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DISCOURSE

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PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon us during the remainder of the meeting as it has done so far, and that it may not only assist me in what I shall say, but that it may carry to your minds a clear understanding of the truth. I was remarkably struck at the opening of this meeting with the beautiful hymn that was sung, commencing with the words: "I know that my Redeemer lives," and I will endeavor to make this the text of my remarks, although I may not divide and subdivide the subject in the orthodox way. It is of the utmost importance for every person who has reached the years of understanding before God, to solve this problem to his or her satisfaction. It is written, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The nature of our lives and the circumstances in which we are placed make it imperative that we shall know of the doctrine; for except we have knowledge we shall be like the waves of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed, and we shall not know that our Redeemer lives.

I will refer to the days of Jesus, when He was with His disciples in Jerusalem, and will endeavor to call to your mind some circumstances that occurred then which appeal today to the hearts of men. We are all familiar with the history of our Savior as it is recorded in the New Testament; how that He was born of a virgin; that He grew in the midst of his brethren to be a man, and what marvelous things He did even in His childhood by the power of His anointing and mission; how He taught the lawyers and the doctors in the synagogue and in the temple, and how He confounded those who sought to make Him an offender for a word. We are all familiar with the power which He displayed in healing the sick, in restoring sight to the blind and bearing to the dead, and in cleansing the leper, and making the lame to leap with joy. We are familiar with the doctrines which he taught; and it has always seemed to me that there need be no further proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ than the doctrine which He taught that men should love those who despitefully used them and persecuted them, and that they should return good for evil. Up to His day the doctrine

taught in the world was, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This was the philosophy of the age. But Jesus taught directly the opposite of this. He enjoined upon His disciples that they should not return evil for evil, but that they should return good for evil. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This doctrine was new to the world. It is a doctrine not in accordance with the fallen nature of man. It comes directly in contact with the natural man. Therefore, it is not of man. Men could not teach such a doctrine and carry it out in their lives without inspiration and power from on high.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Read the Sermon on the Mount, and then ask yourselves whether it is beyond and above everything ever taught by man. It confirms me in the belief that Jesus was not merely a man, but that He was God manifest in the flesh. It is the doctrine of eternal life, by which if a man shall live he shall never die; by which if he shall walk he shall walk in pleasant paths; and by which if he shall abide, he shall know the truth, and the truth will make him free. Then we come to the day of His trial, when one whom He chose to be an Apostle and a witness of Him turned traitor and betrayed the Lord to His enemies. They came out with sword and with staves to capture the man of peace, the man who forbade violence, who had never lifted His voice nor His hand against the innocent and the good, nor indeed against any man, except only against their wicked practices and evil-doings—they came out to take Him prisoner and to pass Him through a mock trial, that they might find occasion to condemn Him to death. On one occasion, when He had been teaching the people these righteous principles and testifying that He was the Son of God, they picked up stones to stone Him. Jesus replied, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" He had done no evil works among them; all that He had done was good; and yet they sought to kill Him. When Peter, incensed, drew his sword and smote off the ear of the servant of the high priest, Jesus rebuked him and said, "Put up thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." In the midst of His trial, when mocked, when smitten, when crowned with thorns, and

when reviled against, He reviled not again, but meekly submitted to His lot and suffered that which God permitted the wicked to inflict upon Him. He was brought into circumstances where the doctrine He taught could be put to the test, and in all He proved the genuineness of His teaching. Even in the midst of His agony on the cross, He cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." I ask, is this true? If it be true, then I say that no man could utter such words as these at such a time; it required the power and spirit, the love, mercy, charity and forgiveness of God himself. I bear my testimony to you that a being who could ask God to forgive men from whom He had received such unmerited cruelty is nothing less than God. If there was no other proof than this of the divine mission of Jesus Christ, this alone would convince me that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world. He taught and exemplified in His life the very principles that will redeem the world, and the only principles that can be found written in any book that will redeem the world. There is no other doctrine taught beneath the sun to my knowledge that is capable of redeeming men than that which He taught. He taught that we should commit no sin; and yet He taught that we should forgive the vilest sinner, that we should not let the sun go down on our wrath. If we would but carry out one of these principles, how much better we would be for it. If we would but hearken to that one doctrine of Christ "agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him," and as expressed by Paul in the words, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath," how much better we would be than we are, how much nobler, and how much greater in the eyes of honorable men and in the sight of the heavens. When we allow anger to rankle in our hearts one towards another, and carry animosity in our souls against our brother from day to day, how necessary this principle is. If we would but carry it out, it would revolutionize the world, and make it a thousand-fold better than it is today. There would be no strife, no anger continued in the hearts of the children of men, but instead there would abide in the heart the principles of forgiveness, charity and mercy. Murders would cease, hatred would cease, and everything that leads to the multitude of evils that prevail among men today, if we would only hearken to that one thing, which Jesus so wonderfully exemplified in His life. But we fall far short of this. Jesus, as I have said, was crucified. His body was taken from the cross by His friends, washed