DESERET EVENING NEWS.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

VOL. VIII. SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH TERRITORY, SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1875. NO. 241.

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SHEEKS & RAWLINS,

Attorneys and Counselors-at-Law.

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DISCOURSE

BY

ELDER JOHN TAYLOR,

AT THE

Funeral Services of Elder Joseph A. Young, delivered at the residence of President Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, Sunday Morning, August 8, 1875.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I AM called upon this morning to make a few remarks on this solemn and interesting occasion, and to unite with this assembly in paying a last tribute of respect to the memory of our beloved brother who now lies before us. We are assembled to condole with the afflicted, to assuage the grief, and to mingle our sympathies with the friends of the departed; and, as is usual on such occasions, to sing, to pray, to speak, and to lay away the body of our departed friend, according to the common usage among us as Latter-day Saints.

I must confess that, this morning, I hardly feel adequate to talk on this subject. Ever since I heard of the death of Brother Joseph A. I have had very peculiar feelings on the subject. Only last Sunday we were in Provo together talking to the people in regard to the principles of the gospel, the building of a temple, the United Order, and other great and eternal truths of heaven. He looked much more likely then than myself and many that were around us to be alive now, and it would not have been particularly surprising if some of us had gone and he been here. But, in the inscrutable providence of God, it seems to be the order of the Almighty that in this affair, as well as many others, we do not see and realize and judge as He sees. He performs his works in the heavens and on the earth according to the counsels of his own will, irrespective of our ideas, thoughts, theories, plans and calculations.

A thousand thoughts have flocked upon my mind since this occurrence transpired. Brother Joseph A. Young was the eldest son of President Brigham Young, who is the representative of God to this people and to the world; and if we could have carried out our ideas and feelings we would have liked Brother Joseph A. to have been spared, for he was a young man of rare talents, of a brilliant genius, of profound intelligence, and one who, according to our ideas of things, was in every way calculated, had he lived, to benefit the generation in which he lived. I have associated with him in different capacities and have met with him in different councils. I have also been associated with him in the legislature, and I have always found him on hand, ready, intelligent, energetic; wise to counsel and prompt [illegible] those counsels.

About a year ago Brother Pratt and myself visited the district in which Joseph A. has been laboring, on the Sevier. We found that he had commenced a work there that was highly creditable to himself and beneficial to the people with whom he was associated. We found that there was a general feeling of respect for him among the people over whom he presided, throughout the whole district of country; and I felt proud and glad to see the course that he had taken and the confidence that he had inspired among the upright and honest, who were desirous of keeping the commandments of God. The reports that I have heard of him since are of a similar nature. About four weeks ago we met him in Sanpete, and he was then appointed to supervise the building of a temple that is to be erected at Manti, in that county. The place was selected, and he was chosen for that purpose; and I thought then that he was the most suitable person that could have been selected for an object of that kind, and I think so yet.

