

## DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

PREST. JOHN TAYLOR,

*In the Ogden Tabernacle, on  
Sunday, March 2, 1879.*

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

I THOUGHT I would come down and talk with you a little this morning. I am pleased to hear the remarks made by Bro. Joseph F.; they are very well worthy of all acceptance by all good men. We indeed, as he has said, are engaged in a great work—the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, wherein it has been decreed thousands of years ago, that God would “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.” And for this purpose he has manifested himself; for this purpose the Son of God has manifested himself; for this purpose those holy prophets, referred to in the revelation read to you by Bro. Joseph, manifested themselves; for this purpose the heavens and the intelligences around the throne of God are united; for this purpose the holy Priesthood that have existed in the various dispensations of time are interested; and for this purpose those who held the keys of the several dispensations that have passed, have brought those keys and conferred them upon the Church of the latter-days, through the medium of Joseph Smith. The work that we are engaged in is associated with the interests of all humanity—all men that have ever lived, those that now live, and those that will live, and the salvation of the living and the dead is mixed up with these matters.

We are not here for the purpose of looking after our own individual affairs and interests, or to carry out our own peculiar notions or feelings associated with any of our interests, or the interest of any particular party or clique, or anything of that kind. But the Priesthood of the Son of God has been manifested in the interests of God, in the interests of the heavens, and in the interests of all humanity; embracing all people and extending to all nations and tongues. The Lord has gathered us together for the express purpose of forming a nucleus, an organism, a people to whom he could communicate and reveal his will, and to whom he could make known his designs, and among whom he could establish the principles of eternal truth and the light, intelligence, rule and law of God, as they exist in the eternal world. This is why we are gathered here to-day, if we can comprehend it.

Jesus, when here upon the earth, had a people and called them his sheep. Said he, “My sheep hear my voice and they know me and they follow me, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger.” And again he says while supplicating the Father, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,” that they may have evidence of a union that exists nowhere else in the world of the love and affection of those godly principles that cement and bind men together, which nothing but the power and spirit of revelation can do; that they may have evidence of something more exalting, more ennobling, and which will unite and associate men together in indissoluble bonds of eternal truth according to the laws of God; that there may be evidence in existence in the world that thou hast sent me, and that the principles that thou hast given me have been revealed to them and that they are to be governed by them; “thine they were, and thou hast given them me.”

That was the feeling that existed in former times among the Saints of God, and these were some of the teachings unto them. The sheep have been scattered abroad among the nations of the earth to whom this communication has been sent, and thousands have heard and obeyed the voice of the good Shepherd and have gathered themselves together, as we are here and as they are over this Territory, according

to the impulses originating from the Spirit of God, which has operated and worked upon our minds and brought us together as we are here to-day.

Now then, what was this for? To preach first the Gospel of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, to be followed by the gathering together, etc. And what was it for? That we all might be baptized into one baptism, that we all might partake of the same spirit, that we all might be brought into communication with the Almighty and derive wisdom and intelligence from the same fountain, having “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, through all, and in you all.” When Jesus sent forth his servants formerly he sent them to preach this Gospel. When the Father and the Son and Moroni and others came to Joseph Smith, he had a priesthood conferred upon him which he conferred upon others for the purpose of manifesting the laws of life, the Gospel of the Son of God, by direct authority, that light and truth might be spread forth among all nations. There was a number of men selected by the Savior anciently, to whom he said: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.” What to do? To do the things you have seen me do, as I have come to do what I have seen my Father do. The words which I speak, I speak not of myself, but the Father who dwells in me, he doeth the works.

Now then, we have got a priesthood organized here upon the earth, as there was one organized in the days of Jesus, only with this distinctive difference,—that that was a dispensation of God to them; this we live in is the dispensation of the fulness of times, embracing all other dispensations and times and powers and authorities that have existed upon the face of the earth, in the various ages, from the commencement to the present time. Herein it differs from others. Hence we are requested to gather together, something which they were not commanded to do. We are told to build temples; they were not. We are told to administer for the living and the dead, which ordinances were only performed then to a very limited extent. We are called upon to build up not only the Church, but the Kingdom of God, and to introduce the rule and government of God upon the earth. We are here just as Jesus was, not to do our own will, not for the purpose of carrying out our own ideas or theories, but to do the will of God who sent us. That is the way Jesus preached: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Sometimes it was trying and perplexing, sometimes it was hard to endure; but he did endure and suffer it, and he accomplished the work he was sent to do. But sometimes when struggling with the powers of darkness, and environed with the corrupt and ungodly, he gazed upon and comprehended the gravity of the situation and things before him, it so operated upon him, that in mortal agony he sweat great drops of blood. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He endured everything possible for mortal to endure on the earth. Finally, when the last struggle came, said he, “Father,” if thou art willing, “if it be possible, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.” What were his feelings in the midst of all this sorrow? Did he give railing for railing, contumely for contumely? No, he did not. David, you know, prayed that God would send his enemies to hell quickly. He was quite in a hurry about it, as we are sometimes. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;” they are ignorant, they are foolish, and blinded through superstition; they comprehend not thy laws, they know nothing of my mission, Father, forgive them. I admire the sentiments and feelings of the Savior under such circumstances, very much more than those of David.

