

DISCOURSE

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, Delivered in the Bowery, Logan City, Saturday Afternoon, June 28, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I HAVE a little temporal matter which I wish to lay before the brethren—something pertaining to our work here for the benefit of the inhabitants of this valley and other places. It is concerning this railroad. I wish to speak of this today. We should pass it over, probably, if it were left till to-morrow. I wish the brethren to take into consideration the benefits that are now and which will be derived by the building of this railroad. Another item I wish to lay before the brethren is the putting a road through what is called Bear River Canyon, this side of Cottonwood, where the railroad will go. If this could be crowded through, I am told it would be a saving of about fifteen miles of travel and climbing some very severe points of the mountains. If the brethren will take hold, under the direction of some one who may be appointed or who is already appointed, of the grading of the road, it would be quite an accommodation to the travel from here to Soda Springs. Get the railroad graded as far and as fast as possible to carry us on. We would like very much to hold some meetings north, and we would rather get into a car and go where we wish than to be traveling along through the dust day after day, consequently we wish to hurry up this matter as speedily as possible. The arrangements will be entered into by those who have the railroad in charge, but I thought I would ask the brethren, inasmuch as they wish to travel north, occasionally, to do themselves and the rest of us the kindness to get a ride upon a pretty good track. We wish to go to Bear Lake Valley, over into Rich County, but how shall we go? I understand that this road up the Logan is impassable, and that the dugway road is very bad. We have some settlements already on the Soda Springs route, and shall probably have more, and if we could have the accommodation of traveling on a pretty fair level road we should be very thankful. I shall leave this and other matters with you, but I would urge the necessity of building the railroad as far north as the iron can be obtained. I understand there is enough now coming to go from here to Franklin, and perhaps a few miles beyond. When this is completed, the traveling and freighting to the north will probably go over this line, and the business of the people here will be increased and the value of the property will be enhanced, and you will advance in proportion to the abundance of your improvement.

Another item which I wish to urge upon the people is the building of this meeting house. We have a bowery here, which is very comfortable to meet in this warm weather, but when it is windy, stormy, cold or wet the people should certainly have a house to meet in instead of being out of doors. This, of course, will require labor. If we were to go into details with regard to labor I think we could show very clearly that the time that is given to us here is not altogether well spent. We might make a great many improvements to benefit ourselves, and be none the poorer, but it would increase our wealth. I think this is apparent to every reflecting mind. Every improvement that we make not only adds to our comfort but to our wealth. I wish the brethren to consider this. Not that I wish to take anything from the minds of the people of the good things that we have heard since we have been together, and especially from brother Taylor, who has just spoken. I would not like to take a thought or reflection from the minds of the people concerning these good things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But recollect that brother Taylor, in his remarks, brought the spiritual and the temporal together. They always have been and always will be together, and by our labor we show to the heavens that we are willing and obedient servants and handmaids. This gives us a claim to the blessings which our Father in heaven delights to bestow upon the faithful. By our works our faith is made manifest, and by them shall we be judged, and justified or condemned. Then let our works be such as will justify us and tend to

the building up of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. If we do this, brethren and sisters, we shall prosper and increase.

