

DISCOURSE

BY

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DELIVERED IN THE

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REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL call the attention of the congregation to a few verses in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew. [The speaker read the first thirteen verses; also the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth paragraphs of the fourteenth section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.]

This revelation, a portion of which I have been reading, treats in a measure upon the subject of the parable that Jesus spoke, namely the ten virgins; both refer to his second coming and to his work in the latter days. In no age or dispensation can a man be called to a greater calling than to administer in the ordinances of the house of God; and nothing but the power of God and the inspiration of the Almighty can sustain and uphold any man, no matter what age he may live in, who is called of God to declare the words of life and salvation and to preach repentance to an unbelieving generation. This may perhaps sound strangely in the ears of many people, but the inhabitants of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, should remember that the Lord God Almighty himself, his Son Jesus Christ, and his gospel and work have been very unpopular in every age of the world among the hosts of men. No more unpopular doctrine was ever presented to the human family than the doctrine of life and salvation. I do not care in what age of the world a prophet, apostle or inspired man has been raised up to declare the commands of God, he has had to contend with the prejudices of the inhabitants of the earth. It is so in our day, and it was so in the days of Jesus Christ. When he came to the Jews, his own father's house, the house of Israel, as the great shiloh of Judah, and the saviour of the world, a more unpopular man than he never dwelt in Judea or Jerusalem from the day of his birth to the day of his death, when he gave up the ghost on the cross and went home to glory as a martyr for the word of God and the testimony which he bore. And this is why I say that when any man, in any age of the world, is called of God to declare the words of life, he has to contend with the traditions of ages that rest upon the minds of the inhabitants of the earth.

The parable of the ten virgins is intended to represent the second coming of the Son of man, the coming of the Bridegroom to meet the bride, the church, the Lamb's wife, in the last days; and I expect that the Saviour was about right when he said, in reference to the members of the church, that five of them were wise and five were foolish; for when the Lord of heaven comes in power and great glory to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, if he finds one half of those professing to be members of his church prepared for salvation, it will be as many as can be expected judging by the course that many are pursuing.

I wish, if I can get enough of the Spirit of the Lord to answer my own mind, to say a few words on the present occasion to my brethren and sisters, the Latter-day Saints, those who have taken upon them the name of Christ. We live in one of the most important dispensations that God ever gave to man, namely the great and last dispensation of the fulness of times, the dispensation of all dispensations, and the one in which the whole flood of prophecy in the holy Bible will be fulfilled, for most all of the prophecies contained in that sacred volume, from Adam to John the Revelator, point to the great work of God in the last days, the days in which the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that should be an everlasting kingdom and to whose dominion there should be no end, and the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens should be given into the hands of the Saints of the Most High God, and they are to possess it for ever and ever. I wish to have the Latter-day Saints understand their appointment, position and responsibility before the God of heaven, and their responsibilities to both Jew and Gentile,

living and dead, on this and the other side of the veil.

The Lord never has built up his kingdom in any age of the world except by calling upon his servants and laboring through the tabernacles of men on the earth; but this he has done in a great many ages and dispensations. And whenever the Lord has had an apostle, prophet or inspired man on the earth he has had power to administer in the ordinances of the house of God, and he has labored for the advancement of the kingdom of God upon the earth, whether he has had few or many followers. As it was in the days of Noah and Lot so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. We live in the day when God has set his hand to establish that great kingdom that Daniel saw. We live in the day when the angel of God has delivered the everlasting gospel in fulfillment of the revelations of St. John, when he says—"I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them who dwell on the earth, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people under the whole heavens, saying with a loud voice 'Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.'"

There never was a generation of the inhabitants of the earth in any age of the world who had greater events awaiting them than the present. As I before remarked, the fulfillment of this whole volume of revelation points to our day. The building up of the kingdom of God, the building up of the Zion of God in the mountains of Israel, the erection of a standard for the Gentiles to flee unto, the warning of the nations of the earth to prepare them for the great judgments of our God, the building up of the church, the sanctifying of the people, the building of temples to the Most High God, that his servants may enter therein and become saviours on Mount Zion, redeeming both the living and the dead, all these things are to be performed in our day. And an age fraught with greater interest to the children of men than the one in which we live never dawned since the creation of the world.

Where is the man, priest or people, in the whole sectarian world to-day, who believes in the literal fulfillment of the revelations of God contained in the Bible? If there is one I should like to see and converse with him. The whole Christian world profess to believe the Bible, and perhaps they do when it is shut. But open the Bible and read the declarations contained therein concerning the last dispensation of the fulness of times, and where is the man who believes them? You can not find one, and it requires faith even among the Latter-day Saints to believe the revelations of God and to prepare themselves for those things which await the world.

