

Endowment Lecture 2

A Spiritual View Of History



by Evangelist Arthur A. Oakman

Endowment Lecture 2 – A Spiritual View Of History by Evangelist Arthur A. Oakman

A series of six lectures to members of the Melchisedec Priesthood, given at the R.L.D.S. Stone Church, Independence, Missouri from October 3 to 13, 1966.

“No Man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

(Meditation XVII from Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions 1624 by John Donne)

I was reminded of this piece of literature from John Donne, when a man with whom I was acquainted, was, passed away at the Independence Sanitarium on Sunday night, and I saw his body being wheeled down the hall. It seemed to me as if a bit of myself had gone with him. And I think this illustrates what I tried to say last night so ineffectively I feel. That is that all of us are connected by a sea of, to a sea of consciousness which we all share. No man is an island. We belong to each other. We have been fashioned and created of a piece, by our Heavenly Father and creation is part of his nature; to create. Creativity is the manifestation of the Divine. And he has manifested and created the universe and in it he has placed us.

We talked briefly last night about a spiritual interpretation of the universe and now we must talk tonight as to how the Spirit views the course of time and the doings of men. As you must know this will be brief, I mean it will be a cursory survey, but I hope it will indicate some principles which will be of help to you in your ministry and in your personal life.

God created man in his own image. And that means that he endowed him with creativity too. Endowed him with creativity in the hope that what man creates might be offered to him. We stand at a peculiar place in history. We teeter on a knife-edge, between universal brotherhood and extinction. Wendell Willkie wrote a book some time ago called, "One World" {or none} and in that title is the terrible alternative which faces us.

It is impossible for me to over emphasize the fact that every man's history is involved in my personal history. What was done in England in 1588 has helped produce me. And gentlemen, this is a truth which is so relevant to our time, that we must see it clearly. We are involved in the course of time, and we are involved in the lives of other people, we cannot escape it. Whether we recognize this or not, it is a fact, and what the Holy Spirit does is to make us aware of the facts of life, to uncover our eyes and make us see clearly the relationships involved, in which we are involved with our fellow men. And all down the stream of time this has been true.

We apprehend history of course through the written word, through the traditions that have come to us in our country. Every one of us has a different point of view, and a different background. I assure you as my friend Brother Davies here can verify, that the American war for independence looked very much different in the British history books than it did in the

American history book. We were told that, over there, that the reason “We”, that’s a capital “W” you see; the historian teaches the little children to say “We”. “We” lost our colonies because of bad weather. Because if ever the British army was defeated, only God could do it. But when I came over here, there was a man named George Washington involved. The only thing we heard about George Washington was that he’d sooner chop down forty cherry trees than tell a fib. But I suspect the truth lay between them; that both God and George Washington had something to do with it.

When I was a boy in school, the little green history book told us, in 54 BC Julius Caesar invaded our shores you see. Well, in 54 BC I was in the loins of somebody in Mesopotamia; I didn’t have any country. And I well remember so vividly in 1939 standing with Brother Alfred Urbahn in Brandenburg (Germany), one beautiful Sunday morning in 1939 just a few weeks before war was declared. And I heard in the distance, singing, beautiful singing, male voices, all in four parts; and I listened. It was a marshal song, the men were singing. And as we listened, they came down the street marching four abreast singing this song. “*Wir fahren gegen Engelland*,” “We march against England.”

And I said to my friend, “I don’t like that song.” I was English although I wasn’t British. I was a citizen of the United States, although not quite yet an American. I said, “I don’t like that song, why are they singing it?”

“Well,” he said, “the reason is simple, you know just as well as I do, that in 1919 after the war was finished the British blockaded Germany and nearly starved her to death; and these youngsters were eating grass, he says and Hitler hasn’t let them

forget it.” The way he taught history causes these men to march down this street singing this song.

