

THE PRODIGAL SON NOT THE STANDARD.

Discourse Delivered in the Finsbury Town Hall, London, Sunday, August 26, 1906, by
PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

(Reported by Elders Ben C. Rich and Willard R. Smith.)

I would be very sorry, my brethren and sisters, to say anything that would cause you to forget, or to regard lightly, that which you have heard. The testimonies of these our brethren which have been borne to us are worthy of our careful thought and acceptance. They have spoken to us in sincerity, in the honesty of their hearts, in the sure and fervent belief of the correctness of their convictions; and when men speak to us in this spirit, and bear this kind of testimony to us, we cannot well afford to treat it lightly. Brother Charles W. Nibley, my life-long friend, fellow-laborer and fellow-missionary, and faithful Latter-day Saint, who has been speaking to you, and who is, indeed, forceful in his remarks, is correct in his convictions and statements. He has tried to show you, and has shown you that God has restored to the earth in the latter days through the manifestations of Himself and of His Only Begotten Son, and through the manifestations given by the messengers sent from time to time to men in our own dispensation, all the gifts and powers and authority that pertain to the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth, and the restoration of the fulness of the gospel to the children of men. We feel in our souls the truth of the principles which were restored through the prophet Joseph Smith, and we feel that because we have, in some degree at least, put ourselves in a position to be in communication with the Spirit and hear the voice thereof when it speaks to us. The Spirit of God speaks to our spirits. The Lord does not communicate to our very often through our natural senses, but when He speaks He speaks to the immortal part; the spirit of man receives the communications. The Lord sends to His children, and we must therefore be in harmony to receive them.

It is a great thing for one to receive the witness in his heart of the divine mission of the Son of God and of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith—that witness which speaks to the spirit of man and restores to the earth in the latter days through the manifestations of Himself and of His Only Begotten Son, and through the manifestations given by the messengers sent from time to time to men in our own dispensation, all the gifts and powers and authority that pertain to the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth, and the restoration of the fulness of the gospel to the children of men. We feel in our souls the truth of the principles which were restored through the prophet Joseph Smith, and we feel that because we have, in some degree at least, put ourselves in a position to be in communication with the Spirit and hear the voice thereof when it speaks to us. The Spirit of God speaks to our spirits. The Lord does not communicate to our very often through our natural senses, but when He speaks He speaks to the immortal part; the spirit of man receives the communications. The Lord sends to His children, and we must therefore be in harmony to receive them.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN INTERPRETED.

One thought I would like to express here, to the elders in particular, is in regard to the prodigal son, who has been referred to by Brother Nibley, and correctly, too, but I want to impress upon your minds, brethren, and especially the elders, that it was not because he was sinful, it was not because he had been prodigal, that he was welcomed back; it was not because of his having been a sinful man; it was his acknowledgment of it. He wasted his substance, he was not the more acceptable to God for this. It was his repentance; it was his awakening to his condition; it was his resolution to return to his father and forsake sin, to acknowledge his sin, confess his guilt and ask forgiveness, that made him so acceptable to the father. You will clearly remember, my brethren and sisters, how the other brother who went not away, who remained faithful to his father and his father's interests, when he heard the music and the rejoicing at home on the return of his prodigal brother, was offended and came in and wanted to know what it was all about; and he was told by one of the servants that his brother had returned and that his father had killed the fatted calf, had given him a scarlet robe, and had placed rings on his fingers, and they were rejoicing and making merry because of his brother's return. The young man was displeased, and refused to enter. He was disappointed exceedingly, and refused to join in the merriment. He went to his father and made complaint. He said, "I have served you faithfully; all my life I have been with you and you have not given me so much as a kid with which to make merry, or anything of the kind." But the father said to him, "My son, you have been faithful. All that I have is thine. And when this poor boy, who has been away and has been foolish and sinful comes home, surely he can spare to him, out of the abundance of that which the Lord has given us, a scarlet robe, a ring or two for his fingers, a pair of shoes, a fatted calf, and we can rejoice indeed, because he has returned and has repented. But to you, my boy, who have been faithful all the time, and never turned away from the right path, but who have stood fast and have been faithful to your father, to you, my boy, all that I have will be given; it is yours." Did the prodigal not say, "I am no longer worthy to be thy son. I am willing to serve?" And it was in this capacity that he expected to return. He was disappointed because he had not received the same as the prodigal son. He was disappointed because he had not received the same as the prodigal son. He was disappointed because he had not received the same as the prodigal son.

