

DISCOURSE

By President Brigham Young, Tabernacle, February 1st, 1857.

[REPORTED BY GEO. D. WATT.]

Let the congregation be as still as possible.

I wish to occupy a short time in speaking to you, and I am not able to talk with the ease that I could wish, for my health has for some time obliged me to confine myself pretty closely to my rooms. This is the first time that I have walked so far as to come to this Tabernacle, since the burial of Jedediah M. Grant. My bodily afflictions would not permit me to walk much, and they also still hinder my efforts in speaking or exercising. I have been troubled this winter, as are many in this high altitude, with a rising of the blood to the head; that is what is troubling me this morning, inasmuch that I hardly felt able to get here.

Aided by the faith and prayers of the Saints, I will endeavor to speak so that you can hear me, and to edify you according to the best of my ability.

I have a great desire to teach people the way of life and salvation; I have been occupied in that labor for many years. It has been my chief business to instruct the inhabitants of the earth how they can secure unto themselves eternal life. The more I become acquainted with the principles pertaining to salvation, and the more strictly I adhere to them, the more importance I attach to them.

If I do not always view people as they really are, yet I see them partially as they are, perhaps, as looking through a glass darkly, and in the vision of my mind, looking at this people called Latter Day Saints, and leaving out the residue of the inhabitants of the earth, to give vent to my understanding, I could cry aloud and weep before the Lord. It appears to me that very many, in their understandings, according to the past conduct of the people, leaving out the present, are too much like brute beasts, or like the door on its hinges, which opens and shuts as it is acted upon, and is insensible. This appears to be the situation of some of the people.

Sometimes this seems strange and inconsistent, knowing that mankind are organized to receive and continue to receive, and that receiving one fact in the understanding does not deprive them in the least of receiving another. There is no heathen nation but what expects their posterity to improve in all the knowledge they possess, and that is required by the parents. But the Christian nations with whom we have been associated, boast of their intelligence, suppose that they are exhibiting great knowledge and that it towers to the heavens, and expect their children to improve in all the arts and sciences in their possession.

When people have the privilege of securing to themselves eternal exaltation, when the words of eternal life are given to them, what a pity it is that they do not understand how liable they are to fall out by the way, and that this is necessary in this state of probation. Place before some persons that which their appetites crave and require, and they will forsake every other thing, even their best friends. They will contend against their best friends and benefactors, in order to glut their appetites. When I look at this people, to say nothing about any people but the Latter Day Saints, if I have a correct understanding, some few of them look to me to be much like what we call brute beasts. The people are instructed, from their youth, that there is no end to their learning. They are taught by their parents and by their teachers that they can continue to learn, that they can store up knowledge, treasure up the wisdom of the world, and never see the time, although they shall live to the age of Methuselah or older, but what they can add to their store of knowledge.

When I apply these principles to the Latter Day Saints, it would seem that when they are once filled, when they are once fed upon the words of eternal life until their souls are satisfied, they conclude that that meal will last for ever. They think they will never require any more, and so they become empty, faint, wearied, dull, stupid, and before they are aware of it they need a spirit of reformation; they need a fresh manifestation of the power of God to stir them up and waken them out of their sleep, to remove the scales from their eyes, to arouse them from their lethargy. And when again awakened, they begin to see that they have been without food; then they can realize that they have neglected the more weighty matters. I ask the Latter Day Saints, is such the case? Is it true that any of the Elders of Israel, with their wives and children, neglect the things of God and turn to the paltry, corruptible things of earth, and let their affections and feelings be attracted from holy principles and placed on objects of no moment? You can answer this question at your leisure.

You that see and understand things as they are, you who can obtain the visions of eternity, whose minds soar aloft to things beyond this vale of tears, how does it appear to you? Do you feel as though you can weep over the people? Whether you do or not, that is my feeling. To observe for what trifling things men and women will turn away from the spirit of the holy gospel, after traveling a few hundred miles with, perhaps, a few little trials to pass through, such as being perplexed with wild cattle in their teams, with misfortunes and losses; and they thirst, thirst greedily for the vain and foolish things of the world, and neglect the Spirit and principles of the holy gospel. It has killed them spiritually to pass through those sorrows, privations, and trials.—You may ponder these ideas in your hearts, at your leisure. Such conduct is one of the most astonishing things to me that ever I have experienced, or beheld; yet I have reasons for thinking that I understand the natural causes why the people are as they are.

