

Work of God the Same in All Ages—The Millennium—Christ the Prophet of Whom Moses Spake—What Makes the Saints Steadfast—Cause of Apostasy—Duty of the Saints

Remarks by Apostle Erastus Snow, delivered in the Assembly Hall, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, Feb. 24, 1884.

It is allotted to me to occupy a few minutes, and it is a privilege which I ought to esteem, and which I do esteem, to stand before my brethren and sisters as a witness of the truth which we have embraced; the truth as it is revealed in Christ, the truth that is confirmed in the hearts of the Saints of the Holy Ghost, the truth as testified by ancient Prophets, Patriarchs and Apostles, and by our Savior Himself when upon the earth among the Jews, and among the Nephites on the continent of America.

The work in which the Latter-day Saints are engaged, the work whereunto God has called His people in this day, is the work which has engaged the attention of the Prophets and Saints from the beginning of the world till the present time. That portion of the world of mankind who have been inspired from above to look forward through the vista of opening years and contemplate the future history of mankind, have had their eyes directed to the great and last dispensation of the fullness of times, in which the Lord would perfect His work on the earth, and bring in everlasting righteousness; when He would establish a reign of peace, when wickedness would be subdued, when Satan would be curtailed in his power and influence among the children of men—the time represented in the vision of St. John, when he declared:

“I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Now, this thousand years is spoken of among modern Christians as the millennium, signifying a thousand years. That period of all other periods will, as we speak of the Sabbath, be a day of rest. On the Sabbath, the seventh day, the Lord rested from his labors, and He has commanded His people to rest from their labors on that day; to meet together and worship Him; to offer up their sacraments and their oblations; to confess their sins unto one and another and before the Lord. And as they ask to be forgiven, and feel to forgive one another, so God forgives them. Our Savior gave us clearly to understand this when He taught His disciples to pray and to say, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;” for, said he, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” This day of rest is a day to forgive and to be forgiven, and to make peace with one another and with our God, and is a type of the millennium, or the seventh thousandth year, in the which universal peace will be established upon the earth, and the Kingdom of our God prevail in all lands—a day when the servants of God may bear the glad tidings to all people, nations, kindreds and tongues upon all the face of the earth, and there shall be none to molest them, or make them afraid. The truth will abound and light and understanding come to the people. It will be a day of great light in every corner of the land—the day spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah, wherein he says the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea—the day when they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know Him from the least of them to the greatest of them—a day when “every man shall see eye to eye.” Prophets

and Saints have looked for such a period, have longed for it, have prayed for it, have sung about it, have prophesied of it, and they have spoken of the work that should bring it about. Are all these prophecies fallacious? Are all these hopes vain? Will all these expectations come to naught? Or are they to be fulfilled? With the Latter-day Saints there is but one answer to this question. The Lord has opened their understanding, has touched their eyes, has pricked them in the ear, has comforted them, and has given to them the Holy Ghost. They have been enabled to see and to discern the signs of the times, and to understand in a measure the age in which we live. It is a source of unbounded joy unto those who possess this testimony, and are living for the blessings promised to the faithful. These events are dawning upon us. A preparatory work has been begun in the earth. As foretold in the Scriptures, an angel has flown in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to deliver to them that dwell on the earth, and which shall be preached unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people before the end cometh. But will every nation and kindred and tongue and people receive it? Not at all. It has not been so written. But it is written that the time cometh when all who will not hear that Prophet whom Moses said God would raise up unto the people should be cut off from among his people. This Prophet was Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, raised up in the meridian of time and in the midst of the house of Israel, from the seed of Abraham, that seed which God said would be a blessing unto all nations. When Jesus showed himself unto the Nephites on the American continent, He quoted this Scripture—this prophecy of Moses—and said to them, “I am that Prophet of whom Moses spake.” Now, we have this assurance, that the time will come when all those who will not hear that Prophet shall be cut off from among the people. It is grievous to reflect upon the darkness that enshrouds the minds of the people; upon the unbelief which prevails among mankind at the present time; upon the infidelity which stalks abroad, that is manifested in church and state, with high and low. It is grievous to contemplate how statesmen and the would-be wise men of our age despise God, or ignore His counsels, ignore His word, His right to rule, His ability to counsel, to teach, and to regulate the affairs of men; how little they acknowledge His hand, how unwilling they are to allow Him to have any voice in the affairs of state. And it is equally sorrowful to contemplate how little are Christian sects willing to acknowledge Him, or allow Him to interfere in their affairs, or acknowledge Him in any way, further than in a sort of—what shall I say?—a sort of mystical way. True, there are many who affect to believe that they must be born again, and teach the doctrine of the new birth, the spiritual birth. But how little they seem to comprehend what is meant by that birth, and the effects that follow it; yet there are some, yea, there are many in the Christian world who profess to believe what Jesus said to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John’s Gospel, that a man must be born of the water and of the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Yet when we come to read the New Testament and learn of the fruits, the influence and effects of that Spirit upon those who possess it, how wonderful, how strange it appears to those Christians! The Latter-day Saints strive to bring home to the minds of those modern Christians, that the Holy Spirit, when overshadowing the people born of the water and of the Spirit produces certain fruits, certain effects, that are the same today as anciently, and will be the same among all people in all ages and times when people receive that Spirit. But most of the Christian sects of our time ignore those fruits of the Spirit, the spiritual gifts and blessings which followed the outpouring of that Spirit upon the Saints of God in all former ages.