And then the thought occurred to me, if all those babies had been swapped at birth between English and German mothers, the babies born to the German mothers would be fighting for the British and the babies born to the British mothers would be fighting for Hitler. It’s all in the way we teach history. And you see the historian causes the little boys to say “We.” “We” rounded the Cape of Good Hope. “We” licked the tar out of the Russians in the Crimea War. “We” crossed the plains and beat Wolfe at Quebec. “We” fought with Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar. But I’ll tell you something interesting. Some few years later in Paris when I was with a group of Americans there, on the Fourth of July, I was taxed to the utmost. I was presented with a long medallion congratulating me on becoming a citizen of the United States of America, and I was called upon to make a response. And then it occurred to me that in the War for Independence there were really no British, no Americans, they were all British on both sides. So I satisfied them with this information and it seemed to quell the disturbance that had arisen.

Gentlemen, history is important; babies come into this world, trailing clouds of glory. They come into this world as human beings. And after they get here we change them over into Englishmen, Americans, Italians, Russians; by the way we teach history. Is that not so? By the way we teach history.

I remember standing in this church the day that King Edward the VIII abdicated. You know that famous speech; “At long last I am able to say a few words of my own;” the poor fellow, “at long last.” I was here with Brother Frank Edwards

that night, and as we were listening to the broadcast, and he broke down and cried. And he said, “Forgive me Arthur, if you don’t have character you don’t have everything; he says and what this man has done, cuts me to the soul; cuts me to the soul.” He said, “I know it’s an emotional thing, he says I know my head says one thing, but he says, my heart says something else.” And his heart had been captivated in the schools of course, like mine had, when I was a boy.

I remember walking out from the history class every Friday afternoon and reenacting the battles, in which, all in which the British had been victorious. And we divided up the class and fought the battles again, and that’s the way we learned history. What a travesty on common sense. That’s why I said last night, that somewhere, sometime, someone has to write the truth about the human story, because you see, men react to life and to their situations according to their views of the past, the way they’ve been taught, what they have imbibed, what has been imbibed. And unless somebody, sometime soon, can so far be endowed with the spirit of truth to write a history book that tells the truth about the human story, we shall never I’m afraid, produce those men who will not take up the sword against their neighbor. And they will not do it because they know the truth about the human story and know that war is not the means by which human disputes are to be settled.

And so tonight as we think about the story of humanity, I wonder if we could return a little bit to what we said yesterday. The universe is created by God and in its midst are creatures that he has created out of his love because he is love. God doesn’t love us because we are lovable, he loves us because he is love; it’s his nature to do this. And gentlemen, nothing you and I can

ever do can make God stop loving us, and caring for us, and spending himself for us, and becoming involved with us. In everything man does the Eternal is committed. There have been some who have thought that God is unconcerned about humanity, that he is not involved in human history. Then what do we do? We point to Calvary. We say yes we know that human history is cruel; we know that it devours its children. We know that the story of mankind is fraught with terrible things, but to say that God is aloof is not true.

For he himself in the person of his Son has entered into the course of time, and has taken in his own body the sins of men, and put them on a tree, and made those sins shine with the love of God. So that forever after God says, “Yes this is true; I gave man his agency in the Garden of Eden, and because he has his agency means he has the power to say yes or no to me, and because he said no to me, sorrow and sin, and destruction and disease has come upon man.” And yet in spite of this, he himself entered in to the arena of human history and took all that men could do, that wicked men could do, took it in his own body. Without recrimination had revealed in the midst of the sin of men the love of God. This we shall say something more about a little later on.

Then, God created us, my friends, because he is love, and why? Because being love, he needed creatures upon whom he could lavish his love. And finding that in us, his creation in the midst of time, he himself came down and became as man, in order that he might teach his creatures how to love, and in order that loving them in the person of his Son, he might win from them an answering love. Loves creates, and the love which creates also enters into that which it has created; and entering

into that which it has created in order that it might display the love which prompted the creation. In order that from the creation there might be elicited that response, which is the response of love to love, that the creature might respond in love to the Creator and that in this God might find himself reflected.

This brief statement of theology, brief statement of the nature of God, just in this particular connection, is I am sure you will see, clear and without equivocation. God created us. And in the course of humanity, in the course of time there have arisen many, many, many empires, and these have arisen and have subsided. All flesh is as grass, and the flower or intelligence of man is as the grass of the field. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away. Ah, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.

