

DISCOURSE

BY

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REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

We have listened to a great many things to-day that are instructive and interesting to all of the Latter-day Saints. A few of us have come among you, to teach you certain principles, and among others to teach you how to pray, in order that your prayers and supplications may find acceptance before the Lord God our Heavenly Father. The disciples of Jesus came to Him, in his day, and said, "Lord teach us to pray as John taught his disciples." And if it was proper for them it is also proper for us; for we profess to be His disciples and the children of our Heavenly Father; we profess to believe that God has established His Church and His kingdom upon the earth, and that this is not man's kingdom nor man's government nor the rule, nor the laws of man; but the rule and laws of God. If it is the Church of God, it is not the Church of man. This Church did not receive its doctrines nor its ordinances from man, nor any principles it possesses; but it received them from the Lord by revelation through the communications that He made unto His servant Joseph Smith. There are no people under the heavens that this Church is indebted to for any light, for any truth, for any intelligence pertaining to God. We did not receive any information through their seminaries; we could find none among the religious world; amidst the teachers of Christianity, or of any other system. We did not receive any doctrine which we believe in, nor ordinance that has been taught or any principle pertaining to the salvation or exaltation of the human family from men; nor from any system of divinity or theology; or from any body of learned men; for everything we know we are indebted to the revelations of Jesus Christ made unto us. This is the same also in regard to the organizations and offices of this Church. We are not formed after the pattern of any other body of men that exists upon the earth. Have we a Presidency? The Lord dictated that. Have we a body of Twelve Apostles? God provided for that and gave us the pattern. Have we a body of Seventies? We heard a number of them speak this morning—they had their meeting, and we desired that they should have the opportunity of presenting their feelings, which they will do more fully hereafter among their quorums. Who organized these quorums? God revealed His will on this subject and made known their duties and showed them the position they were to occupy. Have we a body of High Priests? Yes. Who taught us anything about them? Can you find anything about them in the religious world? I think not. Who taught us about these things? You find the account in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, given by revelation, in the same way that other principles and doctrines were given. Have we High Councils? Who organized them? The Lord; and He revealed unto them their duties and told them how to sit upon cases and how to judge and operate, and gave them their rule of practice in regard to the trial of causes referred to them. God gave us all these; we knew nothing about them, not the wisest of us, not even Joseph Smith himself until the Lord revealed His will, and it is to Him we are indebted for them. The same thing applies to the Elders, also to the Bishopric, with its duties and courts; God has dictated and given instruction pertaining to all of these matters. And who told us about Priests and Teachers and Deacons? The Lord has pointed out their several duties. These then are leading officers of the Church and Kingdom of God, together with the Patriarchs.

Now, is this the Church of man? I do not think it is; I care nothing about the opinions of men in regard to what officers they think ought to be in the Church and Kingdom of God, for God has revealed them, that is, He has revealed the offices for His Church. Very well, then they are under, or ought to be under the guidance, government and direction of the Almighty. And if any of you have received either the Melchizedek or Aaronic Priesthood,

the greater or the lesser, as it is termed, that Priesthood has been conferred and communicated by the Lord; you received it not of man, neither by man, but through the revelations of Jesus Christ and the administration of the Holy Priesthood upon the earth; and this Priesthood, we are told, administers both in time and in eternity; therefore it refers to this world and also to the world to come.

Then, there are other things of a similar nature. Not only are we indebted to the Lord for the offices, organizations and Priesthood of this Church, but also for its doctrines and ordinances. We talk sometimes about the Church of God; then we talk again about the Kingdom of God, or, in other words, the government of God, and we pray sometimes that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven, as we read of; and when we can comprehend it we shall find that the government of God will receive guidance, direction, revelation and instruction from God in regard to its acts, just as much as the Church of God does and upon the same principle.

