

## REMARKS

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG,  
Bowery, G. S. L. City, July 31, 1864.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

In my remarks this afternoon I wish to address strangers, as well as the Saints; and I desire, with all my heart, that I may have the words of truth to give them, to each one as he may need, that all may be profited.

I present myself before this congregation as a teacher of the way of life and salvation, and I seek unto the Lord day by day for strength and wisdom to enable me to magnify my high and holy calling, to the end that those who believe my testimony may be saved in the presence of the Father and the Son; and that those who cannot abide the law which prepares mankind to enter into the Celestial kingdom, may be prepared for just as high a kingdom and glory as they can abide.

There exists in the minds of men throughout the world a great variety of ideas and notions in regard to the character of the Supreme Being, yet all believe in a supreme ruling power which is invisible to them, which does not speak to them, whose dwelling place, as some suppose, is beyond the most distant stars, and, as others suppose, is everywhere; having, as some suppose, a corporeal form, and, as others suppose, being without form.

All people have their national and individual capacities, desires, faith, pursuits, habits, manners, customs, etc. We, like others, think that our religion is the best religion upon the earth. All have the privilege of worshipping the Sun, Moon, or Stars, if they please; to imagine to themselves a supreme being existing in any form their imaginations may create, or in no form at all. Others are as enthusiastic in their faith and religious doctrine, as we are. I doubt not that those we call heathen are as sincere in their heathenish worship as we are in ours. The Christian world of the 19th century acknowledge the Old and New Testaments as the standard of their religion, yet it would be difficult to imagine a greater variety of views, notions and beliefs, in regard to the Supreme Being, than exists among the Christians of the present day.

The foundation of the religion we have embraced, and are trying to practice, is based upon new revelation. To learn the true religion is to learn and understand its Author.

The Latter-day Saints differ from the Christian brethren who do not belong to the Latter-day Church, and we have, we consider, as good a right to differ from them as they have to differ from us. They say that our religion is not orthodox, is of short standing, and unpopular; that makes no difference with us. We are one in our belief in a Supreme Being, while they widely differ upon this vital point; and after ages of controversy upon it, still making more uncertain the possibility of their becoming united, they are content to say "great is the mystery of Godliness, God made manifest in the flesh," and there they leave it.

Moses represents God as saying "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Are we willing, in our faith to subscribe to those statements? Are we willing to let the truth of heaven speak in plainness, and have its full influence over our minds? A few more quotations of scripture upon this point will answer my present purpose. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?" "In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." "Who being the brightness of the glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." From these scriptures you can at once understand there is a strong resemblance between the Father and the Son in the person of the Savior, who possessed all the qualifications of a perfect man.

We Latter-day Saints believe that God is our Father, according to the declaration of the prophets and apostles; that we are his offspring, and that He has made of one flesh and blood all the inhabitants of the earth, no matter whether they be white, black, red, yellow, or copper colored. We believe in a God who has eyes to see, ears to hear, indeed every member and sense of his body well developed as a perfect man. Is there any harm in believing this? If we do not take this view of the Great Author of our existence, what view shall we take of him? Shall we try to view Him as a shapeless, passionless, measureless entity? Shall we consider the Being in whose image we were made, an unorganized element of some kind, floating in the immensity of space, without mind, plan, or purpose?

God is considered to be everywhere present at the same moment; and the psalmist says "whither shall I flee from thy presence?" He is present with all his creations through his influence, through his government spirit and power, but he himself is a person, age of tabernacle, and we are made after his likeness.

It was said here this morning that the gospel maketh those who receive it of one heart and of one mind; they become of one heart and of one mind as to the principles of the

gospel so far as they are revealed, but when men speculate upon principles or doctrines, and undertake to develop what they have no knowledge of, then they may differ widely, the Latter-day Saints as well as others. The principles which have been revealed to us from the heavens bring this people to the standard of truth; it is that which makes them one. The proof of this is before us—Latter-day Saints, you are my witnesses.

In regard to the character of the Deity, our faith is different from that of our former religious associates; but we leave the world to judge, every man for himself, whether we are right or whether they are right, at the same time pleading with them to lay aside their prejudices, and weigh matters in the scale of justice, that they may correctly judge of right and wrong and know the difference between truth and error.

Our religion is founded upon the priesthood of the Son of God—it is incorporated within this priesthood.—We frequently hear people inquire what the priesthood is; it is a pure and holy system of government. It is the law that governs and controls all things, and will eventually govern and control the earth and the inhabitants that dwell upon it and all things pertaining to it. The enemy and opposer of Jesus—the ac user of the brethren—called Satan, never owned the earth; he never made a particle of it; his labor is not to create, but to destroy; while, on the other hand, the labor of the Son of God is to create, preserve, purify, build up and exalt all things—the earth and its fulness—to his standard of greatness and perfection; to restore all things to their paradisiacal state and make them glorious. The work of the one is to preserve and sanctify, the work of the other is to waste away, deface and destroy; and the time will come when it will be manifest to all that the evil one is an usurper, a so that all governments, nations, kingdoms and people upon the face of this earth, that are opposed to the Government of the Son of God, are usurpations and usurpers of the rights and possessions of Him whose right it is to reign.