We were talking yesterday about the blessings of the people. It appears to me that they have little idea of the blessings which are in their possession. Still I am sensible that a great many realize and are very thankful for them, and they wish to improve their time to the best advantage. But take us as a people and how strange is the course we pursue! How inconsistent, inconsiderate and vain are the acts of the Elders of Israel. Is this the fact? Yes. Co-operation was referred to by bro. Taylor. The man or woman who is opposed to this is opposed to God. So said brother Taylor. I say that they who are opposed to co-operation are opposed to heaven, to their own welfare, to the welfare of their neighbors, to truth and to everything that is good. The least thought or act of an individual who is or can be called a Saint that militates against a oneness of feeling and action among the Saints is opposed to everything that is heavenly and good. We do not wish to co-operate in mercantile affairs only, but we wish to bring the minds of the people to consider the benefit of uniting and laboring together, to make this long and strong pull all together, of which brother Taylor spoke. This is an expression that Brother Joseph Smith frequently used concerning the oneness of the people. If the Latter-day Saints were to take a course to alienate their fellowship and feelings one from another, each one saying, "This is my pile, and I am working to increase it," we should then be in the position, referred to by Bro. Franklin D. Richards this morning, of the man who said that all the world belonged to the Lord excepting the little piece of land he had bought and paid for. How inconsiderate, inconsistent and unwise is such a course as this! If we are not one we are not the Lord's. We can not do his will nor be his disciples unless we are one. We must have the same faith and feelings for the building up of the kingdom of God, and for the salvation of ourselves and others, jointly, together, or we shall fail in our attempts to accomplish the work which the Lord has given us to do. We should consider all these matters. Now take hold with union and bring the rock, lumber and all other material that is necessary, and let the mechanics go to work and put up this meeting house.

I do not know who has charge of the building of this store here, but I am very sorry it does not loom up a little faster. I would like to see this store finished, the meeting house built, the railroad completed through here, our roads built through the mountains; I would like to see your farms fenced up, and to see good buildings in this and other towns. Improvement belongs to the spirit and plan of the heavens. To improve in our minds, to increase in wisdom, knowledge and understanding, to gather every item of knowledge that we can in mechanism and in science of every description, respecting the earth, the object of the organization of the earth, the heavens, the heavenly bodies—all this is of Heaven, it is from God; but when a person or a people begin to dwindle, to lessen and to take the downward course they are going from heaven and heavenly things. You have seen this illustrated in those who leave this church. You have known men who, while in the church, were active, quick and full of intelligence; but after they have left the church they have become contracted in their understandings, they have become darkened in their minds and everything has become a mystery to them, and in regard to the things of God they have become like the rest of the world, who think, hope and pray that such and such things may be so, but they do not know the least about it. This is precisely the position of those who leave this church: they go into the dark, they are not able to judge, conceive or comprehend things as they are. They are like the drunken man—he thinks that everybody is the worse for liquor but himself and he is the only sober man in the neighborhood. The apostates think that everybody is wrong but themselves.

Follow the spirit of improvement and labor. All the capital there is upon the earth is the bone and sinew of working men and women. Were it not for that the gold and the silver and the precious stones would

remain in the mountains, upon the plains and in the valleys, and never would be gathered or brought into use. The timber would continue to grow, but none of it would be brought into service, and the earth would remain as it is; but it is the activity and labor of the inhabitants of the earth that bring forth the wealth. Labor builds our meeting houses, temples, court houses, fine halls for music and fine school houses; it is labor that teaches our children, and makes them acquainted with the various branches of education, that makes them proficient in their own language and in other languages, and in every branch of knowledge understood by the children of men; and all this enhances the wealth and the glory and the comfort of any people on the earth. But take the other course and they become like our savages—they soon forget what they have learned, have no taste for acquiring knowledge, and lose all their ambition and desire for improvement. For instance, look at the Jewish nation. Here are the tribe of Judah in our midst. Do you ever recollect any of them building a house? Think of it, look around now and try if you can find any of the sons of Judah so lost to themselves as to be guilty of making any improvements. I speak ironically. They will bring something to you and sell it to you and get your money if they can, for they are every one of them merchants; but can you find one of them that tills an acre of ground? Search the world over and you will find but few Jewish agriculturists, although there are millions of Jews scattered through the earth, and many of them occupying important positions in the learned world; but they are not producers, they are all consumers. The land of Judea has fallen into disrepute, and it has become a desert just through the apostasy of those who once inhabited it who had the oracles of God among them. This is the fact. Let the Latter-day Saints neglect their labor and they will soon find that they are declining in their feelings, tastes and judgment for improving the elements of the earth; hence we say, improve, be industrious, prudent, faithful, make good farms, gardens and orchards, good public and private buildings, have the best schools, &c. The world give us the credit of being the most industrious people on the face of the earth, they say that the Latter-day Saints in Utah have done more than any other people ever were known to do in the same time. It is the little union that we have in our midst that has given this impetus to our prosperity. But we have not enough union, we have not enough of the spirit of improvement amongst us. You will see men occasionally here who, so far as the spirit of improvement goes, are like some old "Mormons" who lived in the days of Joseph. That is, their bodies breathe, and they move and have a being; but they died when Joseph died. There has been no spirit of progress or improvement in them since. As far as regards gathering and organizing the elements and making the earth beautiful, these old "Mormons" have no taste for it, and they see nothing, hear nothing and know nothing, only they knew Joseph. Say they, "Oh, I was acquainted with Joseph," "I knew Brother Joseph." Ask them—"Are you going to build a house?" "Well, I don't know; I don't know as I care anything about having any better house." "Well, but your house is full of bed bugs." "I know it is pretty bad, but still it is as good as I am, and I don't think I shall try to build." They died when Joseph died.