Man is an expression of the divine word, the fact that he is testifies that God speaks today. God speaks every time a baby is conceived. God speaks every time a thrush sings. God speaks every time the grass is cut, and you smell new mown hay. God speaks every time the sun arises. The earth is full of his word, and mankind has conducted a dialogue with God down through the course of time. God speaks and man answers or refuses to answer, which is a response of speech if he even refuses to acknowledge that God has spoken. And when God speaks what does he say? When he, the first revelation which God gives to us as his creatures, is not to tell us what to do; the first primary revelation that he gives to each one of us, in order of emphasis and in order of importance is this, “I am the Lord thy God, I have rights in your life which you do not have in your own life.” “I am the Lord thy God.” This is the first and primary revelation

and man's response is conducted according to his value, his standard of values.

And so it is that down through the course of time, God has called and men have either responded or failed to respond. And the whole history of the human family can be discerned in a response or non-response to the revelation of God, either through the word of the prophets and the voice of the Spirit, or through the person of his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For in Jesus, the Word of God, which sustains all, and creates all, and keeps all in consistency, this Word of God was made manifest; and so far as the Divine utterance can be fully revealed in a human being, Jesus so revealed that utterance. But that utterance I want you to know was not something given once for all. This is where Protestantism and Protestant theologians stumble, they believe, although they do not know what the word of God is from what I can gather from reading after them, they believe that Jesus Christ finished his work and left and entrusted it to mankind. And they say frankly, the time is now. Not for a revelation of God, but for the revelation of man; to express himself and to give to God the response which God requires of him in their own way and according to their own desires. And of course this is heresy as we know. As I said a moment ago God has spoken and men have responded, and in the person of Jesus Christ, humanity did give to God the response that God required from his creation.

Gentlemen, have you ever pondered in your soul what you did in Jesus Christ; what we did in Jesus? Has it ever dawned upon you by the revelation of the Spirit that Jesus Christ is your own better self, growing up in your midst? Did it ever dawn on you that the gift that has been given to you of the Spirit of God

is his image in you? The same image which was manifested in all its glory and beauty in the body of Jesus Christ when he's here upon the earth? Has it ever dawned upon you that that revelation given in the midst of time, equidistant from both ends of it, is a perfect revelation of an eternal reality? And that always, everywhere, men respond to the word of God just about as they did when he was with them personally on the earth? Let us think about it for a moment shall we?

I remember well one time some years ago I went to a certain friend of mine's office in the Auditorium; just dropped in for a chat as we do causally.

And he said to me, "Hello, how's your racket?"

I said, "Terrible, how's yours?"

"Well," he says, "it's worse than yours", he said, "I can't get anywhere."

I said, "Well what's the matter?"

And he opened his drawer, and put his hand in and fished out a long roll; oh it was as long, twice as long as he could stretch.

I said, "What have you got there?"

"Well," he says, "I've got a synopsis of history here, and I'm trying to figure out when Jesus will come again."

I said, "Well don't you know it says that no man knoweth the day nor the hour?"

"Yah, but he, the Lord didn't say he'd never know the year." Marvelous.

So he began talking; "if the world was created 4,000 BC, and if the little season lasts a thousand years;" course you men know what I'm talking about when I talk about the little season, don't you? You know when Satan's going to be loosed again?

And he says, “That adds up to 2,000 years, if the little season is a thousand years, and we’re now in 1940 something; so that leaves it, that if this is so then Christ, we can say, will come and so forth, that the end of the world would appear in about 2,000 AD.”

And all the while he was talking, something was happening to me. And I thought to myself, why is this good man wasting his time? Or was he wasting his time?

And then something clicked in my mind, and I called him by name and I says, “You know the end of the world has already come in principle.”

“What do you mean?” Why he said.

I said, “The end of the world was shown forth in the life and ministry, and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

He said, “How so?”

And as I began to talk again the good Spirit opened my mind. Jesus Christ our Lord was humanity demonstrated in our midst, the whole course of human history taken up into his person and made manifest for us. And there we can see and only there we can see the true meaning of the human encounter. Only there can we see the true; and arrive at a true understanding of the nature of life itself, in the ministry of our Lord, through the recreation of his life by the Spirit in us.

