

DISCOURSE

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, delivered in the Bowery at Paris, Oneida Co., Idaho, Sunday, Aug. 31, 1873.

REPORTED BY JOHN Q. CANNON.

THE gospel of life and salvation that we have embraced in our faith and that we profess to carry out in our lives, incorporates all truth. We frequently testify to each other that we know that this gospel is true; and as I have a great many times said to those that listen to my conversation upon the principles of life and salvation, I believe this work, I believe this gospel, I believe this doctrine that is brought to us through the prophet Joseph, in these latter days, in this our time, for the simplest, plainest and most palpable reason that can be given. "What is it?" Why, because it is true. The gospel that I have embraced comprehends all truth. "How much of it is true?" All of it. "How much does it embrace?" All the truth that there is in the heavens, on the earth, under the earth; and if there is any truth in hell, this doctrine claims it. It is all the truth of heaven, the truth of God, the life of those that live forever, the law by which worlds were, are and will be brought into existence, and pass from one degree or one state of being to another, pertaining to the exaltation of intelligence from the lowest to the highest state. This is the doctrine that the Latter-day Saints believe, whether they realize it or not. Well now, upon apostasy. What have the Latter-day Saints got to apostatize from? Everything that there is good, pure, holy, god-like, exalting, ennobling, extending the ideas, the capacities of the intelligent beings that our heavenly Father has brought forth upon this earth. What will they receive in exchange? I can comprehend it in a very few words. These would be the words that I should use: death, hell and the grave. That is what they will get in exchange. We may go into the particulars of that which they experience. They experience darkness, ignorance, doubt, pain, sorrow, grief, mourning, unhappiness; no person to condole with in the hour of trouble, no arm to lean upon in the day of calamity, no eye to pity when they are forlorn and cast down; and I comprehend it by saying: death, hell and the grave. This is what they will get in exchange for their apostasy from the gospel of the Son of God. This is their reward, and it is foolishness, not merely nonsense; a person can have a little nonsense and pass it over; but this is foolishness. There is not a particle of good sense about it; no light, no intelligence, nothing that is ennobling, elevating, cheering, comforting, consoling, that produces friends, or anything of this kind. I call it foolishness; I do it this time, consequently we will not talk anything about apostasy.

When people receive this gospel, what do they sacrifice? Why, death for life. This is what they give: darkness for light, error for truth, doubt and unbelief for knowledge and the certainty of the things of God, consequently I consider it to be the biggest piece of foolishness that can be hatched up, imagined or entertained, or followed out by any human being, to leave this gospel for what they will receive in exchange. So much for apostasy.

Now a few words, my brethren and sisters, with regard to our position. There are many in this church who have been with it a long time. This church has been traveling for many years. The time that this church has been traveling exceeds the time of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

[At this point the water for the Sacrament was blessed.]

I will give you a word of counsel here with regard to consecrating the bread and the water, which I want the Saints to remember. When you [addressing the Bishops and Elders] administer the Sacrament take this book [the Book of Doctrine and Covenants] and read this prayer. Take the opportunity to read this prayer until you can remember it. You cannot get up anything that is better, and not even equal to it, and when you read it, read it so that the people can hear you. This is what I wish of you; it is what is right, and that which the Spirit will manifest to you if you inquire, and if you cannot commit this prayer to memory, the

one that is given by revelation expressly for consecrating the bread and the wine, or water, if the latter be used, take the book and read until you can remember. If I were to come here next Sabbath, and see you breaking bread, would this, that I am now mentioning, be thought of? The people have various ideas with regard to this prayer. They sometimes cannot hear six feet from the one who is praying, and in whose prayer, perhaps, there are not three words of the prayer that is in this book, that the Lord tells us that we should use. This is pretty hard on the Elders, is it not? If they could remember one thousandth part of that which they have heard, it would have sanctified them years and years ago; but it goes in at one ear and out at the other, it is like the weaver's shuttle passing through the web.

