

TEACHING SERIES
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Why I Am A Latter Day Saint



SERMON

By BISHOP R. C. EVANS

I AM sure I can count myself happy notwithstanding the very many special meetings that are being held in the city to-night, that I gaze with unspeakable delight upon an audience that is occupying every seat of the main floor and gallery of this great assembly hall. I feel that this is a strong testimony, after my services of seven winters in the Toronto Opera House, that in the beginning of the eighth winter I see the place packed to the doors, and I would like to notify the ushers, that they must not permit people to stand in the aisles.

Bible Evidence.

I am here to-night to answer a very important question, as I take it. Why I am a Latter Day Saint? As it is customary to take a text I present to you one found in the third chapter 1st Peter and 15th verse: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." About thirty-seven years ago, when but a boy, I heard this gospel under very peculiar circumstances, and I have been following it up, reading, studying and thinking about it ever since. On Nov. 5th, 1876, I was baptized into Christ, and from that time I have been diligently searching, reading, praying, listening and thinking. I cannot say with the great Lyman Abbott, D.D., when asked "Why I am a Congregationalist," he made answer saying, "Probably chiefly for the same reason that I am an American. I was born and bred so. We adjust ourselves to our environments. If we live in the Arctic regions we eat blubber, if we live in the tropics we eat bread fruits, so we fit ourselves to the religious climate to which we are accustomed."

Many other clergymen of other religious denominations have given about the same reason as Dr. Abbott. They were born Roman Catholics; they were born Protestants, Unitarians, Baptists, and all that. They went with the crowd that they found themselves in. It seems to me anybody can go down stream without much of an effort. When Abraham made a

start in the religious life, he gave a splendid exemplification of his manhood, and his unreserved love for God and the truth, by leaving home and country by direct command of God.

Jesus Denounced Them.

Moses had to leave the home in which he had been educated by the greatest teachers of Egypt and strike out with nearly two millions of slaves in a barren wilderness, receiving the commandments of God direct from Heaven. Jesus Christ had to leave the popular throng, the great temples of worship, and come right out squarely and emphatically declared against the religion of the times, and while He was filled with faith and love, tenderness and gentleness was the element in which He lived, and yet His love for God and for the truth inspired Him to make the most fierce denunciation of the ministers of the different churches that surrounded Him from the highest priest to the lowest parson in the country, declaring: "Ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell."

He rebuked them for their hypocrisy, denounced them because they turned aside from the commandments of God and complied with the tradition of their ministers. Paul did not follow his immediate predecessors. Though a Pharisee after the strictest manner, he turned against the church and stood alone to be mobbed and beaten, declaring after the manner which they (the churches around them), called heresy, he worshiped according to the perfect law that God had given. And so we find it was true, as we come further down the stream. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Ridley, Wesley, Roger, Williams, John Smith, and many of the great noted men had to leave the religion of their fathers, denouncing it as wrong, and stand up for the truth as they saw it.

There are many to-day who make the argument, we have enough churches in Toronto, why listen to this Latter Day Saint? Why don't you abide in the pew where your mother worshipped, where your grandfather died; that is mere sentiment, neither sensible nor honest. Apply that argument to Abraham, to Moses, to Christ, to Paul, to Luther, to Calvin, to Knox, to Wesley, and where would you be? Your own church flings the lie back upon you and shows that that advice is narrow, contemptible and mean. That's the argument that has been made for hundreds of years, the church that was good enough for my father is good enough for me. Why, if there was anything in that, down goes Protestantism, and every other ism in Protestantism. Suppose we applied that idea to anything else outside of religion, you would then see how silly it was: "The religion of my father is good enough for me."

Religion of Fathers Not Good Enough.

Why don't you apply that on something else? For instance, the illumination of this house. Suppose we apply it on that, say oh, well, our fathers had a pine knot and it furnished all the light they wanted. By and by they had a tallow dip that made a good illumination, and after a while the candle was invented. Later on we got coal oil, then gas, and still further on, and we have electric light. Suppose now I was to make an argument against the electric light people of Toronto, and say keep off my premises, what was good enough for my grandfather was good enough for me. Do you see the point now? Try it on anything else you please; you would have no railroads, no steamboats, no automobiles, no bicycles. Why, you would not even have a buggy to ride in, so that this thought that we must stultify investigation and stand by something that our fathers stood

by is not in accord with good judgment and the spirit of development.

