

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

An Address by ELDER JOHN M. SJODAHL, delivered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, before the Pioneer Stake Conference, Sunday, April 25, 1909.

(Reported by F. W. Otterstrom.)

Those who attended the morning session of our conference were reminded of the necessity of watchfulness. A parable was read in our hearing inculcating that virtue and teaching, especially that those who have been given the position of watchmen upon the towers of Zion, should look out and warn of the coming of the enemy, even from afar, and not wait until he is close at hand. According to that parable, it is expected of the watchmen that they see the enemy as he approaches and that they warn those who occupy the vineyard lest it should be destroyed. I have been reminded, this afternoon, of the enemy as he approaches and that they warn those who occupy the vineyard lest it should be destroyed. I have been reminded, this afternoon, of the enemy as he approaches and that they warn those who occupy the vineyard lest it should be destroyed.

are not satisfied with slow speed, but the enemy is getting up the quick speed we possibly can. We are going by rail, by steamboat, under the water, over the water, and trying to make even the air a vehicle of traveling. People are "running to and fro" on the earth; it is one of the characteristics of our age. See, furthermore, how intelligence is increasing among the human family; how we are able to utilize nature and the natural forces for human needs, as never before. Wireless telegraph and other contrivances are now no longer looked upon as miracles, but quite natural. Those who give their thoughts to research are no longer satisfied with a scrutiny of the objects that are nearest to view, but they are trying to penetrate to the uttermost boundaries of the universe, almost, and to the most infinitesimal things that the microscope can bring to view. They are not satisfied until they have analyzed the very atoms of substances.

But there are other characteristics not quite so encouraging. There was, perhaps, never a time in which the authority of God Almighty was less revered than in our age. This is shown in a great many departments of human life. Who is there at present that considers obedience as a virtue? We say now-a-days that we do not want to be slaves to anyone. Obey? Who wants to obey? That is a word that we would like to discard, if possible, from our dictionaries. Even the little children think they know better than their parents. They are "back numbers." Everyone wants to have his own way as far as possible, from the youngest to the oldest. Why? Because we have forgotten that there is a God who has the right to rule, and who does rule, and who demands obedience of everyone of His sons and daughters. Men trample upon the authority of law. They despise leadership, even if God Himself has instituted that leadership. They rebel against the authority of parents, and against authority in any shape. That is one of the characteristics of our age. As a result family ties are breaking up as never before and that not in uncivilized states, but in countries claiming to stand on the highest plateau of civilization. It has been proved that during the last twenty years about one million divorces were granted in the United States and that this evil is on the increase, at a more rapid rate than the increase of population. People are becoming tired of duty and therefore tear asunder the most sacred ties on slight provocation. They want "freedom" even to the extent of licentiousness. They forget covenants that should be kept sacredly.

Then again, we notice another characteristic of our time: everything seems to be changing; the old order of

things seems to be going and a new order is being instituted in everything. This is particularly noticeable with regard to forms of government, and the principles of government. The principles upon which our government was formed are finding their way through out the world, not only in the western European countries that are quite far advanced, but in such countries as Turkey, Persia, China, and more or less all over the world. Those principles are penetrating human thought and shaping the various forms of government so that in a little while we may expect to see the language of the Revolution of John, everything having been made new.

A great many other things could be mentioned in this connection; but let us ask, what do all these signs portend? What is their meaning? This, my brethren and sisters, that we are living in the time of the end. Everyone of the characteristics of our age show this clearly; if we read the prophetic writings touching upon the times of the latter days. The Prophet Daniel (chapter xli.) very clearly said, referring to the characteristics of the latter time, that knowledge should be multiplied, and that man should "run to and fro" in the earth—just as we are doing today. Our Lord, speaking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives concerning His coming again, said that He would make it clear that there should be a time of tribulation and a time of change in everything; the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give its light, and the stars should fall from the heavens, which figurative expressions evidently have reference to great changes in human government and the status of the human family upon this earth, as does for instance the 13th chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet speaks of the fall of the great empire of Babylon in the same figures of speech: "The sun shall be darkened and the moon not give its light, and the stars shall fall from the heavens, and the same language recurs in the Apocalypse, where John speaks of great changes that were to take place before the coming of the millennium, so that these revolutionary changes seem to be among the signs of the end of our great dispensation of our Heavenly Father. Again the Apostle Paul, speaking of the last time tells us that it should be a time in which wickedness should abound in the sons of men. He speaks about the prevalence of the doctrine of devils, or rather demons—as the word means—doctrines of seducing spirits, that abound in our day.