PRODIGAL SON NOT THE MODEL.

What I wish to impress upon the minds of my brethren and sisters, and especially upon these young elders who are here, it is that you must not think it necessary to become a prodigal son in order that you may attain to a joyous reception like that which was tendered to the prodigal son in the parable. Remember that the prodigal son it not the example that has been given to the world for men. He is not the standard. He is not the way and the life of the world; not the example that he had gone astray, but merely the example of his repentance and his return to his father. He is the one for us to follow. It is true when he is lost and he goes and finds it and restores it to the flock, there is more rejoicing over the return of that sheep, for that occasion, than for the ninety and nine others that went not astray. But was the sheep that went away and strayed of more worth than any one of the other ninety and nine that went not astray? Not at all. Why was there rejoicing in the home of the prodigal? Because of his return. Because he was found again, and because he came back repentant, making humble confession of the truth that he was no longer worthy to be called his father's son, and was willing to serve and did not expect to receive any other portion of his father's inheritance save that which he had received or which his father might give him through his mercy.

JESUS CHRIST THE EXAMPLE.

The example for you and for me is not the prodigal son. God sent Christ into the world. He was without sin. He was pure and holy, obedient, humble, and submissive to the Father. He came to do the Father's will and not his own, and He did the Father's will and not His own, and submitted to this.

Father's will and to the plan that was laid down at the beginning by which mankind could be redeemed from the fall and from the consequences of the sin which had come upon them by transgression and be brought back into the presence of God. The humanity which was in Him sinless and sorrow and pain and death which He saw before Him, and He cried out, "O Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass, but not my will but thy will be done." It could not pass. It was a part of the plan devised at the beginning, that He had established, by which the sin that was brought upon the posterity of the first man by his transgression of the laws of God might be removed from men by the righteousness of one man. So that as sin came into the world by one man, it could only be removed by the righteousness of one. So it could not pass. He had to go through the ordeal. He was pure; He was holy and obedient. I want to impress upon the minds of my young friends who are sent to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, that it is the Son of God, that is the example for us to follow and not the prodigal son, only so far as when we have allowed ourselves to fall into temptation, when we have been overcome by our weaknesses, then, indeed, the sooner the better for us that we awaken to a sense of our folly, turn away from our sins and our wicked ways and again serve God and keep His commandments.

IRREPARABLENESS OF SIN.