I am sometimes accused of being old-fashioned, because I am willing to run back on religion to a certain date. I think it would do us all good if we would read the Bible and agree upon it. My position is as a Latter Day Saint that Jesus Christ, the son of God, was selected by His Father to be a witness, a leader and the commander. You will read this in Isaiah 55, and 4, and I am here to-night to say, as I have been for 30 odd years, that I accept Him as the witness when He testifies on this question of religion. I follow Him as the leader to this question of religion. I obey Him implicitly as commander in this question of religion, and so when He stated, Matt. 16, 18: "I will build my church." I accept the church as established by Him to be absolutely correct in organization, doctrine, principle and promise.

Churches Cannot Interfere.

I take the position that no pope, cardinal, archbishop, synod, conference, or any other gathering of men, or any individual among men, has any right to change one ordinance, obliterate one doctrine or abrogate one sacrament that he inaugurated in the divine system called the everlasting gospel. I believe that if we accept Him as the leader, as the commander, and as God's special witness that when any man or church arises to deviate from the doctrine or church organization or ordinance established by Jesus Christ that that individual, that church, that congregation, that conference, that synod, that council, is in error.

I may just hurriedly state to-night that as a Latter Day Saint, without reservation or equivocation, I accept the church doctrinally, and as He organized it and the principle of His church, and I unreservedly utter my denunciation and condemnation upon every church that is in conflict with the one organized by Christ. I have long since settled this thought in my mind, that if Christ made a mistake, then He was a false witness and you need not follow Him, and when that is proven down goes Christianity so far as I am concerned. My only hope is in the Father and that Jesus Christ is the son of God, that He is a witness true, His leadership is true, and His commandments essential to salvation. And hence as a Latter Day Saint, I have stood for what He taught and opposed every church under heaven, either Catholic or Protestant, just to the extent that they have deviated from that church, organization, doctrines, ordinance, or sacrament. I have always said, let God be true, though every man be made a liar. Now because I have taken that position, there has been a good many hard things said about me, but I have been made to know that the servant is not above his master, and if they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, what can the servant of the household expect from the same quarter.

Churchianity has always been against Christianity. That is a big statement and all I ask is that you examine the evidence that I have been presenting to you week after week for many years quoting from the church disciplines, prayer books, and confessions of faith of the different churches in the world. I cannot agree with them, for they do not agree among themselves. This is eminently true, and you cannot expend one cent to purchase a Toronto paper, but what you will get the evidence of that right along, all the time.

Apostacy of Christ's Church.

Now my next point is that that church established by Jesus Christ, according to the prophecies, went in to apostacy, and the time came when ordinances were changed, the doctrines were abrogated, organization was altered, and so in the place of having Bible organization as referred to in the New Testament. (See Luke 6:13. Acts 13:1. Heb. 5:1-2. Tim. 4:5.

Luke 10:1-17. Titus. 1:5-1. Tim. 3:1. Rev. 5:10. Eph. 4:11-1. Tim. 3:8. 1 Cor. 12) which clearly points out that the executive departments of the church were apostles, prophets, bishops, teachers, priests, deacons, elders, that we have now a human institution and in place of having a prophet divinely commissioned we elect a Pope.

The Election of a Pope.

We are told by history that the manner of electing the Pope is when a Pope dies all the cardinals that can conveniently do so rush to Rome. They go into their little cells all alone, their food is handed in to them, and they remain there until the time comes for voting. Each cardinal writes a name, and if there is a two-thirds vote for one person, he is elected. If not, they have to go back, again, again, again and again, showing that it is a human institution, a human election, and a human position, for nowhere in the Bible does it say that God set a Pope in the church. No where does He say that the prophet shall be taken out and that the human election of a Pope shall be established. Some of those elections have been severely censured, and even the election of the last Pope was a go between to save a fight between two others who were notably superior men and neither one would give in, so a go-between was selected. God was not in it. Now that is pretty hard on Catholicism. Protestantism is just as bad.

