

THE DESERET NEWS.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

NO. 43.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1859.

VOL. IX.

[For the Deseret News.]

OUR RELIGION.

BY E. R. S.

Who can describe its worth? It is ALL WORTH.

'Tis perfect in its parts to man reveal'd,
But finite understanding cannot reach
Its vast infinitude—its lofty height,
And yet in man's low, frail capacities,
It meets him and it ministers unto
His nature, in each varied circumstance.

It meets him in his vile, degraded state
Of sin and sorrow, warrings, toils and strifes,
Where passion rules him while ambition goads,—
Gives him control o'er his own fallen self—
The vict'ry over evil pow'rs unseen
Which, fiend-like, oft infest the atmosphere
Of this degen'rate world.

It gives him, too,
The vict'ry over Death—the tyrant Death—
Disrobes its hand of all its terrors—turning
Away its sting and gently modifies
Its pain and bitterness. It kindly lifts
The veil which hides th' eternal world from view
And gives man access to the heights above;
It stirs within his soul the inner life,
That precious gem of immortality,
With wisdom, knowledge, hope, joy, peace and love;
Quick'ning the fire of thought, and all the springs
Of consciousness; endows him with the pow'r
To live for ever and for ever be
Identically his own perfect self—
Imparts the keys by which he may detect
False men, false messengers, false spirits and
False everything and ultimately will
Place him on high, enriching him with thrones,
With principalities and pow'rs, and crown
Him with the gifts and pow'rs of ENDLESS LIVES.

"Pearl of great price!" 'Tis worth all sacrifice
Of this world's honor, and its pride of life—
Its prejudice, ambition, and self-love,
With all their kind. 'Tis more than amply worth
Our long endurance of unnumber'd ills
Heap'd up by persecution's clay-cold hand.

No matter what or how things come and go
With us and ours, if we adhere unto
Our pure religion and, in heart and life,
Honor, respect and cherish it. 'Twill lift
Us out of sorrow, sickness, poverty,
Reproach, injustice, and remove from us
The red-hot lava and its clouds of smoke,
Which roll in streams from falsehood's burning pit.

It holds the heav'n-acknowledg'd claim on Truth—
ALL Truth—all truthfulness, and all that's true
In nature, science, policy and art;
It tests and circumscribes all creeds and all
Religions—knows their origin and sees
And can define their future destinies.

It holds the present, past and future in
A link—connects one dispensation with
Another, then another, and so on,
Till all the dispensations that are past,
Combin'd, comprize the fullness of our own.

'Tis of high origin. 'Tis not a thing
Of earth. Its home is in the bosom of
The Holy Ones—'tis self-existent and
Coeval with th' Eternal Deity.

G. S. L. CITY, Dec., 1859.

DISCOURSE

By Elder John Taylor, Tabernacle, October 7, 1859.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

I have been very much edified since the commencement of this conference. My heart was led to rejoice yesterday exceedingly, when I saw the spirit and feeling that was manifested among the Saints and in listening to the remarks made by President Young and others to-day. I have felt joyful in the Lord, and I bless the name of the God of Israel that I am associated with his church and kingdom on the earth. These feelings I wish at all times to cherish in my bosom and carry out in my life; and I believe there are hundreds, if not thousands, before me to-day, who have the same spirit and feeling, and the same desires.

It is true, we have seen, for a few months past, many things that are painful for good men and women to reflect upon. Wickedness has seemed to triumph, but when we see the spirit and feeling that is manifested among the Saints, we are confident that we can find many more faithful men and women among them than the Lord did in Elijah's day, when idolatry, wickedness and corruption of various kinds prevailed.

The old prophet felt a little sorrowful; he thereupon went alone and there was a voice, as it were the voice of thunder, but the Lord was not in the thunder; there was the voice of an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; finally there was a still small voice whispering in his ear, saying, what doest thou hear Elijah? He answered and said, "Lord, they have killed thy prophets and dug down thine altars, and I am left alone and they seek my life." But the Lord gave him to understand that it was a mistake, informing him that he had reserved to himself seven thousand men in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal; I think he would find more

here, without finding so much of the evil which the prophet complained of in that day and age of the world.

