

ELDER ANTHONY W. IVINS

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis an event of great importance, bearing on today's civil and religious liberty—The past year the most eventful in the history of both Government and Church—Our direct contact with the great world war—The stupendous accomplishment of our Nation in the war—The need of united effort in Church and Nation—Capital and Labor must be brought together in union of interest—We must have just laws and men of character to administer them—Fewer politicians and more unselfish statesmen—God give us men who will stand for the right and for law and order in both Church and Nation.

"For the former things are passed away, and he that sat upon the throne said: Behold I make all things new."

The proceedings of the conference, my brethren and sisters, and my own reflections, as I have thought of the immediate past, and the probabilities of the future, have prompted me to read this scripture from the revelation to St. John, upon the Isle of Patmos, as a basis for the brief remarks which I expect to make this morning.

It is now 137 years since the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and the British Army which he commanded, at Yorktown, which made possible the establishment of the confederacy of the states known as the United States of America. It was an event which meant more to the people of the world than men of the time dreamed. It is true that representatives of the three millions of people who constituted the original thirteen colonies, hoped, and expected that the system which they founded would endure, that the right of self-government would descend

to their children, that America would become and forever remain a gathering place, an asylum, for the oppressed and down-trodden of all nations, but that the seed sown at that time would within a period of 137 years result in the breaking down of kinglycraft, the crash of monarchies, and the establishment of free government throughout the civilized world was neither hoped for nor expected. It was an event of great importance to the world and particularly so to us who are members of the Church of Christ because it opened the way for the breaking down of religious prejudice and recognition of the doctrine that just as man was entitled to enjoy life, liberty, and to pursue happiness in his own way, so long as he did not interfere with the rights of his neighbor, so was it his privilege to worship the Lord according to the dictates of conscience, let him worship who, where or what he may desire.

Eighty-nine years ago the Church was organized, and since that time it has been the custom of the members to meet together on the 6th day of April in general conference, as we are assembled here today, the present date being somewhat delayed because of circumstances over which we had no control. The purpose of these meetings is to transact the business of the Church, review the past, and plan for the future, that we may determine by comparison the growth and development of the Church. The present is, of course, of greater importance to us than either the past or future, because it is our day, but our lives are so closely associated with the past and the future is of so great impor-

ance to us, that we cannot confine ourselves entirely to existing conditions. By the experiences of the past, if we are discreet, we learn wisdom. The paths trodden by those who have passed away are paths of safety, or danger, to us as they have been to those who have walked in them before us. The pitfalls are marked, the shoals and reefs have been charted, and only a careless or headstrong mariner will fall into the pits, or drive his vessel upon the rocks where others have been wrecked. Since the establishment of the the Church, both Church and Nation have experienced periods of trial which have shaken the very foundations upon which they rest. There have been times when the perpetuity of the government has been threatened by war with foreign powers, and by fratricidal strife; but upon each occasion it has emerged stronger, more steadfast than before. The same condition applies to the Church. It has been assailed by enemies from without and by schisms within, but notwithstanding these efforts to destroy it, it has with each succeeding year grown stronger, extending its power and influence for good as the years have rolled by. We are now met together again, representatives of the Church from all parts of the world, where the gospel has been preached and branches of the Church organized, to review occurrences of the most eventful year in our history, the most eventful year in the history of the modern world, to consider the requirements of the Church and the Government of which we form a part and plan for the future, in so far as we are capable of doing with our finite wisdom and knowledge.

I refer to both the government and the Church because to me that which is vital to one is of equal importance to the other. Without just laws by which society may be controlled and the rights of the people protected, and honest, conscientious men to administer them, the Church cannot exist. It never has been able to exist without them; and without the influence of the Church, which teaches honesty, morality, devotion to duty, respect for the law and the patriotic support of the men who enact and enforce, there cannot, in my opinion, be a stable and just government.

During the past year the Church has been brought into direct contact for the first time with a great world war. It is true that on other occasions comparatively small numbers of its members have served in the armies of our country, but never before has the effect of war been so universally felt and the people put to a similar test. Believing, as we do, in the divine doctrine of peace, as it was taught by the Redeemer of the world, abhorring the shedding of blood, believing in the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, war was abhorrent to us; but when our country called, when it became necessary to take up arms in defense of the principles for which our government stands, we responded as cheerfully and performed our part as bravely as did any other citizens of the republic.

