

## DISCOURSE

BY

PRESIDENT GEORGE A. SMITH,

DELIVERED

In the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, May 24th, 1874.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

ABOUT two days since the daily papers announced the arrival in this city, of General A. W. Doniphan, of Liberty, Clay Co., Missouri. This circumstance brought to my mind incidents thirty-six years passed by, to which I shall briefly refer on the present occasion. There are few men whose names have been identified with the history of our church, with more pleasant feelings to its members, than General Doniphan. During a long career of persecution, abuse and oppression characters occasionally present themselves like stars of the first magnitude in defense of right, who are willing, notwithstanding the unpopularity that may attach to it, to stand up and protest against mob violence, murder, abuse, or the destruction of property and constitutional rights, even if the parties who are being thus abused, robbed, murdered or trampled under foot have the unpopular name of "Mormons." The incident of General Doniphan's exerting his influence, by which means he prevented the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and some other elders, who had had a mock trial by court-martial, in the State of Missouri, some thirty-six years ago, is familiar to the minds of all the Latter-day Saints who are acquainted with the history of that period, and there is one man in the Territory who was present on the occasion, that is Timothy B. Foote, of Nephi, who witnessed the court-martial. It was represented to Joseph Smith, by a man known among our people as Colonel Hinkle, that Major General Lucas and certain other parties wished to have an interview with him. In the vicinity of the town of Far West there was at that time a large body of armed men, under the orders of the Governor of Missouri, but temporarily under the command of General Lucas, of Jackson County, Mo., who was the ranking officer. It is understood by us that Hinkle had deceived Joseph Smith and the brethren with the idea that the interview was to be of a peaceful and consultative character, but when they came, as they supposed, to hold the interview, they were taken prisoners, tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be shot; the execution, however, was prevented by the protest of General Doniphan, who, at that time, was commander of a brigade, composed, I believe, of the militia of the County of Clay, and who declared that the execution of that sentence would be coldblooded murder.

It was not long after this that General Clark, who had been appointed by the Governor to this command, arrived and took command of this militia. General Atchison was the ranking officer, being the general of a division on the north side of the river, commanding a division containing, I think, six counties, but he was superseded by the appointment of Clark. If I remember right there were as many as thirteen thousand men ordered out, and there were probably five or six thousand collected together on the ground, their object being to expel the Latter-day Saints from the State of Missouri.

The number of Latter-day Saints at that period is not accurately known, but there were, I suppose, in the neighborhood of ten or twelve thousand. The settlements had been rapidly formed. They had occupied the County of Caldwell when there were only seven families in it. A party of Elders visited Caldwell County to look for a location. On their arrival they fell in with these seven families, who were living in log cabins and had made very little improvements. They said the country was a worthless, naked prairie, there was very little timber in it, and their business being bee-hunting, they had hunted all the bees out of the woods, and they wanted to go somewhere else, as they learned there was better bee-hunting and more money to be obtained up Grand River; and within an hour after the arrival of the first of these elders, every one of the seven men had sold their places and received their pay, congratulating themselves on their good fortune in leaving a country where the taking of wild honey had ceased to be a paying business, and there was not a family, other than Latter-day Saints, residing in the county. A good many of our people were settled in Ray County, a few in Clay, and some in Livingston, Daviess, Clinton and Carroll. I understand that three hundred and eighteen thousand dollars had been paid to the United States for lands in the State of Missouri, the titles of which were held by Latter-day Saints. The order of Governor Boggs exterminated these people from the State. To be sure they owned their lands, and they were industrious and law-abiding. They were increasing rapidly and making vast improvements. The city of Far West had several hundred houses, and other towns and villages were springing up. United farms were being organized, which were putting into cultivation very extensive tracts of land in addition to the large amount already brought under improvement.