Now I am going to tell you some more things, and how long will you remember them? Until you get home? Perhaps there are a few who will remember a few words of counsel that I shall give to you. I am here to give this people, called Latter-day Saints, counsel to direct them in the path of life. I am here to answer, I shall be on hand to answer when I am called upon, for all the counsel and for all the instruction that I have given to this people. If there is an Elder here, or any member of this church, called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who can bring up the first idea, the first sentence that I have delivered to the people as counsel that is wrong, I really wish they would do it; but they cannot do it, for the simple reason that I have never given counsel that is wrong; this is the reason. This people called Latter-day Saints have been laboring now over forty years—forty-three years last April, the sixth day, this church was organized. People have been coming into it, many have gone out of it, many have died in the faith; but there is quite a number in it that are now living who have held on to it from the beginning, and they have been striving to increase in their knowledge, to enlarge their faith and their comprehension of the principles of eternal life; but it is slow progress. I wonder if there are any particular sisters here who have lived humble and faithful, to whom the Spirit has manifested that their progress and advancement are slow: "That by the Spirit that I receive from the Lord, the Spirit that is given to me at times, I can see that we are far in the rear of what we should be, and we have not come up to that status of perfection and purity that the Latter-day Saints should reach." Are there any sisters who have experienced any such thing? Are there any elders who can bear witness to these things? I expect there are. I expect there is any number of sisters in this church who can bear witness to this, and testify that the people called Latter-day Saints are very tardy in the practice of the things of God.

Now with regard to the blessings. There are blessings that the Lord proffers to his people. Has he any conditions? This is the question. The blessings that the Lord wishes to bestow upon his people in the latter days, as he did upon them in former days, are they proffered to the people on any conditions whatever, or is it the voluntary act upon the involuntary people? Are they given to us whether we want them or not? whether we will enjoy them or not? or whether we will profit by them or not? How is this, Latter-day Saints? Is this the way the Lord does? You and I understand this. Every blessing the Lord proffers to his people is on conditions. These conditions are: "Obey my law, keep my commandments, walk in my ordinances, observe my statutes, love mercy, preserve the law that I have given to you inviolate, keep yourselves pure in the law, and then you are entitled to these blessings, and not until then." Now is this not the fact? I leave it to you. You have the Old and the New Testament, from which we can learn doctrine. You have the Book of Mormon to read, from which we can learn doctrine. You have the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which is more especially necessary to this generation. It does not contain different doctrine to the Book of Mormon and Testament. It is explanatory of these three books, corroborates the doctrine that is taught in them and points out the path for this people to walk in to-day, so that we may not err, but know how to order our

lives from morning till evening, from evening till morning, from Sunday morning till Sunday morning again, from New Year to New Year, and every day of our lives. The doctrine that the Lord has taught us and given to us through his servant Joseph points out the path for us to walk in, and while walking in this path we do not lose sight of one iota of the gospel, but you must hold it secure and always keep it before you by preserving those laws and ordinances and continuing to hold them precious. If the Saints will do this, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Spirit of our Father and God will enlighten their minds and bring to their remembrance things that transpired in the past, and things to come to pass in the future; and they may lay a foundation for everlasting life and eternal lives in the celestial kingdom of our God. You may obtain these blessings by keeping in mind and observing the principles, doctrine, and the laws and statutes that are delivered to the people of God for their edification, for their perfection, for their comfort and consolation, to prepare them for entering into the celestial kingdom. If any profess to live in the observance of these principles, and do not enjoy the spirit of revelation, they deceive themselves. No person deceives the Lord. Every individual that lives according to the laws that the Lord has given to his people, and has received the blessings that he has in store for the faithful, should be able to know the things of God from the things which are not of God, the light from the darkness, that which comes from heaven and that which comes from somewhere else. This is the satisfaction and the consolation that the Latter-day Saints enjoy by living their religion; this is the knowledge which every one who thus lives possesses.