I make these remarks not to detract one iota from what Brother Nibley has said to us. He referred to this parable and to this character represented in the scriptures, and all that he said was true and worthy of our consideration and interest. But why I speak this way is because not long ago I heard an Elder in Zion, who had just come home from a mission, stating in effect that it was necessary for a man to become prodigal in order that he might be acceptable to God; that it was the prodigal son who caused the rejoicing in the father's house and who brought to pass the killing of the fatted calf and the feast and rejoicing; and the other boy who stayed at home was not given even a kid with which to make merry. In other words, that it was necessary for a man to sow his wild oats in order that he might rise from a lower condition to a higher condition. I want to say to you that such doctrine as this is from the devil and is false. No man has any necessity to confess to evil in order that he may surmount it or rise above it. The man is most acceptable to God who is most like the Son of God Himself. The man who will follow most closely in the footsteps of Him who knew no sin will be the man who will rise higher in his associations with God in the eternal worlds. No man who has received the light, who has had the testimony of the Spirit of God in his heart, and turns away from that light, transgresses, and "returns like a dog to his vomit, or the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire," as the prophet says, and she who will descend to this condition will ever be able to attain to the same exaltation and glory and position that they would have attained if they had been faithful. He who obeys the law, who receives the testimony, who obtains a knowledge, who is washed clean, who is made pure by the blood of the Lamb, by the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, and then turns away from these and again wallows in the filth and mire, has wasted the talents which God has given him and has lost a portion of his time. He may obtain repentance and forgiveness, for as often as a man will repent, and repent sincerely, he will obtain forgiveness. The Lord said to His disciples that they were to forgive men, forgive those who had trespassed against them. He also said unto Peter that he should not only forgive his brother seven times but even until seventy times seven, or as often as he repented he should forgive him. That was speaking of you and me; that was a matter that concerned you and my brother and me, you and your brethren and your sisters and those that trespass against you. Has he offended you and has he come and acknowledged his fault and repented of it and asked your forgiveness? Then thou shalt forgive him. "I will forgive him," said the Lord, "I will forgive him if he will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." In the Doctrine and Covenants He tells us that "he that forgiveth his brother his trespasses, standeth in the name of the Lord, for there remaineth in him no greater sin." It is our duty to forgive those who trespass against us, as often as they repent. But the Lord does not look upon sin with any degree of allowance. The sin that our father Adam committed could not be atoned for except by the sacrifice of the Son of God Himself. It took the sacrifice of the Son of God to atone for the sin of the first man. It took the power of Him that was sinless to compensate for all by the sin and transgression of one. So when we sin against God, we have received the light, and turn away from it into darkness again, we must come to Him for forgiveness of our transgressions. Where shall we stand in comparison with him who has not sinned, who has been true and faithful and who is spotless before the Lord all the time? Where shall we stand with him? On a par? On the same level? In the same position? No. We will stand behind him until we have atoned for that sin and made entire satisfaction for the wrong we did when we turned against the light when it was given to us.

PURITY OF LIFE ENJOINED.

Now, I want to impress this upon you, my brethren and sisters, and especially upon my brethren who are preaching the gospel in this mission: Boys, sin not at all, so that you shall not have to come, bye and bye, and say, "O God, I have sinned," or, "My Father, I have sinned, and am not worthy to be Thy son." Do not let this be necessary in your case. You are sons of God; you have been born of the water and of the Spirit; you have received the gift of the Holy Ghost; you have received the light and you know the light, and you have heard the voice of the Spirit speaking unto you, and it has borne its testimony in your hearts, and it has left its witness there. Do not permit yourselves to be drawn away or turned aside; do not yield to the tempter for one moment so as to make it necessary for you to come bye and bye and say, "Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be Thy son." Live as you ought to live; be honest and pure, be upright, be virtuous, be benevolent, humble, sincere, true to your convictions, true to your Father and the covenants which you have made, not only in the waters of baptism, but in the Holy of Holies, where you have been permitted to stand, and where you have entered into the bonds of the new and everlasting covenant. If you do this I can assure you that you will be ahead of the man who falls today and rises again tomorrow, and falls again next week and in the future rises again, who is constantly vibrating between sin and righteousness, or sin and repentance, and who is following in the footsteps of the Son of God only part of the time, and who needs repentance all the time. Repent in the beginning