Had he his weaknesses? Yes. Have we all our weaknesses? Yes. Are your weaknesses like mine, or mine like yours? No. Shall I judge you, or you judge me in regard to the influences, operations, powers and temptations with which we have to struggle? No, no, God is the judge of these things, we leave them in his hands and as poor fallible creatures we will tread lightly on the ashes of the dead, and will not rake up any thing in his conduct that we may think was not strictly in accordance with the principles of right. Joseph A. Young, in my opinion, feared God in his heart, he was true to his religion and to the Saints of God; and in reflecting upon him and his sudden death, I was compelled to acknowledge that there is something mysterious in the providences of God—something that we cannot account for or understand. When in the Sevier a few months ago I saw him leading out with the people under his presidency on as just, correct, honorable and equitable principles as I ever saw inaugurated in any part of the world, and more so. True, there have been some operations of the same kind in some other places in this Territory, but they have not gone into them as fully as Joseph did in his district. He received all who came along, rich or poor, if they were industrious and desired to unite together and labor for the general benefit of all. He united them all in one common interest, and the wants of all were provided for; and, as I said before, a general feeling of confidence existed among the people, and I must confess that I pictured to myself, with pleasing anticipations, a people growing up in that region of our Territory under his guidance, who would be great in union, great in the knowledge of the truth and in the principles of the everlasting gospel, their hearts united together in things spiritual and temporal, operating together and in union with their brethren to roll forth the kingdom of God; and I prayed in my heart that God would bless Brother Joseph A. and lead him on, that he, in the hands of God, might be an instrument in leading others in the paths of life. But when I heard that he had been stricken down by the hand of death I was shocked, though I had to acknowledge and say—"Surely the Judge of all the earth must do right," and we, in this instance, as in every other, must bow to his mandates. I have felt great sorrow for his venerable father and mother, who are sitting here, and I feel to say—"God bless them, God comfort their hearts, God bless his family, and the Lord God shield and protect them, and pour the balm of consolation into their bosoms. These were the feelings I was actuated by. But then I look around again, and I see there is something in the providences of God that I can not fully comprehend, and that others can not comprehend. And, in speaking of Joseph A. Young once more, in regard to his personal character, allow me to say one thing. Jesus, on one occasion, referring to his second coming, said that it would be said to certain characters—"I was hungry and ye fed me; I was naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and in prison and ye visited me; and they said—'When saw we thee sick, afflicted and in prison? We do not know anything about it.' And said he, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my disciples ye have done it unto me, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'" Now, then, in speaking of Joseph A. Young, whatever may have been his weaknesses, infirmities, and short comings—which God knows we all have enough of—I would a great deal rather stand in his place before the Judge of all the earth than in that of many others when the final accounts are rendered and the balances struck, wherever you go you will find that the poor man will bless Joseph A. Young, the sick and the afflicted unto whom he has ministered will tell you of his kindness and benevolence unto them, and while this feeling generally prevails there will, I am sure, be a strong feeling of sympathy and regret felt by those among whom he has immediately labored, and over whom he has so successfully presided.

But we will leave these things and pass along.

In regard to the providences of God, and the position which we occupy, it is different from what many people suppose. If I were to talk to his father and mother, and ask—"Is this a heavy affliction to you? Yes. Joseph has gone and left you, he has gone away a little before you into another state of existence to meet with other friends who have gone behind the vail. God, for some inscrutable purpose, to us at present unknown, has seen fit to call him away; he has gone a little while before you, but you will soon meet him there, and then perhaps you will not be sorry that God has thus acted."

In regard to the world wherein we live, the times that we live in and the circumstances with which we are surrounded, they are very peculiar. God has seen proper in these last days to restore the fulness of the gospel, to reveal himself from the heavens, to make known unto us the relationship that subsists between us and our heavenly Father; between us and those who have lived here upon the earth before us; between us and the intelligences with which our heavenly Father is surrounded; between us and those who shall come after us in the rolling forth of the great work that God has commenced for the accomplishment of his purposes, for the introduction of the everlasting gospel, for the redemption of the living and the dead and for the exaltation of all who are faithful to a union of action with those who have been faithful under like circumstances in other ages; that they may be one with us and we one with them, and all one with God our heavenly Father.

As it regards the times and circumstances, and days and years, and seasons and ages, it is a matter of very little importance to us or to those who have lived before, in what day and age we may have lived. It is of very little importance to us how time, in its changes, performs its varied revolutions of a social, moral, political or religious nature; but it is of very great importance for us to know that we are the friends of God and that God is our friend, that we are in possession of principles which have existed in the bosom of God from the commencement of the world pertaining to this world and its inhabitants; and that God has revealed unto us the everlasting gospel, and the holy priesthood, with all its richness and fulness and blessings and powers and joys and hopes and certainties, a priesthood that holds communion with God our heavenly Father, who directs and manages, and has always controlled, and managed and directed the affairs of the human family according to the counsel of his will, in his providences and by his fiat controlling and directing, to a certain extent, all men who have ever lived on the face of the earth. It is of importance to us that we comprehend the day in which we live, and the principles with which we are associated, and the God whom we profess to serve. These things are to us of paramount importance.

