

REMARKS

BY

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

DELIVERED

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ber 25rd, 1883.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

I HAVE listened with much interest to the remarks which have been made this afternoon by our brethren who have been on missions.

The work that we are engaged in differs materially from anything that is in existence in the world today, and is altogether of another character from all else with which we are acquainted. God has spoken. The heavens have been opened. The Lord has revealed His will to the human family. He has sent forth a message of life, light, intelligence and truth; and, as has been described by our brethren who have spoken, this message is not received very graciously by, at least, the people of this nation. I do not think the heathen that Brother Wooley has been among would treat the Elders in the way that has been described by Brother Palmer. I do not think they would tar and feather the Elders, and throw tobacco and rotten eggs at them, and otherwise maltreat them. It is left for Christians, and for the enlightened people of this generation to perform such acts—a generation that boasts of its civilization, its intelligence, its advancement in the arts and in the sciences, and in everything that is calculated to exalt and to ennoble man. But it is very humiliating to hear such statements as those which have been presented to us this afternoon. I can readily believe Bro. Palmer's remarks that in the last seven or eight years the people where he has been laboring have been fast deteriorating and are very much more corrupt and wicked, lower and more degraded than they were at the commencement of that time. But then it has not been an uncommon thing even for enlightened people to manifest such a spirit as he has represented. I think we have an account of something very similar to it in the days when Jesus was upon the earth. The religious people even of that day—the Scribes and Pharisees, the pious people who professed to fear God and keep His commandments, that made broad their phylacteries and prayed on the corners of the streets—were the ones, and the first ones, to cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him; it is not fit that He should live." And then there were other manifestations which were very similar to some of those we have heard related. It is true He cast out devils, but then they said that He did so by the power of Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. They called Him a glutton, wine bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners, and finally they preferred His death to the death of a robber, and cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," and terribly have they reaped the results of that cry and the reward of their acts even up to the present day. There is a retributive justice associated with many of these things. The Scriptures positively say that what a man soweth he shall also reap; and what nations sow nations will reap; and therefore people who are so debased and degraded as to act in the manner represented demand our commiseration and our pity rather than our censure and reproach.

Brother Palmer has remarked that while they are seeking to injure us we are seeking to benefit them. That is proper. It is the duty of all good, all right feeling men—and this has been so recognized everywhere and among all cultured and intelligent nations and peoples—to treat their fellow-men with humanity, with kindness and with courtesy. To be guilty of acts such as have been described are signs of degradation, of folly, of wickedness, and of corruption. If God has spoken, if the heavens have been opened, if He has been pleased to restore to us the everlasting Gospel, we have cause as a people to rejoice, and we do rejoice in the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant which have been revealed to us. Having had these communications made known to us, we feel it a duty and a responsibility devolving upon us to carry out the word, the will and law of God. But there is a bound to all of these things. Jesus said in His day, "If they have persecuted me they will

persecute you. If they have received my sayings they will receive your sayings. If they have rejected me they will reject you also." Therefore, there is nothing new in this persecution. We expect it. It arises from the same spirit, a spirit of antagonism to God, to His laws and to the principles of truth, no matter whether it is done by the drunkard, by the debauchee, or by the pious, so called, or the religious; it makes no difference; the acts, the spirit and principle are the same; they originate from the same source. He that doeth good is good, and he that doeth unrighteously is unrighteous. The crucifying of Jesus Christ did not obliterate the great and eternal principles which he promulgated to the world; and the attacking of a man—no matter who he may be—in possession of truth, with rotten eggs will not change that truth and make it a falsehood. It simply makes a fool of the man who engages in these irregularities, and shows that he is low, degraded and debased. That is the result of such an exhibition. But I will say to Brother Palmer that he is not bound to continue among such people. Jesus said in His day, "If they persecute you in one city flee to another," and where there is not manhood, honor, integrity and patriotism enough among a people to correct those kind of abuses, it is the privilege of the Elders to leave them and go to people who will listen to the principles of truth. We are not sent to the profligate, or to the debauchee, or to the lawless, or corrupt or the depraved, alone. Our mission is to the nations of the earth, to proclaim the Gospel to all men, that they may understand that the heavens have been opened; that God has spoken; that the principles of eternal truth have been revealed; that the everlasting Gospel has been restored. Our mission is to proclaim this testimony to the nations of the earth, and if they receive it, well; if not, the onus rests with them and not with us. We then have performed our duty, and leave the responsibility upon them; let them abide the result. The people of this nation need not be so determined to cast the truth from them. It will be withdrawn quicker than they think of. The servants of God will be withdrawn from them sooner than they imagine; and after the testimony of the servants of God comes the testimony of His judgments, of His wrath and of His indignation, and, as it is written, the testimony of plagues, pestilence, war and famine, and those other results that are spoken of in the Scriptures of eternal truth. We feel to sympathize—I do—with this nation and with other nations; for I do know of certain events that will transpire associated therewith, and therefore I sympathize with them, and God does, and that is why He sends forth His servants and has commanded us to go to the ends of the earth and proclaim the Gospel of the Son of God, and to deliver the message that He has entrusted us with. And I would say to those who have been treated as outcasts among many of those people, and whom they permitted to sleep on the open ground, etc.—I would say to them that many of them will have more of that thing to do than has ever entered into their hearts to conceive of; for whatever measure they mete, as the Lord God liveth, it shall be meted unto them again, pressed down and running over. But I would say to those who have had to suffer, be patient, all is well, and all will yet be well; for as Jesus said in His day, so we say in this day, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Hear it, O Israel! "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." He that is wise can understand. We must remember one thing, that although in former times, as has already been referred to, it was said that the Church should go into the wilderness; that a certain power, to use the words of Daniel, "shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Yet, though this power should accomplish its purpose, and the Kingdom should be given into its hands for a certain period, the time would come in the latter days when the Saints would possess the Kingdom; and the Kingdom and dominion