Remember, we said last night what is so important; there’s the universe around us which will one day disappear because it is temporal; and there’s the universe within us, which never will fade away. The universe around us is merely a scaffold, a scaffold from which the Almighty seeks to build the universe within us. And everything which is around us is a means by

which his life is ministered to us. Not only the forces and the powers of nature with all their principles; chemistry, mathematics, and all the rest, but also the doings of mankind; the social situation in which we are, the inheritance which has come to us through the country in which we were born, the friends we meet, the music we listen to, the books we read, everything about us is merely a means by which this inner universe is being constructed. And God has intended it that way.

And the life and ministry of Jesus Christ our Lord was played out on the world around us, outside us, in order that it might be created in us. Jesus you know, when he said to his Disciples,

“It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come {to} [unto] you;” (John 16:7) [corrected wording] / {added wording}

As long as Jesus remained on the earth in the flesh, they were conscious that there, some point in space, some point in time, was centered their hopes, their ambitions, their desires, their motives. But immediately he was taken from them. They were set free then to discover him within themselves and all that was put on the stage of history in the life and ministry of Jesus was simply the eternal principles of God as they always are and always shall be; the Eternal was made manifest in the midst of time. And the Spirit has been given to us in order that we might know how to take within us that life and that ministry, so that there again might appear on the earth the Kingdom of God. Not this time in its individual mode, as it appeared in the life and

ministry of Christ, but this time in its glorified version; the City, the Nation, set upon a hill which cannot be hid.

Do you see, gentlemen, that all the course of time, both past, and present, and future centers in the Lord Jesus? And that's why we have been commanded to study history; not that we might know something no one else does, but that in order that we might see in the course of time through the eyes of Jesus, the perpetual illustration of the principles that he came to teach us, that we might not be lead astray by the sophistry of men. What is history? You ask the historians, and every historian will give you a different answer. It certainly isn't a succession of events. Something beside this; there's meaning, there's purpose, there's an end, there's an ideal, there's a goal towards which the course of time moves. I believe one poet has said.

“The one divine far off event to which the whole creation moves is Jesus Christ, as he shall be embodied socially in the midst of his people, in these the latter days.”

And so Jesus Christ came then to reveal these things to us. And has given us his Spirit as a means by which we can apprehend these things. And has told us as Elders in this Church,

“ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the [children of men the] things {that} [which] I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit, and ye {shall} [are to] be taught from on high.” (Doctrine & Covenants 43:4b, c)

Now that doesn't mean that we decry human learning for there are many, many insights that are valuable; but it does mean that in the midst of the lives of you brethren, in the midst of your bodies there has been given a principle and a power by which you might be able to discern, and to understand, and to accept that which is truth, and eschew that which is error. So that you one day might be independent of every creature beneath the celestial world. And every help in government and grace which God has made manifest for you is given to you in the gift of the Spirit which you have. And as you look at the life of the Lord Jesus through the eyes of this self-same Spirit which he is, you will see the drama of human history again and again made manifest.

Let us look at it for a moment shall we? On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus talked with Moses and John the Baptist; possibly concerning the manner in which his mission was to be accomplished. This I think is true because when he came down from the mountain he began to talk in a new and a strange way to them about what should happen when he went to Jerusalem, how he should suffer and how he should die; a note that had been absent from his ministry largely before that time. And you remember Peter;

“...Be it far {be it} from thee, Lord; this {is not so} [shall not be done]...” (Mathew 16:23)

and how the rebuke came to Peter? You recall those days how on the road to Jerusalem, James and John came to the Lord Jesus with their mother, and their mother said,

“...Grant that these my two sons may sit, [the] one {at} [on] thy right hand, and {one} [the other] {at} [on] thy left, when thou comest {into} [in] thy kingdom” (Mathew 20:20)

I don't think we've settled that problem in this church yet, do you, really? I don't think so. The eternal thrust of the “I”! “My two sons may sit at thy right...” One good thing about this mother, she had sense enough to know that neither of them could sit in the seat of Jesus Christ. And that's one thing a lot of mothers don't know about their sons; and they teach them.

Brethren, as you look at the life and ministry of Jesus as he moves toward the climax of his ministry you see involved there the whole history of the human race. He comes rejoicing into Jerusalem, and instead of making his way to the center of government, claiming his rights as King, he tamely, and lamely goes to Bethany and spends the time there with Mary and Martha, and with Lazarus; where he raised Lazarus.