The gospel that men had in former times, in the days when Jesus lived upon the earth, brought them unto such close relationship and fellowship with God, that one of the apostles, in speaking of it, says—"Ye are come unto the general assembly and church of the firstborn, to an innumerable company of angels, to God the Father of all, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." They were in possession of the principles of eternal life, of the power of the everlasting gospel, which brings life and immortality to light, they were the sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. One with him, one with each other, one in establishing the principles of truth; one in carrying out the principles of Jehovah, and rolling forth his purposes on the earth, one in bringing to pass those designs which the great Jehovah had in contemplation before the world rolled into existence or the morning stars sang together for joy. And he has in other days and among other people manifested the same things—the same intelligence, the same knowledge, the same power, the same visions and the same revelations that he has made known to this people, and in former ages, as in ours, he made known to the people his designs, taught them correct principles, unvailed the heavens, and gave unto his servants a knowledge of his laws and purposes, and prepared them for the many duties they should have to perform while they lived upon the earth, in the heavens hereafter, and on the earth again when it should be renewed. He revealed the same things to the people on this continent, made manifest unto their prophet the same principles, gave them the same light, inspired them with the same spirit of prophecy and manifested unto them his designs. He has, in these last days, restored again those things which existed in former ages among different people, only if possible more fully than in former times; and he has called us to operate and co-operate with Him in the accomplishment of his purposes here upon the earth. In relation to all of these things if we, as his people, have been faithful, if we have been filled with the light of the Spirit of God which emanates from him through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its ordinances; if we are living in the light of the revelation of God, and the power of God is resting upon us, and our hearts are illuminated by the same spirit, we shall possess also the same hopes and the same light and intelligence, and feel that we are one with God, one with the church of the firstborn, one with patriarchs and prophets, one with the faithful who have lived before upon this earth, and one with all the Saints who are seeking to do the will of God and to carry out his designs; and to fulfil his purposes here on the earth. And then, if we thus feel and thus act, that spirit of self-abnegation and devotion to God and his kingdom, which inspired the saints and servants of God in former days, will inspire us, and our first thought and desire will be—Oh God, what can I do to help to roll on thy kingdom and to advance the principles of righteousness? Oh God, inspire my heart with the spirit of light, intelligence, and revelation. Oh God let thy Spirit rest upon thy servant Brigham and his counsel and upon the priesthood of this church, that they may be led by the light of revelation, by the Spirit of the living God, by he principles of eternal truth, by the power of the great Jehovah to help to bring in and carry out the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things in one whether they be things on the earth or things in the heavens. If we have the right spirit resting upon us, these will be our continual desires, instead of what can I do to aggrandize myself? What can I do to accumulate wealth and property and the things of this world, and the honor the feelings that will possess our hearts, and these will be of the world? We shall desire first and foremost the honor of God, and we shall feel in our hearts—let me be associated with the spirits of just men made perfect; let me be one with the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven; let me, with that innumerable company of angels to which we have referred, strive to operate with them for the accomplishment of his purposes and the bringing to pass of his designs here upon the earth. This is the way we shall feel if we feel right, and if we do not feel so we can do so by humbling ourselves and mortifying ourselves, and living our religion.

Looking at things from this point of view, what difference does it make whether we belong to the church of the firstborn, lived among the ancient patriarchs, on the continent of Asia, or on this continent, or anywhere else, or whether we live and enjoy the light of life and of eternal truth to-day? We are engaged in a great work if we can only comprehend it, and a great trust is committed unto us, as elders of Israel and saints of the Most High God; and no matter what part we perform in the drama, if we do it right it will be acceptable before God. We are operating here with God if we know it, we are operating with the church of the firstborn if we know it; we are operating to introduce the eternal principles of God upon the earth if we know it, we are operating with them and they are operating with us if we are in communion with them and doing our duty. One of old, in speaking on this subject said—"We without them can not be made perfect, and they without us can not be made perfect."

