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Questions and Answers - On Administering the Sacrament

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family—embracing several branches—that are working themselves out of the Church by it. They persist in judging all other doctrines by their interpretation of that. That, and their construction of it, is the paramount issue. Being subject to the Priesthood, and learning wisdom from its power, is considered as nothing. The whole work of God is “out of joint” because this new interpretation—no matter what it is—remains unheeded or neglected.

And so one might go on enumerating hobbies that people in the Church are riding. Boys, work diligently, study zealously, keep the commandments, but don't ride a hobby; however, if you must have one, let it be so broad, so great, so magnificent, so general, that it shall cover the whole plan of salvation, the whole scheme of human ethics, the whole truth, “all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal,” and the “many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” that he will yet reveal.

Joseph F. Smith.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

On Administering the Sacrament.

Is it proper, according to Church laws, in administering the sacrament when two or more are officiating, for two to kneel together; or should only one kneel at a time?

The reader is referred to the Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 20: 75-79, and to the Book of Mormon, Moroni 4: 1, 3; 5: 1,2. It is customary and proper for the two who officiate in the administration of the sacrament to kneel together while the prayer is being said. In the early part of the history of the Church, when the congregations were not so large as they are now, it was not unusual for the congregation also to kneel, but it is now both customary and proper for those two who administer the holy sacrament to kneel with the congregation; and it is also in conformity with what would seem to have been the custom of the ancient inhabitants of this continent, as declared in Moroni 4: 2: “And they did kneel down with the Church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ saying,” etc.

This matter, however, may be regulated by the presiding authority, according to local surroundings, circumstances, and conditions, though a uniform method conformable to the above is desirable.

Bestowal of the Holy Ghost prior to the Day of Pentecost.

Have we any scripture, ancient or modern, to prove that the Holy Ghost was bestowed permanently, by the laying on of hands and confirmation, performed before the Day of Pentecost?

Answer by Elder John Nicholson:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father, that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism: yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word; behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel! (Book of Mormon, II Nephi 31: 13.)

In answer to this quotation, it might be said that the passage says nothing about the "laying on of hands" to impart the Holy Ghost. Neither did Peter, on the day of Pentecost; nor Jesus, in his remarks to Nicodemus. There are but few direct statements in the New Testament in relation to conferring the conditionally permanent gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands; yet it was and is an indispensable ordinance in the Church of Christ, which church existed 147 B. C., according to the following, in relation to the people baptized by Alma:

Mosiah 18: 17: And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God, was added to his church.

Membership in the Church of Christ requires a full baptism, not half a one. In this connection, I quote the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as they appear on page 279, of the Compendium: "Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—and that is the baptism of the Holy Ghost."