

the gospel. I know, as I know I live, that it is true, that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his Son, the Redeemer of the world, the only name by which salvation may come to his children here upon the earth. I know, too, as I know that I live, that Joseph was the instrument in the hands of God of establishing again his work in the earth. He was the pioneer, the path-finder, he blazed the way and gave to the children of men in our day a new faith in God and in his glorious work. I know, too, that the men who preside in Israel today are prophets of God, inspired to direct the destiny of Israel. May God bless us all that we may be obedient to their counsel, and that we may have power to reduce to practice in our lives the instructions that are given to us by our file leaders, that is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

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I think we have been very fortunate today in the solos that have been rendered. I was especially thrilled, as I presume you were, by the first solo this morning, the opening line of which was: "Man, though dead, shall arise again."

That declaration brought to my mind another great prophecy on the same subject, to which I think it will be profitable for us to pay some attention. Permit me to make a little explanation about it. Israel, both in ancient times and in modern times, were a people who endured great sorrows, both as a nation and as a people. They had war, famine, pestilences and many and great tribulations. In the days of Isaiah, the Prophet, their sorrows seemed to reach a climax, and this great Prophet of Israel presented their sorrows to the Lord, undoubtedly for the purpose of obtaining some word of comfort, some hope that would lighten their burdens and bring somewhat of joy into their existence. He voiced the sorrows of Israel in the following language:

"Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they pour out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

"Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord;"

And the Lord answered the Prophet in the way of comfort and said:

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isaiah.)

This was the word of comfort unto Israel, the renewal of the promise of immortality, of resurrection unto immortality. I pray you be reminded here who it is speaking. It is the Jehovah of the Jews, "the Lord God Omnipotent." Here was a prophecy: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." And then comes the song, the praise and thanksgiving:

"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; and the earth shall cast out her dead!"

Seven hundred years passed away, and then came the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy:

"And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake and the rocks rent and the graves were opened, and many of the Saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after his [the Christ's] resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many." (Matt. 27:51-3.)

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. * * * The earth shall cast out her dead." Here we have the prophecy of Isaiah and also its fulfilment. And yet we are living in a day when those who are supposed to name the name of Christ in reverence and faith, are not only denying the Deity of "the Lord God Omnipotent," as he was revealed in the flesh, but are equally strong in their denial of this great fact of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the resurrection from the dead. Comparatively few men in the religious world, believe this unique doctrine of the Christian faith, the literal, physical resurrection of the dead. Many cults and philosophies teach that in some way or other there may be a continuation of the life principle, and even of personality after death; but it was reserved as the peculiar and glorious doctrine of the Christian faith to teach the reality of the resurrection from the dead, the reuniting of the spirit and body after death. If this is not the head of the corner in the building of the Christian faith, it is at least one of the very chief foundation stones. St. Paul teaches us that, and shows us that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then the Christian faith is vain, and is all a mockery. Let me point that out to you a little.

In his discourse upon this subject, showing how fundamental this principle is to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul of the early Christian writers was the first to mass the testimony extant in his day. You must remember that the gospels, as we now have them—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—with their wonderful testimonies concerning the resurrection of the dead, were not in existence at the time that the epistles were being written. Not the gospels, but the epistles, are the first Christian documents of the meridian dispensations, and I think it quite true as an historical fact, that Paul was the first to mass the testimony on this subject. He said in his first letter to the Corinthians:

"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve;

"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

That is, some had died; but he could appeal to the testimony of

five hundred brethren who at once had beheld the resurrected Christ.

"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

And now, upon this state of facts he proceeds to reason, and the keenness and the sureness of his logic cannot be questioned. I pray you hearken to it:

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead.

"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

"Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."

Could you escape that conclusion?

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

And is not that just as true now as it was when Paul conducted the Saints at Corinth through this process of reasoning to that awful conclusion? Down into the very depths of despair does his reasoning bring us, if it so be that Christ did not actually rise from the dead. Behold, how hopeless, how vain is the faith of men in Christ if they eliminate from the scheme of his religion the doctrine of physical resurrection from the dead. Thank God the apostles did not leave either the Corinthian Saints or those of us who come after them in that slough of despond to which he had conducted them; but having brought us down to where we may see into the very depth of despair, now he proceeds to build upon the opposite supposition—no, not "supposition," but the truth; namely, that Christ has risen from the dead. Hearken to him:

"But now Christ is risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive.

"But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death."

That is the Christian faith; and yet Christians of today, in large part, do not believe it; a few do, but only a very few. And believe me, Latter-day Saints, that among the many things required of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one of the

many duties laid upon us in the preaching of the gospel in this dispensation, is this responsibility of being God's witnesses in the world for the truth, for the reality of this doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. Not in the survival of some essence or spiritual principle, but in a real life hereafter, in which spirit and body shall be reunited, and, as the Christ lived physically after he rose from the dead, and was a physical as well as a spiritual personage, so too shall men now dead become: "Your dead men shall live again, together with my dead body," sayeth God, "they shall arise from their graves." That is the word of God, and I care not for the philosophies of men, nor their attempt to tell us that it is a matter of impossibility for them to be resurrected. If the material particles of this body that we call ours shall be preserved as peculiar to the spirit that has laboriously gathered that body through life and made it the garment of our spirits, I care not what becomes of those particles so far as our sight and touch may be concerned. I place my faith in the word and promise of Jehovah before he tabernacled in the flesh, that men should arise from the dead; that together with his dead body they should arise and live; and with all my heart I believe God competent and able to fulfil his promises. "Though a man be dead, he shall arise again." And as a poet has said, "Eternal form shall still divide eternal mind from all beside," and we shall know each other, and have associations that shall, when purified, be holy, and shall minister to our joy through all the ages that shall endure. That is my faith, in this great doctrine of the Christian faith, emphasized in this new dispensation of the gospel whereof we are heralds and witnesses. This is my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, "High on the mountain top," and prayer was offered by Elder Levi S. Udall, president of the St. Johns stake of Zion.

Conference adjourned until Sunday morning at 10 o'clock.