They are operating in the heavens with the Gods for the accomplishment of certain purposes on the earth, and they have restored the everlasting gospel, that we talk so much about the angel flying through the midst of heaven to restore. They have restored the priesthood in all its fulness with the First Presidency, with apostles, with high priests, with seventies, with elders, with priests, with teachers and deacons, all of them under the direction of the Most High, and under the lead and guidance of President Brigham Young. They are all operating, and they have introduced these things, which you who are informed know are eternal principles.

Do we live here? we live in the enjoyment of certain principles that God has revealed; do we live here? we live to carry out certain things that he has made manifest; do we live here? we live to operate with them in the heavens. Our priesthood is eternal; it is everlasting; it administers in time and will administer throughout all eternity. And when we get through with the affairs of this earth, we shall join our associations behind the vail, and operate and co-operate with them and with God and with the general assembly and church of the first born, and with the patriarchs and prophets and apostles of old to bring about the things that God has designed from before the commencement of the world.

Well, then, looking at it in this light, it does not make very much difference where we are operating. They are operating in the heavens and doing things for us that we could not have done on the earth. Who among us could have revealed the gospel? Nobody. Who among us could have understood or manifested anything pertaining to the everlasting priesthood? Nobody. Who among us can lead this church along without the interposition of the Almighty? Nobody. They teach us these things. They teach us about our covenants and endowments and about our temple buildings; they teach us about our sealings and about the blessings connected with this life that associate us with another life. They are operating with us that the hearts of the fathers may be turned to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. They are operating in their part; we are operating in ours. Time rolls on, changes transpiring; one generation passes away after another, and events are transpiring and succeeding one another with rapid succession, and the purposes of God are rolling on faster than many of you Latter-day Saints dream of, and the Kingdom of heaven and the power of God are nearer than when you first believed, and you will see and hear things before long that will make your ears tingle, for God has set his hand to work to accomplish his purposes and to bring to pass things spoken of by the prophets; and his work will roll forth, and no power this side of hell can stop its progress, for God is with his people, notwithstanding their weaknesses, follies, foibles and imperfections. And if one and another are taken away all right if they are right, if we are taken away, all right if we are living our religion and keeping the commandments of God. If we are doing the will of God and magnifying our priesthood no matter where we are or what we are doing, whether we are in this world or in the next, in what we call time or eternity, time is only part of eternity, and we are operating with the Gods for the accomplishment of God's purposes here upon the earth, and it is all right.

When Jesus was put to death in the flesh and quickened by the spirit he went and preached to the spirits in prison who were disobedient in the days of Noah. Now he tells us to build temples that they and others may be administered for, and that the great principles developed in the gospel may be carried out. And if one, two, three or half a dozen of us are called away what difference does it make? None whatever, it is all right. God will lead and conduct and direct all things according to the counsel of his will.

In relation to the death of Brother Joseph A. Young I say the Judge of all the earth does right. Joseph A. may be wanted for other purposes there, who knows? We do not, and we must leave these things in the hands of God. All things are right if we are; and God will bless, dictate, guide and control all things, inasmuch as we do right, according to the counsel of his will. Let you and me be careful then, that we are not found fighting against God; let you and me be careful that we are living our religion and keeping his commandments, and living in the enjoyment of the light of truth, intelligence and revelation which the gospel of the Son of God inspires if we can appreciate and live up to it. Let us do this, and all will be well with us.