Brother Lyman has well said that it is this Spirit shed abroad upon the Latter-day Saints, bearing witness unto them of the truth—which is the witness of the Holy Ghost of the Father and of the Son—that makes them steadfast and immovable. They cannot be turned away so long as they enjoy this Spirit; they cannot be turned away from the light of the Gospel and the liberties they enjoy in Christ Jesus; they cannot be converted to Catholicism, nor Methodism, nor any other ism; but if they fall into sin, if they violate their holy covenants, if they grieve the Holy Spirit from them, then they are left in great darkness. As the Savior said to His disciples: “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore that which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” It may seem to some a wonder how it is, that any man or set of men, after having once tasted of the good word of God, of the heavenly gifts, and the powers of the world to come, and having been made to know and understand the things of God, and been able to bear witness of them, should afterwards fall away, lose their testimony and the light of the truth, fall into darkness and apostatize. It is a marvel and a wonder unto many how this can be, and to some portion of the Christian world it has seemed impossible, and they have affected to espouse the dogma and to make it a part of their religious creed, that once in grace always in grace, and that if they are the elect of God, they

cannot fall away. This is a doctrine of men: it is not a doctrine of Christ, and it is not true. The Savior constantly exhorted His disciples to watch and pray, lest they should fall into temptation, and cautioned them that they who once put their hands to the plow and looked back, or turned away, were not fit for the kingdom of heaven, but that they who endured unto the end, the same should have eternal life. He warned them against falling into darkness, and, as I have already quoted. He assured them that the light that was in them might become darkness, and if it did, how great should be that darkness.

Brother Lyman has well said, also, that when men apostatize from the truths of heaven, and become infidel to the things of God, it is because of sin and transgression; it is because they have given way to evil; it is because they have corrupted their ways, defiled their tabernacles, defiled their spirits, violated their own consciences, or given themselves up to work sin and wickedness. All this they may have done in the dark, or in secret, and not upon the housetops: but the time cometh when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and every secret thing shall be made known upon the housetops. Then it shall be known and read of men the causes that operated to take away the light and the truth from the hearts of men and left them to go into outer and utter darkness. None are proof against the attacks of the enemy, against the powers of evil, against the evil devices of the wicked one; none are proof against or safe from the influence and power thereof, without watchfulness and prayer, without so living that the Spirit will have pleasure to abide with them, to be their monitor and protector. That Spirit will not dwell in unholy temples, it will not continue to dwell with those who violate their own consciences, corrupt their ways, defile their spirits and tabernacles, and defile themselves with their fellow creatures; for God will have a pure people. His Kingdom is holy; His dominions are pure; and no impure thing can inherit the Kingdom of God. "And without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Brother Lyman asked the question (and answered it beautifully) pertaining to the preservation of the Latter-day Saints, from the combined efforts of their enemies. He answered well. The safety and protection of the Latter-day Saints lie in their preparing for peace. In other words, it is to make peace with their God, and with one another, and to proclaim peace unto all mankind, and so live and deport themselves, that they will encourage, extend and maintain peace to the utmost of their ability. But, and if the wicked continue to oppress, to war against and annoy the people of God, and to deprive them of social, religious and political privileges, and other rights that belong to them as the children of God, as human beings, as citizens of the commonwealth, those unalienable rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness; if, I say, the wicked combine to abridge these immunities, privileges and rights, and trample them under foot, and to wage war against the Saints for the purpose of destroying them, what may we do to avert it? It has been well answered: Do the will of the Lord; keep His commandments; do good to one another; forgive one another, and ask to be forgiven of each other and of our God; walk humbly before Him day and night; trust in Him, believe in Him, and go forward in the discharge of every duty, fearing only God. "Fear not them," says the Savior, "which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Let our fear center upon Him; let our trust and our faith center upon Him; let us maintain our confidence in Him, that He rules in the heavens and among the armies of men, and that He turns the hearts of the children of men as the rivers of water are turned; and if at one time their hearts are softened, as was Pharaoh's of old, and then, again, their hearts are hardened, as was Pharaoh's, we may bear in mind that all these things are necessary in the accomplishment of the divine purposes of our Father and Creator. For the wicked have their agency as well as the righteous, and God will not deprive them of it. He wills not that any be deprived of their agency. If people will work wickedness; if they will violate their covenants; if they will foreswear themselves; if they will trample under foot the constitution and institutions of our common country, (which they are sworn to defend and maintain) in their overzeal to destroy the Saints, they must have their agency so to do. They must have the privilege of working out their own salvation or their own damnation. They must fill up the cup of their iniquity; otherwise, how will the Lord be justified in wasting them away and destroying them out of the earth, except they first fill up the cup of their iniquity. But, says one, what and if He shall permit them to overrun and lay waste and scatter and destroy the Latter-day Saints? Such questions have been asked a great many times in years that have gone by, by those that were fearful, or doubtful, or unbelieving; but questions of this kind need not arise in the breasts of those who are living as Saints ought to live, and have the testimony of Jesus dwelling in them. We ought to know, yea, it is our duty to feel that abiding trust and confidence in God, to know that He will make the wrath of the wicked to praise Him, and the residue of wrath He will restrain; and that neither Congress, nor Presidents, nor

Senators, nor Judges, nor Governors, nor armies, nor Generals, nor any other human being have or can exercise any power in the earth, except that which is given them of our Father in the heavens, and that He can restrain when it seemeth Him good, and within such limits as seemeth Him good. And this He does without interfering with their personal agency; for man may propose, but God only disposes the affairs of men.

May God help us to be in deed and in truth what we have been called to be—Saints of the last days, and then, whether in life or death, we shall be His, we shall enter into His glory and be numbered with His jewels; for the Lord cometh to make up His jewels, and it will be those who have met together often and have spoken often one to another, that will be numbered therein; while all the proud and they that do wickedly, will become as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

May the grace of God be sufficient for us under all circumstances, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.