During the past year, as has been stated, one of the most desolating scourges of sickness ever known has passed over the land. An unprecedented number of our Church members have been stricken, and many of our most useful and esteemed brethren and sisters have

passed away. During the past year the Church has lost, as you all know, its honored, esteemed and beloved president. For seventeen years President Smith had presided over the Church, had directed its policy and to a great extent shaped its destiny. We believed in the divinity of his prophetic calling, had confidence in his wisdom and judgment, felt that his example and teachings were indispensable to the welfare of the Church, but the Lord saw fit to take him, and call another to stand in his place, a new man to direct the policy of the Church in this new era upon which we are entering, in this new world, for the world of 1919 is not the same world which existed a year ago. The government, like the Church, has passed through experiences, the like of which have never before been known. No nation has ever before, within the same period of time, mobilized from raw recruits, armed and equipped, transported across the sea, furnished commissary for, trained and sent to the battle front such an army of fighting men as has the United States of America. Men may criticise that which has been done, may tell you how it might have been better done, but the fact remains that the most stupendous undertaking which the world has even known has been successfully accomplished.

One year ago the question of the courage and devotion of the American soldier, when he might reach the old world, was one of common discussion. Since the events which occurred one year ago yesterday and today, when American marines and infantry, for the first time went into action at Chateau-Thierry, that question has been set

at rest, for never before in the history of the world have men shown greater courage, greater devotion, greater self-sacrifice than has the American soldier upon the battle fields of France. Men have criticised, and will continue to criticise, that splendid citizen-soldier who has commanded our armies abroad, will tell you that the success of our arms was not due to his intelligence or generalship, but it is a well-known fact that no American commander was ever before confronted by conditions so difficult and well nigh insurmountable and that under his leadership the war was brought to a speedy and successful termination. Men have criticised, and I suppose will continue to criticise and seek to belittle the man who has stood as the representative of the American people, and American ideals, through this critical and eventful period; will question his judgment, his patriotism, and will not hesitate to grossly attack his character in their efforts to discredit his administration, but the fact remains, and will be so written in history, that President Wilson has been confronted by the most difficult, the most intricate and complex questions which have ever confronted a President of the United States. The Lord be praised that he has managed them as well as he has.

You may ask: what has this to do with this conference and the welfare of the Church? I have called attention to the fact that we are entering upon a new era, are upon the threshold of a new world. Changes have come to the Church, and many other changes will come. I cannot perceive by careful personal observation, that these changes have created a ripple of confusion or dissension in the

Church. Without exception this splendid body of men who make up the presiding authorities of the Church, stand solidly behind the new Presidency, and if this condition shall continue there can be no doubt regarding the success of this administration; but let me ask you this question: Suppose that we who are nearest to President Grant and his counselors, these presidents of stakes, were constantly seeking occasion to discredit that which they do, criticising their policy without offering a better, sowing the seeds of dissension among the people, suppose that we, in order to accomplish our own ambitious purposes, were sowing the seeds of distrust and dissension among the members of the Church, how long would it continue to exist? It would soon be converted into broken fragments without cohesion or power. Not one of us, I am sure, desires this condition; and if we adhere to our past and present policy, each man and woman seeking first the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and the Lord's righteousness, it will never come, but the Church will enter upon this new era with a strength and power of development such as it has never before known. What I say of the Church I apply to the Government. We need it. We must have it, and I can not conceive that we can be true to one and untrue to the other. I can not conceive that I have obligations of duty and service to my brethren and sisters in the Church which I do not owe to my fellow citizens in the State, and if I see danger ahead for my country, it is my duty to declare it as it is to ward off danger from the Church, and I fancy that I see such danger

for my country. The State, like the Church, is entering upon a new era, is upon the threshold of a new world. Without sacrificing fundamentals, old policies and prejudices must give way, selfishness, the curse of the modern world, whether it be personal, community or national, must give way to a broader, more liberal, more statesmanlike policy. The selfishness of the poor, who look with greedy eyes upon the possessions of those who, by their industry and economy, have accumulated plenty, and a desire to take it without the consent of the owner, or giving value received for it, the inordinate selfishness and greed of the rich, who grind down the poor, who shut their eyes and close their ears to the cry of the needy in order that they may add to their ill-gotten gains, are the two great elements of danger which I see for our government. Governments have been wrecked by them since the beginning of time. Why should we close our eyes to the experiences of the past? Some means must be found by which those who toil, who produce the wealth of the world, may more justly share in the fruits of their labors. By which those who have in abundance may be protected in the possession of that which is justly theirs. Unless a plan be found by which capital and labor may be brought together on a basis of righteousness, the time is not far distant when the conditions which prevail in the old world will be enacted in our own beloved country. One thing is indispensable to the perpetuity of our system of government.

