

power to wield the military and naval forces of the country.

Mr. Weller—When did you find that out? (Laughter.) Mr. Seward—The people will be consulted on that subject; and, resuming, he said that his belief was that there was no necessity for violence, but that prudence and moderation will attain a settlement of the question without disturbing the peace of the country, or endangering the Union. He proposed to keep cool, and meet the question on its merits. He trusted soon to admit Kansas as a State, there being already twenty-five thousand people in that Territory.

On motion of Mr. Douglas, the reports were ordered printed.

Adjourned.

DISCOURSE

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS, ITS OBJECT WITH THAT OF THE FORMER DAY SAINTS, &c., BY ELDER PARLEY P. PRATT, TABERNACLE, MONDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1856.

[REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.]

My brethren, sisters and friends, I have rejoiced in the return of this anniversary of the rise of the Church, and to see so many of those that we have reason to believe love the truth, assembled in general conference, in beholding and seeing the faces of so many as were assembled on yesterday and as are here to-day, to feel the spirit, behold the unanimity and the good feeling that appear to exist, and the dispatch by which we are enabled to transact business; and in reviewing the past, looking at the present, and contemplating the future, my heart has been cheered.

I have been highly edified and interested, and have had reason to rejoice in looking at the saints gathered in from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, who have met to rejoice and reflect upon the things of God. I have rejoiced while listening to the edifying discourses which have been delivered; I have not heard anything more useful and more to the point in a long time than the discourse on yesterday in the forenoon; it was practical and instructive and all its points, just the advice and counsel that is needed at the present time; nor have I been less edified and instructed in the remarks made, as I conceive in the spirit of prophecy, in a great measure, that flowed from my brother yesterday in the afternoon, a parting discourse as we may call it, as he expects soon to depart to a foreign land on the other side of the ocean.

I have also been led to reflect much in contemplating that this is the 26th year since the restoration of the Church of God, visibly as an organization upon the earth. Twenty six years have rolled away in the experience of this Church, and it naturally leads the mind to contemplate upon the past, and past events will rise in review, the memory will fall back upon them and whether we look at the past, the present or the future the mind cannot but view it, if it is constituted like mine or influenced by the same spirit that mine is influenced by, with pleasure and delight.

Twenty six years ago the coming summer mine eyes glanced over the Book of Mormon, and I afterward heard the voice of the servant of the Lord and enjoyed the smiles and the blessings of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum, and received under their hands and that of Oliver Cowdery the priesthood, or a portion of it, and the keys and power of the same, they having received it from the ministering of angels, to be carried to all the people of the earth; and at that time all the people of this Church upon the face of the earth, could have been assembled in the vestry of this Tabernacle without being much crowded.

The joy which filled my bosom in reading that sacred record, waking up our minds and giving us the knowledge of the past dealings of God with the inhabitants of this vast western hemisphere, and of a nation of people as ancient as that of Abraham or of the Jaredites, and giving us a knowledge also of a branch of scattered Israel led away from the land of their fathers 600 years before Christ, and the glorious fact, the most important of all others in the book, that the risen Jesus in his glorified immortal flesh and bones set his feet upon this western hemisphere and ministered publicly to thousands and thousands of the Nephites, blessed them, revealed to them his gospel in its fullness, and was glorified in their presence, and thousands of them had the privilege of bowing at his feet, of bathing his feet with their tears and of kissing them, and of handling him and seeing and beholding the wounds that were pierced in his side and his hands and feet, and of hearing the words of salvation and the commandments of God from his own mouth, and then from day to day they had the privilege of assembling in general conference and hearing his prophecies, and his remarks on the prophecies of the prophets referring to himself and to others, prophecies also concerning this our day, and the coming forth of this work to us, and the visions that should appear and be given at the opening up of this dispensation; all these things received in faith in my heart, and by the spirit of knowledge and of light and of understanding, and of hope and joy and charity filled my heart in a way that I never can express to any being; to have the same joy understood it must be experienced.

Nor have I been disappointed in my hopes since I embraced this gospel. After 26 years of progress, progressive fulfillment of the things spoken by that Redeemer to the Nephites, and the things written by his commandment and brought forth unto us, I not only believe but I realize and know by the Spirit of the Lord as well as a man knows anything that he sees and hears, and better too, for a man might be deceived in seeing or in hearing, but I knew these things by that light that reflects on the understanding, and in which there is no mistake, nor deception; by that I knew that the work was true and that Joseph Smith, the finder, translator, and the restorer of the priesthood upon

the earth, was a prophet and an apostle of Jesus Christ, a restorer, raised up according to that which is written, to bring back and commit unto the person appointed those covenants, those keys, those ordinances, that gospel and plan of salvation which were had in old times, but which had been suspended and lost from the enjoyment of the people; I say, that he was such, I had a knowledge and an understanding.