The fig trees are leaving, the summer is nigh, the signs of heaven and earth all indicate the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but who are really looking and preparing for the coming of the great Bridegroom? I do not know that any people on the earth, except the Latter-day Saints, are looking for this great event. There may be exceptions, there may be men who believe in the second coming of Christ. The people called Millerites believe in the second coming of the Saviour, and they have set a great many days when it should take place. But he did not come, and he never will come until the revelations of God are fulfilled and a people are prepared for his coming. He will never come until the Jews are gathered home and have rebuilt their temple and city, and the Gentiles have gone up there to battle against them. He will never come until his saints have built up Zion and have fulfilled the revelations which have been spoken concerning it. He will never come until the Gentiles throughout the whole Christian world have been warned by the inspired elders of Israel. They are called to thrust in the sickle and reap, for the harvest is ripe and the time has come, which is referred to in this revelation, when the Lord commands the elders to go forth and warn the world for the last time, and call upon the inhabitants of the earth to repent. And what I wish to say to the elders and to the Latter-day Saints is—Have we faith in God and in his revelations? Have we faith in our own religion? Have we faith in Jesus Christ? Have we faith in the words of the prophets? Have

we faith in Joseph Smith, who, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, translated the Book of Mormon, giving a record of the ancient inhabitants of this country, and through whom the Lord gave the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants? If we have faith in these things, then we certainly should prepare ourselves for the fulfillment of them. I consider that as a people and as elders of Israel we occupy one of the most important positions ever occupied on the face of the earth by those who have been called to work for the Lord. We have received our appointment for this work, and we should prepare ourselves to perform the duties devolving upon us in connection with it. Truth is one of the attributes of the Lord, and he never makes a declaration but what is certain and true. And, as one of the apostles says, "There is no prophecy of any private interpretation, but holy men of old spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost;" therefore what they said is true, and their prophecies will have their fulfillment. No man can point to any of the revelations of God in the old prophets concerning events up to our day, but what have had their fulfillment. Everything that Jesus Christ spake concerning Judea and Jerusalem has had its fulfillment to the very letter. The temple at Jerusalem was overthrown until not one stone was left upon another, and the Jews have been scattered and trodden under the foot of the Gentiles now for eighteen hundred years, and so they will remain until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and that is pretty near. And, as the Lord has told us in these revelations, we are called upon to warn the world.

We have been laboring now for forty-five years in preaching the gospel of Christ throughout the Gentile nations. We say Gentiles, because the gospel goes to the Gentiles first, that the first may be last and the last first. Anciently the Jews were first in having the gospel sent unto them, but they rejected it and they were broken off through unbelief, and hence the gospel turned to the Gentiles; and, as Paul says—"Ye Gentiles, take heed and fear, lest ye fall through the same example of unbelief, for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed also lest he spare not ye." The Gentiles are fallen through the same example of unbelief as did the Jews. They have put to death every prophet, apostle and inspired man since the days of Jesus Christ, and the church went into the wilderness, and the face of a prophet, apostle or inspired man, called of God to administer the ordinances of the gospel, had not been seen for some eighteen hundred years, until the Lord raised up a prophet in the day and age in which we live. Therefore the gospel brought forth in the last days has to go to the Gentiles first.

Sometimes our neighbors and friends think hard of us because we call them Gentiles; but, bless your souls, we are all Gentiles. The Latter-day Saints are all Gentiles in a national capacity. The gospel came to us among the Gentiles. We are not Jews, and the Gentile nations have got to hear the gospel first. The whole Christian world have got to hear the gospel, and when they reject it the law will be bound and the testimony sealed, and it will turn to the house of Israel. Up to the present day we have been called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and we have had to do it. For the last time we have been warning the world, and we have been engaged in that work for forty-five years.

When Joseph Smith was called of God it required faith, inspiration and the power of the Almighty to rest upon him to enable him to organize the church and kingdom of God and to preach the gospel against the traditions of the Christian world, for they had spiritualized the Bible until there was not a remnant left in a literal point of view. Hence the inhabitants of the earth were not looking for the church and kingdom of God to be established in their midst. Darkness has prevailed upon the earth, and does to-day, in all the nations, and this causes silence to reign and all eternity is pained because of the sin, wickedness and abominations which prevail throughout the whole Christian or Gentile world, and throughout the whole Jewish world, for darkness prevails upon the face of all the earth, and the Lord is calling upon all the inhabitants thereof to repent and receive the gospel, and when they have done so to gather out of Babylon to the place he has appointed for the dwelling place of his Saints. The Latter-day Saints heard this gospel among the Gentiles wherever they dwelt, in almost every nation under heaven, and by this gospel we have been gathered out unto Zion. We have been gathered here for a certain purpose, and that purpose is to fulfill the revelations of God.