As I understand it we are called upon to be saviors. And as saviors of men, endowed with the holy

priesthood, we should, with one heart and one voice, with one feeling and spirit, operate together in the interests of Zion; we ought to humble ourselves before God and seek for his Holy Spirit to lead us in the right path, that all may comprehend his law, and that we may operate together in the interests of Israel, and in the building up of the Kingdom of God upon the earth; and every other feeling and idea ought to be esteemed subservient to that, and that ought to be the first, leading, guiding, and controlling sentiment of all the elders of Israel, and especially of those who take the lead in Israel.

We get tried sometimes, and we sometimes try one another; and we sometimes feel as David did on a certain occasion, when he exclaimed: “For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I could have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance.”

Did you ever know it is necessary that we should be tried in all things? If you do not you will find it out before you get through, and we are not through yet quite. In this connection, I am reminded of what I heard the Prophet Joseph say, speaking more particularly with reference to the Twelve, The Lord will feel after your heart strings, and will wrench them and twist them around, and you will have to learn to rely upon God and upon God alone.” Has he done it? I think he has pretty thoroughly. The Prophet himself was tried about as much as anybody I know of, and his Brother Hyrum had his full share, the Twelve also have been tried as much as any men that I know of, and a great deal more than you know anything about. He furthermore said, “If God could in any other way more keenly have tried Abraham than by calling upon him to offer up his son Isaac, he would have done it. And as I have said, Jesus himself sweat great drops of blood, and in the agony of his suffering cried out ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ And why is it thus? We are told by one of old, ‘For it became him, for whom all things, and by whom all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.’” “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Oh, what a happy thing it would be if we could follow in his footsteps in that particular! But we have our weaknesses and infirmities in common with all men. It is incident to humanity, and the devourer is at work seeking to destroy, to contaminate, to corrupt and defile and to lead men down to perdition, to produce discord and envy hatred and strife and every evil that proceeds from that source. Shall I tell you its fruits? Envy is one; hatred is another; malice is another; uncharitableness is another; evil speaking is another, and so on—all these things proceed from an evil spirit; and it is said “that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness.” Men sometimes falter? Yes, sometimes they think they are strong; but no man is strong unless he be strong in the Lord. No man is sustained only as God sustains him; and if He do not sustain him, I would not give much for his ideas or position. We sometimes think we are strong and that we can do a great deal. So thought Peter on a certain occasion—at the time when Christ said to his disciples, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night.” But Peter answered him saying, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” The Savior doubtless appreciated his feelings, but knowing better than he the frailty of humanity, he said unto him, “Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.” Did he do it? Yes, he did; but Jesus did not get angry with him nor begin to upbraid him and speak angry words to him. He knew too well the weakness of mortal man, and he knew it before that time. But he says, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” He saith unto him, yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.” If you love me, if you are my