I say, therefore, the signs of the times portend that we are nearing the end of this dispensation, and one of the best proofs of this is the fact that our Heavenly Father has sent to us His inspired servant, His prophet, and established, in this age, His Church, His gospel, calling to repentance His children all over the world, that they may come and gain salvation in His kingdom. That is one of the great signs of the end.

Now, my brothers and sisters, I desire to give this testimony before I close my remarks; that Joseph Smith was a prophet sent of God to this world to call us to repentance, and to call attention to the fact that the coming of the Son of God is near. I testify that those who have succeeded the Prophet Joseph, in his high and holy calling, are men of God, standing as witnesses of the same fact to the world

today. I can only bear testimony to this.

PROOF OF DIVINITY.

Nicodemus came to the Savior and said to Him, "Master," or Rabbi, "we know that no one can do these works that Thou doest except God be with him." If this is the criterion, that the works a man is doing are a proof of his divine calling, then the works that were done through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph and his successors is a proof of their divine inspiration and calling, for no one could do the works that they have done except God be with them. This you can learn for yourselves.

Speaking to those who have not this testimony, I say you can learn for yourselves, because the promise is that if you are willing to do the work of God, then you shall know for yourselves whether the doctrine is from God or not. Willingness to do the commandments of the Lord, gives light, gives testimony, gives assurance in the soul that you are on the right road, and there is no other way to get this testimony, this assurance than through willingness to do what the Lord has commanded.

For myself, I desire to say that when I commenced walking in the light of the gospel, I knew very little of it, but I had this made clear to me that it was necessary to repent and to be baptized. I was willing to repent of my sins and to be baptized, but I did not know much yet, but I knew less then. I knew very little, indeed, but one truth came to my mind after another, and one after another, till I could see something of the full glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I sometimes have said, studying the gospel is like going out in an evening and looking up towards the sky. You see, perhaps, at first only one or two of the most brilliant stars in the firmament, but as you walk along, there is another star that comes up before your sight, and another one, and still another, until you can see the entire firmament strewn with the glory of God. This is your experience, if you are walking in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Truth after truth will be made manifest to your soul until you can comprehend more and more of its entire glory.

May God help you, and me, and all of us, to be watchful and prayerful in these last times that when the end shall come to us, individually, or to the dispensation in which we live, we may be counted worthy to participate with the Bridegroom in the festivities that have been prepared for His coming. Amen.

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GENEALOGY

All communications for this department should be addressed to the secretary of the society, Elder Joseph F. Perkins, Jr., care of the Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah. All surnames eligible to membership in this society; life membership is \$10. If annual members, \$1 must be paid for initiation fee, and \$1 a year for dues, making \$2 for the first year and \$1 per year after.

PERKINS FAMILY.

An interesting letter from Brigham T. Perkins of Taylor, Arizona, has been received. He wishes to hear from all who are related to the Perkins family of the United States, whether of the New England or the Southern family. He states that he and his father worked for some time in the St. George temple, on names gleaned by his father, Elder Ute Perkins, from the southern states, while on a mission there in 1869. This work was begun in 1877, and continued intermittently until 1882, when the lists were finished. There were over 200 names thus attended to. While this was going on, the family obtained through that indefatigable temple recorder, Frank Farnsworth, over 1,100 of the Perkins family from the northern states. Most of these were added to a young list of the Perkins family tradition has it that two brothers came over from England in the early days of the colonies, and one located in the north and one in the south. These have sprung the two branches of the family, the Ute Perkins branch descending from the southern line. His second great-grandfather was Richard Perkins of Virginia, born in America. His son Robert Perkins was also of Virginia. His son, Ute Perkins, Sr., was born Aug. 8, 1780, in Virginia, dying in Illinois, March 12, 1844, as a member of this Church. Ute's son, Reuben was born in Lincoln Co., North Carolina, March 1, 1783. He died in Bountiful, Utah, Oct. 22, 1871. Reuben's son Jesse Nelson Perkins was born in Jackson Co., Tenn., 1819, and died in 1883, at Taylor, Arizona.