In consequence of the influence exerted by General Doniphan General Lucas started to execute the sentence of his court-martial, and he delivered Joseph Smith and his associates into the charge of General Moses Wilson, who was instructed to take them to Jackson County and there put them to death. I heard General Wilson, some years after, speaking of this circumstance. He was telling some gentlemen about having Joseph Smith a pris-

oner in chains in his possession, and said he—"He was a very remarkable man. I carried him into my house, a prisoner in chains, and in less than two hours my wife loved him better than she did me." At any rate Mrs. Wilson became deeply interested in preserving the life of Joseph Smith and the other prisoners, and this interest on her part, which probably arose from a spirit of humanity, did not end with that circumstance, for, a number of years afterwards, after the family had moved to Texas, General Wilson became interested in raising a mob to do violence to some of the Latter-day Saint elders who were going to preach in the neighborhood, and this coming to the ears of Mrs. Wilson, although then an aged lady, she mounted her horse and rode thirty miles to give the elders the information. Year before last when I was in California, attending the state fair, I met with a son of Mr. Wilson; he was president of an agricultural society, and was attending the fair, and I named this circumstance to him. He told me that his mother deeply deprecated the difficulties with the Mormons, and did all she could to prevent them.

You can readily see from what I have said that our community, at that time, was very handsomely situated. The poorest man in it, apparently, owned his forty acres of land, while some of the richer had several sections. Farms had been opened, and prosperity seemed to smile upon the people everywhere. Mills were built, machinery was being constructed, and everything seemed to be going on that could be desired to make a community prosperous, wealthy and happy, when suddenly, in consequence of the exterminating order issued by Lilburn W. Boggs, and executed by General Clark and those under his command, the people were driven from the state. If we would renounce our faith we could have the privilege of remaining, but we were told pointedly that we must hold no prayer meetings, no prayer circles, no conferences, and that we must have neither bishops nor presidents, and that if we indulged in any of these forbidden luxuries the citizens would be upon us and destroy us. A very few accepted the conditions and remained, and I believe that, to this day, one or two families occupy their inheritances who then renounced their faith.

This people landed in Illinois destitute. Most of their animals had been plundered from them during the difficulties, and, to use a comparative expression, they arrived in that State almost naked and barefoot. They were, however, a very industrious people, and they immediately went to work; any where and everywhere that they could find anything to do their hands laid hold upon it, and prospered very soon began to smile upon them. Joseph Smith was kept in prison during the winter, but in the spring he and several of his fellow prisoners, among them Bishop Alexander McKee of the 11th Ward, escaped and made their way to the State of Illinois.

Our people had a very singular idea of justice and right; they supposed, having paid their money to the United States for their lands, having actually purchased and received titles for them, that it was the business of the United States to protect them thereon; having little acquaintance with law they entertained the somewhat wild idea that that was no more than justice on the part of the Government. Of course, the government could only be expected to protect them against any adverse titles that might arise; but so far as protecting them from mobs or from illegal violence from the State in which they lived, from oppression from those in authority, or from marauders who might burn their houses, or murder them and ravish their wives, this was no part of the business of the United States; but in their lack of knowledge on these subjects they fancied that the United States should protect them on their lands, hence Joseph Smith and several of his brethren went directly to Washington, carrying the applications of some ten thousand persons, and asked the Government to protect them in the possession of their lands and in their rights, and to restore them to their homes. They had an interview on the subject with Mr. Van Buren, at that time President of the United States, and the answer that he gave has become almost a household word. Said he—"Gentlemen, your cause is just, but we can do nothing for you." Joseph accordingly returned to his friends in the western border of Illinois, and they commenced purchasing lands in the vicinity of Nauvoo and they laid out and built a city, and remained there.

This occurred in the Spring of 1839, and Joseph remained there until the Summer of 1841, during which time he had several very grievous lawsuits, which arose out of attempts on the part of the authorities of Missouri to carry him back to that State. He was arrested several times, and had one trial, and was discharged on habeas corpus in the circuit court, before Judge Stephen A. Douglas; one trial, and discharged on habeas corpus before Judge Pope, United States judge in the district of Illinois; and one trial before the municipal court of Nauvoo. These several trials cost a great deal of money and a great deal of time, and were a very discouraging feature in the progress of the settlements in that vicinity, though the industry and enterprise of the people were such that they purchased a large portion of the lands in that county and in adjoining counties. They laid out and built the city of Nauvoo, containing some twelve thousand inhabitants, and they were building a temple and making other improvements, when Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered, which took place on the twenty-seventh of June, 1844.

