

DISCOURSE

BY

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday afternoon, September 3, 1882.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

As Latter-day Saints we are called upon by the revelations of the Most High to perform a work, to assist in establishing the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth in contradistinction to error and false doctrine. We are called upon to advocate the principles of truth, of virtue, and purity, in opposition to falsehood, licentiousness and crime. We are called upon to form a nucleus to which the upright and honorable of mankind may gather; a place where the principles of life and truth, as they exist in the bosom of God, can be revealed and made known to the people. We are called upon to make known to the world of mankind those eternal principles which God in different ages revealed to His Saints, which in times past He revealed through His Son, and which in these last days He has revealed by the opening of the heavens, by the ministering of holy angels and by the revelations of His will and His laws, whereby men can be instructed and taught the ways of life and salvation and prepare themselves for an inheritance among the Gods in the eternal worlds.

The Gospel that the angel was to declare, as spoken of in the Revelations, was to be an everlasting Gospel. It existed in the eternities before time was. It has been manifested in the various dispensations of time since the world came into existence. It will exist when the world shall have passed away and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, whereon the purposes and designs of the Almighty pertaining to the world and its inhabitants will all be carried out according to the eternal purposes of the Most High. The ordinances and principles of the Gospel are different from those believed in by the world almost in every particular. While men generally are looking only at the affairs of time, we, through the Gospel, learn that they have a dual existence, that they exist not only in time, but in eternity; that men, through the inspiration that has been referred to this afternoon may become acquainted with the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh, and may come under His teachings, His guidance, and His direction, and be freed and delivered from the follies, vanities and notions of men, resting upon the principles of eternal truth, the rock of eternal ages, as developed by the God of Israel for the salvation and exaltation of the human family. What do any of us know of God or of religion but that which He has revealed? Nothing. What do the world know of these things? Nothing. And hence in our operations, in our teachings—simple many of them in themselves, yet are they fraught with great and eternal consequences—we are dependant upon God. The Elders of Israel are called of God to go forth to preach the Gospel. They may be mechanics, may be laboring men, they may be employed in an adobe yard, or in a brick yard, or at a saw mill, or in a garden, or on a farm, or they may be professional men, as the world term them; they may have received a liberal education or none at all comparatively; yet if they come under the teaching and intuition of the Spirit of the Lord God, they comprehend their position, they learn the lesson that the disciples in former ages learned when Jesus told them to go forth and preach the Gospel, that even when they stood before kings and emperors and the powers of the earth, they were not to think or meditate what they were to say, for God in the same moment would give unto them that Spirit by which they would be enabled to do whatever was required of them. The disciples of Jesus were not what the world would call the great, the honorable, the learned and the mighty; but they were the elect of God, they were the chosen of the Almighty, they were selected by the Lord Jesus Christ, they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and they spoke as they were moved upon by that Holy Ghost. Being under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and governed by its inspiration, they were enabled to advance principles of which the world knew nothing; but they were the