And then, a little while after that he enters into the feast of the Passover with his Disciples. And gentlemen,

“...he said {to} [unto] them, With desire {have I} [I have] desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;” (Luke 22:15)

And here they were striving and struggling one with another as to who was the greatest in the Kingdom of God. All stimulated by the question, who shall sit at thy right hand and on thy left. “These two young fellows,” Peter must have said “have a lot of nerve; have a lot of nerve asking for these two places.” I

can imagine him saying to Andrew, “Why Andrew you know that over there at Caesarea Philippi I was the man that recognized the Lord Jesus first; and he told me that he would give me the keys of the Kingdom.” “If anybody should sit on his right hand it ought to be me, not those two young fellows.” Scriptures doesn’t say that but it says there arose a great contention among them as to who was the greatest, and it broke Jesus’ heart. And this is reflected in the fact that in the seventeenth chapter of St. John’s Gospel you have his prayer,

“{Lord} I pray not for the world, but for {those that} [them which] thou hast given me...out of the world that they might be one for they are thine.” (John 17:9 & 11)

His whole concern was that his Disciples might come to know the secret of his love and its unifying power in their lives. That out of the many there might be made one; so that there might be offered to God this offering of a humanity unified, itself unified as he was unified with his Father and with the Holy Spirit.

And so you know what transpired; you know how that Judas betrayed him. And that brings me to something which is utterly vital, and vital in this point of view. I wonder what Peter would have done; you remember he had a sword with him which he used later? What Peter would have done, had he known that Judas was going to betray him? Let me ask you, do you think that Judas would have gotten to the door, had Peter known? No. Jesus protected Judas in the act of betrayal when he said to him,

“That thou doest, do quickly.” (John 13:27)

He protected him. If God is to win men, he himself must be obedient to the Law of their being. Do you see that? He cannot violate their agency. If he were to do this everything we know of man would vanish.

And so the Son of God protected Judas in the act of betrayal. If a son of man will betray the Son of God, or if a son of the Son of Man will betray his Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Lord Jesus Christ says, "So be it." He will not violate our agency, gentlemen; that is a cardinal principle which flows from one end of the human story to the other.

"...men are, that they might have joy." (II Nephi 1:115)

and if they are to have joy they must be free. And even God himself cannot violate that freedom and so he says to us in these the latter days,

"Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me and {ye} [you] shall be a free people," (Doctrine & Covenants 38:5b)

Freedom is the basis of Divinity. How jealously our Heavenly Father guards it for each one of us. He will not violate our agency. We are left to ourselves, to our lonely, isolated, terrible selves, to choose.

None of you are here except through your own free choice, are you? When the priesthood came to you did you not willingly agree to accept its responsibilities and its opportunities? Surely you did. This choice you have made and because you have made it, it has set your life in a certain

channel. Judas made his choice; it set his life in a certain channel. And once those choices are made, and the courses of conduct are set in motion, except through the grace of God, and notice I say this, except through the grace of God, they are irreversible; and God cannot call back an act once taken. God cannot change the past gentlemen; what's done is done.

And so Judas passed out into the night, the scripture tell us; as passes out every man into the night of his own self, when he rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not only true of us, it's true of every man that's ever been created and tonight hundreds of millions of men weep in outer darkness because they have chosen to reject the Lord Jesus Christ. They follow courses of conduct which are not endorsed by him. And their plight constitutes a call to us. God loves them, and even the pain that they suffer is a revelation of his concern for them, so that through that pain their selfishness might be pierced, the citadel of their souls conquered by his love and they might be won back to him. And even Hell is an expression of his Divine love, for therein men are taught to repent.

And so Judas passed out into the night. Here we have not the dealings of one man with another; here we have the way in which the Eternal God always treats humanity. For Peter who denied his Lord there was forgiveness. For Judas, who betrayed him; nobody knows. He passed out into the night. And we don't know the end, there must be some,

*“...sad, {obscure} sequestered state
Where God unmakes, but to remake the Soul
He else first made in vain;
Which must not be.”*

(The Ring and the Book by Robert Browning).