I will say in relation to the progress of the work, that missionaries, among them the Twelve Apostles, had been sent abroad to preach, and a great many people had received the gospel. The Apostles took their departure directly from the recommencing of the foundation of the temple in the city

of Far West, on the 26th of April, 1839. They went on a mission to Europe for about two years, baptizing some seven thousand persons, and laying a foundation for the gathering from the old world, which has continued up to the present time. The circumstances connected with the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith were such as to impress upon their enemies even, the disgrace inflicted upon the State by their murder, and upon the world the importance of their mission. The governor of the State pledged himself, when they gave themselves up, that they should be protected and have a fair trial, but he placed them in the hands of men, who, he was assured by many, were their enemies, and who would murder them if they had the power. Joseph Smith had been brought before legal tribunals forty-seven times, and had in every instance been acquitted. Everything in the shape of a vexatious law suit that could be trumped up against him had been, and in this instance he was arrested on the affidavit of a man, whose word would not have been taken at a saloon in Carthage for a glass of grog, who swore that he was guilty of treason, and he was thrown into prison, and murdered while being detained waiting for an examination. The governor, in a communication to the Elders in Nauvoo, said that the people felt that it was very wrong that he should be murdered in that way, but the great mass of them were very glad that he was dead; and I have reason to believe that this feeling was caused by religious prejudice, which arose from the fact that he came preaching what was considered a new doctrine, which attacked all the hiring priests and religious crafts, and offered free to all people, a religion, plain and simple, and in accordance with the Bible, and which, if accepted, would have a tendency to throw a large portion of the hiring clergy of the age out of employment, or compel them to do as the Apostles did in the days of Jesus—preach the gospel without purse and scrip. Vexatious law-suits, mob violence, tar and feathers, and finally bloodshed were successively adopted in hopes of stopping this religion, and it was believed by those who regarded "Mormonism" as a wild theory, that the death of Joseph would scatter the people and destroy their faith in the work. They did not realize that he had laid the foundation of a living, truthful organization, which would be likely to increase the faster the more it was persecuted. But so it was, for the people continued to gather, and the public buildings—Temple and Nauvoo House—were being pushed forward more rapidly than ever, and when this was ascertained, there was an organization formed which expelled the people from the State.

The authorities of the Church at Nauvoo being aware of this combination, petitions were sent to the government of the United States, and also to the governor of every State in the Union, asking each one to give us an asylum in his State. The governor of Arkansas gave us a respectful answer, all the rest treated our petition with silent contempt.

In September, 1845, the mob commenced burning houses, and they continued burning in different parts of the settlements, mostly in Hancock County, until they burned one hundred and seventy-five houses. The governor and authorities of the State were notified, and finally the sheriff of the County took a posse, mostly Latter-day Saints, and stopped the house burning. The instant this was done the people of the nine adjoining counties rose up and said—"You 'Mormons' must leave the county or you 'Mormons' must die." They then made an agreement that we should have time to move away and dispose of our property, and that vexatious law-suits and mob violence should cease. This we kept most faithfully, but so far as they were concerned the agreement was never observed, mob violence continued, house burnings and murders occurred occasionally, vexatious law-suits were renewed; and before the remnant of the people were permitted to get out of the county they were surrounded by armed mobs, as many as eighteen hundred in a single body, and cannonaded out of their houses.

The people thus driven commenced a journey to seek the home where we now reside. The white settlements extended sixty or seventy miles west of the Missouri River, Keosauqua was the most western one. From that place we made the roads, and bridged the streams, some thirty in number, across Iowa, to Council Bluffs, arriving there in June, 1846. The people who started on this journey started under the most forlorn circumstances. They left their houses, lands, crops, and everything they had if they could get a yoke of cattle, wagons without iron tires, carts, or anything of which they could make an outfit, and commenced a journey to hunt a home somewhere where co-called Christians would not be able to deprive them of the right to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, a right which is actually more dear than life itself.

I think between thirteen and fourteen hundred miles of road were made, though we occasionally followed trappers' trails, and on the 24th of July, 1847, President Young led the pioneer party—numbering one hundred and forty-three men—on to this ground, then a portion of Mexican territory and one of the most desolate, barren looking spots in the world, and dedicated it to the Most High, that we might once more find an asylum where liberty could be enjoyed. We should most probably have reached this place before we did, but the United States, the year before, invited our camps to send five hundred men to aid them in the war with Mexico, which they did, and they were mustered into service on the 16th of July, 1846, and made the route through from New Mexico to the Pacific coast.