Sarah Grant married Ute Perkins, Sr. and Elizabeth Pettillo was the maiden name of Reuben Perkins' wife. The name of Jesse Nelson Perkins' wife was Rhoda Condra McClelland. The Condras and the McClellands were supposed to be of Scotch descent. The New England emigrants were named Thomas and William Perkins. Bro. Perkins would be very pleased to hear from any one interested in any of these lines.

SHROPSHIRE PARISH RECORDS.

Elder Joseph F. Smith, Jr.: In connection with my first and last visit to the genealogical office, an incident in my missionary life seems applicable in the fall of 1884. I was one morning taking a stroll in the general cemetery, Auckland, N. Z., where I formed the acquaintance of an old gentleman, the sexton of the church, who was a pleasant chat. I gave him my card, introducing myself a missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

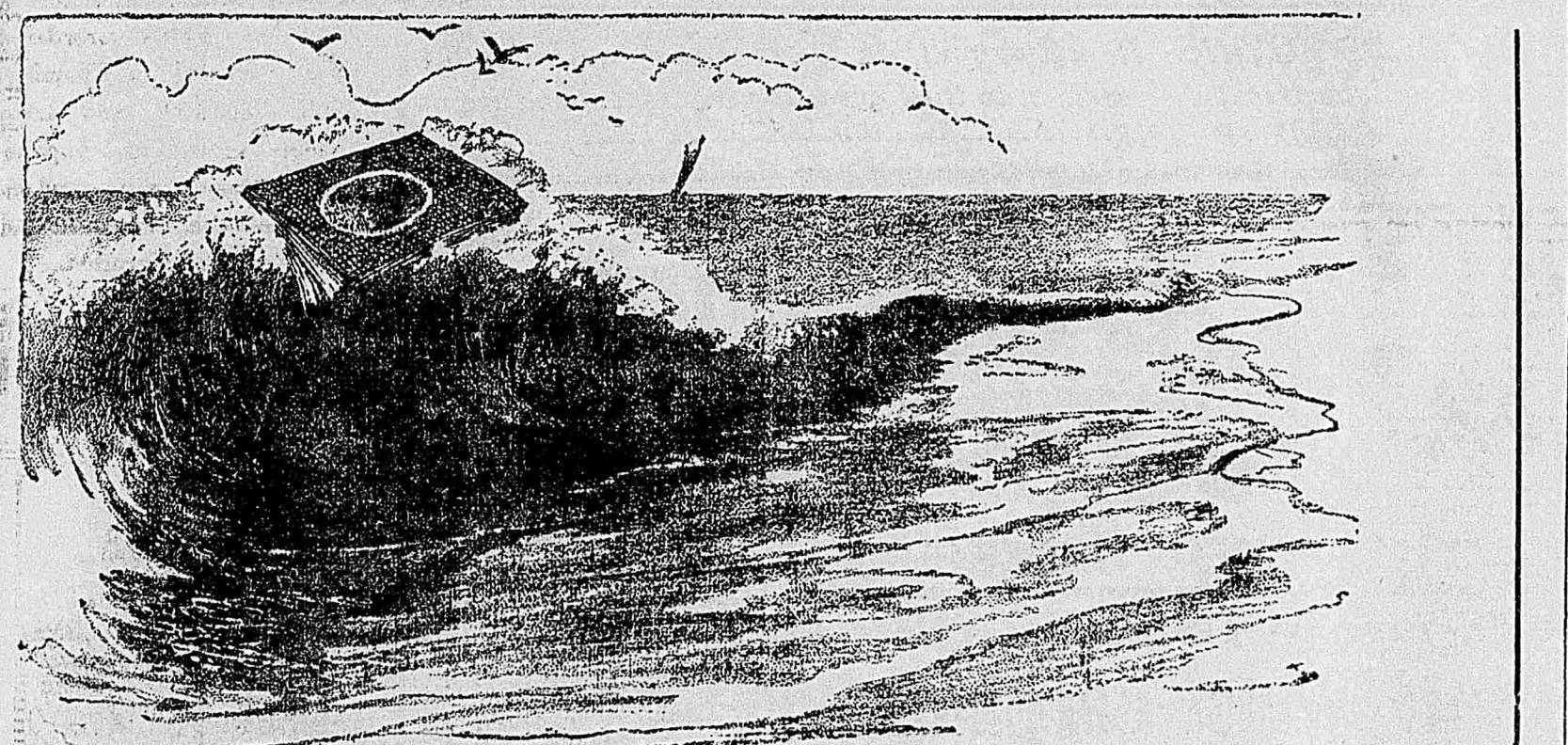
DAVIS AND FOX FAMILIES.

