

Albert H. Davis

EIGHTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Of the Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints



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with a full report of
the discourses

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You all know the revolutionary condition has continued now for over five years. At times it has seemed as though a stable government would be established among that people, but just as soon as that appeared about to be accomplished, we find them dividing again, turning against each other and starting new revolutions. It seems, to us who have been observers of this situation, that those people are unable to control the situation, and establish a government among themselves. The spirit of confidence in each other does not exist. It seems to us that the time must come, if it has not already come, when some power other than that which they possess will have to be exercised for the establishment of a stable government in that land, under which the people's lives will be protected, and their property and rights will not be molested.

In looking over the situation of our people we find that, although our lives have been preserved, we have been robbed, plundered, and peeled by all factions, none of them have passed us by. I have wondered whether we would be able to hold on until peace is established. As far as this world's goods are concerned, it has been a losing proposition with us from the commencement of this trouble until the present time. Our horses and wagons have been taken, our fences have been destroyed, and a number of our houses have been burned. The implements that our people had new and in good condition, five years ago, are now worn out, and they have not got the money with which to replace these implements. In talking with merchants in El Paso last Monday, some of our brethren asked for credit some who

need wagons, mowing machines and other implements to harvest this year's crop, and the question arises, who is going to stand good for these things? Of course, those of our people who have anything left, that they can sell, can dispose of it for real money, for American coin, but our people have but little left. While some of the bandit leaders have offered to pay in the past for the produce that they have taken, they have paid in money that was worth, perhaps, two cents on the dollar, practically nothing. At the present time, we feel that our people are safe in the colonies, as long as the United States forces are there we feel that they are amply protected. We do not know what the condition may be if those forces are withdrawn.

My brethren and sisters, I do not wish to take up more time this afternoon. There are others who can edify you better than I can; but I want to say again, as I said in the beginning of my remarks, that I do know that the Gospel is true; that the hand of the Lord is over this great latter-day work and over His people. We know that He is able to protect us, and provide for us. May we live so that we will be worthy of His blessings from day to day, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Meaning of immortality—Eternal life is salvation and glorification of the soul—Man's futile substitute for God's plan—Disbelief in Christ's atonement hinders salvation—The principles and ordinances of the Gospel must be obeyed.

I have been honored, my brethren and sisters, with the privilege of addressing this large assembly of

Latter-day Saints and our friends who have gathered with us, and while I occupy this position I desire to speak so that all can hear, and more than this, I desire to say something that is worth your hearing. In this I am sure you can very materially aid me. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It is also true that the prayers and faith of many righteous men and women availeth much with the Lord. I desire to feel that I am in the presence of the Lord, and that you are in His presence and that we are influenced by His presence and by His Spirit, for I desire to say those things only which the Lord would have me to say, on this occasion.

I have thought to use as my text the word of the Lord to His servant Moses, as it is recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses, first chapter, 39th verse, which reads as follows: "For behold, this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." This being the work and glory of the Lord, which I take to mean the all important work of the Lord, it is important that we analyze this expression, and obtain, if possible, a proper understanding of its meaning.

The word immortal means not mortal; that is, not subject to the power of death. I would define immortality as being that state to which we attain in the progress of life when we have passed through death and the resurrection, the spirit and body being reunited and inseparably connected, constituting the soul of man prepared to receive a fulness of the glory of God. Immortality is a means to an end, the end being the accomplishment of man's eternal salvation and glory.

In support of this statement, I call attention to the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 93, verses 33 and 34, as follows: "For man is Spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fulness of joy, and when separated, man can not receive a fulness of joy." Hence the importance of bringing about the immortality of man.

The eternal life here referred to means something more than that man shall not cease to live. I read the word of the Lord from Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 14, verse 7, as follows: "And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." The revelations of the Lord indicate to us the height, depth and grandeur of the glory of God to which the righteous may attain. Eternal life, as here used, being the greatest gift of God, must include a fulness of glory of God, in His celestial kingdom.

The Lord uses the expressions "eternal life" and "salvation" synonymously (See Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 6:13): "If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God: for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation." My text, then, might be stated in other terms expressing the same meaning, such, for example, as the "resurrection and glorification of man," or what, for my purpose, I like better, "the saving of souls." The institution of the Gospel plan from the foundation of the world including the creation of the world, was accom-

plished with this end in view, the saving of souls. I am convinced that the Lord never planned nor engaged in a greater work than that of saving souls. All His works so far as we have any account, were accomplished with that end in view, and such is the magnitude and importance of the work in which we as Latter-day Saints are engaged as instruments in the hands of the Lord, authorized and directed by Him. The Gospel, which has been revealed from heaven through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as its vehicle, represents the means by which this great work is to be accomplished.