It is a remarkable fact in history, that while these five hundred Latter-day Saints, mustered into service at Council Bluffs, were bearing the American flag across the desert, from New Mexico to the Pacific

Coast, a march of infantry characterized by General Cook as unparalleled in military annals, the remnant of their families in Nauvoo were surrounded by eighteen hundred armed men and cannonaded, and driven across the river into the wilderness, without shelter, food or protection, in consequence of which very many of them lost their lives.

Our friends pass through here and they say—"What a beautiful city you have got! What beautiful shade trees! What magnificent fruit trees, what grand orchards and wheat fields! What a splendid place you have got!" When the pioneers came here there was nothing of the kind, and a more dry and barren spot of ground than this was then could hardly be found. Still the little streams were running from the mountains to the Lake. We knew nothing, then, about irrigation, but the streams were soon diverted from their course, to irrigate the soil. For the first three years we had but little to eat. We brought what provisions we could with us, and we eked them out as well as we could by hunting over the hills for wild geese and thistle roots. There was very little game in the mountains, and but few fish in the streams, and hence we had but a short allowance of food, and for three years after our arrival there was scarcely a family which dared to eat a full meal. This was the condition in which this settlement was commenced. There was no intercourse except with Western Missouri, and it was ten hundred and thirty-four miles to the Missouri river, if we struck it at the mouth of the Platte, where Omaha is now; and our supplies, which were generally brought by way of that place, were all purchased in Western Missouri.

In 1850 a sufficient crop was raised here to supply the inhabitants with food, but previous to that time we had divided our scanty supplies with hundreds and thousands of emigrants, who drifted in here in a state of starvation while on their way to California, for the discovery of the gold mines there had set the world almost crazy. Many people started on the Plains without knowing how to outfit or what to do to preserve their supplies, and by the time they reached here their outfits would be completely exhausted. We saved the lives of thousands who arrived here in that condition, many of them our bitter enemies, and we aided them on their way in the best possible manner that we could.

There are several incidents which occurred here in early times which, to us, were miraculous. The first year after our arrival the crickets in immense numbers came down from the mountains and destroyed much of the crops. The people undertook to destroy them, and after having done everything they could to accomplish this object, they gave it up for a bad job; then the gulls came in immense numbers from the lakes and devoured the crickets, until they were all destroyed, and thus, by the direct and miraculous intervention of Providence, the colony was saved from destruction.

While crossing the Plains we had to form in companies of sufficient size to protect ourselves against the Indians, there being from fifty to a hundred men in each company. In these companies existed our religious organization, and we also had a civil organization, by which all the difficulties that arose in the companies were settled; and then a militia organization, composed of able-bodied men, whose duty it was to guard the camps from attacks by Indians, and from accidents. We had our meetings every Sabbath, at which the Sacrament was administered; we had days also set apart for washing, and occasionally we had a dance, and our travels were so regulated that the cultivation, enjoyment and associations of society were experienced almost as much as when living together in a settled and well regulated community.

When we started on our journey we knew very little about Indians, but we exercised towards them such a spirit of justice, and such vigilant watchfulness, that we lost very little, and suffered very little on account of difficulties with them during the many years that we were crossing these plains.

Before we left Nauvoo we had covenanted, within the walls of our temple, that we would, with one heart and one mind, abide by each other, and aid one another to escape from the oppressions with which we were surrounded, to the extent of our influence and property, and just as soon as the brethren were able they formed a perpetual emigration fund in Salt Lake City, and in 1849 Bishop Hunter, with five thousand dollars in gold, was sent back with instructions to use that and what other means he could gather in helping those to come here who were not able to come before, and from year to year this work has continued, being a grand system of brotherly love and united co-operation. In a few years after reaching here we sent a hundred teams back to the frontiers, each team being a wagon and four yoke of oxen or six mules or horses; and as we increased in strength, we sent annually two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, and finally six hundred, to bring home those who wished to settle in these valleys; and even at the present time, our system of emigration has been extended across the sea, to gather all who wish to gather with the Saints. There are many thousands of people in the valleys who had it not been for the organization of the Latter-day Saints and the kind and fatherly care of President Brigham Young, would never have owned a foot of land, or any other property, but they would have been dependent all their lives upon the will of a master for a very precarious subsistence.