I flattered myself, years ago, that whoever embraced the doctrine of salvation would so live as to enter in at the straight gate, in this, howev-

er, I have been mistaken. If we this day had congregated the vast multitudes that have taken upon them the name of Christ, that have entered into the new and everlasting covenant to serve the Lord our God, those who have embraced the gospel of salvation that has been revealed through his Prophet and Seer in the last days, and then selected out those who still stand firm in the faith, you would find that but a small portion of the vast congregation had kept the faith; far the greatest number would be on the left hand. If you were to inquire of them individually, 'after you heard the gospel, believed, and embraced it, did you think you would ever leave the faith?' every man and woman would reply, 'no, no; I will believe and obey until death; no power on earth shall deprive me of the blessings of the gospel that I have embraced; for it I have sacrificed my all.'

Again, would not thousands that have forsaken their fathers, mothers, children, or companions, for the sake of the gospel, but are now enveloped in the spirit of the world, when asked whether they know this gospel to be true, reply, 'we believe it;' and when asked whether Joseph Smith was a prophet, reply, 'we believe it.' Ask such persons why they do not gather with the Saints, and the ten thousand obstacles that would be presented would tower up like mountains and keep them from gathering. Ask them why they do not pay their tithing, and they have ten thousand excuses and reasons to render. Inquire why they do not do something for the gospel, and instruct them, if they cannot pay their tithing, nor gather with the saints, to go and preach to their neighbors, and they will say to you, 'O, my neighbors are pretty well off, they are good people; here are the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc., and they are good people and I really do not feel it my duty to preach to them.' Where are such persons? They are in darkness, they have apostatized. Another great class you will find have come out in open rebellion to the faith, to those principles they once testified they knew to be true, and that too by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now leave that vast multitude, and come to this place. Here is the gathering of the people; here is the carcass, and the eagles gather to this place; here they are by thousands and scores of thousands. Look through this vast multitude before me, and through the inhabitants of this Territory, and then go to the United States and to Europe and the Islands of the sea, and gather up all who profess to be Latter Day Saints, and how many of them are there in the way to enter into the straight gate? How many are going to be crowned with the Gods? You will all admit that this is a hard question to answer. Do you think one half of them will enter in at the straight gate, pass by the angels and the Gods, and receive a celestial exaltation? I pray they may, even if I do not believe so.

Is there any person deprived of this privilege? No, not one. Has the Lord cast an obstacle in the way of any individual, to deprive him of the privilege of being exalted? No, not one; but every thing that could be done has been done, every provision that could be made has been made, every law that could be instituted to encourage and elevate the people, to increase their faith, their knowledge, their understanding, and to lead them to life and salvation, the Lord has brought to this people. Then the Lord is not to blame. Are angels to blame? Are they hindering the people? No. Are the spirits of the just casting stumbling blocks before the people, or tying their hands, or turning them away from the right path? No.

Do you think that one half of the people walk up to every known duty, are so doing and laboring that they are in the straight and narrow path that leads to the lives? Answer this question at your leisure. Yet every person will acknowledge that every thing the Lord could do for our salvation has been done. All heaven is anxious that the people should be saved. The heavens weep over the people, because of their hard-heartedness, unbelief, and slowness to believe and act.

You have been taught, all the day long, that you are in a world of sin; you have been taught, all your lives, that the seeds of sin are sown in your mortal bodies; you have been taught that the spirit warreth against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit; that the spirit of every man and woman that gets into the celestial kingdom must overcome the flesh, must war against the flesh until the seeds of sin that are sown in the flesh are brought into subjection to the law of Christ. This has been taught you, from your youth up. There is not a society in Christendom but what has taught these principles, and you have read them in your Bibles when you were children. Your mothers taught you that we were in a world of sin, and that the enemy of righteousness is all the time ready and watching to overcome every individual. You will reply at once, 'We believe this doctrine,' and yet, from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and from year to year, we go on as we have. Some will say, 'I did give way to my evil passion yesterday, and I will give way again to-day, and I will let the flesh overcome the spirit. I will bring my spirit into subjection to the evil passion and evil influences that the enemy of Christ has sown in the human system. I will let my tongue speak just what it pleases; I will rail out against my neighbor; when I get mad, I will blaspheme; I will deceive my brother, or my neighbor,' and thus they bring the spirit into subjection to the flesh, until the Lord Almighty will withdraw the light of truth from those individuals, and they are left, if not to apostatize, to deny Joseph as a Prophet, Jesus Christ as the Savior, and to esteem holy writ and all the revelations from God as a burlesque. They are left in the dark, to welter in sorrow in the flesh, and in the spirit world they never can be exalted.

Is it, then, any marvel that those who dwell

in the heavens should weep over the people? Do you wonder, now, that the prophets used to weep over the people in ancient times? That Joseph used to weep over the people in his day? If you do, I do not.