He was only about 24 or 25 years old when I first met him, and I became intimately acquainted with him and his brothers, and with his father's house, and I remained so, so far as I was not separated by foreign missions, until his death; and did I not know, and do I not know and bear testimony that he lived and that he died an apostle and prophet of Jesus Christ? And from the day of his death, or long before that until the present I have been intimately acquainted and associated with the apostles of this Church and kingdom under all circumstances, whether in sickness or in health, whether in the midst of life or in death, whether in prosperity or adversity; whether abounding or suffering want, whether by sea or land, whether in the midst of peace or of mobs and oppression. And do I not know that Pres. Young and his counselors and the other Apostles associated with him in this Church, hold the keys of salvation? That they hold that authority which administers life and salvation to the obedient and the humble, and which to reject is condemnation wherever it exists to every soul of man upon the earth? Yes I do know it, and I do this day bear testimony of it, that that glorious gospel in its fullness which was restored to the earth 26 years ago; that filled my heart with joy and charity and love for my fellow men, and with a desire to do good, and to impart the truth as it is revealed.

Has it become dim and waxed cold in my heart, or departed from it? I say unto you no! But if it be possible for a man to rejoice more than I rejoiced 26 years ago, I say if it be possible, then I rejoice more to day than I did on yesterday and more than I did 26 years ago, and why? Because my heart is larger; it was full then, it is full now, and although outwardly and according to the flesh, and in the world I may be in tribulation and sorrow, and care, and labor, and anxiety, yet in Jesus Christ there is peace, in the fullness of the gospel there is joy, in the spirit of God there is gladness; and whether we look to the past we rejoice with thanksgiving, and whether we look to the present our hearts seem to grow larger, and whether we look to the future there is hope and a fullness of joy, and we increase in understanding; and why? Because the spirit that is in us sheds forth in abundance in our souls joy and satisfaction, and the gospel inspires us with a degree of knowledge and light, and certainty in regard to what we are about, in regard to the work we are engaged in and the prospects that lie before us.

We know for what we labor, altho' in the flesh, subject to mortality and its weaknesses; we may be partially asleep, or in other words we may know in part, comprehend in part, prophesy in part and hope in part, not seeing and realizing the fullness, nor the thousandth part of the fullness that will be consummated in the progress of this work. But after we see enough of it to serve us for the time being, and we enter into it with sufficient comprehension to rejoice with a heart full of joy and of satisfaction, it inspires us to act with all our heart, might, mind and strength.

I have often been reminded by the faithful laborers in this Church; the Presidency and others, of the parable in the Book of Mormon that these latter day laborers should be called to prune the vineyard of the Lord. It says that "their numbers were few, but they did go to labor with their might," and it says, "the Lord labored with them."

Well, do they not do so? Do not the old prophets and apostles help us? Have we not their aid and their influence in our favor? Zenos and many other prophets are helping us. Lehi and all the prophets understood the principle of union and concentration that would be necessary in the last days. And Nephi in bringing up this prophesy which was uttered by the prophet Zenos and putting it in his book, shows that he considered it of importance to the people of God, and it is written there that we might see and understand how it was that the great work of the last days was to be fulfilled.

Is it not being fulfilled every whit? Have not the eleventh hour laborers been called? Are not their numbers few? And have they not labored with all their might, many of them? We won't say all, because there are many called but few chosen, but those chosen men that have been faithful, have not denied the faith, nor departed from the labors assigned them, nor forsaken the cause, but have held on and held out all the day long; and many more laborers of more recent date, have they not labored with all their might, temporally, and spiritually? Verily I say unto you, yea, and the Lord has labored with them; and if you want the proof look around here! What else but the power of these laborers and the power of the Almighty God with them could have led these thousands and tens of thousands of Latter Day Saints over seas, deserts, through the mountains, overcoming every obstacle and then have sustained them in these valleys? Did not the Almighty labor with them when he clothed them and fed them? Was not his eye over them in providing circumstances through which they might be fed and clothed, and have the necessary comforts of life? When he caused them to flourish in the midst of a desert country? When he inspired the gentiles to pass through here with all kinds of tools, clothing, shoes, seeds, with cattle and horses, flour, bacon, powder and lead, from the frontiers of the United States, and throw them down at the feet of this people cheaper than

they could buy them where the articles were produced?

