

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH*At the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday, January 8th, 1893.*

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I need not say that it is unexpected to me to be called upon to address you this afternoon, although that may be the fact. I can say truthfully that I feel exceedingly dependent for what I shall say upon the promptings of the Spirit. In my feelings I shrink very much from attempting to speak to you this afternoon, and unless the Lord helps me and the Saints will sustain me by their faith and prayers, I shall not be able to interest you very much or to occupy much time. On being spoken to, however, by President Geo. Q. Cannon, my mind reverted to a revelation in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which I feel prompted to read; although whenever I do read from the Bible, or the Book of Mormon, or the Doctrine and Covenants I feel almost as though I should apologize to the Latter-day Saints, for the reason that it is supposable that as Latter-day Saints we are perfectly familiar with the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, with the contents of the Book of Mormon, and with the doctrines of Christ found in the Bible. It is fair to presume that the Latter-day Saints read these books and contemplate the principles and instructions there to be found, and that they are endeavoring, according to the best light and knowledge which they possess, to apply these principles to their lives, in order that they may be what the Lord desires they should be—His people, a righteous people, and a people who have faith in God and who honor His laws in their everyday life. You will, therefore, pardon me, I trust, my brethren and sisters, for reading to you one of the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

Behold, blessed, saith the Lord, are they who have come up unto this land with an eye single to My glory, according to My commandments;

For them that live shall inherit the earth, and them that die shall rest from all their labors, and their works shall follow them, and they shall receive a crown in the mansions of My Father, which I have prepared for them;

Yea, blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed My Gospel, for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth; and it shall bring forth in its strength,

And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time; they that are faithful and diligent before Me.

Wherefore I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve Him.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal, neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

Nevertheless, thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

But remember that on this the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart, that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.

Verily, this is fasting and prayer; or, in other words, rejoicing and prayer.

And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance;

Verily, I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fullness of the earth is yours; the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth;

Yea, and the herb, and the good things which cometh of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards;

Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart;

Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul.

And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion;

And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is His wrath kindled save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.

Behold, this is according to the law and the prophets: wherefore, trouble me no more concerning this matter.

But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.

I, the Lord, have spoken it, and the Spirit beareth record. Amen.

In reading this revelation I do not expect that you will discover anything that you have not read before, and that you do not fully understand. Indeed, I think it would be very difficult now for any man to address a congregation of Latter-day Saints and give them instruction upon any subject which pertains to their present welfare and to their future progress in the work of the Lord which they have not already heard of or received in their hearts.

We do not come here for the purpose of hearing new things, or receiving new revelation and new commandments; but really we come together that we may have our minds refreshed and our memories awakened, according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which may rest upon us, in relation to those things which we have already heard and received, and for which we have been gathered together in order that we might put them into practice, that we might become the people of God in very deed.

But I have found very often in my experience in reading over passages of Scripture that the Spirit has brought to my mind new light, and has shown up to my understanding thoughts and views which seemed to be new to me, notwithstanding I had been familiar with those Scriptures and had read them over and over again. In fact, there is a peculiarity which I have found accompanies the reading of the word of God, that whenever read it is calculated to refresh the soul, to revive the spirit of man, and to draw him nearer, if possible, to the fountain of light, truth, wisdom, love and knowledge. Therefore, it is a good thing for the Latter-day Saints to read very often the word of God as it is recorded in the Bible, the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, and as it has been discussed also by the leading Elders of the Church with a view to making plain the laws of God to the understanding of the children of men. And in reading the word of the Lord we should take into consideration its application to us under the circumstances and in the conditions in which we find ourselves, and we should reflect as to whether we are complying with the requirements of the Gospel or not, and whether we have the Spirit in our hearts which accompanies the work and word of the Lord. We should not read merely to say that we have read; but we should read with the spirit and with the understanding, in order that we may be profited, and that the truth may be revealed, as far as possible, unto our understanding, and may be so impressed upon our minds that it will never depart from us, but will be in us like a fountain which springeth up unto everlasting life, and which shall be an unfailing source of truth, of light, of joy and of peace in our hearts continually.

"Behold, blessed, saith the Lord, are they who have come up unto this land with an eye single to my glory, according to my commandments."

Now, I ask myself, am I blessed of the Lord because of my having come up to this land, agreeable to the commandments of God? Is my eye single to His glory, and am I seeking to keep His commandments? These are the questions which arise in my mind. Am I really enjoying this promise and this blessing, and am I living so that I shall be worthy of a continuance of this blessing? If I am not, then why am I not, and what excuse shall I give that I am not receiving the blessing that is here promised? What account will I be able to render of my stewardship and the course which I am pursuing if this blessing is not realized by me in this land unto which the Lord has brought me? I have come here, what for? I came here in my childhood for the purpose of finding a place of safety, a place of rest, a home, somewhere where my head could lay in peace, undisturbed by the hand of mobs and of violence. I came here in fulfillment of the commandments of God.

It is true, this revelation was given in 1831. It had, perchance, at that time reference directly to the land of Zion in Missouri. But it also applies to this land with just the same force and the same consistency as it applied to