These are the books, the Old and New Testament, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we take all that has been said to us by the Spirit of Truth, bring it together, live to it, and this brings us into a condition that we have fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, and the people of Christ are cleansed from all sin, walk in the light and no more in darkness. We have received in the first place the first ordinances pertaining to the gospel that Jesus introduced, that have been sent to the earth for the salvation of the children of men. Before the ordinances are performed, however, the people hear the name of Christ declared; Jesus is preached to the people; faith springs up in the hearts of the people. We the people believe. The Spirit of truth bears witness to our spirits that this is correct. This is the Christ; he is the Savior of the world; and we begin to have faith in him; and when we begin to have faith in him, and believe on him, and the Father who sent him, we begin to look around ourselves and say: "Why is it that we saw nothing so familiar and perfect years ago? All this is so familiar and plain and simple. How is this? They that declare Christ unto us, are they ready to teach us?" "Yes, certainly." "Do you believe?" "Yes." "Do you wish to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "Do you wish to enter into his family?" "Yes." "Do you wish to belong to this quorum of disciples?" "Yes." "Is there anything for me to do to get there?" says the candidate. "Yes, certainly," says the Elder. "Well, what is it?" "To go down into the waters of baptism, this is the first ordinance, and be baptized by one having authority."

Well, now, this people have received all this. They have been convicted of the truth, they have believed the truth, they have repented of their sins, they have received baptism for the remission of their sins, and the next ordinance or blessing—the laying on of hands so that they may receive the Holy Ghost. What accompanies this Holy Ghost? I have been telling you: it brings to our remembrance things past, present, and future, and dwells upon the things of God. Here are the ordinances, and we have commenced to obey them. We have the promise of receiving blessings if we hold on to the faith and not turn away from this principle; and although temptation may present itself to us, we will resist it, and we will cling to the things of God, and believe on his promises, and will ask the Father in the name of Jesus to help us to overcome these temptations, and we will free ourselves from this darkness; we will break

the chain of doubt and unbelief, and we will emerge into the full faith of the Lord Jesus. When temptations come to you be humble and faithful, and determined that you will overcome, and you will receive a deliverance, and continue faithful, having the promise of receiving blessings. What are these blessings?

There is a variety of blessings, a different blessing being probably given to one, two, three or four of this congregation. Thus, one will have faith to lay hands upon the sick and rebuke disease, and drive it from the person afflicted. Many may receive this blessing of faith, the gift of healing. Some may receive faith to the discerning of spirits; they can discern the spirit of a person, whether it is good or evil. They have such power, that when a person enters this congregation they can tell the spirit of such person; then they have received the gift of discerning of spirits. Some may receive the gift of tongues that they will get up and speak in tongues and speak in many other languages beside their mother tongue, the language that they were brought up in, that they were first taught, and be able to proclaim the gospel of life and salvation that all men could understand it. These are the blessings; but others might receive the gift of prophecy, get up and prophecy what is to befall this nation, what will befall this or that individual, and what will befall the different nations of the earth, etc. Now, after naming some of the blessings, I want to come to something else, and draw a line for the Latter-day Saints to walk up to.

Suppose that we hear the name of the Savior declared to us, that he is the Savior of the world, and by his death atoned for the sins of every man, and we believe that this is the fact; but instead of inquiring, "Is there anything for me to do? is there any labor for me to perform?" when we get home we sing and we say, "I thank God, and I am satisfied." When the elder says, "You must be baptized for the remission of sins," and we say, "O, no, we have received the spirit of truth, there is no need of baptism. We have received all that is necessary. The spirit of truth is given to us; we acknowledge the Savior and we rejoice in him, and we will not be baptized for the remission of sins," are we entitled to have hands laid upon us for the reception of the Holy Ghost? No; everyone comes to this conclusion. Suppose that we make our ourselves satisfied with what we have received, and we can say that Jesus is the Christ—"Yes, I believe he is the Christ; but I don't see the use of any of these ordinances," are we entitled to the Holy Ghost? No. Are we entitled to faith to heal the sick? No. Are we entitled to receive the spirit of prophecy? No. Are we entitled to the gift of speaking in, or the gift of the interpretation of, tongues? No. Are we entitled to the gift of the discerning of spirits? No. Are we entitled to any power or blessings that the Lord has promised to his disciples: that if anybody administered poison to them, it should not harm them, and if their pathway were marked in the midst of serpents, they could take up serpents and they should not hurt them? Are we entitled to this protection? What is the answer of the Latter-day Saints? My brethren and sisters, answer this question in your own minds. Are we entitled to the blessings of the holy Gospel unless we obey the ordinances thereof, and all the commandments and laws and requirements that are laid down for us to obey? Now I know that every Latter-day Saint will come to the same conclusion that I do—that if we did not obey, we would not be entitled to any of these blessings from our Father. There is not a Latter-day Saint but who comes to the same conclusion as myself—that we would not merit, we would not be entitled to, we could not claim at the hand of our God, those blessings that he has promised through obedience to his word. Could we be called the people of God? We would be in the path of disobedience. We would be in the path that leads to death. We would be in the broad road that millions are walking in to death. Now everyone of us comes to this conclusion.