It is not so much the enactment of just laws, however important that may be, as it is the character

of the men who administer them; or the best of laws, if administered by selfish, dishonest men, amount to little or nothing. What our country needs, is more unselfish statesmen and fewer professional politicians. Personally I can see little difference between the man who by sabotage prevents the harvesting of the crops of the West, where the people cry for bread, stops the wheels of the factories in the East, while the people shiver with cold, and the member of Congress who, by sabotage, under another name, obstructs legislation, stops the wheels of commerce, refuses appropriations designed to provide for the industries of the country, to feed its army, provide for its navy and render assistance to a dying world which in anguish looks on and cries for succor, and all to accomplish his own ambitious purposes and satisfy his petty spite. It seems to me that never before were the words of J. G. Holland more applicable than they are today, when we are confronted by these universal worldwide conditions, which either mean the destruction of society or its protection. He long ago said: "God give us men. A time like this requires strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands; men whom the lust of office does not kill, men whom the spoils of office cannot buy; for while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, their great pretensions and their little deeds, mingle in selfish strife, lo freedom weeps, wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps."

The Lord has spoken plainly to us who are of the Church upon this question, has told us that many are called but few are chosen. Why are they not chosen? Because

their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they forget this one lesson: that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled or exercised, except upon principles of righteousness; that whenever we use it to accomplish our own ambitious purposes, to satisfy our own pride or exercise dominion by compulsion over the souls of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, amen to the priesthood and authority of that man.

I believe, my brethren and sisters that this doctrine applies to men who are engaged in the administration of civil affairs, as it does to those who are engaged in work for the Church; for whether men believe it or not, the powers of heaven do dominate this earth, and woe to the man who ignores it. He will reap that which he sows, as many people in the world today are reaping the harvest from the seed which they have sown. And so my appeal to you is to put away from us all, as far as we can, personal selfishness and ambition, to desist from unjust criticism of the men in the Church, and in the State, who stand for that which is right for the maintenance of law and order, for the protection of the rights of society, that we give patriotic and unselfish service to both the Church and the State, service which is freely given; for a gift given or duty performed, if done grudgingly, counts us for little or nothing. May the Lord help us, my brethren and sisters, to look into this new world with enlarged vision, to comprehend our duties to it, and to each other, and faith-

fully perform them. I humbly pray. Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

We have been listening to truth, so we will ask the congregation to arise and join in singing John Jaques's inspired hymn—"O, Say, What is Truth:"

O, say, what is truth? 'Tis the fairest gem

That the riches of worlds can produce;

And priceless the value of truth will be when

The proud monarch's costliest diadem

Is counted but dross and refuse.

Yes, say, what is truth? 'Tis the brightest prize

To which mortals or Gods can aspire:

Go search in the depths where it glittering lies,

Or ascend in pursuit to the loftiest skies,

'Tis an aim for the noblest desire.

The sceptre may fall from the despot's grasp,

When with winds of stern justice he copes,

But the pillar of truth will endure to the last,

And its firm-rooted bulwarks outstand the rude blast,

And the wreck of the fell tyrant's hopes.

Then, say, what is truth? 'Tis the last and the first,

For the limits of time it steps o'er:

Though the heavens depart, and the earth's fountains burst,

Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the worst,

Eternal, unchanged, evermore.
J. Jaques.

Following the singing of the hymn, President Grant said:

Usually, in our conference proceedings, the hymn is mentioned

and the first line recorded, but I would request Brother Edward H. Anderson, our clerk, to see that in publishing the proceedings of this conference, this inspired hymn shall appear in full.

Since our last meeting the vacancy caused by the death of our beloved President has been filled by my being taken from the Council of the Twelve, creating a vacancy in that Council, and Brother Melvin J. Ballard has been sustained by you here, yesterday, to fill the vacancy in the Council of the Twelve. We will now ask Brother Ballard to occupy the balance of the time in this meeting.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

Scourges have a lesson and a meaning of great significance—Testimonies of Nature—The wisdom of men cannot counteract the scourges of God—Through calamities and judgments the Lord often touches the hearts of men—Why the innocent and the good suffer affliction—The answer from the Lord who speaks through the suffering of the good, that all may repent—Let us therefore resolve to serve God better than ever that we may escape the judgments or tomorrow—Danger in material prosperity—But God is at the helm.

The circumstance which has postponed the annual conference of the Church from April until June has already been commented upon. I feel, however, that it is a matter of sufficient importance to call your attention to it again. I believe that the events that have transpired have a lesson and a meaning of great significance to the Latter-day Saints and to the world. I believe that it is pleasing to the Lord for us to contemplate these things that are occurring, and