Did not the Lord labor with his servants and with this people? Yes he did, and when they had made the track where neither wagon nor horse tracks had been seen for hundreds of years and for hundreds of miles of the journey, and made the bridges and crossed the streams, they had not more than made a commencement on their journey when five hundred men were called for by the United States to go to the seat of the Mexican war; and these men took California and made it secure to the government of the United States.

When these men were discharged from government service two thousand miles from their friends and without means to return, did not he guide them to bring forth the treasures of the earth, to bring forth the shining dust, and turn the world upside down? And did he not cause persons from all parts of the earth to follow in their wake, with their implements, their provisions, and their various kinds of tools, from the United States to this country, and when they came here they found themselves too heavily laden, their animals worn out; but they were bound to press onward, and hence they stripped for the race and harnessed for the battle, to see who would reach the gold mines first.

Well, suppose a man had stood up and prophesied before the battalion went to California, or when we were first driven out from Illinois, that we should ever be prospered, clothed and fed until we could come here into these mountains and raise food for our own sustenance, who would have believed it?

And suppose a man had prophesied thus:—The gentiles will follow you like a flowing stream by scores, and hundreds, and thousands, and they will bring their flour and bacon, their sugar and dry goods, their tools and implements of husbandry, their iron, and everything that is of use and pour them out at your feet so that your every want will be supplied, and the treasures of the earth would open under your feet, and the treasures of the ancient mountains shall be opened unto you, and the clouds shall drop down their rains. Suppose that all this had been prophesied; also that Great Salt Lake City would become the great central seat of government for this country, and that the gentiles would come like a mighty flowing stream, and that we should after all our difficulties be sustained, who would have believed it? Why some one would have said, this is wild enthusiasm; it is too good to be true.

Well, this people came, sustained themselves on the journey, and arrived in this desert country, plowed up the parched earth and put in their seeds, after bringing them more than a thousand miles, besides what they had to bring to sustain themselves on their journey, and they have lived until now on what they could raise in these deserts. Who ever heard such things? And yet the very moment that we are tried, some of us are complaining, and you will find that our stores are not overflowing with plenty, and the insects eat our grain, nearly every thing is destroyed by the grasshoppers and drouth, and we are then brought to ourselves.

For these trying times some will begin to say in their hearts the Lord has forsaken us, and the Lord has forgotten us, but he will show that he hath not. Can a mother forget her suckling child? Say, mothers, can you forget your infant children? Peradventure you may, but it is not likely; yet tho' a mother may forget her child when it cries with hunger, yet the Lord says he will not forget Zion. He may show that he is displeased with the acts of some, he may hide his face from them in his justice, yet in his loving kindness he will chastise them, but he will make a way for their escape. Brethren, will his friends ever forsake him? Or will he ever forsake them? No, never.

To sinners he has never made any promise, but that they shall be rewarded according to their works; but to the saints that keep the commandments and abide in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to them that do believe and know his will, he has made these; but those who have known him and in the day of tribulation forsaken his laws will be beaten with many stripes. To all those who stand firm and steadfast when the love of many shall wax cold because of the famine and pestilence, and great trials with which the saints of God are to be tried before the judgments pass from the house of God to the wicked, to all such he has made precious promises and they will be fulfilled; and the promises concerning things to the house of Israel as well as to the saints of the Most High will surely be fulfilled, for those promises hold good to the other side of the veil; for although the remnants of Israel are not yet in the Church, although not in the covenant, yet they are beloved for their fathers' sake, and the promises have claim on them because of the promises made to their fathers; and tho' these their children do not understand it, and tho' they are in a state of ignorance, not knowing the Lord, ignorant in relation to the promises obtained by the obedience of their fathers; yet the promises extend to them as well as to us Latter Day Saints.

Do you suppose these promises will be fulfilled? I know they will. I knew they would twenty-six years ago this summer; I knew it then, I have testified to it ever since; I know it now, and tho' heaven and earth should pass away, yet not one jot nor one tittle of the promises of God concerning the Latter Day Saints, concerning Zion, concerning Jerusalem, concerning the Jews, concerning the Lamanites, concerning the remnants of Joseph, concerning the seed of Lehi, or concerning the ten tribes of Israel, or any of the branches thereof, not one will fail, but they all will be fulfilled in their time and in their season.

