

A Return to Full Belief in God

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Christianity, as it is known to the world, is widely diversified with its varied and conflicting teachings, doctrines, and practices and is filled with numerous plans of salvation—many of them contradicting one another. There are even conflicting conceptions of the being and nature of God the Father and his son Jesus Christ. But there must be one true church and gospel of Jesus Christ. All cannot be right. All cannot lead to heaven.

Why must there be one true gospel and church of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ told us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

This cannot be achieved through devious means. Because we are destined and taught to become like our Heavenly Father, he does not give us optional courses to follow in achieving it. It is important that we personally belong to the right church. If we do not follow one path, we may find ourselves among those whom the Savior spoke of when he declared,

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
[Matthew 7:22–23]

Since this confronts all of us, each of us must know for himself which church is right. Each of us must know for himself and learn that there is only one God, our Heavenly Father, one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, one true religion, one way to be baptized, and one way to be saved, and that is through the strait and narrow way.

The only way for each of us to be saved is by (1) faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) repentance, (3) baptism, (4) the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by authority, (5) keeping all the commandments, and (6) enduring to the end.

Each of us must choose the true way of salvation, or otherwise we may find ourselves on the broad way that leads to destruction. When a person is only a half believer, then he will

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The Greatest Power

Jesus Christ was never once a half believer. In his mind there was no doubt to cause him to be of weak heart. His heart contained the power of righteousness. This power he never abused in any moment of weakness, the fullness of all belief and knowledge rested upon his soul. His admonition to become perfect, even as his Father in Heaven is perfect (see Matthew 5:48), requires a full belief because perfection requires full belief. Full belief is that perfect prayer that leaves two witnesses, of mind and heart, to ascend unto God and give him the glory and honor. And in this manner Heavenly Father returns blessings upon our entire soul. This constitutes a fullness of belief.

In a prophetic way, Jesus knew today would be filled with major disturbances in nature and among the society of mankind. Well did he say of our day, “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37). There is a relationship between man and nature that halfhearted belief in God can damage. Half belief in God causes disharmony between man and his environment. The Apostle Paul saw our day, too. He said:

In the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. [2 Timothy 3:1–5]

We are living in perilous times, probably the most wicked age of all time. It is a negative time, but there are also many positives. There has been an explosion of knowledge. We are the beneficiaries of the most fantastic inventions of all time. We enjoy the best the world has to offer, and it is an important time concerning religion as well. Paul looked forward to our time and called it “the dispensation of the fulness of times [when God would] gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Ephesians 1:10).

The gospel has been restored in its fullness in our time. People of our time have split the atom. Man has taken great power unto himself. Yesterday there was a wooden stick to turn the ground. Today, machines have taken over the puny muscle power of man. Today, mountains are moved by machines. Every inch of earth is packed with potential power.

For our benefit, Heavenly Father buried billions of tons of coal, oil, and uranium. Power from water gives us electricity. Solar energy comes from the sun and is just beginning to be tapped. The air holds power. Do we not breathe it to give us energy? And what of its necessity in combustion engines and airplanes? Topsoil produces power for food production.

All of these elements of the earth were provided for the benefit of man. When he develops a fullness of belief, as did Jesus Christ, these natural elements will become his friends, and not his enemies.

We live in a day of miracles. We live in a space age; we live in a nuclear age. All these elements of the earth are not the greatest power. Heavenly Father gave man the greatest power. He put his greatest power into his children, who made the machinery and who made it possible to receive power from the elements from the earth and to split the atom. But above all this, by far the greatest power in the universe and in the earth is the power of God. By his power, he created and controls the

universe. God the Father said, "And worlds without number have I created; . . . and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten" (Moses 1:33).

The Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Through the power of the Son of God, worlds come into existence and others pass away. As one earth passes away, another takes its place. At his decree, nations rise or fall (see Moses 1:33–38). The time is very close when he will come to the earth again with great power and glory.