So our Lord goes into the garden, encounters the soldiers; delivers himself into their hands. What are we looking at here? We're looking at the Lord Jesus Christ, who is presiding over his own execution. Nobody surprised him; nobody took his life from him, he laid it down willingly. Whatever was done to him, he permitted, it was with his consent; his free consent. We talk of our freedom. Which man among us is free, as Jesus was free? Which man among us is free to take the worst that wicked men can do and yet make no difference to him? We're not free as he was free. And so he went the Via Dolorosa and even his cross was too heavy for him. It was carried by someone else. There between two thieves he was crucified. His temporal world came to an end, as your world will come to an end, and my world will come to an end someday. The universe of discourse which is you, will come to an end. And it's that world, and the way it ends which is of tremendous concern to our Heavenly Father. The Heavens will fold up, then as a vestige of a garment will vanish away.

Gentlemen, has it ever occurred to you, God by his word can make a galaxy or a universe; utter his word and it is obeyed, and yet it takes him the agony and the sweat, and the blood of the cross to change the heart of one selfish man so that it becomes a loving heart. Have you ever thought of that? And has it ever occurred to you that it matters more to God in eternity, that one little eight year old child makes a decision for righteousness of his own free will; this matters more to God than the creation of a universe. That's why we're to teach our children light and truth. And when in Zion children grow up

without becoming converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, the parents have blundered badly. And here again the sophistry of men is made manifest; theories of education, by many, many means our children are taken from us. And we don't hold our natural increase in this Church, tonight.

Let us return to the life and ministry of our Lord. Jesus cannot change the past. Wicked men slew him. The mob? The Pharisees?

*“His blood {be} [come] upon us and {upon} our children”
(Mathew 27:27)*

And so it has been ever since, has it not? But has it ever occurred to you that every self-satisfied Elder in this Church crucifies his own best possibilities. Self-satisfaction is the worst enemy that the gospel has. To be satisfied with yourself, and to sit in satisfaction and refuse to minister; this is the essence of crucifixion.

The difficulty with the Scribes and Pharisees were not that they were not religious; they were. They had a tremendous heritage and a tradition back of them, and many of them were steeped in the tradition and earnestly and sincerely trying to do that which they conceived to be right. But they were satisfied with themselves, and so crucified the Lord of Glory. But when they crucified the Lord of Glory, what did they kill? You cannot rob a son of God of life, it's impossible. You cannot be robbed of life, except you yourself throw it away. You cannot rob a Son of God of life. And what these men did when they crucified our Lord Jesus Christ, they simply put an end to their own best possibilities; for there he stood in their midst. He was what they

might be. The life he lived; the ministry he performed in the midst of them. This was their calling; this was that for which they were made, and they refused it. And so because they said they see, they were blind; and because they said they were alive, they killed him; put him on a cross.

But has it ever occurred to you too, that the most amazing miracle that was made manifest in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ was the fact that as he hung upon the cross, being buffeted in his soul by the hate and the lust which was around him, and it must have been terrible to him; has it ever occurred to you that as he looked into the eyes of the soldiers, and he prayed for them,

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”
(Luke 23:35)

that he never uttered one word of reproachment against them? Have you ever; you ask for a miracle, you ask for an almighty God; you have one. Here is a demonstration in the midst of the course of time, which gives meaning to all time, and which gives purpose to all time, that love is triumphant and nothing any man could ever do can change the fact of the eternal almighty love of God.

This is revealed in the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your history is there and mine is too. We talk about the end of the world and the end of the age. This will come of course when history moves to its climax. But how about your world and how about the way in which it will end? It's all revealed on Calvary. For Jesus as you know was

crucified between two thieves; one was repentant, the other was unrepentant.

And there are only three classes of people; two of them are thieves and the other, sons of God. The unrepentant thief comes to the end of his world and goes into oblivion, but he who said,

“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,”
(Luke 23:43)

receives from the lips of the Lord the blessing,

“{this day thou} [Today] shalt [thou] be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:44)

or in peace. And this is, this is received by every son of Adam who is truly and sincerely conscious of the fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord. He may not belong to our Church, he may have no notion of what our Church stands for and yet he may have some knowledge of the Son of God, he receives the blessing of pardon and in paradise shall be found. All of us are thieves. Oh, you say that is strong language. It is!