and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." The latter time will come as surely as the former. There was a little stone that was to be hewn out of the mountains without hands, and it was to roll and roll and roll, and smite the image on its feet, and the gold, and the silver, and the brass, and the iron, and the clay were to become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and there should be found no place for it. Thus in the last dispensation, we are told, in contradistinction to the former one, that the Kingdom should not be given into the hands of another people, but that it should stand forever; and the Lord, who has instituted and revealed His law and made manifest His will to the human family, is able to accomplish His own purposes and in His own way.

Men operate against us because they do not know what they do. Let them pursue this course. That is their business. Let us pursue our course; for God requires us to fulfill His law and obey His commandments and walk in obedience to His precepts, and proclaim His word, His will and His message to the nations of the earth, and we will go forth, in the name of Israel's God, and fulfill the mission that He has given us to fulfill. Then in regard to the people receiving or rejecting it, that is none of our business. Our business is to do His will, proclaim His word, and make known His law, and deliver our testimonies. "Go ye into all the world," was the command of Jesus, and it has been the command in these latter days.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." When we shall have done this we will leave the result in the hands of God. It is for us to perform our duty, and having done this, it is all that the Lord requires at our hands so far as our missions are concerned. Here we have other work besides that to do. We have gathered together from the nations of the earth—what to do? To learn of the law of God and to walk in obedience to His commands. I will take them one of a city, says the Lord, and two of a family and bring them to Zion, and give them pastors after mine own heart that shall feed them with knowledge and understanding. This is what He has been doing, and the people gathered in the valleys of the mountains are the results of these labors and the effects of that testimony which God has given to the Elders of Israel. We are doing quite a labor here notwithstanding there is a great amount of feeling exhibited against us as a people, and they threaten us with further persecution and proscriptions, with confiscation, banishment and the sword, and these things are openly advocated by the press, in the pulpit, and by political tricksters and demagogues who are really the enemies of this nation, of good rule and government, and of the institutions of our country. There is a lawless, reckless, dangerous spirit that is plaguing the nations of Europe and threatening their overthrow, and that spirit and those influences are sought to be engrafted upon this nation; and from the spirit that is being manifested it seems that they are but too successful, and that the religious animus is being made use of as a pretext to foster their nefarious designs. They seem to forget that if the principles of liberty and the rights of man can be attacked under the guise of what they are pleased to term "Mormonism" or "polygamy" that other systems, creeds and faiths that may be considered objectionable to the majority, the barriers being once broken down, will be equally open to their attack, until order, justice, equity and good government will be supplanted by Nihilism, communism, Ku Kluxism, Molly Maguireism and every other incendiary and revolutionary principle until anarchy shall generally prevail, and those great principles for which the founders of this government contended shall be overthrown, the goddess of liberty be dethroned and our proud flag be dragged in the dust, and the greatest and proudest republican nation that ever existed become the laughing stock and derision of the monarchies of the world. It is lamentable to think of these things, but this would neces-

sarily be the result of the vast amount of tergiversation and infamous falsehood which is so rampant at the present time; for it is safe to say that nineteen twentieths of the statements that are made against us and assiduously propagated and believed are unmitigated and unblushing falsehoods, without any foundation in truth, and are set on foot by their inventors and propagators to accomplish their nefarious and diabolical purposes. These characters are aptly represented in the Scriptures in the following terms:

"They hatch cockatrice's eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper."

"Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands."

"Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths."