with that repentance that needs not to be repeated. Go and do your duty, boys, and keep yourselves free and clean from the sins of the world. Shun all evil and learn to do all good. "Oh, but," says one, "that is impossible with mortal man." Yes, it may be impossible for mortal man to do all things, but it is possible for mortal man to love God with all his heart and mind and strength. It may be impossible for you and me to love our neighbor as ourselves; but let that principle be uppermost in our hearts all the time, and let us love God with all our hearts. Let us aim to love our neighbor as ourselves; let us do it to the utmost of the strength which we possess; then we shall be doing in our sphere what God is doing in His: we shall be perfecting the sphere in which we live, and making perfect the glory of it. Christ said, "Be ye righteous as your Father in heaven is righteous; be ye pure as your Father in heaven is pure." How are you going to be pure? How are you going to be righteous with all your imperfections? Only by living up to the light which you have received, and by yourselves to fall into temptation. If you know a thing is right, live by it, stand by it and die by it. Never allow yourselves to swerve from it by any influence or power that can be brought to bear against you or upon you. Stand by that which you know to be right, and that which you know to be elevating in its nature and spirit and operation. Never permit yourselves to be drawn away from it, and you will then become perfect and righteous in the moral sphere in which you dwell as God is perfect in the immortal sphere in which He dwells. If you will do this, like the arm of the blacksmith that is constantly in motion and in action, you will gain strength and power day by day until you attain to the summit of that which is possible for you in your mortal life, and you will be pleased with you and acknowledge you as His child; will accept of you and will have claim upon you, and He cannot turn you away because it would be unjust to turn away one who had been faithful to the light which he had, and God cannot be unjust.

"ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE."

He that under such circumstances seeks shall find. He that asks the Lord will certainly receive. The Apostle let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind, and tossed. When we ask let us go to our Heavenly Father as a child goes to his earthly father—with faith that He will give him what he asks if he be proper for him to have it. So let us go to God our Father when we are in need of anything, and let us have faith that God will give us as a child. He who has received the testimony of His Spirit, who has no doubt, who knows that God can hear and understand him, does understand him, just as well as we know that we can stand here in London at one end of the world and communicate with our friends in Liverpool, Glasgow, or any other place, and that they distinguish our voice and know what we say to them, and we know what they say to us. We know that this is a fact, but why it is we do not know. There is an element in it that we do not know just yet. What it is we do not know just yet, but we call it ether. That element carries our words and signs and symbols to almost limitless distances, reaching to the desired destination, and there recording the sound that is expressed. All over the world men hear, where the instruments are in tune. As Brother Nibley has expressed it, when the instruments are in tune there is an element passing through the whole atmosphere that will carry our words everywhere. So we can communicate with the Father; there is nothing in these things that God does not understand and does not know about and has not known about all the time; but we are just beginning to realize in some little degree, some of the things which we have never known our fathers before us. God's all-seeing eye sees all things which happen on this earth, and can see and behold all the workmanship of His hands. How the eye of God can do this we do not understand, but we will begin to see it by and by, because you know, the prophets have said that in the latter days God would reveal many precious truths, and that knowledge would be greatly increased in the earth. Today we can learn here in London things that transpire in China, Japan, the Philippine Islands, or any part of Europe. The intelligence flashes right here to the great central market of the world, and you and I can pick up the papers and read of the earthquakes in California and Chili and other calamities and events which transpire in all parts of the world. We understand it, we can see, and we can by which these things are brought about, but we do not understand what causes it. No man can say what electricity is. No man can tell you what there is in the air; they call it ether, but what it is they cannot tell you except that it is that element in the atmosphere which carries sounds and records thoughts in distant lands as perfectly as they are expressed here. How much more simple it is for God to hear our words, to receive our thoughts, to understand our hearts, and to listen to our prayers and our supplications. And bye and bye we will know a great deal more about these things than we do now.