I heard it mentioned here, I think, this morning, that we all knew the character of the Latter-day Saints and the difficulties and persecutions they have passed through. It came into my mind at that moment to ask this congregation how many of them knew Joseph Smith, the prophet, just to show what "Mormonism" has accomplished in twenty-eight years. I believe I will do myself the favor and gratify myself so far as to ask those of my brethren and sisters now present who were personally acquainted with Joseph Smith to raise their right hands. [A very few hands up.] There is a few, but very few, not above one to twenty, and perhaps not more than one to fifty in this congregation who ever saw Joseph Smith. Now if I were to ask the boys and girls, and the all young folks,

present, although your Sunday schools are not here, who were born in these valleys, to raise their right hands, I will venture to say that we should find that more than half this congregation have been born in these mountains. What do they know about what we passed through in Illinois, Missouri, Kirtland, or New York State? I will give you one item. I lived close by where these plates were found. I knew that Joseph found them from outward circumstances that transpired at the time. I shall not take time to relate but a little of the delicate, kind, benevolent, Christian-like, I will say anti-Godlike feelings of the priests and of the people who professed Christianity at the time that Joseph organized this church. The very first thing that was circulated was this—"Did you hear that Joe Smith and his followers got together last night, blew out the light, stripped themselves stark naked, and there they had the holy roll?" This was the story started by the priests in the neighborhood where the plates were found. In the branch where I lived we had not met together three times before our beloved, kind, anti-Godlike Baptist priests, and people declared that we made a practice of meeting together, stripping stark naked, and there having the "holy roll." A great many of you do not understand this term. It came from the shaking Quakers. I shall not attempt to relate here the conduct attributed to them, but from that sprang the peculiar phrase I have mentioned in your hearing this afternoon. In a very short time we were all thieves in the estimation of our so-called Christian neighbors. Said the priest to a beloved sister—"Sister, did you hear of such a man, he was a member of our church a few days since, but he has joined old Joe Smith?" Joseph was then twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, but it was "old Joe Smith." "Sister, did you hear that such a brother stole a lot of chickens last night?" Says the sister, "No, can it be possible?" "Well, they say so," says the priest, and he himself had fabricated the entire story. This sister would tell it to another, and it would go all through the neighborhood that such a man, who only a few days before had been considered by them as good a brother as they had in their church, had become a chicken thief. But you cannot mention any crime that this people called Latter-day Saints, have not been accused of committing by their so-called Christian neighbors; and these stories would generally commence by the priests whispering to some sister—"Did you hear of such and such a thing?" That was enough, all that was wanted, it became a solemn fact by the time it passed the third mouth. Now what do the great majority of Saints know of these things? Nothing, for they have been born since our arrival here. I need not relate much of my experience in this work, although I have had a pretty large one. But it is not particularly profitable to me or to anybody else to relate it. Sometimes it is very well to relate circumstances that have transpired, to show to the rising generation what we have passed through and what we have had to contend with.