One thing in particular strikes my mind and probably strikes the minds of many; that the spirit of evil is bold, uproarious, rampant and fond of exhibiting itself everywhere; while the spirit of righteousness, virtue, integrity and truth is modest and retiring, and not very anxious to exhibit itself; consequently when a spirit of this kind prevails it seems as though the devil is to pay when you feel after the heart strings of the people and touch them with the touch stone of truth, all good men and women will answer to the test, showing that the spirit of truth, of intelligence, of union, of virtue and integrity still exists and prevails in the bosom of all the faithful; so that, when we meet together in the capacity of a conference, every opposing feeling to these noble qualities and truths in the character of a Saint is subdued; the Spirit of the Lord becomes the prevailing influence and we feel as we have often felt on former occasions.

We realize that we have not lost his Holy Spirit and, if we continue to encourage it, it will be in us a spirit of life, light, intelligence and truth; in fact a spirit springing up unto everlasting life. It is the principle embodied in the words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria.

We feel that we are in possession of the principles of eternal life, which are as a well of water within us and around us and of which we drink and participate in when we live our religion. It emanates from God, issues from the fountain of light and truth, the source of all intelligence, and is imparted to us through the medium of the everlasting gospel. It has enlightened our minds, enlarged our understandings, extended our feelings, informed our judgment; has warmed up our affections to God and holiness, has nourished and cherished us and put us in possession of principles that we know will abide forever and forever.

We have been seeking in a great measure to do the will of our heavenly Father; to keep his commandments, magnify our priesthood, honor our calling and do that which is right in the sight of God continually.

Inasmuch as we have done this, the Spirit of God is yet with us, a living, abiding, eternal principle, which is extending, growing and increasing within us until we shall be prepared to associate with the Gods of eternity.

What makes us so buoyant and joyful on occasions like this? Why is it that the Spirit and power of God is more visibly manifested at the time of our general conference, when the authorities of the church from all parts are assembled together to talk on the things of God, regulate the affairs of his kingdom, to put in order anything that may be wrong and counsel together pertaining to the interests of Zion, and the building up of Israel? It is because there is a union of good feelings, good desires and aspirations and one spirit inspires the whole, forming a phalanx of power, of faith, and of the Spirit of the Lord. A single taper will give a light, and it is pleasant to look upon, but thousands of the same kind of light make a general illumination. With us, it is a time of union, of light, of life, of intelligence, of the Spirit of the living God; our feelings are one, our faith is one, and a great multitude possessing this oneness forms an array of power that no power on this side of earth or hell is able to cope with, or overcome.

We feel mighty to-day. We are satisfied that we are associated with the kingdom of God upon the earth. We know that this is the church and kingdom of God, and our temporal and eternal interests are centered in it. We know that it was established for the gathering of Israel, for the redemption of the Saints, for the permanent establishment of the principles of righteousness upon all the earth, for the introduction of correct principles of government, for the salvation of the living and of the dead—for the salvation of our progenitors, and posterity.

We believe that we as a body of people, embracing all the various quorums of this church and kingdom are engaged in this one great work; and hence there is a feeling of faith, union, and intensity, or power, if you please, of the Spirit of the living God, that quickens and vivifies the mind, gives energy to the body, and joy to the bosom. In this we all feel to participate. The Lord is here by his Spirit and power, and our hearts are joyful.

Speaking then upon the principle of union among the Saints, for this seems to be the topic of conversation at this conference; union with each other; union in families; union with our Bishops and Wards; union with the twelve, and with the first Presidency; union throughout the church and kingdom in all its various ramifications. This seems to be the spirit and feeling and teaching that flows from the various speakers who have during this conference addressed us.