I would say to this family, God bless you! God comfort your hearts, and lead you in the paths of life! I am looking for the time when I shall meet President Young behind the vail. I want to be faithful, don't you? You tread in the steps of your father! Honor his God, and reverence his word and the things of God which he communicates unto you. It is a great privilege to be the sons and daughters of a man of God occupying the standing and position that President Young occupies. It is a great privilege to be the wives and associates of a man like him—a prophet of the living God. Sustain and comfort him! Bless him, and he will bless you and lead you into the celestial kingdom of God, to thrones, principalities, powers and dominions, where you and I and all of us, if we are faithful, will rejoice together in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace. I pray God that not one of you may be found wanting in that day, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

REMARKS

BY

ELDER LORENZO D. YOUNG,

AT THE

Funeral Services of Elder Joseph A. Young, delivered at the residence of President Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, Sunday morning, August 8, 1875.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I FEEL that I should do injustice to my own mind were I not to speak a few words on this occasion. I can bear testimony in my spirit, and my heart says Amen to what Elder Taylor has said in our hearing. I am so well pleased with the spirit of the gospel that is so definitely demonstrated to us in these last days.

I had the opportunity of visiting, journeying and attending meetings with my nephew, Brother Joseph A. Young, in his last labors, and I feel very thankful that I had. I have felt since I heard the sad news of his death that I would not, for a great deal, have been deprived of what I have learned, and the spirit that I have felt in his society for the last five weeks.

After travelling through Sanpete County in company with President Young and a number of the Twelve and others, Joseph A. and I went to Kanab, and during our journey we met with the Saints in some ten or twelve meetings, and conversed a great deal upon the building of temples, and also on what is called the New Order, and my mind was so well pleased, so satisfied with the views and ideas, many of them new to me, that were advanced by my nephew, that my journey was a delightsome one, and time passed away almost imperceptibly, and the instructions and exhortations that were given to the Saints on our journey were so agreeable to me and I enjoyed them so much that I felt that it was one of the best portions of my life.

It is hard for me to talk on this occasion, my feelings are so keen that I find it difficult to give expression to my ideas; still I have joy in my spirit. While Elder Taylor was speaking of the principle by which my nephew was actuated in his financial matters to the poor, it brought to my mind a little circumstance which I will relate, if you will pardon me for taking the liberty of doing so. While on this journey to Kanab we stopped at noon to feed and get dinner at a little settlement on the Sevier, where a few years there was a few minutes when a panic came of an accident that had happened in the neighborhood to one of the members of a very poor family, the head of which was an invalid man; his son, a boy twelve or fourteen years old, the only help the family had, had been flung from a wagon and his leg broken. Joseph immediately inquired if any person had been obtained or sent for to set the bone, for the leg was in a very bad condition, the wagon having gone over it and mashed it very seriously. He learned that a surgeon had been sent for, and for the time he seemed to rest contented.

After dinner we resumed our journey, and Joseph drove directly to this house to see the boy that was hurt. But previous to our leaving the place where we stopped for dinner, two or three of the neighbors came in, and this accident was the subject of conversation, and one sister made a remark which touched Joseph's feelings sensitively. I saw that the sister had made a mistake, but she did it ignorantly. Said Joseph during the conversation—"I wonder if these folks are comfortable," &c., and this lady replied—"They don't get along very well, the man is an invalid and unfortunate, and they have not the sympathy of the people so much as they would have if they had not apostalized and become Spiritualists." You may think this is a strange thing for me to speak about here but I do it because I want to. After we left the house we drove directly to this poor man's cottage. Joseph called to the woman and she came to the door and, after making some little inquiry, he handed out some fifteen or twenty dollars worth of bedclothing which he had along for his own convenience in camping out, saying to her—"Perhaps this will help you a little," and giving her three or four dollars, all the money he had in his pocket, said he—"This is all I have, or I would give you more." We then drove along and I said to him—"Joseph, I admire that kind act." Said he—"Uncle Lorenzo, it makes no difference to you and me whether these folks have apostatized or whether they are Spiritualists, or whatever they are, they are God's children and they are poor and in want."

