

DISCOURSE

BY

APOSTLE F. D. RICHARDS,

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday morning, October 5th, 1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

I WILL read a few verses contained in the 68th section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a book of revelation and commandment which the Lord has given unto us in this last dispensation for our guidance:

And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents;

For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized;

And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of hands,

And they shall also teach their children to pray and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

And the inhabitants of Zion shall, also, observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And the inhabitants of Zion, also, shall remember their labors, inasmuch as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness; for the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord.

Now, I the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.

I will also read from the 29th section of the same book:

But, behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten:

Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me;

For it is given unto them even as I will, according to mine own pleasure, that great things may be required at the hand of their fathers.

Referring to our little children, who are becoming, numerically, a mighty host among us, I wish to make a few remarks this morning, the subject seeming to impress itself on my mind somewhat. A consideration of the associations of our young men and young women, reminds us that before they become young men and young women in the common acceptance of the term, they are younger men and younger women and while infant children are in a dependent and somewhat helpless condition. As the tall oaks from little acorns grow, and as mighty rivers are made up from small streamlets and springs that come from hidden sources in the mountains, so is the increase of God's people by reason of their little children that are growing—increasing in number and multiplying continually in the land. In early days our increase used to be made up, in a great measure, by emigrants from foreign nations: The past few years our emigration has attained to some three or four thousand, annually, from the various countries in which missions are established, while it has increased many times that number from the great and glorious presence of God our Father, who sends the spirits to this world to dwell. Hence it becomes the great source of our supply, of our increase, and I am sure you will join with me, many of you, this morning in realizing that we have not, in many instances, given a sufficient and proper consideration for our little children that have been committed unto us, when we realize the importance, the eternal consequences that are made to flow from the beginning of their tuition and education here in this mortal life.

Many of this people, who have lived faithful to their professions, know more to-day of God and his purposes, than they did fifty years ago. We learn by experience as well as by precept from the Lord, and as in the light of our experience we have obtained observation and got knowledge we should not only profit by it ourselves, but as Elders in Israel we should endeavor to benefit and improve each other by our experiences, so that we may increase in understanding before the Lord in all our relations to Him and to each other.

Now, concerning little children, there is too much of an inclination with many—particularly in the world, but this feeling is growing much less among the Saints—to treat their children with indifference, to put them off, and to think that a very little of anything will do them very well. Children are apt to be waited on even at the table after the feasted and friends are all served.

I will not stop to dilate upon this particular feature of my subject, but will turn to a more pleasing one. Our Savior while here in the flesh, perceiving the people thought that children were of less importance than grown persons, was much displeased and said:—"Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Who, I ask, among my hearers this morning has been attending the Sunday School and listened to their recitations that has not felt their hearts warmed within them at hearing the early germinations of intelligence made manifest and apparent while they have been reciting the Scriptures, the revelations and maxims from the cards that are now in use in the Sabbath Schools? Who has listened to their songs, so sweet and melodious, without feeling

that the very blessing of the Lord was there, that it was delightful and lovely to be in their midst? Who has gone into the little associations of the Primaries, now held so regularly among us, and heard them answer their questions, from perhaps the youngest that were able to speak distinctly and articulate so as to be heard—heard them answer the questions put by their teachers concerning the kind of knowledge they are expected to obtain and are obtaining—who among us have attended these associations and listened to those little ones without feeling the fragrance of heaven shed abroad upon their souls and being sensible that there is to be found in them a beauty of innocence, of sweetness and purity that we cannot expect in the hearts of a concourse of grown people? Jesus said of them:—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He might also have said, "their angels, their spirits had always dwelt in the presence of God, or before the face of my Father which is in heaven." Learn this, mothers, when you sorrowfully lay away your little ones—learn this: their spirits do always dwell before the face of their Father who is in heaven, and let your hearts be comforted, no sin has contaminated their souls, no spot of contamination has tarnished their young and tender consciences. There is purity, the purity of the pure here on earth. What has the Lord said, "That little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten; wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me: for it is given unto them even as I will, according to mine own pleasure, that great things may be required at the hands of their fathers."

When He was here upon this continent, our risen Redeemer taught the Nephites, and blessed their children in multitudes.

So powerfully was the Holy Ghost poured out upon them that they spake with tongues. Infants that had no learning at all declared forth His praise in such glorious, exalted terms that the brethren present could not write them. Such was the blessing and favor of heaven through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shed abroad upon the innocent portion of humanity that was permitted to stand in His presence.