All I have to ask you to do is to look back a few short months ago to the election of a Protestant bishop in this city, and if the proceedings of those meetings have been properly reported by the public press then God was not in it, and it was absolutely disgraceful the conduct and speeches during that time. The ward heelers for aldermen never fussed more than the fusses in Toronto as to who would be bishop. Now I am saying this, knowing it is going into the press, and I am prepared to answer what I am saying, asking no pity at the hands of those who are specially referred to.

How different these things are compared to God's method as we read it in the Bible. When the ministers to represent God in the true church were to be selected even Jesus Christ Himself spent the whole night in prayer upon the mountain top before He made the selection of the apostles.

God Calls His Ministers.

Again the record is teeming with the facts as declared so distinctly in the 5th chapter of Hebrews, speaking of the priesthood: "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." God is pushed out of it, and the man who has the biggest pull and gets the most votes is elected now, so that it is a human institution.

Now following the human priesthood of course comes the human church, and so we have the church drifting further away as I have pointed out in many of my sermons.

And let me say logically to-night that I would be forced to accept many views of Catholicism discarded now by all Protestant churches rather than to accept many of the claims of the Protestant church as correct. There are a great many points in Catholicism that are both spiritually good and logical, that puts the conglomerated mass of confusion called Protestantism so far in the shade that it is a wonder King Billy ever reached the other shores of the Boyne.

Catholics Forbidden to Read Bible.

They tell me the Catholic church burned the Bible, they did not want anybody to read the Bible. Now there is a statement that is very frequently made that "we must give the devil his due." While it is a fact that the Catholic church for hundreds of years denied the common people the Bible. That's true.

I admit that, and lest it may be denied, I am going to crave your indulgence while I read a proof. "No Bible shall be held or read, except by priests. No Bible shall be sold without a license, except upon the pain and penalties of that mortal sin that is neither to be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come." Council of Trent. "Moreover we confirm and renew the decrees cited above, delivered in former times by apostolic authority, against the publication, distribution, reading and possession of the books of the Holy Scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue." Pope Gregory XVI. Pope Pius IX. said: "We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device (Bible society) by which the very foundations of religion are undermined. We have deliberated upon the means proper to adopt by our Pontifical authority, in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible. This defilement of the faith, so imminently dangerous to souls." Romanism and the Republic, p. 106. "There is no remedy for the evil (reading the Bible) but to put the heretics to death." Belarmine.

That our Catholic friends do not wish the Protestant Bible to be read is true. I do not think they can deny that. I will read you just one statement on this line: "You must not read Protestant bibles, for they are adulterated and falsified. They have been changed into a hundred different forms, and the revised edition is nothing but an outrage on Christianity and a book of lies. The Protestant bible is the word of man. In it you will find destruction, and I am sorry to say that there are Catholics who have had the weakness to believe that Protestant bibles are true. Protestants are very sociable and polite with their bibles. They send their agents through the country, such as colporteurs and point-aux-trembles-theologians, renegades and apostates, with tracts and bibles, and now I repeat again, and it must be understood that the church forbids you to read those bibles. If you have any of them in your houses, burn them, and if you do not want to burn them, bring them to me and I will burn them." Montreal Daily Witness, 65th annual meeting of the Montreal Bible Society, report on the Rev. Father Giband's sermon.

Henry VIII. Burns Bible.

I could furnish you many such statements, but is our Catholic friend any worse against the Protestant bible, than some of our Protestant people have been against both Catholic and some translations of the Protestant bible. Oh, no, my dear friends, there is as much said against the Catholic faith by our Protestants as there has been said by the Catholics against the Protestants, and it is not fair to put it all on the one side. Let me read you concerning King Henry VIII., and some acts passed by his parliament on the Bible. "In 1543 the contest as to reading the Scriptures was again renewed. None were to read the Bible aloud, without license. The King or ordinary noblemen and gentlemen might cause the Bible to be read to their families, servants and householders might read it to themselves privately, but all women (except the families of the nobility and gentry), and all artificers, laborers, or servants, with all persons of the lower classes were strictly forbidden or prohibited from perusing the word of God," Act of English Parliament.