How can this union be brought about more extensively. All agree that union is a great and powerful principle. The several States of this great American confederacy have chosen for their national motto "E Pluribus Unum," which means many in one. They think that union is very good. Professedly every good man thinks it is good to be united in anything that is good. But the great difficulty with

the world is to bring this about. The nations of the world are not united, and each nation is divided and split up, and confusion and the spirit of war and animosity and evil abounds everywhere. They are not united, but they are full of jealousy, hatred, strife, envy and malice.

Witness the late European wars. What did they fight for? Who can tell? They fought for nothing and they made peace for nothing. I have searched the papers diligently, but I must confess that I have been unable to discover what they fought for, and I question very much if the emperor of France, the king of Sardinia or the opposing powers could tell you; yet one hundred thousand men have been sent into eternity to satisfy the caprice of a few individuals, and for what purpose? I cannot tell, and I do not know anybody else that can. I have not met with a man or with a writer yet that knew what they fought for, or what they made peace for. What are they now doing? France is building extra ships, and England is building extra ships. What for? They do not know.

A nation is afraid its neighboring nations are going to possess a little more power than it possesses and it must create more power to cope with them. That is all the union I know anything about in the world.

What is the union that exists in these United States? and what are the feelings that prevail among them. Pretty much the same that prevails among the European nations.

Look at the animosities, strife, hatred and jealousy, and the spirit of war that prevails between the North and the South. Yet the Northern and Southern States are said to be united together—they have entered into certain compacts to make what they call "E Pluribus Unum." How far they are united the past, present and future events must declare. What do the world say about the Saints of God? They say, we are united, and they are fearful of our union. They say, we think as one, act as one, believe as one, and are "led by the nose by one man."

Horace Greeley says it is nonsense for the United States to send any public officers here and advises the government to appoint President Young governor of the Territory of Utah; for he says he carries the "keys of the Territory in his breeches pocket" anyway.

The world do not like the Saints, because they are united, and another thing is very evident; they do not understand the principle of our union. Some suppose it is a species of Daniteism, or terrorism, a sort of tyrannical power that is made use of to bring men down into subjection, and hence, in accordance with these ideas the government sent out an army to give protection to the oppressed people of Utah, and escort back all who want to go back to the East or to California and dare not for fear of Brigham and the Twelve.

When Gov. Cumming came here first he offered deliverance to the captives in Zion and told the people in public that if there were any that wanted his protection it should be had. How many sought it? I think his Excellency's mind has become better informed, since his association with the people; he has found out that, with very few exceptions, the people are well contented to remain in Utah and build up their adopted country.

I speak of this as an example, to show the spirit and feeling that exists in the minds of many of the leading politicians of the United States, and the erroneous ideas they form in relation to us as a people, for Gov. Cumming was instructed in relation to this matter. They do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God, as the Sadducees did in the days of Jesus. They do err, because they understand not the fundamental principles of the kingdom of God. They do not err, because they do not know how it is that this whole people can be controlled by one influence and spirit, and they are under that control willingly and voluntarily, and of their own free individual action and accord, and so far from their being controlled, it is impossible to drive them out of it.

The world do not know the all-powerful influence that pervades the minds of this people called Latter Day Saints, creating the union they so much wonder at and fear.

The governments of the earth make use of different means to unite their people; or, rather sustain their power. In some of the despotic governments they have vassals or serfs whom they make serve them in the capacity of armies; with these and police forces, they make use of the people to rivet their own chains by concentrated earthly power. They appeal not to the will, judgement, feeling or spirits of men. They make them obey by force. In this way they bring about a kind of false union. This prevails to a great extent in Turkey and Russia, and as far as I can learn, the same prevails in China and Japan, and to a certain extent in Austria, Germany, and other European governments. There men are absolutely forced to a certain extent to bow down in servile submission to the will of one man in right and in wrong as the case may be.