This people I say are very tardy. I will ask you a question and I will let you answer it in your own minds, for you know, and I am satisfied that the answer I shall give will satisfy the Saints. Can we

stand still, receive so much pertaining to the blessings of the Kingdom of God, receive so much knowledge, just so much wisdom, just so much power, and then stop and receive no more? How is this, Latter-day Saints? Your answer will be precisely like mine—I can answer with you all. This people must go forward, or they will go backward. Will all answer this question the same way? Will the same conclusion be in the mind of every Latter-day Saint, that this work is a progressive work, this doctrine that is taught the Latter-day Saints in its nature is exalting, increasing, expanding and extending broader and broader until we can know as we are known, see as we are seen? That is the answer of the Latter-day Saints.

We will say we have received a great deal; very much instruction, have we received. But there are keys to open up other ordinances which I will mention. Do you recollect that in about the year 1840-41 Joseph had a revelation concerning the dead? He had been asked the question a good many times: "What is the condition of the dead, those that lived and died without the gospel?" It was a matter of inquiry with him. He considered this question not only for himself, but for the brethren and the church. "What is the condition of the dead? What will be their fate? Is there no way to-day by which they can receive their blessings as there was in the days of the apostles, and when the gospel was preached upon the earth in ancient days?" When Joseph received the revelation that we have in our possession concerning the dead, the subject was opened to him, not in full but in part, and he kept on receiving. When he had first received the knowledge by the spirit of revelation how the dead could be officiated for, there are brethren and sisters here, I can see quite a number here who were in Nauvoo, and you recollect that when this doctrine was first revealed, and in hurrying in the administration of baptism for the dead, that sisters were baptized for their male friends, were baptized for their fathers, their grandfathers, their mothers and their grandmothers, &c. I just mention this so that you will come to understanding, that as we knew nothing about this matter at first, the old Saints recollect, there was little by little given, and the subject was made plain, but little was given at once. Consequently, in the first place people were baptized for their friends and no record was kept. Joseph afterwards kept a record, &c. Then women were baptized for men and men for women, &c. It would be very strange, you know, to the eyes of the wise and they that understood the things pertaining to eternity, if we were called upon to commence a work that we could not finish. This, therefore, was regulated and all set in order; for it was revealed that if a woman was baptized for a man, she could not be ordained for him, neither could she be made an apostle or a patriarch for the man, consequently the sisters are to be baptized for their own sex only.

This doctrine of baptism for the dead is a great doctrine, one of the most glorious doctrines that was ever revealed to the human family; and there are light, power, glory, honor and immortality in it. After this doctrine was received, Joseph received a revelation on celestial marriage. You will recollect, brethren and sisters, that it was in July, 1843, that he received this revelation concerning celestial marriage. This doctrine was explained and many received it as far as they could understand it. Some apostatized on account of it; but others did not, and received it in their faith. This also is a great and noble doctrine. I have not time to give you many items upon the subject; but there are a few hints that I can throw in here that perhaps may be interesting. As far as this pertains to our natural lives here, there are some who say it is very hard. They say, "This is rather a hard business; I don't like my husband to take a plurality of wives in the flesh." Just a few words upon this. We would believe this doctrine entirely different from what it is presented to us if we could do so. If we could make every man upon the earth get him a wife, live righteously and serve God, we would not be under the necessity, perhaps, of taking more than one wife. But they will not do this; the people of God, therefore, have been commanded to take more wives. The women are entitled to salvation if they