We learn from such historians as Collier and Fuller and others, that long before printing was invented, the Bible was written by hand, and bound with gold and silver, and many diamonds and other costly stones adorned the covers, and that during the reformation anything that had the semblance of the Roman Catholic Church upon it was destroyed. Whole libraries were burnt, and costly Bibles were striped of their gold, silver and precious stones and burnt.

Tyndale translated the Bible, Miles Coverdale did the same, and it is admitted that Catholics burned a great many of these Bibles, but they weren't the only ones, who were guilty of burning even these Protestant bibles. Speaking of the act of parliament just referred to, Rev. Graham, in his book called "Where We Got the Bible," says: "The very year before he (Henry VIII.), went to his account (1546), he commanded all copies of the Bible, translated by either Tyndale or Miles Coverdale to be delivered up and burned." (P. 141.) That was one of the last acts of that old rascal's life, after having several wives, killing one to-night and marrying the other to-morrow.

Luther, of blessed memory, accomplished much that was good, yet he was vindictive, he was spiteful, and the works that he did not like, he burned them. John Calvin, the father of Presbyterianism, the books he did not like, he burned them, and he went a little further, he burned the men that wrote them, too, and so the Protestants may tell the truth when they say that Catholics have killed over fifty millions of Protestants.

Must Tell Truth.

But that is not all the truth. You know it is one thing to tell the truth, and quite another to tell all the truth. When you go up before Colonel Denison you do not take an oath to tell the truth, but you take an oath to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God. Very frequently that is not carried into effect. They tell a part of the truth and hide the other part, and that is very unfair, so while we have Catholicism fighting with Protestantism, Protestant books denouncing Catholic books, Protestants murdering Catholics and vice-versa, so long will the Catholic Church and her children, the Protestant Churches, be in a big muss, and, therefore, the teaching and practice of both the Catholic and the Protestant Church has been a withering, blighting, curse to hundreds of thousands, and destroyed faith in thousands of others, and that is the reason why I am in the stand with Christ and not with the man-made creeds. Let me say in honor to them that there is much in the Roman Catholic Church that I love because it is true and it is right.

On the other hand there is much that is denounced by Protestantism, in Roman Catholicism, that I believe with all my soul. Then there is much, in, shall I say every Protestant Church, that I admire, the zeal, the sacrifice, the loving service, the grand work accomplished by both sides charm and thrills my soul with thankfulness to God, and to-night I would not wither a single flower of truth that blooms in the garden of either the Catholic or Protestant Church, but with Jesus I stand, saying "every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted must be rooted up," and I am after the weeds occasionally that seem to choke the good plants.

Some people think that I denounce everything only that which is Latter Day Saintism. Now you have some of the reasons why I am not a Roman Catholic and why I do not agree with what is generally called Protestantism. Some people think that I am a great objector because I protest against many things that the Protestants do not protest against in Catholicism.

Original Sin Unscriptural.

For instance, I protest against the doctrine of infant baptism, that stains every soul that is born in this world, and that they are damned in the next forever unless they are baptized before they die. Now that doctrine found its origin in the doctrine of "Birthsin." I denounce it because it is unscriptural. A number of Protestant churches do not protest against it because they brought the article with them when they left Roman

Catholicism. There are a host of things that I protest against that I found both in Catholicism and Protestantism, but I stand for this position: Christ and the apostles foretold that the church would go into apostacy, that she would teach for doctrine the commandments of men and would depart from the faith and introduce much that would lead the people astray, and as we read the history how the very Bible has been changed, altered and burnt, and the truth frequently misrepresented, we see the prophecies fulfilled. Looking back through the dark history of the last seventeen hundred years we see the prophecies of the Bible fulfilled in that the Church of Christ went into apostacy.

The Protestant Church is the strongest evidence relative to the apostacy of that church that I would care to present, but notwithstanding that church went down into the maelstrom of apostacy while the New Testament, and the Old Testament for that matter, foretells with no uncertainty that in the latter days, in the hour of God's judgment, just before the harvest time, God would speak again that He would raise up a prophet, that He would call twelve apostles, that all ministers would be called of God, that the ministers in general would be called by revelation, and that the church would be organized just as it was in the former days. I am a Latter Day Saint because I believe that. Because I believe that we are living in the latter days. Let me say that it is unnecessary for me to give any of my time to this part of the subject to-night, because all the churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant agree with me on this plan, but said one: What right have you to call yourself a saint; why, gentlemen, that is the name that God gave His people.