Let me ask you first of all, to whom do we belong; do we belong to ourselves? Are we our own men? You know in this world today there's a piece of fiction written by a man named Henley, who says,

*“I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,*

My head {may be bloodied} [is bloody], but {it's} unbowed."

(Invictus by William Ernest Henley)

I'll take what's coming to me, so what. And then there's that little bit of fiction that was written by Shakespeare, you know,

*"This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."*

(Hamlet - Act 1 Scene 3 by William Shakespeare)

Supposing you have a self that isn't worth anything; what about that? Do you want to be true to that? Matters not how straight the gate. The amazing pride of the thrust of the children of men, when they are learned they think they are wise, counsel themselves, trust in the arm of flesh, and overlook the riches and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so these men crucify to themselves the Son of God, as does every other son of man, who chooses his way against the way of God. We do not belong to ourselves, we are created by him. He has made us; we belong to him in a way that we can never belong to ourselves.

Beethoven wrote Opus 127, number 2; took it to the publisher. He was hungry and needed some money to buy some food, and he played it for the publisher.

The publisher said, "I'll give you seven florins for it," and he gave him seven florins or shillings for it and he took the

manuscript. And the publisher says “We’ll call this the ‘Moonlight Sonata,’ because that is what it sounds like.” Nothing was further from Beethoven’s mind than moonlight when he wrote that piece of music.

Then the publisher took hold of it and said, “This is mine.” I’ll lay a wager tonight, there’s no man in this room who can tell me the name of that publisher. But you all know the Moonlight Sonata, because even when the publisher got his hands on it who did it belong to? It belonged to the man that made it; it belonged to Beethoven. He was in it. Every line, cadence and key relation; every movement of it belonged to him. And it always will belong to him. And if you are in favor of a little levity, I’ll inject some here. I remember the time I went home one day when my son was playing Beethoven, and Beethoven was losing.

God made us; we belong to him. Not only do we belong to him, he has bought us. Do you remember the story of the boy that made the ship? The fourteen, fifteen year old boy; lavished his care upon it. It was a beautiful little vessel. And when it was finished he went down to the lake, put it on the lake to sail and some errant wind caught it, filled the sails and it went beyond his reach. Sailing clear across to the other side of the lake, it was lost. In vain did he search for it. His father and he drove round the lake looking for it.

Then one day they were driving in another town, way on the other side of the lake, and they came to a pawn shop. The boy happened to glance into the window and there was his ship.

Stopped the car; excitedly ran into the shop and he said to the man, he said, “Say you have my ship in your window.”

“Oh,” he said.

“Yes, it’s mine, I made it.”

“Sonny,” he says, “that doesn’t belong to you. Someone came in here and I gave him fourteen dollars for it.” He says, “That’s mine.”

“No,” the boy said, “It’s mine.”

The man said to him, “You bring me fourteen dollars, and you can have it.”

So the boy went out and earned fourteen dollars, took it back and gave it to the man.

Proudly coming out of the shop with his ship he said, “Daddy, here’s my ship; I made it and I bought it.”

Someday the Lord Jesus Christ will say to his Father, “Father, here is thy creation; we made them and we have bought them.” We don’t belong to ourselves.

And what foliate pride is it for a man to make up his own mind as to what he shall do, with his life, which isn’t his to start with. A young man will sit down in his teens or his young manhood and imagine what life will be like when he is forty. And decide what area of life he will serve in, in order that he might become successful; and then he turns around and he uses all the gifts, and the opportunities, and the graces, and the blessings of God, to get what it was that he desired. There are many, many, many thousands of successful men who have done just that. They live on fine streets, they have a nice family, a street full of friends, two cars in the garage, money in the bank, they carry all the best kind of credit cards there are, they’re members of all the best clubs, but they’re certainly excluded from the Kingdom of God.

For it is not true, that man belongs to himself. It is true that man belongs to God, and for every one of us there is in the Lord

Jesus Christ a better self, which he will give to us. There's a part of life for each one of us mapped out. Which if we accept it, we will find him waiting for us at the completion of our journey. And one day we will stand erect, in the full manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ; free. Free to what? Free to do for men what they cannot do for themselves, free to suffer for men that which they do not know needs suffering. Free to give to men, all that they do not know they miss. This is the calling of the men of the ministry. And so on Calvary was revealed the end of the world; your world and mine. And if we die and lay down our lives as the Son of God laid down his life, then we pass from this stage of action with a consciousness, that someday we shall return and our ministry shall continue.

