence in the production of my pen. But you say though "it has been a long time since you heard from me, it has not been so long since you heard of me." You were doubtless informed by your wretched sister-in-law, Mrs. P. somewhat concerning my joining the Saints. But did she tell you, she sought me repeatedly, and twice was disappointed in her expectations of being baptized? And when I did perform that solemn rite, although she professed her faith in "*the blessed Jesus,*" and her repentance towards God; and avowed her determination to go on to perfection, I had an impression soon after that she would fall away; which soon took place, notwithstanding she realised that the gift of healing was in the Church immediately afterward! or else she lied to the Holy Ghost for she positively said so in my presence!!

You say you are extremely sorry for me, this I at first felt inclined to believe, but as I proceeded to read your letter, I began from its burlesqueing style, to guess it to be a mere mode of expression; but be this as it may, I thank you for the compliment. I truly "*once professed to love the precious Redeemer,*" and I still profess to love him, and can say in the language of Peter, and appeal to him this moment while I write, thou that knowest all things, know that I love thee, and have esteemed and still do esteem the words of his mouth more than my necessary food; I so value his words that "I count all things but dung and dross" that come in contact with them. Yes, all the spiritualisings, and perversions

“ a composition of nonsense, and an awful perversion of God’s word,” whereas, I know it to be a faithful declaration of divine truth; not in an isolated form, but in its connective bearings. You say, you would as soon have heard Balaam’s ASS ROAR, as to have heard the sermon!! and let me tell you, I guess from the spirit you seem to manifest, that the sermon in your case, heard by you would have proved, not like the roaring of Balaam’s ass, but like the talking of Balaam’s ass, which rebuked the madness of the prophet! Peter ii. 16.

You ask “ How I could be so simple as to let such a poor deluded creature put his hands on my head, that I might receive the Holy Ghost?” That he was *poor*, I allow; he was poor, as it regards the things of this world; he was poor, but making many rich! And I was *soft* and *weak enough* to believe, that the man who had told me the truth in other matters, that had preached the gospel in its ancient purity and fullness, was not attending to this ordinance without authority; and of this the Lord certified me within one hour afterwards by the Holy Ghost: though you have been pleased to call this ancient and holy ordinance BLASPHEMY! But take head, dear uncle; I hope this will be regarded among your sins of ignorance. Your preferring a pig’s foot to attending to this Holy Ordinance, reminds me of the choice of all the unclean herd, the swine of our day to an individual, prefer their own race to any other; and generally speaking, something for their bellies is their first pursuit.

As to “ leaving God’s faithful minister, and his church and people;” I feel grateful that I have not yet done so, and I pray for grace to preserve me in the future. If I had considered Mr. Smith’s church to be Christ’s church, I should not have left it; but as it regards Mr. Smith himself I have nothing to say more than he was nigher the truth than many, though far from the order of the New Testament. Nevertheless in as much as he or any other man walk up to the light that is afforded them, so be they do not wilfully reject greater light when it come to them, the Lord will bless them accordingly.

I have no doubt I shall have occasion to be ashamed of many who will unite with us, and call themselves Saints, but I trust there are already thousands I shall never be ashamed of! and whatever some of them may prove to be, truth is truth still, and the work of God is the work of God, and I know that the Church of the Saints is it. Yes, dear Uncle, I hope as long as I am a poor frail creature, I shall have grace given me to repent of my sins, and put away my follies; but should I do as you advise me, to run away from the Saints, I know I *can* if I please, but in so doing I should run from the truth; I should run from the Church of Christ; I should commit the unpardonable sin; I should seal up my damnation; there would be no forgiveness for me in this world, nor in that which is to come; for as I before repeated, so say I again, I do know this work to be of God, and that by the Holy Ghost! I could not deny the work, without sinning against the Holy Ghost whether you come into the secret or not.