"The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

Having had the truth presented to them they have rejected it, as people in former days have rejected similar truths. One would be surprised at the amount of falsehood that exists abroad pertaining to us as a people, and the almost utter impossibility of obtaining any correct statements about our affairs; but the Apostle Paul explains this matter, and has prophesied clearly of the events that should transpire. That great enunciator of Christian principles says, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

If ever a people were afflicted with this mania it is the people of the United States to-day, and not only of the general people but we are sorry to say some of those in high places partake of the same spirit, but then there may be an excuse for thousands and millions of the people who find it impossible to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. It is to those who are engaged in this work of misrepresentation and falsehood that these remarks would apply, and outside of the injury they are doing to the State, I would say, wool to those that fight against Zion, for God will fight against them. Now, I say that, I make that statement here, and I do it in the name of the Lord, and their judgment lingereth not and their destruction slumbereth not, for the Lord will be after them. But it is for us to observe the law of God, keep His commandments, walk in obedience to His precepts and do good for evil, bless those that curse us, and do good to those that spitefully use us, that we may be the children of our Heavenly Father, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust. Pray for all good men the world over, whether in this nation or any other nation; for there are thousands and hundreds of thousands of men, honorable men, in this nation and in other nations, many of whom are deceived by the falsehoods that are circulated in their midst, and desire to do right, and when they learn the truth they will be governed thereby. I think I have read something like this—I presume many of you have read the same thing—that the time will come when he that will not take up his sword to fight against his neighbor must needs flee to Zion for safety. These days are fast approaching, and if God can be merciful and kind to the human family we can afford to be the same. If He is full of benevolence and long-suffering, we can afford to manifest the same spirit. It is for us to pursue the course that our Lord and Savior has marked out; to preserve ourselves in virtue, in honor, in purity, in righteousness; to deal rightly one with another; and with all men, to preserve our bodies and spirits pure before the Lord, and to call upon him in the morning and in the evening and whenever we have an opportunity. It is for us to walk according to the light of the Holy Spirit which God has given unto us, and to love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for any man that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It is for us to

act justly before God, that when we get through with the affairs of this world we may be prepared for an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for us. But we have a work here to perform. We have to assist in building the temples; and I am happy to say that in visiting some of the temple districts lately, I have found that things are progressing very favorably. Not long ago a number of us paid a visit to Cache Valley. Their temple there is very nearly completed. It is a beautiful structure; and every thing is going on pleasantly and agreeably. The people of these districts are not engaged in rotten-egging people, nor in persecuting their brethren, but they are seeking to fear God and work righteousness, and a spirit of this kind seems to prevail among the Saints wherever we travel. They are erecting another beautiful structure in Mantle. The roof is on that building, and there also every thing is progressing very pleasantly and agreeably. And when we assemble with the people, they meet together in the spirit of the Gospel. We don't find meeting houses big enough to accommodate the people. And they are not the same kind of people Brother Palmer has spoken of. We are among a class of people that treat us kindly, lovingly, affectionately, and that do all in their power, while we are in their midst, to make us comfortable.

Some of us have been out in the world preaching the Gospel without purse or scrip. Brother Woodruff, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and many of my brethren who are around me have been out on missions in the nations of the earth, and we know of us what that is. I talked some time ago to a young man who had been shot at by three men in the State of Georgia. They shot at him but missed him. I told him I had a little the advantage of him—if I might be called an advantage—to they shot at him and missed him, but they shot at me and hit me. But in regard to these matters, they are of very little importance. All this mobbing, lawlessness and violence is a little amusing to reflect upon. It shows the weakness and folly of men, and if they can afford it, we can certainly endure it.

Our purpose will be to go on and do the will of God, to build up His Zion and His Church, and to try to purify the Church, that we may be free from hypocrisy, from vanity and from craftiness of every kind, that we may be honorable, upright, charitable, kind and benevolent. You have some of these strangers here among you. What would you do with them? Why, treat them well. If they are naked, clothe them. If they are hungry, feed them. If they are sick, administer to them, and do good for evil, and carry out the principles of the Gospel of the Son of God. They are the children of our Heavenly Father, with all their weaknesses and follies. God is merciful to all men. He has given to all a portion of His Spirit to profit withal, and if they will not heed it, what then? There are certain irrevocable laws, certain decrees, gone forth from the heavens that must and will be accomplished in regard to the nations of the earth, and we cannot help it. We will go on and do the work which God has designed for us to do. We are building temples. When they are finished, with the help of the Lord, we will enter them and do a work for the living and for the dead—for our fathers and friends and associates—and then when we get through with these temples, there are others to be built under the direction of the Almighty. We will try and build up the Zion of the Lord, and we will accomplish it too. Now, I will prophesy this in the name of the Lord. I will prophesy that Zion will be built up. I will prophesy that the Kingdom of God will be established, and that the Church of God will grow and increase. It is for us to love one another, to cleave to the truth, and to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith. We will add to our faith virtue, brotherly kindness, etc., and every principle that tends to exalt, dignify and happy the human family. Let us learn to live our religion, and while others are acting foolishly, let us not act foolishly and unwisely, but live our religion, a religion that we can carry with us to our homes, that will be with us in our outgoings and our incomings, and that in our dealings one with another we may act honorably and uprightly, and not only with one another, but with all men, and be Saints of God without rebuke.