He did not call them Roman Catholics, Protestants, Unitarian, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Trinitarians, "saints," they were former day saints, and you will find this name referred to in the New Testament. If the church of Jesus Christ is to be organized again in the latter days, then certainly they will be called Latter Day Saints, for even the word Christian is a nickname.

No Objection to Name.

Now I have no objection to the other churches calling themselves after their several founders, whether it be Lutheran or Knox church, or some other man's church, I am not saying anything against that. If I would build a house they would call it my house, so I am not complaining, but we call this the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from the fact that God calls His people saints and that we live in the latter days and the church has been reorganized so that so far as the name goes you may hate it, but that is the true Bible name of God's people. Now while we have had a great many translations of the Bible, both Protestant and Catholic Bibles. I believe that God in the latter days has raised up a prophet, and that prophet and the true church is in a position to stand up with the Bible, translated by inspiration: That while the Bible contains the word of God that yet the church existed before there was any New Testament and was in the halo of its glory hundreds of years before that book was compiled, but while I believe the gospel of Jesus Christ was taught in the Bible and that no man should preach that which is contrary to the Bible, yet I believe there is something more than the Bible.

With Paul I can say: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," and so my friends as a Latter Day Saint I believe that the Holy Spirit comes down upon the men that have faith in God, and repent of their sins and are baptized for the remission of sins, for this is the invulnerable promise of God. He has guaranteed to the obedient the abiding comforter, the gift of

the Holy Ghost, that is to take the things of the Father and reveal them unto you. No man is a Christian who denounces the power of the Holy Ghost.

One Reason.

And when the Protestant Churches rise to say that all that God gave to men is revealed in the Bible and the last revelation was given to John, they by that statement convince the Bible reader that the Protestant churches are of human origin, so I am a Latter Day Saint because I believe that the man who will believe the gospel as it is taught in the New Testament may receive the Holy Spirit and under its inspiration the church to-day may enjoy the gift of tongues, an interpretation of tongues, the gift of prophecy, and other spiritual manifestations referred to in the Bible promises. Just in a word, the same cause producing the same effect, the spirit of God working in the Latter Day Saint Church, just as it worked in the Former Day Saint Church.

Another Reason.

I am a Latter Day Saint because I believe that, and I am supported by all the Bible in that position, for "I am the Lord, I change not," is the certificate given by the Almighty in the third chapter of Malachi. If God is an unchangeable being, then we have the right to expect His church as organized in latter days, to be unchangeable. It will have twelve apostles, prophets, bishops, deacons, elders, etc., ordained under divine appointment, and they will preach the gospel just as it was preached by Christ and the apostles. The Protestant or Catholic Church that denounces any part of this but proves that it is a human institution, for the body without the spirit is dead.

I am a Latter Day Saint because this gospel with all its charming promises reached me when I was a wild, weak, ignorant boy who had never mastered the multiplication table. I received with meekness and faith the simple gospel promises as I read them in the Bible. When I was baptised I was forsaken by most of those who knew me, but I was soon called by God to preach the gospel. I left everything that I ought in this world. I have been mobbed, shot at, ill used and abused, but I certify to you to-night in the name of Jesus Christ, that God has been true to His promises to me. My life has largely been a very lonely one, filled with many sacrifices, but God has been true to me and I know that the man that will obey from his heart the gospel as God sent me to preach it, will not only receive the remission of his sins, but he will be born again from an old existence into a new life and the spirit of God will fill his heart and body, and mind, just as that spirit dominated men in the dear dead years of the past.

Our Church Supported By Bible.

I am a Latter Day Saint because there is absolutely nothing in the doctrine of this church that is not supported by the Bible. So far as I have been able to search there is nothing that the Bible teaches that is not inculcated in the doctrine and principle of the Latter Day Saint Church. I know that I could be more popular.

I know that I could have a better time in this world, so far as the world is concerned, but the honor of having heard the voice of God is the biggest salary that any man can receive, to really feel that you are walking in the footsteps of Christ and the apostles, both as to church organization, doctrine, ordinances and hope, is something that builds me up in all the walks of life.