The Lord Jesus has power over life and death and every detail of our existence, and one of the primary purposes of his life was to give us power. That is, he sacrificed his life so that you and I can have the power to become like him and to make it back into the presence of God. If we are to become like him, we must have full belief in God and full belief in the things of God. Jesus had a full and complete belief in his Heavenly Father and all things associated with him.

We Must Believe

One of the first steps toward any success is to fully believe in God, as the Lord has taught us and shown us. Did not the Lord have full faith and belief in charity, in excellence, in prayer, in scriptures, and in enduring to the end? Did not the Lord have a full belief and faith that he had the power to become like his Heavenly Father? Did he not have a full belief and faith in his character, a full belief in the power to overcome temptations? Did he not have full belief and faith to destroy the weakness and sins in himself?

If we are to become more like him, we must believe and have full faith, as he did. We must become a full believer. We have the power of faith. We have the power of repentance. We have the power to keep his commandments. We have the power to believe in ourselves. We have the power of excellence. We have the

power to endure to the end. We have the power to build character. We have the power to overcome temptation. We have the power to destroy the weaknesses and sins in ourselves. We have the power to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ and to become like our Heavenly Father, and to live with them again.

Paul the Apostle said, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). We have the physical, mental, spiritual, and moral abilities to act. Because of the increased evils and wickedness in our day and time, we need a much greater power to overcome our more difficult problems. We need more thinking power. We need more character power, and we need more doing power. We should know and understand that all powers are based upon obedience to the laws of righteousness. It is a natural law of weakness that when one becomes drunk, disobedient, or dishonest, he is enslaved by his evil habits and therefore loses his power.

Unfortunately, some of us do not put our hearts completely into something that is good, something we believe in. When we have a strong faith and belief in something that is good, this usually increases our strength and happiness. But unfortunately, everyone does not always earn the right to believe, even in very important things. We are sometimes afflicted with too many doubts and fears. We are caught halfway. Sometimes we are afraid to make solid, intelligent, proper decisions, and consequently, we go into life with many uncertainties.

Some of us are holding back in our faith and our beliefs. We have become only half believers. We only half believe in ourselves. We only half believe in God, we only half believe in the Church, we only half believe in the Book of Mormon, half believe in prayer, half believe in our leaders and scripture study, and half believe in our country. We become those who just believe part of the time, or we just believe in some of the things. When we

put ourselves in this position of only half believing, then we have committed a sin of fractional devotion and marginal morals. This sin of fractional devotion and marginal morals is sometimes very evident in our class work, in our worship of God, and in our lives.

I think it is impossible to live at one's best or to give one's best when one is only a half believer. There are too many people who are impartial about right and wrong. Some of us have committed the sin of fractional devotion and marginal morals, which only produces a minimal spiritual performance, which in turn usually results in marginal or minimal spiritual success.

John the Revelator said to a group of people who were half believers:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

[Revelation 3:15–16]

Many people are miserable and unhappy because they simply cannot make up their minds between right and wrong, good and bad, obedience and disobedience, success and failure.

I am afraid many of life's problems are caused because our beliefs are controlled by our moods, instead of by facts and right decisions. Sometimes we react to things, not according to whether they are right or wrong, but according to how we feel at the moment. Too many of us have become only half believers in God, and most important of all, we only half believe in ourselves. When we only half believe in ourselves, we don't trust ourselves and we develop what has been called an "inferiority complex," which can become the most damaging disease in all the world. We can make ourselves great or small according to the way we believe.

A Fool's Paradise

Some of us do not want to attract attention. We merely want to be average. We want to be average in our beliefs. We want to be average in all that we do. It is sometimes so comfortable just to be average, where nothing great is expected of us. It is so comfortable sometimes just to be a half believer, where nothing extraordinary is expected of us. However, we must remember that average, or half believing, is halfway between heaven and hell. Half believing is halfway between right and wrong. Half believing is halfway between good and evil. Half believing is halfway between God and Satan. Why should we be a half believer, or just average?

How would you like to go to a basketball game to see players who are only half believers in themselves, to see players who are average? It would certainly be a boring game. How would you like to go see a BYU football game, to see average BYU players, players who are only half believers in themselves and in the game?