Elder Taylor, during his remarks, referring to that great momenteous day when we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, repeated the words of the Savior—"Come ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you." "Why prepared for them?" "Because," said Jesus, "I was an hungered and ye fed me, I was naked and ye clothed me." That is the secret, Latter-day Saints, and upon us, individually, rests the responsibility of keeping the commandments of God; we are not responsible for our neighbors, but for ourselves. Our heavenly Father does not ask of us either dollars or dimes; he does not ask us to feed him, for all that we call ours is his, and he can dispose of it according to his own pleasure. All that he asks of us, his children, is to carry out the exhortations of his Son Jesus while he was here upon the earth, and to fulfil the requirements of his law which he has given us, that we may inherit the glory which is prepared for the righteous.

This is a day of mourning and it is a day of rejoicing. Why? It is a day of rejoicing because the kingdom of God is upward and onward, and his faithful children feel it, it is in their souls like a well of water springing up to eternal life; yet when we see our friends pass away, no matter what our faith may be, our human weakness causes us to mourn. But for all that, when I see those who have covenanted with God, and who have been faithful to that covenant, and who have thought more of God's law than of life and of all the wealth of the world, I feel that all is right with them, another battle is fought, another victory is won, another soul is saved and its salvation is sure. Then why should we not rejoice?

We know, by the circumstances that surround us, that mortality is with us. To-day, or yesterday, the funeral took place of one of our old friends from Nauvoo, or Kirtland, Brother William Miller, formerly Bishop of Provo. Brother Alphonso Green and Brother Fielding have also gone, and all within three or four days. Four weeks ago yesterday I travelled in company with my nephew from Kanab to Long Valley. I was very sick the day before, so sick indeed, that I really felt a doubt in my own mind whether I should ever see Salt Lake City again, for I was suffering from one of those deathlike spells to which I am subject, and I felt that death was upon me, so much so that I said to my son—"If I do not live to return home, carry my body back to Salt Lake." "Yes," said he, "father, I will." My sons and Joseph A. administered to me a number of times, and I will here mention one thing. After administering to me one morning Joseph A. jumped into his buggy and, in company with one of the brethren, went fifteen miles to a little settlement, held a meeting there and returned home, before sun down, back to Kanab. He attended some forty meetings in thirty days, and this was one of them. He came in at night, and I was lying on the bed in a little back room, and he came in and said—"Uncle Lorenzo, how do you feel?" I said I—"Joseph, I am not in as much pain as I was this morning, but I am sick." Said he—"I know you are," and he pushed too the door and put his hands on me and prayed with all the fervency of his soul, and I felt that his prayer was heard, and before his hands were removed from me the renovating power of God ran through my system, and from that moment I received strength, and the next day I travelled twenty-seven miles over the roughest road in the Kanab country.

I mention this because I want my friends to know that I know that my nephew, Joseph A. Young, no difference where he was seven years ago, no difference what his weaknesses were once, had faith in God and in the priesthood, and was a humble man at the day of his death, and he went away from this world full of faith and hope, and I feel to rejoice and I am thankful to God my heavenly Father that another victory is won.

I want to bear testimony to the good work that is established in the southern country, in Sevier County. I attended several meetings there, including two or three with the directors of this United Order, and the utmost union was manifested; there was not a dissenting voice nor a murmur at any of them. All was harmonious; all present seemed to be filled with faith and the spirit of the heavens seemed to be there, and I observed to some of my friends that Joseph A., by the wise instructions of his father and the counsel of the Holy Spirit which he possessed, would, in a little while, circumscribe all that country, and every Latter-day Saint would soon be united in the gospel of the Son of God, and they would all work together to carry out this beautiful order. I saw it there as I have seen it nowhere else, and it was a comfort and consolation to me.

To the wives and children of my new hew who has gone, I say God bless, comfort and strengthen you, and may you always find friends, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wherever you go!

A joy, satisfaction, peace and hope that are full of immortality fill my bosom today. In a little while, a few more struggles, a few more days of labor and toil, and many of the veteran Saints will gain an eternal victory, and parents will enjoy the society of children, and children the society of their parents in that world of peaceful bliss and rest where the enemies of God's kingdom can never come. I pray God to help us all to so live that we may be prepared to inherit the blessings which God has in reserve for the faithful, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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