Thinking men, inquiring minds, ask whether it is really necessary for the Government of God to be on the earth at the present day; I answer, most assuredly; there never was a time when it was more needed than it is now. Why? Because men do not know how to govern themselves without it. Would it be considered treason by any Christian government in our day to profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the efficacy of his death and resurrection for the salvation of man, and to profess and declare that it is his inalienable, indisputable right and prerogative to reign over men, the earth, and all things upon it?

In November, 1838, Joseph Smith and others were arraigned before Judge Austin A. King, in Ray county, Missouri. In course of the examination our church organization was converted into a temporal kingdom, which was to fill the whole earth and subdue all other kingdoms. Much was inquired by the Judge (who by the way, was a Methodist), concerning the prophecy of Daniel:—"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever," etc. "And the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the Saints of the Most High," etc., when lawyer Doniphan said:—"Judge, you had better make the Bible treason." The Lord has suffered the earth to lie under sin for thousands of years:—"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The system of church government that we have differs from others, but we take the Bible for our standard, which you can all read at your leisure. Jesus said to his disciples:—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Do we believe this important saying, or do we not? Is this true, or is it not true? I am answered:—"It was so in the days of Christ and the apostles, but it is not exactly so now, for God is merciful to all, is no respecter of persons, but giveth to all men liberally that asketh, whether they are baptized or not. We believe in the light of the Spirit, but we do not believe that baptism is either here or there to affect salvation." Another one said:—"You can be baptized, if you wish to be, for it is right for every person to answer for his own conscience, for if you can only answer a good conscience before God, it is enough." Then another one feels that his conscience is answered without being baptized. Another one's conscience is answered by kneeling down in the water, and having water poured upon him. Another's conscience is not answered, without being buried with Christ in baptism. Another one, to answer his conscience, must be sprinkled from a bowl of water on the forehead, making the sign of the cross, and he sees no reason why all his household should not be baptized in the same way, and so he has them all baptized by sprinkling, even the infant in its mother's arms; and the consciences of the parents are answered by choosing sponsors, or god-fathers and god-mothers. But tell me how the conscience of the unconscious infant can be answered? "O, as to that its conscience is all right, it is made by the mother and the priest." Now, I ask, should the consciences of the people regulate the ordinances of the gospel of the Son of God, or should those or-

dinances regulate and direct the consciences of the people? I decide that the gospel of life and salvation should form, direct, guide and dictate the consciences of all. In this light the Latter-day Saints take the scriptures, the ordinances of the gospel and the Holy Priesthood, and act accordingly.

When it was said to Peter and his brethren, anciently, "men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Jesus Christ taught his disciples to lay their hands upon baptized believers, for the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." The gift of the Holy Ghost was so visibly manifest that a certain man called Simon, a sorcerer, who bewitched the people of Samaria, when he "saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying give me this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Again we read of certain ones, who had been baptized to John's baptism, who were baptized again by Paul, "and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." This is the gospel we believe in and practice, now judge ye for yourselves whether we have the Bible to sustain us in this practice of the ordinances of the gospel. I say let God be true, if it makes every man a liar.

Now the inquirer asks, "Is not the Holy Ghost given to others, as well as to members of your church?" I would answer yes, in some instances; but in such cases they receive it through grace, not through obedience to the ordinances. We have a striking example of this in the case of Cornelius and his household. Cornelius was a gentile, and gentiles were supposed by the ancient disciples of Christ unfit vessels for the reception of that holy influence; but the house of Israel had proved themselves unworthy of the words of life, and the time had come that they should be offered to the gentiles. It appears that Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, gave much alms and prayed to God always. He saw a vision—an angel of God coming to him—who told him that his prayers were heard, and that his alms were come up before God for a memorial. Then the angel told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to call for one Simon, whose surname was Peter, telling Cornelius where he lodged in a house by the sea side, and saying "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." In the meantime the prejudices of Peter had to be overcome, so when he went up to the house top to pray, he became very hungry, and fell into a trance while they were making food ready for him. While in the trance he saw as it were, a great sheet, knit at the four corners, let down from heaven to the earth, filled with all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him saying rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter refused, saying I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice said what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. "While Peter thought on the vision, the spirit said unto him, behold three men seek thee." Peter went to the house of Cornelius, and while he spake to those who were assembled "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Now it may be asked, "what more did Cornelius want?" He needed to be baptized.