Then, seeing that the heavens are so pleased with them, ought not we to understand and entertain a higher estimate of their value, of their heavenly worth, and of their eternal importance, especially when we consider that from these small children that mothers are nursing upon their laps will by and by have grown up Prophets, Seers and Revelators, Judges in Israel, men of God standing forth upon the earth declaring His counsels, building up His kingdom in all righteousness and in the power of God. Remember then: that as the twig is bent the tree will be inclined.

Let me call your attention to a particular feature in the matter of children and their early condition. In the revelation which I have read to you, the Lord says: "Power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children until they begin to become accountable before me." Did you notice this when I read it? Let me ask how many of those present have taken this great truth into serious consideration, to consciously sense this great heavenly indemnity of a few years' growth to each of our infant children in which Satan has no power to tempt their innocent souls; that whatsoever the examples placed before them, whatsoever their early inclinations by reason of erroneous teachings, yet until they are made accountable Satan has no power to tempt them, and they are still innocent before the Lord until they come to the years of accountability when they should be instructed and prepared to be baptized into the Church and become members of it.

People of other religious denominations tell us that if we will give them the education of our children for a certain number of years they will wrest them from us, turn them loose upon the world, cause them to depart from the faith of their fathers and despise their parentage. Seeing this is the design of our enemies and they are conscious of being able and are endeavoring to do this with our children, ought we not to sense more deeply the value of that same consideration—yes but in a thousand-fold greater degree—we ought to see to it that the faith of our children is preserved sound, healthy and kept growing in their bosoms. How important, then, that we teach and educate our children during the first eight years of their lives, so that when they attain to that age they may be admitted into the church by baptism, and receive the laying on of the hands of the Elders for the reception of the Holy Ghost, then they will have the aid of that heavenly monitor that will assist the formation of their growing judgments.

Let us consider this matter more carefully than we have done. Let us see that while there is a suspension of the wrath—if we may so say—of Satan, that he has not power to tempt our children who have been born under the covenant—let us see that we attend to them, and let us give an assiduity to the business of teaching and preparing their young and tender minds, that we have never given before.

What is the great object and purpose of this life while we are here upon the earth? What one thing, if possible, is more important than another? It is this: that as our children come to us

innocent—for the revelation tells us that all men are innocent when they are born into the world, and have these early years of indemnity from the power of the tempter to tempt them to sin—let us go to and make a better use than we have done of the opportunities we enjoy. Let us instill faith into the tender hearts of our children, faith towards God, obedience to their parents, obedience to the authorities of the Church, that when they come to years of accountability they may take hold for themselves, with a hearty, strong and loving relish for the principles of the Gospel of divine truth. Let us endeavor to realize the importance of this matter. And what is that other thing we want to preserve to them? It is this: as they come to this life innocent, if men and women can be taken through this life innocent and sin not before the Lord, and receive of His Spirit and walk in the light of it, so that while passing through this state of probation they shall have maintained a condition of innocence through the blessing of the everlasting gospel, they will have accomplished a wonderful thing—the great object and purpose of their mortal lives. This is the great thing to be sought for—to preserve that innocence with which our children are born, and in which they are permitted to live a few years, at any rate, free from the power of Satan. It seems to me that if we contemplate this matter in the light of revelation, we ought to see its importance. The Lord has given to us the privilege of being united in the holy marriage covenant for time and eternity. We look forward to inheriting the blessings of the kingdom of God with our children, and that to their increase there shall be no end. This was the gospel that was preached to Father Abraham—that he and his children and his generation should become as the stars in the heavens for multitude, and like the sands on the sea shore that cannot be counted. We look for blessing, dominion, exaltation and glory in the eternal worlds through similar means.