Mrs. Catherine Fox, Lehi, Utah, is anxious to take up the temple work of the Davis family of London and the Fox family of England and request all related to either of these families to write to her at the above address.

NEXT WEEK IN HISTORY.

- MAY 16.
- 1791—Col. John Buttrick, commander of the Americans at the Concord fight, died; born 1721.
 - 1801—William Henry Seward, statesman, secretary of state under Lincoln, born; died 1872.
 - 1860—The famous Republican convention met in Chicago. The aspirants for the role of standard bearer were Lincoln, Seward and Chase.
 - 1905—First joint meetings since the beginning of the civil war in 1861 of the Baptists, north and south, in St. Louis.
- MAY 17.
- 1829—John Jay, statesman, died; born 1745.
 - 1875—John Cabell Breckinridge, vice president 1857-61, and Democratic candidate opposed to Lincoln in 1860, died; born 1821.
 - 1905—Yacht race for the \$5,000 Kaiser's cup begun at Sandy Hook.
- MAY 18.
- 1675—James Marquette, missionary and explorer, died; born 1637.
 - 1861—Nathaniel Hawthorne, distinguished American novelist and sketch writer, died; born 1804.
 - 1907—Edward H. Conger, who was United States minister to Peking during the Boxer troubles, died at Pasadena, Cal.; born 1843.
- MAY 19.
- 1780—"Dark day" in New England; darkness commenced at 11 a. m. and

- covered the country from New York City to Maine.
 - 1790—Gen. Israel Putnam, famous Revolutionary soldier, died; born 1713.
 - 1906—George McNeil, noted labor leader, called the "father of the eight hour day," died; born 1827.
- MAY 20.
- 1506—Christopher Columbus, discoverer of America, died at Valladolid, Spain, aged about 70.
 - 1772—Dorothy Payne, famous as Dolly Madison, born in North Carolina; married James Madison 1794; died 1849.
 - 1834—Marquis de Lafayette, noble French ally of the American revolutionists, died in Paris; born 1757.
 - 1902—E. L. Kodkin, noted editor and critic, died; born 1831.
- MAY 21.
- 1690—John Eliot, apostle to the Indians, died in Roxbury, Mass; born 1604 in Hartfordshire.
 - 1894—General Phil Cook, a distinguished Confederate veteran, died in Atlanta; born 1817.
 - 1905—Albion W. Tourgee, noted writer and lecturer and United States consul at Bordeaux, died; born 1828.
- MAY 22.
- 1807—The trial of Aaron Burr, former vice president of the United States for high treason, began at Richmond. Trial lasted six months and resulted in acquittal.
 - 1898—Edward Bellamy, "Arthur of Looking Backward," "Equality," etc., died; born 1859.



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