

is only an example of what the Apostles afterwards taught. I do not intend, this afternoon, to quote the numerous instances that occur in the Scriptures where this doctrine was taught, where it was obeyed by those unto whom it was taught, and the blessings that followed obedience; but I call attention to the fact that this doctrine was set forth by the Apostles even as Jesus taught it and even as Jesus obeyed it, and that they administered the ordinances as the Lord had taught them.

It may be said, How is it possible for the millions that exist on the face of the earth to obey this doctrine? This question is very frequently asked us, because the Latter-day Saints dwell very considerably upon this part of the Gospel, and upon the necessity of these ordinances being obeyed. The question, very naturally, immediately rises in the minds of men, if it be necessary that all men and women should be born of the water and of the Spirit, then what is to become of the millions who have died and have not had the opportunity? I recollect, on one occasion, when quite a youth, speaking upon this principle of baptism, and dwelling, at some length, upon the necessity of people yielding obedience to it. After I had got through, a gentleman walked up to me, and said he had been very much interested in my remarks, but one difficulty had suggested itself to his mind, and he would like to have me explain. Said he, you doubtless recollect when Jesus was crucified there were two thieves with him, one of whom upbraided and railed at him. This called forth a rebuke from the other thief, who, turning to Jesus, said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus replied in this wise: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Now,

said the gentleman, "if your doctrine be correct, that a man must be born of the water and of the Spirit before he can enter the kingdom of God, I would like to know how that thief entered that kingdom." Well, looking at this from his standpoint, it was a very plausible question, and it looked as though his position was incontrovertible. But did Jesus enter into the kingdom of God when he was crucified? Did he, when he was crucified, enter upon the glory he afterwards attained unto, and did the thief accompany him? I know that many Christian ministers, so-called, believe this, I know they teach it. In reading the newspapers I frequently see accounts of the execution of vile criminals, whose entire lives have been spent in the commission of revolting crimes. Christian ministers, so-called, attend these criminals while incarcerated in jail, and to the gallows; they pray with them and endeavor to awaken them to a sense of their lost condition, and frequently they are successful, for many influences are brought to bear on the minds of malefactors at such times and their hearts are softened at the near prospect of death. Then, when these ministers accompany them to the scaffold they will pray with them there, and they assure them that through the merits and death of Jesus they will be ushered into the kingdom of heaven as soon as they are executed. This is the invariable assurance given to criminals who will listen to them, by ministers of this description. They believe that the thief on the cross was ushered into the immediate presence of God, there to dwell eternally in peace and felicity. This was the view entertained by this gentleman I have mentioned.

If you will turn and read the account of the resurrection of Jesus, you will find an explanation of this