History devours its children. But history when viewed in the light of the Spirit of God, and when action is taken in the individual life in light of that Spirit, history is a means by which eternal life can break into the shades and the night of this present world existence. Gentlemen, God is. He is eternal; and God is love. This is the cardinal fact of the universe and we who are joined to him by his Spirit, in the inner deepest recesses of our souls, we cannot escape him. We ought to discover that which is within us in order that our own history might be transfigured with the light and the glory and the power of the Son of God.

Why do we talk about history when we talk about the Holy Spirit? There's no way to avoid it. We're involved, we cannot escape it. We cannot escape the judgments of history. We must suffer the consequences of what other men do, even as the Lord Jesus suffered the consequences of what other men did to him. This we cannot escape, but as he did we can take the exigencies of time, and the antinomies of time. We can take all that men

can do to us and if we use it in the manner designed of God, it can turn to our glory. And even that which seems dark and dreary, and hard to endure can be made by the grace and the power and the endowment of the Spirit, to be used as the means of glorifying God.

I care not how scared a soul may be, if only that soul turns and relies upon the Lord Jesus Christ and does the things that the Lord puts into his heart by the power of the Spirit to do. There's the secret gentlemen. The word of God speaks, for unless he is revealed everywhere, he cannot be revealed anywhere. Unless he calls all men, he cannot choose any man. Unless he's revealed in the history of Russia, he cannot be revealed in Europe or in the United States. And if he's not revealed in the history of the doings of men in the United States, he's not revealed in the history of the doings of the men of the Church. Of course, he works in different ways, in these areas, in these different areas; but always of God. And it is our welfare to know this and to come to know him and enjoy him forever; is the end and the purpose of mankind.

And so again I say, and I emphasize, as I emphasized last night, do not neglect the gift of God that is within you. For in you there is that power by which every circumstance of life can be taken and made to serve the cause of the kingdom. Love is triumphant over all.

You know the story of the little girl, don't you?

Climbed onto her mother's knee one day and said to her mummy, "I think you're the loveliest lady that ever lived." And the little girl said, "Your skin is beautiful, your eyes are beautiful, your hair is beautiful; Mummy, I love you so much. But Mummy, why are your hands ugly?" And they were.

So the mother turned to the little girl and she said, “Well Susie, when you were little, your bed caught on fire one night, and I heard your screams and I went and beat out the flames with my hands and this is the result.” The little girl never said anything. Said her prayers and went to bed.

Then a few weeks later the same process was repeated. “Mummy, I think you’re the most lovely lady in the world; your hair, your skin, your eyes. Mummy you know something? The loveliest thing about you are your hands.”

Love had taken that ugly thing and made it to that child a thing of beauty. And when the love of God takes the sin of the world it doesn’t alter the fact of the sin. It changes its value, so the very sins men commit become the occasion of the revelation of the glory and the endowment of the Spirit of God. And this is what history is saying in the Lord Jesus Christ and that is what it says in your life and in mine.

Gentlemen, with such a God and in possession of such a Spirit, who cannot fail to go on in this great cause? God has validated our calling in the life and the ministry of his Son. Oh, I beg of you, as one of your brethren, to seek to study the life and the ministry of Jesus with all your heart, might, mind, soul and strength. Not only seek through the study of the written word but seek on your knees the revelation of the Spirit which will make the record luminous. And as you shall find walking in the midst of your consciousness the image of the Lord Jesus Christ; and time and time again if you will do this, you will have recreated within you some of those aspects of the scriptural life of our Master and you will be able to say, “Him I know, for I have seen him.” For God holds the course of time in one unitary, solitary, comprehensive grip. He sees it all; the past, the

present, and the future, all in one eternal grasp. And is able to bring to your mind and to mine that which is in harmony with his will, which will serve his purpose in each of us, to bring us to the maturity to which we are all called.

*Transcribed by Morris Heide, and published by
LatterDayTruth.org, 2013.*

*For other Church materials, please visit our website at
www.LatterDayTruth.org*