Then, we have another kind of government, that is to say, we have the government of the United States. Is it the government of God? Not exactly. It does not look very much like it sometimes; there is not that kind of order about it that there will be about the other. But how shall we treat it? Treat it right. Are we subjects of that government? Yes. We, as a Territory, form an integral part of the United States; we owe allegiance unto that government, and ought to be loyal and patriotic, and ought to fulfill all of the duties and responsibilities that devolve upon us to attend to as citizens thereof. Because a few foolish people laboring under prejudice lend themselves as tools to the adversary to publish and circulate falsehoods, and because their statements are believed by people who are more ready to believe falsehood than truth; because foolish men speak foolishly and write foolishly and act foolishly, and in some instances try to deprive us of our liberties, shall we condemn everything that is good in the United States? I tell you nay. I will give you my feelings about the United States to-day. I do not believe, notwithstanding there is a great deal of "fuss and feathers" over what is called the Anti-Polygamy societies, religious societies and other busy bodies, as well as the foolish and inconsiderate remarks of some men in authority, my opinion is, that there is no government under the heavens wherein we could be better protected in our political and religious rights than we are in the United States; "Yes, but some of them make foolish remarks and write foolishly?" Well, and so do we. What of that? Does that destroy or release us from our allegiance to the government which we are associated with? No! The very genius of this government is the most extended liberty to all; its constitution and institutions guarantee to all citizens freedom of thought, freedom to worship, freedom of action, and the untrammelled pursuit of life, liberty and happiness, and any violation of the common rights of man is an infraction of law and a violation of the great fundamental principles of our government. And any man or combination of men, who seek to pervert under any pretext the great underlying principles of our government, knowingly or unknowingly, are the enemies of this great commonwealth. When men attempt to strike at the constitution of any government, they are aiming a blow at the life and vitality of that government or nation, they are enemies of the government and they lay the axe at the root of its prosperity.

We, as a nation, have been guided to the high position we occupy by the hand of God. This nation has had a great destiny to fulfil, among other things to prepare a place upon the earth where God could establish His Kingdom, and where freedom and equal rights could be extended to all men. Joseph Smith, in speaking of the Constitution of the United States, said that it was given by the inspiration of God. And shall we attempt to interfere with any principles enunciated therein, principles given by the inspiration of God? No. We will sustain them. We will be true to our allegiance, by all our acts in all our lives. And if narrow-minded, unjust, calumnious and turbulent people can not afford to give us our rights, we can afford to give them theirs. If others can not afford to

treat us right, we can afford to treat them right. If people can not afford to maintain the principles of equal rights, of liberty and justice to all men, we can; we can afford to proclaim liberty and salvation to all the world, and so far as lies in our power we will protect the rights of all men that come within our reach. We can afford to do that all the time. And if men in position, and men professedly statesmen, do not know what they are doing when they attack the liberties and rights of men, we do. What is our case to-day, should the injustice contemplated against us be consummated, will be somebody's else turn to-morrow. If others can stand this perversion of constitutional rights and the attack upon the liberties therein guaranteed, we can. It is just the entering wedge that by and by, if its projectors are not very careful, will split up and divide and destroy those principles for which their fathers bled, and produce confusion, misery, bloodshed, death and destruction, and an utter overthrow of this great and magnanimous nation. We have already some premonitory warnings of these things. What of the disgraceful doings in Pittsburg in 1877, the outrages by the Klu Klux and Regulators, the introduction into our midst of Communistic and Nihilistic combinations, and the antagonism between labor and capital? To what, if unchecked, may these and other irregularities grow, which are now only in a state of incipency among us. I feel to mourn myself when I see acts of this kind through the foolishness of men. They do not know what they are doing, they know not the results of their own acts, they know not that they are prompted by the inspiration that comes from beneath and that their steps lead down to hell.

It may be proper here, however, to state that the inconsiderate remarks of a small clique of narrow-minded bigots and the frantic ravings of a few frenzied religionists, are not the sense of this nation. There are hundreds of thousands of large-hearted, liberal-minded men, who look at things pertaining to us from another standpoint, and who are not prepared to disrupt and disfranchise the citizens of a whole Territory of the United States, to make the people and their property a prey to designing demagogues; to desolate their homes and turn them over to a pack of rapacious howling wolves, at the behest of pseudo reformers, religious bigots, or fanatical demagogues. They know full well that if the liberties and rights of one set of people can be interfered with, then those of another people may be, that if one Territory can be disfranchised and robbed another may be, and that if Territories can be blotted out and despoiled, so can States, and that just as certain as this is permitted, the strong bulwarks of our nation's greatness are attacked, the axe is being laid at the root of the tree, and this great and grand republic, weak, divided, and emasculated will crumble into decay and ruin.