The work has rolled on progressively up to the present time; not one jot or tittle has rolled out of its place, but it has moved on harmoniously, and it will continue to progress, and all the promises will be fulfilled.

In order to aid in their fulfillment, the Latter Day Saints, the faithful, those who hold the keys of this ministry, must fill their storehouses with grain, their treasures with the comforts of life, their cellars will vegetables and all kinds of food, which can be preserved, and this will be done in the own due time of the Lord.

Whatever straits, whatever poverty, and however long they may last, yet the Lord will smile upon us and we shall again have plentiful harvests; and however much there may appear to be in the world at the present, yet in the own due time of the Lord they will need bread and provision, and the necessities of life, and if faithful to the council given, we shall be able to succor the poor, and have means to help the laborers and the mechanics, and to supply the wants of the needy.

We shall be able to call into requisition the skill of the able mechanics, to have the benefit of machinery, and we shall have all the skill, and all the power, and all the wisdom, and all the treasures, and all the means necessary to build up Zion, gather the people, redeem Israel, fulfill the promises, and build the holy temples and cities of our God; redeem and bring about the restoration of the living, and administer for the dead, and do all things necessary to accomplish the purposes of God whereunto we are called.

Who will live to see it? We will live to see a great deal of it before we die, but in one sense of the word, we all will live to see it, for we will never die, but we shall part with our bodies, and beyond the veil, we shall then be no less interested in this great and glorious work.

I know some people are apt to think, while the Latter Day Saints are a small people, and considering what we sift out, and what go to California and the States, and with one thing or another, that we do not increase very fast, and that we cannot accomplish all these things that were predicted.

Well, I do not expect that the Latter Day Saints will accomplish the work; I never tho't they would. I will tell you my opinion, no, my knowledge, and my testimony; call it opinion if you please. The Latter Day Saints never expect to do it all themselves, but they expect reinforcements of the former day Saints, and that the two will carry it all out.

You know the prophecy of Daniel about the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens being given to the Saints of the Most High God to possess it for ever and forever; you have read it and no doubt understand it.

Well, a mock court under the administration of Austin A. King, since governor of Missouri, while Joseph Smith and others were taken by a mob and were made subject to this inquisition, and to a mock trial, and while undergoing this mock trial the question was put to a witness, "Do these people, these 'Mormons' believe in this verse in the Prophet Daniel?" and at the same time quoting it. "Yes," said the witness. "Put that down," said the judge, "it is a strong point for treason." "But," says one of the lawyers in defence, "Judge, you had better put the Bible down for treason."

That was a very suitable reply; but mind you the text does not say that the Latter Day Saints would possess the kingdom, but it says that the saints of the Most High, and of course that includes the Latter Day as well as all the former day Saints, from Adam down to the end of time.

Well, then, when the former day Saints reinforce the Latter Day Saints, and all the powers of heaven are in the midst of Zion, and all the people from Adam and from Jesus Christ and from the least and last Latter Day Saint all combine their faith and their works, and their powers, and their gifts, I would leave it to any intelligent person in Christendom whether or no they will not be able to do this.

I say they will; I know it; but to say that the Latter Day Saints ever undertook it is not correct, for they never undertook any such thing. It is as I told them in California, in public debates and every where throughout the State where I had an opportunity of speaking to them, and while they were threatening the sword because they could not get the governor out of the chair. I told them to their faces that they need not worry themselves about the Latter Day Saints undertaking that job, for they never would, and they never would be strong enough; but the Saints of the Most High had undertaken it, and I told them that these would reinforce the Latter Day Saints, and then they will all combine together, and they will do it, for it has to be done, and it will be accomplished; and this is what we are here for to-day; it is what we are assembled at this conference, and we never had but that one object in view, neither have we now, whether we come together to sing, pray, prophesy or bless, to saw wood or to chop it in the canyon; if we are Saints we never had but this one object in view.

Just so with the former day Saints, they never had any thing in view, in heaven or on earth but this one object in relation to the earth and the inhabitants thereof, and that was to rule and reign on the earth, and over it, and over the elements, and over the people, and over all kings and all presidents, and all governors, and all rulers, and all powers that exist upon this planet, and finally over death, and hell, and the devil, and all his hosts, and the last enemy that will be conquered on this earth is death; so it is written.

Well; that is the object, brethren, is it not, of our coming together into these mountains?