I believe that BYU has a very successful football program because the players are full believers in themselves. They are full believers in winning the game, and they are full believers in their coach. They fully believe and have faith in themselves and in their coaches.

How would you like to have a brain operation by a doctor who was only a half believer in himself? Or by a doctor who is just average? How would you like to be led by a university president who only half believes in himself and who is just an average leader? How would you like to be taught by a professor who is only a half believer in himself and in his teachings and who is just average? How would you like to have your teeth worked on by a dentist who only half believes in himself and in his work? By a dentist who is just average?

How would you like to be counseled by a bishop who is only a half believer in himself and in his counsel? By a bishop who is just

average? How would you like to have open-heart surgery by a heart surgeon who only half believes in himself, and half believes in the success of his operations? By a heart surgeon who is just average?

How would you like to be led by a religious leader who only half believes in God and who only half believes in keeping his commandments? Throughout the ages, evil people have transgressed the laws of God, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant that the Lord himself established.

Even in our own day of enlightenment, in this, the last dispensation of the fulness of times, in this day of power and miracles, there are too many half-believing people who have developed counterfeit character traits, counterfeit religions, and counterfeit moral standards. Many people in this age of power and enlightenment are like nickels trying to pass themselves off as silver dollars.

There are too many people in our day and age who live in a kind of a fool's paradise. They indulge in fool's reasoning and enjoy a fool's happiness. But when the Lord comes, these imitators will be tested and examined in the light of God's truths, and they will be found condemned for those they have deceived.

Our prisons are full of people who are half believers, or with no belief in God at all. These are people who are counterfeiters and imitators. Our reform schools and mental hospitals are full of people who are only half believers in many things, including God. These are people who are imitators and counterfeiters of things that are good. It used to be that these were the only places where we could find counterfeiters, or half believers, but today there are half believers and counterfeiters everywhere, including those who deny the existence of God. Men and women who have developed counterfeit character traits are everywhere. Men and women who have developed moral standards made out of fool's gold are

everywhere. Even in the Church there might be a few men and women who have developed moral standards made of fool's gold.

Counterfeit love, counterfeit friendship, counterfeit virtues abound in our midst. Counterfeit ideas, ideals, and ambitions are all around us.

Moral Counterfeiters

In his own image, God created male and female and gave them a miraculous power called procreation. This was part of a divine program wherein all of God's spirit children may receive a mortal body under the most favorable conditions. But this great, sacred, and divine power was soon being abused, ridiculed, and mocked by a vast group of moral counterfeiters teaching premarital and extramarital sex relationships.

These same moral counterfeiters are doing everything within their power and means to glamorize the beauty and appeal of the human body in their attempts to sell tobacco, beer, alcohol, and other things that have a soul-destroying effect. All of the beautiful virtues, beautiful attributes, and beautiful qualities and character traits that we have been given by our Heavenly Father are the targets of these counterfeiters.

I think it would be a very stressful and unpleasant experience for any of us to live on counterfeit money, but how much worse would it be to live a counterfeit life and carry a burden of guilt? How much worse would it be for someone to live a counterfeit life and know that even his own ideas, ambitions, and ideals are phony?

How much worse would it be for any of us to live a counterfeit spiritual life and know that our love, our friendship, and virtues had no real substance and that we were not genuine people? There are many among us who think they get their greatest kicks and pleasures from drug addiction, addiction to alcohol and paint sniffing, addiction to sex, and addiction to cheating and stealing.

These things are nothing more than counterfeits of honor, virtue, and industry. These things can easily set in motion evil and negative influences that can lead us to become only half believers and lead us to discouragement, depression, and a feeling of worthlessness.

The glittering fool's gold called necking, petting, and sex always leaves one far worse than he was before. The glittering fool's gold called drugs and alcohol always leaves one worse off than he was before. The glittering fool's gold called lying, stealing, and cheating always leaves one far worse off than he was before. The glittering fool's gold called profanity always leaves one far worse off than he was before. The glittering fool's gold called gossiping and criticizing always leaves one far worse off than he was before.