What shall we do? We will do just as Joseph Smith said long ago we would do. He said when men shall begin to tamper with the rights, the liberties and freedom of men, and shall strike down those glorious principles introduced by the Almighty for the welfare of the peoples; that whenever they do this, and when one plank after another shall be taken away from the platform of liberty and equal rights to all men, that the Elders of Israel will rally around the Constitution of the United States and sustain it, if nobody else will. They will come to its rescue and proclaim liberty to all the nation and to all men. Now write it down! It is being written, and I expect it will be published. I am not ashamed of any such principles as those; they emanate from God, and He is the author of them, and He is the friend of this people and of all good men everywhere in the world. Will we try to injure this nation? No. Will we plot against them? No. Will we sow dissension and discord and tribulation? No. We will sustain every principle of honor, justice and truth, and every principle of virtue and everything that is calculated to elevate and ennoble man upon the earth, and to exalt him to the heavens.

Then as to other matters. Brother Woodruff was talking about people going out to some of the settlements. That is right. Shall we do it? Yes. Will we follow counsel in that as well as in other things? of course we will; we will do what God and the Holy Priesthood want

us to do, and help to do what we used to preach about—to lengthen the cords of Zion and strengthen her stakes. That is scripture, you know, and we will try to fulfil it.

And then, while we do not desire to say or write hard things about anybody, yet it may not be out of place to ask those foolish people who talk and write so much about polygamy this pertinent question. What of the institutions of our moral reformers, these monogamists, these proposed modern examples of purity and virtue? What of these? They are so foul, degraded and hideous that they shock the moral sensibilities of decent humanity; they will not bear the light of day; if spoken of at all it must be with closed doors and bated breath. That spurious creed, that compound of paganism and Christianity, established at Rome in the early centuries of our era, among its other exploits assumed to correct the order of God in regard to the marital relations, and to stop up, to curb and control those legitimate avenues which God had provided to regulate the turbulent and unruly passions of man, through the legitimate and honorable estate of matrimony, which unnatural acts, like the confining of the volcanos' fires have only caused them to burst forth with tenfold energy; and as the pent up lava, once free from its confinement spreads desolation far and wide, and overwhelms cottages, hamlets, villages and cities in its resistless course, so have these mad, unnatural acts and teachings filled Europe, America and indeed all Christian nations with a social and moral pestilence, withering, blighting and destroying every soul it touches. Need I name it? It is that horrible institution of pseudo Christianity known as "the social evil," with all its unnatural, disgusting and revolting adjuncts. The self-styled reformers of modern Christianity, anti-polygamists and professedly religious, though they be, are unable to cope with this flagrant, burning infamy. In spite of all their powers and influences, like the deadly simoon it sweeps through the land, permeating all their cities and villages. Yet they, with unblushing hypocrisy, whilst writhing in the deadly coils of this dreadful anaconda, assume to ignore their horrible position, and would even drag us down to a like destruction, and would blast our youth, our manhood and our womanhood with their corrupting, blighting and damning influences. We say to such, "My soul enter thou not into their secret, and mine honor with them be thou not united." We have had more than enough already of their drunkenness, debauchery and corruption forced upon us, we have been over and over again nauseated with the immoral stench surrounding some of the members of the bench and bar; we want no more of such exhibitions, bedecked and bedizened though they be with these adjuncts of a self-styled Christianity. Hypocrites, liars and lascivious men do not shine very brilliantly in the role of reformers. Yet such creatures, often rotten with lasciviousness and corruption, talk against the principles that God has revealed, and make war upon laws of holiness that have been communicated from heaven for the exaltation of the human family, and to save them from many abominable and almost nameless crimes, amongst them those of infanticide and feticide; wherein women imbrue their hands in the blood of their innocent offspring, and men yet more vile assist them in the crime. The above is a lamentable state of things, and I do not take pleasure in its recapitulation, but I am very, very sorry, that it is too true. God has introduced laws to correct all this, principles to elevate and exalt His earthly children. Let the wicked rave against His gospel, God will maintain the right, and He will sustain His people, while those who oppose Him and endeavor to frustrate His purposes will dwindle away; they will go down and wallow in corruption until they enter into another state of existence where they will find they have been fighting against God, against the laws of life and the principles of virtue and eternal truth.