When we left Missouri and Nauvoo, leaving behind the graves of our fathers and children, we were driven by our enemies into this desert, in the expectation that we should perish, and for nothing but because we believed revelation and prophecy and in living prophets and servants of God. We thought it was hard to be driven from our homes and lands, which we had bought of our government, and paid the money for; but I will say to the Latter-day Saints that if we had not come here there certainly would have been a flood of prophecy fallen unfulfilled, prophecy in regard to the mountains of Israel, and the great company gathering up thereto, with regard to the lifting up of a standard therein, and the building of cities and the temple of God in their midst. All these things would have fallen unfulfilled if we had not come to these mountains and fulfilled them. And so with many other prophecies. We have been called together to perform the work of the Lord, and now the Lord looks to us to fulfill our covenants and keep his commandments. If we do this he has made great promises unto us. The Lord has given the holy priesthood unto the elders of Israel, and he requires at our hands to fulfill all these revelations and commandments; and in regard to the parable which I have read, I, as an individual, feel that it is necessary for me, and I may say that it is necessary for the whole people, to have oil in our lamps if we expect to see and comprehend the things of the kingdom of God.

The Lord has chosen a royal priesthood and a holy people from among the weak things of the world, in fulfillment of his revelations; and we have been commanded to go forth and bear record of these things, and we have done it. We should have been condemned and the curse of God would have rested upon us if we had not, because the full set time has come to build up and favor Zion, to build up the kingdom of God, to warn the world and prepare them for the judgments of the Almighty. The Millennium is dawning upon the world, we are at the end of the sixth thousand year, and the great day of rest, the Millennium of which the Lord has spoken, will soon dawn and the Saviour will come in the clouds of heaven to reign over his people on the earth one thousand years. The Lord has a great work ahead and he is preparing a people to do it before his coming. Now the question arises here, brethren and sisters, are we prepared in our hearts? Do we realize these things? As a people do we realize our responsibilities before the Lord? The Lord has raised up a kingdom of priests here in the last days to establish his church and kingdom, and to prepare the way for the second coming of the Son of Man, and the God of heaven has put into the hands of his servants the keys of the kingdom, and he has said—"Whatever I have decreed in these my servants shall be fulfilled, for to them is given power to bind and to seal both on the earth and in heaven, against the day of the wrath of Almighty God, which is to be poured out upon the world."

I think, many times, that we, as elders of Israel and as Latter-day Saints, come far short of realizing our position before the Lord. The work required at our hands is great and mighty; it is the work of Almighty God. We are held responsible for presenting the gospel of Christ to all the nations of the earth, to warn the Gentiles, to prepare for the return of the lost ten tribes of Israel and for carrying the gospel to the whole twelve tribes of Israel. We are held responsible for all this and for building temples to the Most High, wherein we can enter and attend to ordinances for the salvation of our dead. There are fifty thousand million spirits shut up in the spirit world who never saw the face of a prophet, apostle or inspired man in their lives. No man having the authority of God ever declared the words of life and salvation unto them, and without authority their ministrations are useless, for this is what the priesthood is for. The God of heaven has ordained this from eternity to eternity. These persons in the spirit world died in the flesh without the law, without the gospel, and they are shut up in prison. Joseph Smith is preaching to them, and so are thousands of the elders of Israel who have died and gone to the other side of the veil. George A. Smith, who dwelt with us until within the last few days, will take part, with joy and rejoicing, with his brethren in the great work the other side of the veil. When I saw ten or twelve thousand people met in this tabernacle to pay their last respects to the body of that man, I thought to myself—"How much larger a congregation surrounds his spirit, in the spirit world." Yes, they number millions there to where we have units here, and the servants of God will preach to them the same as Jesus preached to the spirits in prison. While his body lay three days and nights in the tomb he went and preached to the spirits in prison, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, that they might receive part in the resurrection, according to the testimony which they received. As I said before, the God of heaven requires this at your hands. They will not baptize anybody in the spirit world; there is no baptism there, there is no marrying or giving in marriage there; all these ordinances have to be performed on the earth. Paul says, in referring to this subject—"Why are ye baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not why then are ye baptized for the dead?" The Lord holds us responsible for going to and building temples, that we may attend therein to the ordinances necessary for the salvation of the dead.