friend and my disciple, “Feed my Lambs.” That was not very hard to do; he had been called for that purpose. “He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, Feed my Sheep.” And the third time the Savior put the same question to Peter, and which on being answered as before, he said to him, “Feed my Sheep.” What is the duty of the Apostles, the Presidents of Stakes, the High Priests, and Seventies, especially of those that are generally presiding? If Jesus was here, he would tell you to lay aside your nonsense, your follies and weaknesses and act more like men and Saints and go to work and “Feed my Sheep.” Said he, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me,” not that, I will rule with an iron hand, not that I will trample upon them, not that I will let you see that I possess power and authority; but “I will draw all men to me.” That will not be accomplished until the time spoken of when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall be heard to say, “Glory, honor, majesty and power be unto him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever;” but it will be done through the influence of the Gospel, through its cementing and harmonizing influences, through the aid of the Almighty and the operations of the holy Priesthood combined together, united as the heart of one man in the accomplishment of the purposes of God; with kindness and brotherly affections, with long suffering and with every principle of righteousness that is calculated to draw the feelings and affections of men, that they may see the truth and know it for themselves, and that they may know also that we are their friends, acting for the welfare of all men living and dead, and in the interest of the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth. And where this principle does not exist, there is something wrong, the principles of the Gospel are not lived up to. For God is love, and they that dwell in God, dwell in love; and “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar,” so said the word of God formerly, and it says to day. God is love, and they that dwell in God, dwell in love. They are surrounded by that element, it is the fountain of life within them. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria whom he asked to give him drink, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” If we will live so as to be entitled to drink of the well streams that flow from the fountain of all light, all these little, narrow, contracted, by-gone influences will vanish like the dew before the rising sun, and the light, the Spirit and revelations of God will rest upon the Priesthood, and Israel will be one and his Priesthood one, and they will fight side by side in the defence of truth and in the maintenance of those principles calculated to exalt men through all time and all eternity.

These things referred to by Brother Joseph F. are too small for men to have anything to do with. It might be excusable in babies, but for men to be engaged in such things is a shame upon the priesthood, and an outrage upon the holy principles that God has been pleased to reveal to us. That is the way I look at these things. And it is a trick of the devil to decoy and destroy, to divide and disrupt, and to lead men down to perdition. What would be the result if these things are carried out a little further. The whole head would be sick and the whole heart faint. I say, shame on the Elders of Israel! shame on men holding the holy priesthood that cannot be united and operate together in the interest of the Church and the Kingdom of God, but must drag in their mean, low, contemptible ideas and notions, forgetting the high calling with which they are called.

What shall we do? Why, lay them aside and repent of your foolishness, and forgive one another of your hard speeches and words, and your rash and hard treatment made use of to produce stings, trouble, and annoyance among men; and study from this time henceforth one another's feelings, and act the part of a brother and friend one towards another, live your religion and keep the commandments of God. How did

Jesus teach his disciples to pray? When you pray, say, “Our Father which art in heaven.” What? I must tell a little story here. There was a poor man once called upon a minister for assistance; the minister tried to cheat him, and would not give him what he had agreed to for some labor performed by him; the man was not very well suited about it. The minister, it would seem, was one of those fellows who, if he could squeeze a little out of the poor man, was quite willing to do it. “Well,” said the man, “I will take what you offer me, although it is not what you agreed to give me, providing you will teach me the Lord's prayer.” To which the minister agreed and said, “Repeat after me and say, ‘Our Father which art in heaven—’” “What?” says the man, “is God your Father and my Father, too?” “You must repeat what I say,” said the minister. “Our Father,” etc. “What,” said the man, “my Father and your Father?” “Yes, yes.” “Then,” broke in the man again, “is he indeed my Father as well as your Father?” “Yes,” replied the minister, “but you must repeat my words.” “Well, what a rascal you must be to try to cheat your poor brother in this way!” We should all feel that God is our Father, and that we are all brethren and sisters. There are none of us very big; in fact we are all very little when you come to know all about us. None of us can do anything except the Lord helps us, and if he does not help us, we, as a certain lady said, are “all poor, miserable, independent sinners.” There is none of the “big I and little you” amongst us. We should have a common sympathy one for another, and feel a kindly regard for the lowest of God's creations, and especially for the Saints of God, no matter what position they occupy. If any are in error, try to reclaim them by kindness; if they have a bad spirit, show them a better one; if any do not do right, do right yourselves and say, “Come, follow me, as I follow Christ.” Would not that be the right course to pursue? I think it would; that is the way I understand the Gospel. We do not, any of us, have the priesthood for self aggrandizement or to be used to oppress or take advantage of anybody, or to use improper language; but with all kindness and long suffering and forbearance and with love unfeigned. I will read from the Doctrine and Covenants something bearing on this, from page 386.

“Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, and they do not learn this one lesson—” just the very thing I have been talking about—“That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.” Do you think that God will give power to any man only to carry out his own contracted or selfish purposes? I tell you he never will, never, no never. “That they may be conferred on us it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood of that man.”

We think sometimes, we are standing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and so we are. But there is no priesthood of the Son of God that authorizes one man to oppress another or to intrude upon his rights in any way. There is no such thing in the category; it does not exist; as it is said—“Behold! ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks; to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God.” We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen. No person or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile, reproving by times with sharpness,