Now, then, my brethren and sisters, I wish to ask a question at this state of my discourse. Realizing something of the value which the heavens set upon the children; remembering that the Prophet Joseph Smith himself taught and left on record in his history that little children who depart this life before they come to the years of accountability go back to the presence of God; that many children were of so excellent a spirit that God, in His grace and mercy took them away from the adverse conditions of this life that they might not be required to suffer as many others had to; this being their position before the heavens, what are we to think of parents, who, having these principles before them, turn their children over to our avowed enemies to be educated, knowing that their policy is to break down "Mormonism," especially the authority of the Priesthood to counsel, direct and govern the people—I say, what are we to think of such parents? How can those people do such things and be justified in the sight of God? It seems to me they must be consummately ignorant or consummately wicked to do such a thing. I should think it right that such be refused certain privileges of the Gospel until they had a better idea in regard to these things. I do not see how they can themselves feel that they have a right to open up to further intelligence, or to have further blessings bestowed upon them. If people are so insensible to and so ungrateful for blessings already conferred, how can they expect more? Oh! that such people would turn round and understand the foolishness and sinfulness of their course, for if they do not repent, their action will bring sorrow and affliction, until their gray hairs will come with sorrow to their graves. It appears in contemplating this subject—more especially since the great work of the Sunday schools has been going on in our midst, since the vast labor of the mutual improvement associations has been inaugurated among our young men and young women—that there is a stupendous work before us, that our children, while they are on our laps, and while prattling in and about our homes developing the first germinations of intelligence—that then is the time to instill the first ideas of faith towards God and His work, into their young and tender minds. The wicked world are endeavoring to wean away our children by their arts, their publications, and by the blandishments of falsely so called "superior civilization." They would like to draw away the young and rising generation of Israel. They have learned that we their parents have the principles of the gospel established in us, and that we are not easily moved, unless we fall into transgression. They find that their purpose of building up their churches by conversions from amongst our people is futile and hopeless. They find that the Gospel of eternal truth is established in the hearts of this people; that we have received something which satisfies the human mind, a something which they have not got to offer. They find that they cannot furnish the human mind with the satisfying influence and effects which are afforded by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Great and abundant are the blessings that are promised unto those who seek unto the Lord in the days of their youth. They who seek Him early shall find Him, and from such He will not turn away. It was anciently a divine injunction with promise to the youth of Israel that they were to reverence and obey their fathers and their mothers, that their days might be long in the land which

the Lord their God gave to them—and this promise—renewed to our children with the same conditions now—should be esteemed and regarded with equal or greater deference to that anciently bestowed.

The whole tenor of God's dealings and instructions to His people have been enriched and adorned with affectionate remembrance, instruction and illustration of the youth of His people. They are the redeemed of Christ from before the foundation of the world. Jesus said their angels or spirits do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. He has promised that they shall come forth in the first resurrection, that they "shall grow up until they become old," and when he would demonstrate who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He took a little child and placed him in their midst, saying, "Except ye repent and become as this little child, ye can in no wise enter therein; but whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

In relation to all these matters, there is a great deal of importance attached to them, not only in the matter of our children—which seems to be of primary importance to us—but in the preaching of the gospel. We that have ministered in the gospel have learned of the truth of that gospel, and are able to comprehend by the Spirit in some degree the revelations and commandments which have been given for the guidance of the church. It is by virtue of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins that men's sins are remitted. It is by attending to certain ordinances that the blessings of eternity are sealed upon us, and by which, in the plain language of the scriptures, our calling and election are made sure. But we must obey those ordinances in faith or their efficacy will not avail. Our Elders go abroad and preach to the world, and their hearts are filled with charity and loving kindness towards their fellow creatures. They administer to the sick among the Saints, and they are often called upon to administer to those who do not belong to the church, to whom they administer according to their faith, and thus the power of faith through the ordinance of God is made manifest among the children of men.

But there is one ordinance that the Elders may have perhaps neglected—and I do not know but I have myself—and that is, that if we enter a house and the people thereof receive us, there our peace should abide. This was the instruction of the Savior in His day; and if we enter a house and the people receive us not, then we should go away and return not again to that house, and wash our feet with pure water, as a testimony against them in the day of judgment, and thus bear witness unto the Lord that we have offered them salvation, that we have sought to preach to them the principles of everlasting life, that we have offered to them the Gospel of peace and desired to administer unto them a blessing. The same is applicable to a town, village or city that rejects you. In this way you do your duty and leave them in the hands of the Lord. You are not called upon to contend with anybody in public congregations, or to do anything that would stir up wrath and indignation. The Savior simply told his disciples to wash their feet as a testimony against such people. But the generous, charitable feeling of our Elders prompts them not to do a thing against anybody; they would rather pour out a blessing upon the whole people. Consequently, it is a very rare thing that this ordinance is attended to by the Elders of this last dispensation—speaking from my own experience, and conversation had with the brethren. But when it comes to this, that we are persecuted and our lives taken, it would seem as if this was a duty depending upon those Elders who are thrust out, and warned away from their fields of labor. These things have happened of late, and it seems a duty devolving upon the Elders to do that which the law requires and leave the responsibility of its reception or rejection with the people and their God. We have no quarrel with anybody. We simply preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of the earth. If they receive it, well and good; if they will not, then it is a matter between them and their God; but the Lord requires this duty at the hands of His servants.