Our plan of settlement here was entirely different from that we had adopted in any other country in which we had ever lived. The first thing, in locating a town, was to build a dam and make a water ditch; the next thing to build a school house, and these schoolhouses generally answered the purpose of meeting houses. You may pass through all the settlements,

from north to south, and you will find the history of them to be just about the same—the dam, the water ditch, then the school house and the meeting house. Crops were put in, trees were planted, cabins were built, mills were erected, fields were enclosed, and improvements were made step by step. This Territory is so thoroughly a desert that unless men irrigate their land by artificial means they would raise comparatively nothing. The settlements at the present time stretch some five or six hundred miles, extending into Arizona on the south and into Idaho on the north.

We have had some difficulty with the Indians, resulting principally from the interference of outsiders. Those of you who have read the history of John C. Fremont's journey through Western Arizona may remember that he gives an account of some of his party killing several of the native Piate Indians. From that time the war seems to have commenced between the Indians and the whites. Some of you may also remember the declaration, in regard to the Indians, made by Mr. Calhoun, one of the early governors of New Mexico. He informed the government that the true policy in regard to the Digger and Piate tribes, in the western part of the Territory, which then embraced Arizona and portions of Utah, was to exterminate them, that it was utterly useless ever to attempt to civilize them, or to do anything else but exterminate them. This was the policy adopted by a great many travellers who passed through, and when they saw an Indian, the feeling was to shoot him. This was especially the case in the district of country now comprised in the southern portions of this Territory and the western part of Arizona.

When we came into the country our motive was to promote peace with the Indians, to deal justly with them and to act towards them as though they were human beings, and so long as we were permitted to carry out our own policy with them we were enabled to maintain peace, and there were but few instances in which difficulties occurred. A band of men, rowdies, from Western Missouri, on the way to the mines, shot some Snake squaws and took their horses, up here on the Malad. This aroused the spirit of vengeance in the Indians, and they fell upon and killed the first whites they found, and they happened to be "Mormons" who were engaged in building a mill on the northern frontier, just above Ogden. This difficulty, of course, had to be arranged, and a good many circumstances of this kind, at various times, have made it difficult to get along without having a muss with the Indians.

Again, we had people among us who were reckless in their feelings, and who were not willing always to be controlled and to act wisely and prudently. All these things considered, when we realize that we always had four frontiers, and that we were about a thousand miles from any white settlement in any direction, that the Indians were on every side of us, and many of them very wild and savage, it is perfectly wonderful that we have had as little difficulty with them as we have. But the United States, in sending agents here, have frequently been not altogether fortunate in their selection, and in some instances have not sent very good men. Some who have been sent have been very good men, but they were totally ignorant of the business of dealing with, controlling or promoting peace with the Indians. This, of course, has been more or less detrimental to the settlements, and it has cost them a great deal to supply the natives with food and to aid them in getting along, for it is much cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them. But the general feeling among the Indians is, that as far as the "Mormons" are concerned, they desire to deal with them in a spirit of justice and friendship. There is now little difficulty except from distant Indians, and we sometimes think that white men, perhaps, have employed Indians to plunder ranches and drive off cattle four or five hundred miles and sell them. Some instances of this kind may have occurred, but we have got along wonderfully well.

The people here have shown a vast amount of enterprise in the construction of the roads through the Territory. Strangers who come here run down to this city, go down to Provo and up to Logan, and to various other places on the little branches of our railroad system; but if they were to travel through these mountains and extend their investigations into the valleys, which are well worthy the attention of any traveller for their beauty, they would find that in many places they are so rugged that it is almost a wonder there were ever men enough in the country to make the roads. Then the telegraph wires have been extended some twelve hundred miles through a number of the settlements, north and south; these wires have sometimes been used to prevent the plunder of the ranches by the Indians. From year to year we are extending our railroad system. We have had no encouragement from the General Government in relation to railroads; we have never been permitted even to have the right of way, by act of Congress, over a foot of ground, until we have occupied it with a railroad for a year or two, and sometimes not then; and we are extending our railroad system without any aid from Congress or any other source, but our own ingenuity and means, and that of our friends.

We are doing all we can to unite our brethren to co-operate in the building of factories, in the construction and establishment of machinery of various kinds, in commercial operations, in the building of railroads, the enclosing of farms, and in every branch of business possible we are endeavoring to unite the people in order to save labor, economize, and produce within ourselves as many articles as we possibly can that we need to consume, and some to sell, for our history for the past few years has proved that we have traded too much, we have bought more merchandise than the products of the country would