I can assure you, my brethren and sisters, it is a pleasure to me to meet with you here today. I did not expect to enjoy this privilege when I left home. I have been in London before. I suppose, perhaps, I was here and bore my testimony in this great city a good many times before many of you were born. I have four boys right here in this congregation. I preached the gospel in this land before any of them saw the light of day. They have come into the world since I first came to this country to preach the gospel. My first mission here was a mission of three years. I was called on another mission to the islands in the Pacific soon after I reached home, and was gone another three years. When I returned again in 1837 to England it was expected at that time that I should remain here for a long series of years as the president of this mission, but the death of the Prophet Brigham Young necessitated my being called home, and since that time I have had very little thought or expectation of ever visiting this land again. I am getting old, and I have all most served my time in the mission field, although I expect to continue in the service of the Lord the remainder of my days. Let me tell you, my brethren and sisters, the reason why the Lord has blessed me with a testimony of the divinity of this work. He has made me to know it, and has made me to feel it in every part of my being. The knowledge that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world and Redeemer of mankind, and that Joseph Smith was called of God to lay the foundations of this great work, has been ingrained into my being and ground into my heart, and I know of it as I know of God living; Jesus is the Christ, and Joseph Smith was raised up by the power of God to lay the foundations of this work. He was not a learned man; he was just a child 14 years of age when he was called by the voice of God, and he was just a child pointed out to him. It was not Joseph Smith who laid the foundations of this Church and restored to earth the power and authority of the Priesthood of God and the principles and ordinances of the Gospel for the perfecting of the saints, but it was God who did it, through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. And I know that Brigham Young was a man of God, and was called of God to succeed Joseph Smith as the leader of His people. Do not forget it, do not lose sight of the fact that this work is not of man, but of God. God has decreed that He will accomplish a work in the earth. It shall not fail; but it shall continue until the knowledge of God shall fill the earth, and "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ." Remember this, my boys, when

you preach the gospel. My brethren and sisters, I want to tell you God has given me this knowledge. My brethren and sisters, if it is true, you cannot avoid it; but if it is not true (but that is impossible; it must be true; it is true) And now, time will not permit of my telling you how I know that it is true. God bless you. Peace be with you, and may you live to gather to Zion and rejoice on the mountains in the midst of the people of God, and receive the fulness of the blessings of the gospel. Do not be in haste; take your time; study the gospel and do it in a hurry, but when you go to Zion do not expect that you are going there just to lie on a bed of roses, that you will never more have trials or difficulties, or sickness, nor have to make an effort to support yourselves and keep in the line of your duty. When you go to Zion be sure that you will have to meet with the problems of life, and with the stern realities of life there just the same as you do here. You will find, as I have heard one of the brethren express it, that Zion is the threshing-floor of the Lord. It is there the wheat is gathered together and threshed, and the chaff is thrown away and only the wheat remains. God bless you and peace be with you, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PREST. SMITH IN SWITZERLAND.

Zurich, Switzerland, Sept. 1.—The Swiss and German mission feels highly elated over the recent visit of President Joseph F. Smith and party, who arrived Aug. 17, Zurich. Although exhausted by the hurried trip, President Smith attended the evening chapel services, and by his wise counsel and gracious manner left a most lasting impression upon all present. The following day the party, accompanied by President George F. Smith, proceeded via Luzern and Interlaken to quaint old Bern, where a special conference had been called for the occasion. On the afternoon of Aug. 19, rousing services were held with an audience of several hundred people. President Alex. Nibley, of the Netherlands mission, Elders Howell and Alvin F. Smith of the British and Geo. C. Smith of the Scandinavian missions bore fervent testimonies. Elder Chas. W. Nibley very interestingly contrasted the organization, doctrines, and usages of the churches of the world to those of the Church of Christ. In briefly outlining the rise and spread of Protestantism, the speaker paid a high tribute to the broadminded loyalty and unswerving devotion displayed by the Swiss people in the cause of religious liberty. President Joseph F. Smith stated that our attitude towards those not of our faith should be one of charitable forbearance, since we are ushering in a reign of peace and love. Love for Christ inspires obedience, love-suffering, purity. The key saints maintain the divinity of Jesus before a world of scoffers, for the word of the Scriptures agrees so perfectly with that which we know through modern revelation to be true.

Many of the saints availed themselves of the opportunity of the session of the meeting to shake hands with the president, and assure him, in their simple way, of their fidelity. In the evening a priesthood meeting convened. After several reports of elders who had successfully labored without purse or scrip, President Smith delivered a powerful sermon upon the theme of personal sacrifice in the mission work, touching upon his own experiences. Elder Chas. W. Nibley, as second speaker, confirmed the truth of the remarks which had been made and added much valuable advice with an appropriateness peculiarly his own. Early the next morning the visitors left Bern for Paris via Basel. Although the weather had been unpropitious, the visitors expressed themselves as perfectly delighted with Switzerland. ASHBY D. BOYLE.