We need not be concerned about the acts of men; we will do right ourselves. We profess to be the people of God, and it is for us to observe His law, and when you are taught how to pray, do it, but do not pray hypocritically, but pray in all sincerity and with all truthfulness; and when you approach God, feel to say, O God, search me and try me, and prove me, and if there is any

manner of wickedness in me, let it help me to overcome evil and cleave unto the truth. So in regard to other principles. Should we have one? Yes. We hear a great deal about unity; but we do not strive for it as much as we ought. We ought to be one in our temporal affairs, one in our spiritual affairs, seeking to sustain each other under all circumstances, that is, under all circumstances that are right, but under no circumstances that are wrong. This should be our course no matter who it is or who it affects. We have our organizations for the accomplishment of these things. You, for instance, have been providing a beautiful co-operative association. That is all very well. Shall we have one in trying to sustain co-operation? Yes; and then we shall expect to be one in trying to sustain and people, the Church and Kingdom of God on the earth; if they do not, they are not of us. And if they take other course than that, the higher God will be upon them, and we will withdraw from them. That institution has inscribed on its head, M. I. What does it mean? M. I. Co-operative Mercantile Institute. What is meant by Zion? The heart. And we want to see men employed in the institution of Zion; and men who are governed by the principles of virtue, honor and integrity, or we do not want them. That is my opinion, and the expression of my feelings about such matters. And our people must be sustained; our manufactures sustained; our mechanics must be maintained; everything that tends to the welfare and prosperity of the people must be sustained. And if this is not sufficient, what then? We expect that Zion's institution and we are men that they will sustain Zion and the people of Zion; and then the people of Zion will sustain them. These things. But it is for us to stand by honest, true, and virtuous principles; and there is anybody in those institutions that do not do right, treat them according to the law of God, and make them out from our midst; that shall not have place among us. Say that to Brother Peery and Counselors. Let us have truth, justice, virtue and purity, and let us purge out every thing that is evil and corrupt of any kind, that may stand before God acceptably. His sight. And while we are at it, kindness, mercy and good feelings towards all men, and would treat honorable men aright everywhere, and while we would be full of kindness towards institutions such as that is, (which I consider has a great deal of good and which we ought and must sustain); and must condemn everything that is wrong there or anywhere else. These are my feelings upon the spoken I speak thus plainly, that you may understand me. Beat of certain rumors shall we be aside from the right and turn to the Gentiles? No I do not intend any such principle; I think we will stick to Zion and to her institutions, and if anything is wrong purging the wrong and maintain the right. This is the way I look at it, let us attend to the adjustment of these matters.

And then, we have our out here. I am very much pleased to find the progress made. You have most beautiful high school here; I was talking with your superintendent; he tells me getting along very well in these matters, and that things are very satisfactory in the interior education. We want to look into the educational interests of our youth, that they may grow up intelligent as any other class of and be able to battle with the world in any phase that they may be ed upon to act in society.

And then, your Sunday School learn are progressing. I am very much pleased to see that these matters throughout the territory. We have reason to be of our position in these relations find for instance in comparing statistics of the schools of the States that the people of this territory are a little above the average of the whole nation in regard to literacy. It is true we do not compare with some of the most favored States but we are a young Territory, and we are a little above the States taking them all together. We have not received a pecuniary aid from government or from any other source; what has been done in this direction has been accomplished through our own labors, and we