The same principle exists to a great extent in France, but not so extensively as in those other countries; yet she went forth with magnanimous enthusiasm to deliver down-trodden Italy, while in that very France, twenty men were not permitted to meet together without a

permit from the police department. Were we assembled in France as we now are, without a license, the police force would have power to possess themselves of the keys and lock up this door after turning out every one of the congregation.

These are some of the blessings of despotism. That is a kind of union which they enforce, and hence they can command the popular vote for anything they please. The people dare not resist the will of their rulers; they are brought down into subjection by force, bound in chains, and their chains riveted upon them in every imaginable form.

In the British constitution as it now stands there are three powers all opposed to each other—called kings, lords, and commons. The king pulls one way, the commons another, and the lords another—on the same principle that you prop up a steamboat pipe by chains pulling different ways; the moment you cut one of those chains, down comes the chimney pipe. The British governments presents a sort of pulling policy instead of propping up. It is so with all other political institutions of our day.

The great cause of all this evil is, God has not established their governments nor framed their laws, nor inspired their law makers, nor given wisdom to their kings and emperors. They have governed by their own wisdom, but heavenly intelligence they have not possessed. One evil has followed on the heels of another; corruption has followed corruption; and there has been no man to point them out the right way, or if there was they have not listened to his counsels.

What is to be done in this deplorable state of things? The Lord wants to establish a kingdom that shall break in pieces all these kingdoms. The devil has held the reins long enough, kings and rulers have borne rule without the Lord long enough. The nations have groaned under tyranny and oppression and every kind of maladministration long enough; and it is now time for the Lord to regulate his own vineyard, and put things to right that has been put wrong by the reign of wickedness.

To bring this about does he speak to the emperor of France, or to the emperor of Russia; to the king or queen of England, or to the President of the United States, to the emperor of China, to the ruler of Japan, or to any other earthly power? They would not listen to him. What do they know about God, his rule, or his authority? Nothing at all. What could he do with them? Simply nothing all. Suppose he were to speak to the Pope, what does he know about God? Nothing.

The Almighty wishes to accomplish a great purpose on the earth in the last days; who is he going to speak to and send to prepare the way for the fulfillment of His latter-day purposes?

Suppose you were God and placed in such circumstances, and had such a set of kings, governors, rulers, potentates and priests to deal with, how could you put them right? And suppose you wanted to introduce your form of government upon the earth, your spirit, your law, your intelligence, and the way your government in the heavens is administered; and were you determined to establish your kingdom on the earth, how would you do it?—(Voice in the Stand—"The only way would be to lead them all into the Red Sea together.")—How could you get at these kings and great men of the earth? You could not. Would they listen to a revelation from God? Verily no.

You may go to any of the priests of the day, presidents of colleges, and you will find them too great to bow to God, their reputation would be at stake; if God should reveal his will to them, they would be called false prophets, and this they could not endure.

Under the circumstances, what could God do? He could not do better than he has done. Men are now wandering in darkness like you and I were before the gospel greeted our ears. What did we know previous to that? Nothing. I did not know that it was necessary to be baptised for the remission of sins until the gospel taught it to me, yet I knew the Bible from A to Z. I could read a great many things in the prophecies, and make calculations about the millenium and the gathering of Israel, but did not know the first principle of the gospel of Christ; and there is not a man here that knew them.

I have traveled extensively in the world and have never met with a priest, or scientific man that knew the first principles of the gospel of Christ in any country.

What could the Lord do with such a pack of ignorant fools as we were? There was one man that had a little good sense, and a spark of faith in the promises of God, and that was Joseph Smith—a backwoods man. He believed a certain portion of Scripture which said—"If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." He was fool enough in the eyes of the world, and wise enough in the eyes of God and angels, and all true intelligence, to go into a secret place to ask God for wisdom, believing that God would hear him. The Lord did hear him, and told him what to do.

Yes, there was one man that believed God, that had simplicity, honesty, truth and integrity enough to ask wisdom of him, while the presidents of churches and men of extensive