Now, if the brethren will take hold and perform the labors devolving upon them they shall be blessed in them. They will increase in health and in wealth. The Lord will bless the people in proportion as they bless themselves. If they are faithful in following every requirement they will be blessed in their families, and no other people on the earth that we know anything about are blessed in their families and posterity as the Latter-day Saints are now. Visit town after town in this Territory and let the Saints turn out their children neat and clean and what can be said of them? The Lord blesses them in their families. Let them drive up their flocks, and what will be said of them? The Lord blesses their flocks in their folds. See them upon the plains, they are blessed there more than any other people. Then look at their harvests and their gardens and orchards, and they are blessed therein more than any people we know anything about. They are blessed in everything they put their hand to. The climate of these valleys has been modified and mollified for their sakes. When we first came here neither an apple nor an ear of wheat could have

been raised in this valley. But is there a finer valley than this now in these mountains? No. Is there a finer place for people to live in on this continent? No. There is not.

If the people take a course to bring the blessings of heaven upon them they will increase in everything. If they refuse obedience to the holy priesthood they will dwindle and go into unbelief and apostasy; they will be contracted in their views and feelings; the fruit trees will begin to refuse to bear fruit; our flocks will begin to refuse their increase, and our fields will refuse to bring forth their crops. I will just make this statement with regard to the country the plates were taken from, from which the Book of Mormon was translated. I have helped to harvest wheat there that yielded fifty bushels to the acre, or from twenty-five to sixty bushels. For thirty years past they have not raised twenty bushels to the acre; for twenty years past they have not raised fifteen bushels to the acre, and now, in that country, which once was not surpassed by any portion of the globe for raising fruit and wheat, not an apple is raised without a worm in the centre. They have been so for twenty or thirty years. Their apples are good for nothing. Send them to England as they did forty or fifty years ago, and they are not marketable; they will bear no price in comparison to good fruit. Five to ten bushels of wheat to an acre now. Their peaches have gone, their apples have gone, their plums and their pears have gone, and that land eventually, unless this government and the people of the government take a different course towards the gospel that the Lord has revealed in the latter days, will become desolate, forlorn and forsaken. That is the country I was brought up in, and with regard to its products I know about as much as any man that lives.

Now, brethren and sisters, if we wish the blessings of heaven upon us, let us be faithful to our covenants and callings, faithful in paying tithing, in keeping the word of wisdom and in building temples. The tithing is for the building of temples. Suppose we build this meeting house here with tithing. If the people will give us one-tenth part of that which is due on their tithing we shall have all we need to build their meeting-houses, school-houses, and temples. This may seem strange to some, and perhaps I look at tithing different from others, and consider the law of tithing different from what others would look at and construe the meaning of the words concerning the tithing that the Lord requires in the latter days. I will sum it up and tell you what my views are. Here is a character—a man—that God has created, organized, fashioned and made, every part and particle of my system from the top of my head to the soles of my feet, has been produced by my Father in heaven; and he requires one-tenth part of my brain, heart, nerve, muscle, sinew, flesh, bone, and of my whole system, for the building of temples, for the ministry, for sustaining missionaries and missionaries' families, for feeding the poor, the aged, the halt and blind, and for gathering them home from the nations and taking care of them after they are gathered. He has said, "My son, devote one-tenth of yourself to the good and wholesome work of taking care of your fellow beings, preaching the gospel, bringing people into the kingdom; lay your plans to take care of those who can not take care of themselves; direct the labors of those who are able to labor; and one-tenth part is all sufficient if it is devoted properly, carefully and judiciously for the advancement of my kingdom on the earth."

What little wealth I have got I have obtained since I have been in this church. What I had when I came into the church I gave away to my friends. I had no family except two children. I can hardly say that either, for when I came into the church I had a wife, but in a very few months after I was baptized I lost her, and she left me two little girls. I gave away what I had, and I started to preach the gospel. I was obliged to do it, for I felt as though my bones would consume within me if I did not, consequently I devoted my time to preaching. I travelled, toiled, labored and preached continually. My own brother Joseph and myself were together a good deal of the time until we went to Kirtland to see the Prophet, and the next year moved up. This is