In every dispensation the Lord has had those who were before ordained to do a certain work. We all dwell in the presence of God before we came here, and such men as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the ancient prophets, Jesus and the apostles received their appointments before the world was made. They were ordained before the foundation of the world to come and tabernacle here in the flesh and to work for the cause of God, and this because of their faith and faithfulness. You can see the great variety of spirits that have dwelt in the presence of God, from these who are in the presence of God, down to the devils. A good many of the hosts of heaven were cast out because of their wickedness. Lucifer, son of the morning, and those who followed after him were cast down to earth, and they dwell here to this day—a hundred to every man, woman and child that breathes the breath of life. They dwell here without bodies, only what tabernacles they can get into, to rule and preside over.

ernacles they can get into, to rule and preside over.

We are required to build temples in which to attend to the ordinances of the house of the Lord, that the prison doors may be opened, and the prisoners go free. The world say—"We do not believe in such stuff." We know that perfectly well; it was so in the days of Noah and Lot, but the unbelief of the people did not stop the flood and the fire, neither will the unbelief of this generation stay the hand of God one moment. The angels of God have been waiting in the temple in heaven for forty-five years to go forth to reap down the earth. The wheat and the tares must grow together until harvest; the people must be warned, the Saints gathered out, Zion built up, temples reared, the living warned, the dead redeemed, that the skirts of the elders of Israel may be clean before all men.

It is by the power of God that the elders have been sustained in days past and gone. And I want to say to my brethren—and what I say to them I take to myself—we should wake up, we should open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and we should open our hearts to understand our appointment and position before the Lord; for if, as Latter-day Saints, we are going to stop praying, lose the light of the Holy Ghost, and turn to the beggarly elements of the world, the Lord will have to say to us—"Get out of my way, my purposes can not be thwarted;" and he will raise up somebody else to perform this work. The Lord has never told any lies or made any false promises. "Who am I," saith the Lord, "that I promise and do not fulfill?" "Who am I," saith the Lord, "that I command and am not obeyed?" The amount of it is that the promises of the Lord are yea and amen, and though the heavens and the earth pass away his word never will fail of its fulfillment.

In one paragraph of the revelation which I read to you this afternoon it says—

"And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying, hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. O ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunders, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trumpet, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor, and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not! Behold the day has come when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full."

How often has the Lord sent prophets, as in the days of Noah, Lot, Abraham, Enoch, Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young? How often have the elders of Israel lifted up their voices to the inhabitants of the earth and been rejected? Will not these things rise in judgment against them? Yea verily they will. The Lord has offered the fulness of the everlasting gospel to the inhabitants of the earth to-day, and they refuse to receive it. Brother Pratt, here, myself and thousands of us have travelled ten thousand miles on foot, without purse or scrip, carrying our knapsack or valise, and we have waded swamps, swam rivers, and begged our bread from door to door to preach the gospel to this generation. And how many have we got to believe it? Two of a city and one of a family, as the prophet has said, and we have gathered them to Zion. Nevertheless the warning voice has gone forth to the world. But what do we see to-day? What do the Gods, the heavens and all eternity see? They see a generation of men and women making war against God and his Christ, making war against prophets and apostles, and laboring night and day to overpower and annihilate every principle of salvation and eternal life which God has restored to the world. And I will here say, in the ears of this congregation, that were this not the dispensation of the fulness of times, and were it not for the decrees which the Lord has made in relation to it, one of which is that he will set up a kingdom which shall stand for ever, there is not an apostle or Latter-day Saint on the face of the earth but would have to seal his testimony with his blood, as has almost every other apostle that ever breathed the breath of life. I say that were it not for these things we should all have to follow our leaders, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, who laid down their lives for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. But hear it ye Gentile nations and all yemations of the earth, the Lord Almighty has set to his hand to build up his kingdom on the earth, and he will not be thwarted. The Lord is going to make a short work in the earth, and he will defend his anointed, his prophets, his Zion and his people. This is the decree of Almighty God. The eyes of all heaven are over this people, they are over the earth, over the Gentiles and over the Jews, and the Lord holds in his hands the destinies of all men. And we are commanded of God to rise up and warn the nations of the earth; and we call upon the Latter-day Saints, upon the elders of Israel, upon the mothers and daughters in Zion to lay aside their fooleries and nonsense, and to no longer let their hearts be set upon the fashions of the world, but turn to and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the revelations of God given in these days, and get the Holy Spirit and walk in the light of the Lord, that your eyes may be opened that you may see and comprehend the position you occupy on the earth, for you are held under great responsibility for the manner in which you do your duty and magnify your callings before