Satan is miserable because he is evil. Satan's mission and goal for mankind is misery. The best way for Satan to accomplish his goal of making everyone miserable is to make each of us self-centered, or selfish. When a person becomes selfish, he will usually seek temporary happiness and pleasures. Selfishness usually leads to many sins. Selfishness usually leads to depression and discouragement. Selfishness usually leads to counterfeit activities and behavior. Selfishness usually leads to half believing or no belief in God at all.

Anyone who seeks happiness in wickedness is foolish. Satan's mission and plan is to spread bloodshed, famine, ignorance, and misery over the whole earth. This tactic or strategy is a counterfeit of God's plan for eternal salvation. It is up to each of us to be able to tell the difference.

It is very unfortunate that, without knowing it, many of us lose large fractions of our lives because we were fooled by counterfeiters, we were fooled by the fool's gold, and we became quitters. We have quit believing in ourselves. We have quit believing in God. We have quit believing in our country. We have quit believing in prayer. We have quit believing in the scriptures and the things that are good.

The Most Effective Process

The time has come for each of us to free ourselves from being fooled by counterfeiters, to free ourselves from the fool's gold, and to become full believers in God. In my opinion, the most important thing about a person is his religion. His religion is what he believes in. This is what he thinks about. This is what he works at. This is what he fights for, and this is what he lives by.

Full belief in God can be the most effective process by which we can reach any success or real happiness, as well as make our lives worthwhile. There is a tremendous need to return to full belief in God and religion. I personally believe that almost all of our problems arise because we sometimes close the Bible, close the scriptures, and turn our backs on God and religion. We only half believe in God and in religion. When we are confronted with wrong in our lives, we sometimes say that how we live is our own business, and anyway, since God is kind and forgiving, we can always repent. In the end, we will be saved anyway.

A policy of each man for himself can sometimes wreck our civilization and bring misery and failure upon each individual in it. A policy of only half believing in God can wreck our civilization and bring misery and failure. A policy of no belief in God can seriously damage our society.

Do we not study medicine to be well physically? Do we not study psychology and psychiatry to be well mentally? Do we not study agriculture to feed ourselves and others? Do we not study sociology to relate well with one another? Do we not study law to keep our lives orderly? Then why not study the great science of religion to keep ourselves well spiritually? I think it would be wise and well if more of us would get serious about studying the science of God, or science of religion, so that we can keep ourselves well spiritually. Of all the great disciplines of study, the study of God is the greatest.

I believe that it is our weakness and sin in this area that brings about our most serious problems and our worst failures. I believe that because we don't fully believe in God, most of our serious problems come about. I think many of us are very weak when it comes to God and religion, and as a result we develop failures and problems for ourselves.

It seems that we are constantly seeking new inventions that will give us more of life's pleasures, comforts, and idle time. Somehow we ignore those basic practices of religion that have been known since the world began. Many people the world over seem to take great delight and pleasure in placing a ban on religion, in placing a ban on God, as if it were an evil plague. They take great delight in placing a ban on prayers and scriptures.

If more of us would become full believers in God, this would give us tremendous amounts of prosperity and power and a great amount of mental and social health. What we need more than anything else in this life is a full belief in God to lift us above our own selfish interests. We need God to believe in. We need something to fight for that is bigger and more important than ourselves.

To Know God

It is a natural principle that misery loves company, and a claim that everyone is doing something makes it right. Some who claim not to believe in God seem to get great satisfaction in criticizing those who do. Even some of us in the Church criticize members of our own faith who have become full believers in God. We feel uncomfortable to be around them. They are too spiritual. They are straight-arrows. They are religious fanatics. We view them as too straight-laced, and we fool ourselves in believing we will be saved in the end for only half believing. Some people take great delight and pleasure in downgrading those who fully believe in God and religion. We fool ourselves in believing we will be saved in the end for counterfeiting our religion.

People like this spiritualize God out of existence and convert him into some mere figure of speech. Some have converted him into stone or wood. They treat the great Christian doctrines as unworthy of their devotion. Because of immaturity, rebellion, and godlessness, some people believe we don't need God anymore, that we now can take care of ourselves. They believe God is dead. Others believe they are more popular than God.