RETURNED MISSIONARIES.

Elder Marion C. Clark of Georgetown, Baur Lake, returned Sept. 11 from the Northern States mission, for which he was set apart March 29, 1904. The Northern Illinois and Wisconsin conferences were his fields of labor.

Elder Martin I. Burnham of the First ward, Provo, Utah Co., returned Sept. 16 from the British mission, whither he was sent July 19, 1904. The Norwich conference was his field of labor.

Elder George H. Smith, Jr., of Lehi, Utah Co., arrived a few days ago, Sept. 21, from the Northern States, where, since Jan. 10, 1905, he has been doing missionary work in the Minnesota and Illinois conferences.

Elder Delbert Stanger of Iowa, Bingham Co., Idaho, passed through this city Sept. 20, on his return from the Australian mission, to which he was assigned Feb. 13, 1904. The Queensland and New South Wales conferences were his fields of labor.

Elder Bernard Newren of Scofield, Chas. Co., passed through this city Sept. 22, on his return from the Swedish mission, for which he was set apart March 29, 1904. The Gothenburg conference was his field of labor, where he acted as choir leader, conference clerk, and for the last year as presiding elder.

Elder Lafayette T. Farr of West Weber ward, Weber Co., passed through this city Sept. 26, on his return from the Eastern States mission, for which he was set apart Nov. 1, 1904. The South West Virginia conference was his field of labor.

Elder Amos A. Fuller of Winder ward, Salt Lake Co., returned Sept. 26 from the Eastern States mission, whither he was sent April 11, 1905. The Brooklyn and South West Virginia conferences were his fields of labor, presiding over the last named.

All the missionaries reporting this week return in good health and spirits. They report the work in the various mission fields represented making excellent progress. Baptisms were quite numerous, and the Mormon representatives are making many friends for the cause of truth and many are investigating the same.

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CONFERENCE.

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Huntington, Ore.	14.80	Marquette, Mich.	5.50
Weiser, Idaho	12.00	Anthony, Mo.	3.15
Payette, Idaho	12.00	Logan City, N.M.	7.50
Caldwell, Idaho	12.00	Tulsa, Okla.	7.15
Boise, Idaho	12.00	Highland, Okla.	7.15
Nampa, Idaho	12.00	Dallas, Texas	14.00
Shoshone, Idaho	12.00	Blackfoot, Idaho	5.50
Ketchikan, Alaska	12.00	Mackay, Idaho	10.25
Haley, Idaho	12.00	Prosser, Wash.	2.50
San Francisco, Cal.	2.50	Portland, Ore.	2.50
Burley, Idaho	7.00	Collinsville, Mo.	2.50
Ammon, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Kemmerer, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Montpelier, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Soda Springs, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Preston, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Logan, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75
Spencer, Idaho	5.00	Tringham, Idaho	1.75

Tickets on sale from Ogden and intermediate points, October 4th to 7th, inclusive; all other points October 8th to 10th, inclusive. Tickets on sale from Ogden and intermediate points, October 11th and 12th, respectively.

Proportionately low rates from other stations not shown.

See agents for further particulars.
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DEPART DAILY:

LOS ANGELES LIMITED.....	4:45 p.m.
LOS ANGELES EXPRESS.....	12:30 a.m.
For Garfield.....	7:00 a.m.
For Stockton and Tinto.....	7:45 a.m.
For Lynn and Nephth.....	8:00 a.m.
For Garfield.....	8:30 a.m.
For Nephth and Utah County.....	4:45 p.m.
For Garfield.....	8:30 p.m.

ARRIVE DAILY:

LOS ANGELES LIMITED.....	8:35 p.m.
LOS ANGELES EXPRESS.....	6:30 a.m.
From Garfield.....	9:05 a.m.
From Lynn and Nephth.....	9:30 a.m.
From Nephth and Utah County.....	6:45 p.m.
From Garfield.....	6:00 p.m.
From Stockton and Tinto.....	1:30 a.m.
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