It is a tremendous responsibility men assume when they presume to set aside the plan which the Lord has instituted for the saving of the souls of men, substituting therefor one of man's making. There are, however, thousands and millions who have so done. I think it was this class to whom the Lord referred in his expression contained in John 10:1, which reads as follows: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

There is another class whose responsibility is still greater, for they have not only accepted a substitute plan for the saving of souls, but they have adopted as their vocation the preaching and teaching of the same to their fellows, thus blinding their eyes to the simple truths of the Gospel, and prejudicing their minds against the true cause of God. I have authority for this statement in the words of the Apostle

Paul as addressed to the Galatian Saints (Gal. 1:8), "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

I thank the Lord with all my soul that the light of the everlasting Gospel has come to me as He has revealed it, that my environment and teachings have been such that the Gospel has appealed to me, that I have accepted it, and so far obeyed it that I have learned of its truth. To those who will obey the Gospel it is one of salvation both in this life and in the life to come. Talk about Christianity in the world! If you can find a people who have not rejected Jesus Christ as the Son of God in the flesh, the Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer of the world, then we will not question their right to be called Christians; but, we do not acknowledge those as Christians who deny Him in part or whole of what He is. I understand that many, if not most, of the preachers of today, professed Christians, reject Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of the world, accepting Him only as a great philosopher or wise teacher. They have rejected the chief cornerstone of Christianity, and have undermined and rendered powerless for salvation their professed Christianity. Not so with the Latter-day Saints. We realize that there is no virtue for salvation and exaltation outside of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, our Savior. There is no other name under heaven by which man may obtain salvation. The whole plan of salvation is founded upon revelation and Jesus Christ; rejecting these there is no foundation left upon which to build

nor to stand. The ordinances of the Gospel have virtue in them by reason of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, and without it there would be no virtue in them for salvation.

In this Gospel of Jesus Christ, revealed to earth through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, through which to accomplish the immortality and eternal life of man, there are certain indispensable principles and ordinances, such, for example, as faith, repentance, baptism, confirmation and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, etc. Faith in God the eternal Father is an absolute necessity to salvation. The Apostle Paul presents this fact clearly to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:6), "But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Do men hope to obtain salvation outside of His presence, that they can reject Him or believe Him to be but the shadow of one's self or of one's imagination? I think that such doctrines are as pernicious as the doctrine that there is no God, and those who accept such doctrines place themselves in the condition of those of whom the Psalmist wrote, Psalms 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no God.'" God has given us sufficient evidence of His existence, His personality and attributes that unbelieving man is left without excuse. It is no less important that we accept Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of man, as has been already explained.

Repentance is also a necessity. As long as we are mortals we will have sins to be repented of, for sins not repented of will not be forgiven, and, in our sins unforgiven, we can

not attain to salvation. But repentance means something more than to forsake our sins. If we have transgressed against others it is our duty to right the wrong done as far as lies in our power, and, if it so be that we can not fully do so, then he whom we have wronged is under obligation by commandment of the Lord to forgive us and the Lord will forgive us inasmuch as other conditions are satisfactory, for we must forgive others who have transgressed against us (Matt. 6: 15), "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespass." Another condition making our repentance perfect and effective is the water baptism or burial in the grave of water in likeness and typical of the burial and resurrection of the Lamb of God by which the sins are washed away. This ordinance of baptism by water is followed by the baptism of the Spirit or confirmation to membership in the Church of Christ, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost by those who are duly authorized. We are then to go on to perfection, adding to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, chastity, etc. We are to seek after that which is virtuous, lovely, of good report and praiseworthy and obey all commandments of the Lord living by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. This indicates the method of securing salvation for our own souls. There is the further responsibility of laboring for the saving of the souls of others, by the preaching of the Gospel abroad, by laboring in the organizations of the Church where called, and by perceptive teaching wherever opportunity is afforded as well

as preaching, always and wherever our lots may be cast, by the consistent exemplary life. If we have uppermost in our minds and hearts the saving of souls we will find ample opportunity of laboring to this end.

I bear my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, of the truth of these things which I do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

A contralto solo entitled, "Supplication" was sung by Sister Mammie F. Stark; it was written by S. B. Mitton.

ELDER ANTHONY W. IVINS.

Evidences of continued and accelerated progress of the Church—Important mission of the Church in Peace movement—The Saints an example of peace and righteousness—Vital questions now perplexing the world—Present great need of nations is just men to make and administer laws—Responsibility of the people to elect good men—The Church wants prohibition.

The proceedings of this conference, my brethren and sisters, have been very gratifying to me as I believe they have to all of the Latter-day Saints who have been present. The definite, unmistakable manner in which the fundamental doctrines of the Church have been presented by the Presidency, the testimony to the divinity of the work which has been borne by the presiding authorities of the Church and our brethren who have addressed us, the reports made to us in regard to the development and progress of the Church during the past fourteen years have all been very gratifying indeed to me, and I think ought to put at rest any doubt, if doubt there is, or has been, either in the Church

or out of it, as to its development, its progress, its stability.

I have been thinking that if comparative figures were available, it would be seen that since the organization of the Church, eighty-six years ago until today, development has been consistent and constant, that from year to year the Church has gained greater strength, greater prestige, and that greater faith has come to the people as the years have passed. I have been asking myself the question, what will the next fifteen years of the history of the Church develop? Where will we be, what will be our numbers, what will be our increased influence in the world, what progress will the Church of Christ have made? I look forward with optimism because I believe that, just as from year to year there has been greater development, just as during the fourteen years of the history of the Church, which have been reviewed, its progress has been greater comparatively, perhaps, than at any other period of its history, so in the future will there be increased development. This is the Lord's work and is in the world to prevail, to become better understood and to gain greater influence for good among the people.

I have been thinking if we could confine ourselves to this environment, if we could always be together, if we could always enjoy the spirit of testimony and assurance as the Lord gives it to us in these conferences, we ought to be a very happy, and contented, and satisfied people, and I believe that we are as a rule. But we go out from these conferences, and find ourselves in the world a very small part of the world, but nevertheless, a very important part of it, because