Again, we go abroad and gather in many people to this place, and they desire to find work. One of the brethren has referred to this matter and likened it unto a man going into a field and working diligently to plow the field, sow the grain, harrow it in, harvest it, and then leave it to waste. It is too much so in bringing home our brethren and our sisters to this country and not furnishing them labor. It is a very pleasing thought that occasionally companies of 400 or 500 people, or even 1,000, are delivered here from abroad. Why is it pleasing? Because it shows the work of God is progressing; it shows that God is gathering home His Saints, and soon after their arrival, the new comers are taken home by their friends and relatives and provided for, made comfortable until another spring, or until they look around and find or make a home. And it is a blessed thought that, notwithstanding hundreds and thousands of people are brought here yearly and cared for, so great a proportion of them live in their own homes, raise their own cows, pigs, chickens, etc.

Frequently when we go to the Seventies and ask some of them if they are willing to go on a mission to preach the gospel, one replies: "I am no preacher

at all; I could not preach a sermon if I were to try;" and wind up by saying—"If I can't go out myself and preach, I am willing to help support the families of missionaries while they are gone." Many have said this, and many more of them have thought it.

The Seventies are a numerous concourse of men who are called in connection with the Twelve to see that the Gospel is carried to the nations of the earth. Many of them are aged—some having been in the Church almost from the days of its first organization in Ohio, and many since the days of Nauvoo—too aged to be called to go upon missions—yet they could help their brethren coming in to find employment, and as do the Twelve after having labored in the vineyard to help gather the harvest, labor together in the threshing floor to help garner the wheat, clean it, and assist to make it fit for the Master's use. The younger men, after having secured homes for their families, feel free to go on missions, knowing that their interests at home are not being neglected.

If the aged Seventies and all men of experience would interest themselves in the different parts of the Territory, and find or make work for the new-comers, they might do a vast deal of good. They might help their brethren who come in from the old country to obtain a living. When we first came here every man had to be a farmer, had to cultivate the land in order to obtain a living. To-day many of the brethren who come from the old country have no idea of farming, and have never, perhaps, raised a chicken, a pig or a cow. The brethren should take hold, therefore, and assist each other in these things. Let us help to build each other up more earnestly and more extensively than we have done. Let us not cultivate feelings of covetousness to the crowding out of those ennobling and generous sentiments which should fill the bosom of every Latter-day Saint.

My brethren, you are Elders in Israel and the blessing and power of the Priesthood are upon you. Therefore we should do all the good we can, that those of our brethren who are constantly coming in here may obtain work, that they may not be led away, through idleness, into sin, and their hearts be turned away from the Gospel which they have embraced.

Praying always that the understanding of the Lord may be given unto us that we may know and do His holy will, in the name of Christ our Lord, Amen.

SALT LAKE AND LEADVILLE.

MR. W. H. STINSON, of the Leadville, Col., *Chronicle*, and also the *Democrat* of that place, the same gentleman (Mr. Davis), being the owner of both papers, has been endeavoring to work up business for these two journals, but has not as yet met with a great deal of success, because of the very slender business connection at present existing between Leadville and Salt Lake City. He sees no reason, however, why business relations cannot be entered into between the two places on a considerable scale, especially in some particular lines. The prices of produce, for instance, are a great deal higher in Leadville than here. Flour at that place ranges at retail from \$3.60 to \$4.25, according to quality; potatoes (Utah article) from \$2 to \$2.25 per 100 pounds, and other products in proportion. These rates, as will be seen, when compared with the low prices obtaining here, would, if anything like moderate freight rates could be had over the D & R. G., leave a handsome margin for profit. Now, would it not be well for Salt Lake dealers to make an effort to open up a trade between this city and Leadville? According to this showing we think it would. At all events the subject is one worth inquiring into.

Mr. Stinson is confident, from an examination of the facilities here for manufacturing mining machinery, that by a little energy on the part of persons interested in that line of business, Salt Lake might be made the source of supply in that direction for Leadville and the adjacent mining regions.

In any event it will be well, especially in these times of semi-stagnation of general business, for Salt Lake men to have an eye upon Leadville as a likely field for trade.

JUDGMENT FOLLOWING THE MOBBER.

THE Ogden *Herald* of the 4th inst. Contains an interesting article in relation to the Tennessee massacre. It refers specially to the fate of a number of those who incited and took part in that murderous affair on the 10th of last August, as related by a lady who lately arrived from the part of the country where the tragedy was enacted. We here reproduce a portion of the statement as given by our cotemporary of the Junction city:

The sister gave some interesting details concerning the mobocrats. It appears that Parson Vandever, the person referred to in Elder Nicholson's lecture, the leader in the mob and the person who catechised Elder Jones upon religious questions, has gone crazy and is a complete mental wreck.