Again it is asked:—"Is the Holy Ghost given in this age or the world?" Yes, but they could not send men to Joppa for Peter, for behold there was no Peter, or men possessing the Holy Priesthood, to send for, neither has there been since the church lost the Holy Priesthood, until it was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Cornelius did not belong to the house of Israel, yet he received the Holy Ghost. Continue this history, and what does it give to us? It gives to us the key of knowledge with regard to receiving the Holy Ghost through the ordinances of the gospel, that it is free to all, Jew and Gentile, as Peter exclaimed when Cornelius had related to him how he was instructed to send men to Joppa. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him."

Our friends of the Christian world have labored from the pulpit and through the press, for ages, to make it appear that baptism by immersion is non essential, and that the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost is done away and no longer needed. Suppose Cornelius had refused to be baptized, on the grounds that he had received the Holy Ghost as well as the apostles, the result would have been that the Holy Ghost would have left him, and the light that was in him would have become darkness, and then it could have been exclaimed, how great is that darkness! Those who work righteousness, do as they are commanded by the Holy Priesthood; and those who do not according to the commands and requirements of the Holy Priesthood of the

Son of God, never did and never can work righteousness; they may do thousands of good acts, for which they will have their reward, but as the followers of Jesus—as his disciples—as lights shining in darkness—as way marks to the kingdom of heaven—as the oracles of truth to the children of men—they do not and cannot work righteousness to be saved in the celestial kingdom, independent of the Holy Priesthood. Is the Holy Ghost given? Yes, it may be given to members of the various churches, who are sincere enough to receive the revelation and power of God.

Here and there the Holy Ghost is and has been given to a few. Is it given to all? No. Have they any right to it? No. It is the system of government God has revealed to the children of men that gives people a right to the ordinances, blessings and privileges of the gospel of Christ, and without that they have not any legal right to them, and cannot claim them. When men have the privilege of hearing the plan of salvation from the mouth of an inspired servant of God, and they reject it, I will promise them that, if they have ever possessed any portion of the Holy Spirit, it will depart from them and sevenfold more darkness will ensue to the mind of that person than is the lot of all to suffer in a state of nature, unlightened by the inspiring rays of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus Christ, while on the earth, sent His servants to preach He instructed them to promise all baptized believers that, "these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." "But, Mr. speaker, were not these signs done away?" Yes, but how were they done away? They were done away by the wickedness and unbelief of the people. "Were they done away by the Lord Almighty, because they were no longer needed?" They were not.

"But if a man should, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, in these days prophecy and write it, would it not be adding to what is already written, and is not that strictly forbidden?" This is a very popular query, and I am disposed to notice it a few moments. In Deuteronomy it is written:—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Again, in the book of Proverbs it is written:—"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Again, in the last chap. of Revelations it is written:—"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Where is it intimated in these passages that God would cease or had ceased to give revelation to His children? Those passages were written to guard against the mutilation of the revelations already given, which then existed in manuscript form, and very likely there existed not more than one copy when these words were written. It cannot reasonably be supposed for a moment that the Almighty has sealed His own mouth in silence by the scriptures quoted, yet they are used in that light by modern Christians.

We are safe in saying that from the day that Adam was created and placed in the Garden of Eden to this day, the plan of salvation and the revelations of the will of God to man are unchanged, although mankind have not for many ages been favored therewith, in consequence of apostasy and wickedness. There is no evidence to be found in the bible that the gospel should be one thing in the days of the Israelites, another in the days of Christ and his Apostles, and another in the 19th Century, but, on the contrary, we are instructed that God is the same in every age, and that His plan of saving His children is the same. He has redeemed the world by offering up His Only Begotten Son, and that Son is the heir of the earth and to all things which pertain to it. He has not changed His laws, ordinances and covenants pertaining to Himself and the salvation of mankind. The plan of salvation is one, from the beginning of the world to the end thereof.

The gifts of the gospel are given to strengthen the faith of the believer:—"They shall speak with new tongues," saith Jesus. The stranger who is ignorant of our history inquires:—"Have you the gift of tongues in your church?" Yes, and were I to permit it now, hundreds of the Elders and the sisters would rise up in this congregation and speak in new tongues, and interpret as well as the learned of the age; but I do not permit it. Does the gift of prophecy exist with us? This fact is so evident and plain that it appears to us almost a loss of time to talk about it. The present state of affairs and the present unhappy state of our once happy country, I have preached and prophesied of for the last thirty years; and so have thousands of others prophesied before the people of this land that the Almighty would come out in His wrath and vex the nation for persecuting the priesthood of the Son of God; the fulfillment is too evident to attempt to prove.

I will here say that it is a mistaken idea, as entertained by the Calvinists, that God has decreed all things whatsoever that come to pass, for the volition of the creature is a