saviors of men. God has sent forth similar men in these days, pretty much the same kind of men as He did in former days. I have some times looked at the strange anomaly that is presented in our Elders going forth. Who are they? As I have said, they may be shoemakers, brick-makers, plasterers, blacksmiths, or they may be lawyers, bankers or some other profession, it makes no difference, yet they go forth in the name of Israel's God, trusting in Him, seeking for the guidance of His Spirit, and they become the messengers of life and salvation to the world. They preach the Gospel. Is any one more successful than another? No. Perhaps the shoemaker or the banker may baptize a great many more people than the lawyer, the merchant or any other profession that may go, for God operates through whom He will, and in His own manner, and the Lord has scattered through the nations of the earth a people who are desirous to know the truth, and they know it when they hear it. It is now as it was in the days of Jesus, the sheep know the voice of the shepherd, and a stranger they will not follow. An Elder goes forth in his simplicity to preach the first principles of the Gospel; he calls upon man to repent of his sins, to be baptized for a remission of their sins, and to have hands laid upon them for the reception of the Holy Ghost; and there is something very remarkable about these things and we Saints are acquainted with them. Now these men come forward and they profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in God, faith in the principles of the Gospel, and they covenant before God that they will eschew evil, depart from iniquity, and observe the laws and commandments of God. An Elder baptizes them by virtue of the authority conferred upon him for the remission of sins; then he lays his hands upon their heads and confers upon them by virtue of the same Priesthood, the Holy Ghost. Do they receive it? They do if they are sincere in their professions. And what does that do? It takes of the things of God and shows them unto them to their understanding and comprehension. They then are "born again," and become new creatures in Christ Jesus through the laws of the Gospel. Is God with this people? I appeal to hundreds of you Elders, you that have been abroad preaching this Gospel among the nations, whether when you laid hands upon the heads of men who had repented and been baptized—whether they did not receive the Holy Ghost? I appeal to this congregation, if what I say on this point is not true. If it is, is it not a mark that God is with this people; that God is with the Elders no matter who they are, whether they are merchants or philosophers or whether they are brick-makers or adobe-makers, tax-gatherers or fishermen, or mechanics of any kind; having been called of God and operated in the functions of their office, God honors them by recognizing their administrations in the Priesthood, by bestowing upon the people the Holy Spirit, as promised. This may not be evidence to some that God is with this people, but it is evidence to us.

Then what next? They are then desirous to gather where the Saints of God are. Some people think that we send our Elders abroad in the interest of some emigration scheme. I suppose I receive scores of letters inquiring what we have to offer for emigrants. I tell them nothing but the Gospel; we have nothing to offer to such people save the principles of truth. And the Elders of Israel go forth in the name of Israel's God sowing the seeds of eternal life; they go forth weeping, bearing precious seeds, and they endure the contumely and reproach of an ungodly world; they go as saviors of mankind, and they return rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

Notwithstanding the peculiar ideas that men have formed of us, it makes no difference; the work is still going on, is still progressing. Just before I arrived here this afternoon I received a telegram informing me of a company of some six or seven hundred Saints having started on their way from Europe to this land. And they keep coming. And what do they come for? What did you come for? Why are you here? Not to embark in any emigration scheme that I know of; I never knew of anything of that only as I have heard it from men who do not know what they are talking about. We have come here according to the word and will of God, and ac-

cording to the predictions of the ancient Prophets, one of whom said, speaking of the latter-day gathering of the people of God: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family." And what will you do with them when you get them there? "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding;" I will instruct them in the laws of God; I will give them a knowledge of myself, whom to know is life everlasting; I will give them a knowledge of the principles of eternal life, and prepare them for thrones, principalities, powers and dominions in the eternal worlds. This is the kind of spirit that actuates the people, and you cannot prevent it, and those who are already gathered are continually sending thousands of dollars to help their friends to come to this land.

No matter about the feelings that Brother Taylor referred to, they amount to very little. We have had to suffer the like treatment long ago; we have stood it before and we can stand it again. And if men cannot afford to do right by us, we can afford to do right by them, and to pursue a steady, even course, putting our trust in the living God.

We also act in a peculiar manner about other things. Most of you that are here left your homes, friends and associations. What for? For the Gospel of the Son of God, and nothing else, and that you may fulfil the law of God and help to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. People outside the Church of God repeat the Lord's prayer, but they do not understand it. "Our Father who art in heaven," who? Our Father, the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh—"hallowed be thy name;" that is, we reverence Thee in our hearts, we honor Thee in our lives. "Thy kingdom come." What for? That "Thy will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven." And we are gathered for this purpose. gathered out from among the nations, gathered to the valleys of the mountains where we ought to be allowed the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, but which we are not. We ought to be allowed this meagre privilege, but we are not and cannot be allowed in the exuberance and magnanimity of the chief men of this land of freedom. We are here to serve God, and hence we are engaging in a work that man by his own wisdom cannot comprehend. We cannot help that; that is none of our business. God has given us a work to do, and in the name of Israel's God we will try to do it. One of the duties incumbent upon us is to preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth and to save if possible those who would destroy every vestige of human right and liberty, and trample under foot the freedom of humanity. We will save them if we can in spite of themselves, God being our helper.