Here is a large number of the Latter Day Saints situated upon the mountain tops, and right before each individual is eternal day, or eternal night; eternal light, or eternal darkness; eternal love, or eternal hatred; eternal glory, or eternal misery. This would want a great deal of explaining, to bring it down to your capacities, so that you can understand; but I use one class of these expressions to convey an idea of the opposite of the glory prepared for the very people now before me. The Lord has done every thing he can do in justice and in truth; in his mercy and in his long suffering and kindness there is nothing he has neglected, in order to put into the possession of this people power to secure to themselves eternal day, eternal peace, instead of eternal misery. Eternal glory, happiness, beauty, power, exaltation, excellency, and every good thing are prepared for the Elders that now sit before me to enter into the presence of the Father and the Son, where they could be exalted, sit with the Gods, be crowned with immortality and eternal lives; become the fathers not only of many nations but of an endless posterity; be the framers not only of a kingdom but of an endless chain of kingdoms. Nothing more can be done, than what has been done.

How many of those now looking on me will order their lives so that they will secure to themselves eternal happiness and exaltation? Do you think that one half of this congregation will answer that question? I pray that they may, whether I believe it or not.

Do you see people neglect their eternal welfare? A feeling prevails with some that, 'we do not know these things, we have not seen these things, we do not understand that there is a kingdom prepared for the faithful; we do not understand that there is a place prepared for those that are unruly, those that disbelieve, those that neglect the truth and the gospel when put in their possession. We do not know anything about these things.' Is this so? What do you say, brethren and sisters? Have you seen the Father and the Son? Do you know where they live? 'O, no.' Have you seen the courts of glory, have they been opened to your view? 'O, no.' What next? The spirit of unbelief takes place in your hearts. The enemy, the evil that is in the world, that has caused the trouble, sorrow, and perplexity, is with you, is your constant companion, and is continually suggesting that you know nothing about these things, consequently, without the utmost care and exercise of faith, and close application in life of the requirements of heaven, you are left to drink into the spirit of infidelity.

In this manner people are left in darkness, do not understand the things of God, neglect their salvation, and go groveling and feeling their way through this world, without a ray of light to shine on their path; hoping that there is a God, and, if there is, that he will be merciful to them; thinking that, if there is a heaven, they want to go there; if there is such a character as a Savior, they hope his blood will atone for their sins; and if there are any such beings as angels, they hope they will pick them up, by and bye. It resolves itself to this, 'if there is a God, O, be merciful to me.' You do not know, do you? 'O, no, we cannot realize it.'

Let me ask you a question, before I proceed further. How did you feel when the Spirit of the gospel first entered into your hearts, when the light of the gospel first shone on your understanding? Had you any such feelings then within you? Had you any doubts? How did you talk, when you first rose to testify that the Book of Mormon was true, that Joseph was a true Prophet, that this work was of God, that the Lord Almighty has revealed himself in these our days? Had you any doubts? 'No, I could not help bearing testimony to those things, I was so full of light and peace.' Did you hate anybody, at that time? 'No. I was filled with peace and union; I loved God and all the works of his hands. There was no anger, malice, or wrath in me.' Do you feel so now? Many of you would tell me, 'no.' Have you abode in that Spirit and feeling? You will answer, 'no.'

You say within yourselves, 'I believe the gospel, I believe the Lord has revealed the truth concerning himself, concerning the Son, concerning angels, salvation, eternal exaltation, etc.; I admit all this to be true.' Then you have to admit that we are organized to inherit all glory, power, and excellency; to be filled with eternal salvation and exaltation, and to become the sons of God, as the Apostle says, to be 'gods, even the sons of God;' fathers who shall endure, and whose posterity shall never end; though the Apostle turned the point very quick, because the people were not prepared to receive it. You admit the fact that we are organized expressly for the purpose of being exalted with the Gods.

You have the words of eternal life in your possession. What next? Take your own philosophy; if I am organized and capacitated to receive this glory and this exaltation, I must be the friend of Him who has brought me forth and instituted this exaltation for me; I must not be his enemy at any time. Again, you say, 'we are organized to become Gods, even sons of God; to act independently.' You expect to see the time when you will have at your control worlds on worlds, if your existence endures. Take Abraham, for instance, you can read the promise made to him, and again to Jesus. 'Now,' say you, 'we are to have kingdoms, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, etc.' Can you read it in this book? This is the Old and New Testament, which you and I were taught, from our youth, to believe is the word of God. If I

am to receive these blessings I will be an independent character, like those who dwell in eternity. If this is the case, let me pause for a moment and use my own natural philosophy. How can I prove myself the friend of God, who has placed all this glory within my reach, unless his influences are withdrawn from me, to see whether or not I will be his friend? At the time when you receive the greatest blessings by the manifestations of the power and Spirit of God, immediately the Lord may leave you to yourselves, that you may prove yourselves worthy of this exaltation. Multitudes, on the right and on the left, when this Spirit and power are withdrawn from them, sink into unbelief and do not know whether there is a God, or not. Ask them, 'what did you realize and experience yesterday?' The reply is, 'I do not know anything about it. I can see this house, I can see the sun, I can see men and women, but I can say no more.' 'Do you believe what you believed yesterday?' 'I do not know.'