Inasmuch as they think God has lost the power to exalt or condemn, these same people seem to deprive God of his body and make him an "it." These same people believe that God is without body, parts, or passions. These same people view God as a shapeless mass, as someone who is incomprehensible and permanently invisible.

Because our judgment is no better than our information, we sometimes make great mistakes with our relationships with God merely because we fail to understand him. God is our Eternal Father in whose image we were created. He has a body and a set of feelings, faculties, and senses. We need to return to God through daily prayer, scripture study, fasting, and doing good to all men. We need to return to God through reading the Book of Mormon.

God our Eternal Father is the father of our spirits, and we are his offspring. We believe in a God who has eyes to see, ears to hear, and we believe every member and sense of his body is well-developed into a perfect man. God our Eternal Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as ours. His son, Jesus Christ, also has a body of flesh and bones—but their bodies are more perfected and glorified than ours.

God the Father is the literal earthly father of Jesus Christ. Each of us is a child of God, created in his image, endowed with his attributes, and entitled to his inspiration. One of our greatest privileges in this earth life is to seek him and become more like him.

If we don't take this view, what view shall we take of him? Shall we view him as a god

who is incomprehensible, shapeless, and an invisible influence without body, parts, or passions? Shall we view him as something unorganized, floating in the immensity of space without mind, without plan or purpose? Shall we view him as a shapeless mass that is everywhere, yet so small he can dwell in our hearts?

Can you imagine Jesus Christ praying to a God who is a shapeless mass? Can you imagine Jesus Christ praying to himself, who is at the same time God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost all rolled into one?

But how can we really come to know God our Heavenly Father? Our Savior gave us the key in the inspired prayer he gave before his crucifixion. As he prayed to his Heavenly Father, he said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

I bear testimony that to know God the Father we must go to the source of the knowledge of God and there learn about him. That source is revelation. That is where God makes himself known to man. One of the great reservoirs of revelation is the Holy Bible. The Bible teaches us that God did make himself known to mankind anciently, that he was near enough to mortal beings to permit them knowledge to be saved in his presence.

I bear testimony that the knowledge of God is essential to our salvation. If knowledge of our Heavenly Father is essential to our salvation, what has God our Heavenly Father already revealed to us about himself? He has made it known that he is our Father, that he is the father of our spirits, that we are of his family, and that we can become like him in perfection. He has made it known to us that we not only may become like him, but we already look like him in form and shape. We are in his physical image. The Bible teaches that God the Father is a person and that Jesus is in the exact image of his father’s person.

In the first chapter of Hebrews, beginning with the first verse, we read:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. [Hebrews 1:1–3]

I bear testimony that this tells us that God the Father is a person, and Jesus is in his express image. Jesus looked like other men. Jesus looked like his father’s person. Therefore, other men resemble God’s person, just as Jesus did.

We learn in Genesis that God made man in his own image and likeness: “So God created man in his own image, and in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

This tells us that man is in the image of God, and Jesus was in the image of God. Jesus was in the image and likeness of his fellow workers, Peter, James, and John, and the other apostles and the multitude that he taught.

The Bible tells us that God made the plants, the trees, and the animals. Everything was commanded to reproduce after its own kind. It was natural for trees to bring forth other trees and animals to bring forth other animals after their kind. This was true of the herbs of the field and birds of the air and cattle and creeping things. All were commanded by our Heavenly Father to multiply and replenish the earth by bringing forth after their own kind. When God the Father made man, he commanded him likewise to reproduce after his kind, and he did.

In the book of Genesis, we read: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Genesis 5:3). Seth was in the form of Adam, Adam was in the form of God. Everything that was created was commanded to bring forth after its kind, and not even God would violate his own law.

Just as Seth was the son of Adam and looked like his father physically, so Adam was

a child of God and was in his image. So God the Father is both father and deity to Jesus and all mankind. We are his offspring; we are his children.

Brothers and sisters, the time has come for all of us to become full believers in God our Eternal Father and in his son Jesus Christ. I testify of these truths in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.