Then what else are we doing? You are building Temples, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in their erection. For what? Not as some ignorant, capricious, designing and unprincipled people think to make court houses or state house, or post offices of, but to perform the ordinances of God in. What ordinances? Ordinances that some of you are acquainted with, and you that are not doubtless will be. For whom? For the living. For whom else? For the dead. Why? Because God our Heavenly Father is a philanthropist and is interested in the welfare of all His creatures that have ever lived, that do live and that will live; and because they did not, many of them, have the opportunity that this generation has of listening to the Gospel of the Son of God. And therefore we build temples in which to attend to the ordinance of baptism for the dead, a subject referred to by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians where he says: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" You understand these things because God has revealed them; and we are operating not only for time but for eternity in the interest not only of men who now live but of those that have lived. This generation do not know it, but one thing I can say—I was going to say, if they live long enough, but many of them will not; but if they should live long enough they would know, that the millennium that people talk so much about will be

principally devoted to the work of saving those that had not the opportunity of hearing the Gospel while they were in the flesh. And who is to conduct this work? The Lord. Are we believers in the Lord? I think our works prove that. I think this Temple here, the Temple at Logan, the Temple at Manti and the one already built at St. George, as well as other operations in which we are engaged will show at least that we are sincere in our faith in God. We desire while the Priesthood in the heavens are operating in the interest of humanity to co-operate with them, to be one with God, one with the ancient Priesthood and one with the Son of God in the work of redeeming the living and the dead. Hence our religion, as I say, reaches back into eternity and forward into eternity. And as an immortal, intelligent being made in the image of God, I feel if there was nothing beyond this life, I would not care if I were blotted out of it to-day. But I believe in an immortality that will exalt me among the Gods in the eternal worlds, and that that exaltation will be onward and progressive, and that while eternal ages roll the purposes of God will go on and will continue to be developed "while life and thought or being lasts, or immortality endures." If we could not have that, I would not give you five straws for any religion.

Again, people prate a great deal—that is, a lot of ignorant men, who do not know what they are talking about—in regard to our marriage relations. In our marriage relation we enter into eternal covenants. Do we break any law? I think not. I think the Constitution says, that Congress shall make no law impairing the validity of contracts. And if I make an eternal covenant with a person, I expect to remain true to it in time and in eternity, dying or living, both here and in the next world, I expect to be true to it and no man shall break it God being my helper.

A short time ago I attended the funeral of a sister of this Church. I was asked to make a few remarks; and in doing so I said that the deceased entered into the marriage covenant with her husband in Scotland until death did them part. What, eternal beings possessed of souls, as was referred to to-day, beings that were calculated to live in the eternal worlds with God and to have eternal increase? We talk of living in the blaze of Gospel day, and then make covenants with our wives by whom we expect to have children and be associated with just as long as life shall last, and when life ends, there ends everything; when that life is extinct our hopes are gone and we are left to grope in the dark through the eternities that are to come unless something comes to our aid that we know nothing about. Now, said I, that was the condition of that woman, her husband, of her children, that were around her—everything snapped assunder by the grim monster death; and death has conquered under those circumstances and triumphed. But no, they learned in former times, and we have learned to-day, to say, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who gives us victory through the Lord Jesus Christ." But that man who was weeping over his departed wife, and those children that were surrounding the dead body of their mother were not in that hopeless condition that the world would have us to be in, and try to force us to be in. That woman had entered into sacred and eternal covenants with her husband, and she as well as the surrounding mourners expected that when the earthly house of their tabernacles would be dissolved, that they will have a house, a building with God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which they would secure by the eternal covenants which they have made with one another. Shall we be deprived of this? No, never. Do not put it into your calculations, for it will never be done, worlds without end, Amen. What, we as Latter-day Saints, bound together by the principles of eternal truth, enlightened by the Gospel of the Son of God, inspired by the revelations of the Most High, having had the veil drawn aside so that we can comprehend the glories and exaltations that await us in the eternal worlds—we barter away the principles of life, our wives and children and everything that is dear to us? No. We