Can a man be exalted upon any other principle? When men are left to themselves it is then they manifest their integrity, by saying and feeling, 'I am the friend of God.' Do all people realize that? If they did, let me tell you, they would cling fast to their integrity. When the mind of a righteous man is beclouded by darkness, when he does not know the first thing about the religion he believes in, it is because the veil is dropped so that he may act on the organization of his own individual person, which is calculated to be as independent as the Gods, in the end. When you are fully aware of this, then you are ready to lay down your lives for the cause of God and for his people, if you act on your own integrity and philosophy.

One of the greatest trials that ever came on the Son of God when he was in the flesh, upon that man whom we hold as our Savior, was when the mob had him in their possession. They spit on him, scourged him, mocked him, and made a wreath of thorns and placed it upon his head, (and I will insure that it was so placed on his head as to cause the blood to start) and said to him, 'here is your cross, you poor, worthless scamp, take and carry it onto that hill, for there we are going to nail you to it.' How would you feel in such a time, and at that very hour and moment when this tabernacle suffers, should the Father then withdraw himself and say, 'now, my son, I will see whether you will prove yourself worthy or not.' Did he walk up the hill? He did, and carried the cross until he fainted under it; then they took it and went on, and he submitted patiently to the will of his Father.

Will you submit patiently to the will of your Father, in the hour of darkness? Will you say that you are the friends of God? O shame! Many of you will not say so, in the hour of darkness. Take these Latter Day Saints, the Elders of Israel, and let many of them pass where they can hear the name of Jesus Christ and the name of their Father and God blasphemed, and they will pass along as unconcerned, and will never move a muscle nor a nerve of their systems. That is nothing to them, compared to what it would be to have their own dear names spoken against in the least. Speak against William, John, or Thomas, and then you will see the fire of resentment roused in that individual; while at the same time they may be opposed to their Father and God, to their Savior, to the Prophet, and to their holy religion. People may scandalize these as much as the tongue of slander can, and not a word said, nor a look of disapprobation given. But my dear brethren, those holy men and women, (pardon me, if I burlesque the idea a little) your names are so dear to you that, let any one speak a word against them, you are at once for fight.

If you want to know what you should do, when you hear a man blaspheme the name of God, and you feel that there are ten thousand million devils around you to see whether you will be for your religion, knock down the man that blasphemes, and say, 'If I cannot pray, I can fight for my religion and my God.' When you are in darkness is the time for you to exhibit your integrity, and to prove that you are the friends of Him who has called you to this glory and eternal life.

Do you want to know how to pray in your families? I have told you, a great many times, how to do when you feel as though you have not a particle of the Spirit of prayer with you. Get your wives and your children together, lock the door so that none of them will get out, and get down on your knees; and if you feel as though you want to swear and fight, keep on your knees until they are pretty well wearied, saying, 'Here I am; I will not abuse my Creator nor my religion, though I feel like hell inside, but I will stay on my knees until I overcome these devils around me.' That will prove to me that you are the friend of God, that you are filled with integrity. This is good for every person to practise in the hour of trial and darkness. Say, 'I am the friend of God, and if you abuse him, I shall abuse you.' This is what Abraham used to do. He would take his servants and go out, once in a while, and chastise the poor, miserable characters that ridiculed the Priesthood that was on him.

Here are the people that say they are Latter Day Saints. Now, if you can understand your own position, you will know, perhaps, better how to deal with yourselves and control yourselves; how to bring into subjection your own dispositions, your passions, appetites and wills, and let the Spirit of Truth the Lord has given you commence and conquer and overcome, little by little, until you gain the mastery in the spirit. This prepares the tabernacle for a resurrection and eternal life. You cannot inherit eternal life, unless your appetites are brought in subjection to the spirit that lives within you, that spirit which our Father in heaven gave. I mean the Father of your spirits, of those spirits which he has put into these tabernacles. The tabernacle must be brought in subjection to the spirit perfectly, or your bodies cannot be raised to inherit eternal life; if they do come forth, they must dwell in a lower kingdom. Seek diligently, until you bring all into subjection to the law of Christ.