Respecting “ what my beloved mother would think?” I do not go by living men’s opinions much less dead ones, though you have gone to work in a true modern stile, directed your arrows at the feelings; I venerate the memory of my mother, but do not pin my faith to her sleeve: though I have no doubt if she was living, she would embrace the fullness of the gospel; but she never heard it, and therefore cannot be condemned for rejecting it.

You say "the system is altogether rotten at the core," perhaps you say this judging from its transient stay upon earth, when set up in the days of Jesus Christ and the former day apostles? but you remember it was not because the system was rotten at the core, but the beast was to make war with the Saints, and prevail against and overcome them. The core of the system is the holy priesthood, which is again restored to the earth! this is the horns of Joseph, which gives the Saints the strength of a unicorn, by which they will push the people together to the ends of the earth; and by which they will thresh the mountains &c. ! but I should prefer speaking on this subject by word of mouth. Perhaps I shall come round your way soon, and give you a convincing proof that this work is not so likely to "come to the ground," as you might wish.

Your burlesque upon what the Lord has wrought by me, fails of producing the effect you doubtless designed. Nay, I feel to rejoice therefore; I am very willing to be considered deluded; a novice and a simpleton! and to be a companion with those that are so used, by such who are "wiser in their own conceits, than ten men that can render a reason;" remember, "the world by wisdom never found out God." And you seem to have the same spirit the world possessed, when it taunted the Redeemer and told him he had a devil and was mad; when it called the preaching of the cross foolishness, and said Paul was beside himself; but as Paul said, so we say, if we are beside ourselves, it is to God, we are just so much beside ourselves, as to believe that the word of God means what it says, and accordingly we act upon it. Yes, as professing Saints, we are so deluded as to think that it requires the same in one age to constitute men Saints as in another; that to be the children of Abraham, we must have the faith of Abraham; which admitted visions, revelations; the gift of healings; fellowship with angels; and even with God himself, &c. ! So deluded, as to admit and even insist upon repentance, as a necessary qualification for baptism, and that baptism is for remission of sins. So deluded, as to believe in, and lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost! So deluded, as to believe that no man has a right to preach a different gospel, or a different order of things now from what Peter taught on the day of Pentecost, and call it the gospel, and that should men or angels attempt it, in so doing they must bring down the curse of God upon their heads! Again we are so deluded, as to believe in the personal reign of Christ upon earth! and that the meek of every age, shall inherit with him all the blessings that shall be common to all the Saints when he appeareth. And then will every plant, that has not been planted by our Heavenly Father, be rooted up! all religious systems that men has formed demolished!! and GREAT BABEL FALL!!! Then, "shall the kingdom of the Saints, have broken in pieces every other kingdom." Daniel ii. 42, vii. 18, 27.

I have duly considered the advice you gave me, respecting preaching my farewell sermon to the Saints; not that your remarks in any wise led to the slightest intention of leaving the Saints, yet as the idea had never struck me, I now felt determined to act upon it, and accordingly I preached my farewell sermon last sabbath evening; not to the Saints, nor the doctrines of Jesus Christ, but to sectarianism; and the following was my text, "from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii. 5.

As it regards your prediction of the Saints "coming to nothing," I do not consider it worthy of notice, as you have founded it upon an assertion without proof, and that assertion might easily be proved to amount to something short of the truth, and therefore I believe that the prediction will prove like it; to say that we came from nothing, are nothing, and will come to nothing, is equivalent to saying we never did, do not, nor ever will exist; to which I answer fourteen years ago we did not exist; twelve years ago, the sixth of last April, the Church of the Saints existed in the persons of six men; in April, 1842, our numbers was calculated at between two and three millions; considerable additions has been made since; and what twelve years more will do I will not venture to predict, but I do hope, and earnestly pray, that by that time, it may extend to every nation under heaven.—Amen.

I remain, dear Uncle, your very humble and affectionate Nephew,

Bristol, October 4, 1842. B. H. WEBB, L. D. S.

Taylor, Printer, 89, Temple Street, Bristol.