expect to receive them as Jacob will receive his in the New Jerusalem, and participate with them in the glories and exaltations that God has prepared for them that love and fear Him and keep His commandments.

Our principles are eternal. Our Gospel is everlasting, and is the plan that has been provided for the salvation and exaltation of mankind, and for the redemption of the world. Our ideas and covenants are eternal, their's only refer to time. They can affect us only in time. God permits and no further, the eternal covenants are beyond the reach of power.

Let us then, my brethren and sisters, be true and faithful. New mind the troubles that come along they will all blow past by and by. The wrath of man will be made known, God, and the remainder will restrain. What will we do? We will be virtuous; we will be pure; we will be honorable; we will cleave to the principles of truth; we will honor God and honor our religion, and be fit associates for just when we get through with the affairs of earth. And we will try to prepare ourselves to associate with God and with the angels and the Priesthood, and have the veil that separates us and our Heavenly Father made a little thinner, that we may more clearly and comprehend fully the principles of life; and we will go on from purity to purity, from intelligence to intelligence, from knowledge to knowledge, until we see as we are seen and know as we are known; and by and by, when we get through the affairs of time and sense, we will join in the song, glory, and honor, and power, and might, and majesty and dominion to be ascribed to Him that sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever. Amen.

TRIP TO CASSIA COUNTY.

SALT LAKE CITY,
September 30th, 1882.

Editor Deseret News:

At 3.45 p. m., Thursday the 28th inst., our party, as follows: Apostles F. M. Lyman and John H. Smith, H. J. Grant, Bishop Edward Hunter and daughter, of Grantsville, here to visit the Saints in Cassia County, Idaho. We went by train to Terrace, reached that point about 1 a. m. Friday; were met by Bishop Horton D. Haight and Wm. Hunt. About 1.30 we started by team, Oakley, reaching that point at 4 p. m. We were a pretty sleep crowd, as we had traveled continuously, only stopping to feed teams, and refreshing the human man. Saturday and Sunday held meetings at Oakley; at 10 a. m. and 2 p. m. The house was crowded Saturday afternoon and all Sunday, and there were many people outside the house. Apostles Lyman and Smith and several of other brethren addressed the Saints. Much good instruction was given which the Saints listened with marked attention.

William C. Martindale, George Whittle were chosen and set apart as Counselors to Brother Horton D. Haight, Cassia Ward. A relief society organized, with Sarah Ann Snider as President, Louisa Haight and Jannette Whittle as counselors. Enoch R. Dayley was chosen to set apart to preside over the Little Basin branch of the Cassia Ward. Some additional teachers were selected. Sunday afternoon Apostle Lyman presented the general Church authorities and those of the Cassia ward, and the Little Basin and Cassia Creek branches of said ward, all of whom were unanimously sustained by the congregation.

Monday our party drove down Goose Creek several miles, we were much pleased to note the many improvements, in the shape of neat log houses and granaries, fences, etc., since our visit of last year. The material advancement of the country was marked. In visiting with the Saints we learned that they were generally in good health and spirits. The crops were far below the average some cases amounting to almost nothing. This state of things is mostly due to a lack of proper regulations, and the fact that they had allowed crops to volunteer several years, and in this way most impoverished their land. Saints in this section of the country are warm-hearted and hospitable and as far as we were able to learn endeavoring to be faithful members of the Church.