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CHICAGO TRADE.

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DISCOURSE BY PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR,

DELIVERED

In Kaysville, Davis County, Sunday, Dec. 9th, 1883.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

The age in which we live—The position the Latter-day Saints occupy—The progress they have made through the medium of the Gospel—The hatred manifested against the Saints of God—Cain—Sufferings of former-day Saints—Sufferings of the Latter-day Saints—The attacks of religious fanatics and political demagogues—The Mormons are not scared—Duties of the Latter-day Saints—The consequences of allowing our children to be educated by our enemies—The work of our enemies: their aims—Freedom extended to all sects in Utah—What the Mormons claim—Their belief in plural marriage—Institutions introduced by Christian civilizers—No yielding of the principles God has revealed—Conclusion.

If you will give me your attention and your faith and prayers I will endeavor to address you. It always affords me pleasure to meet with the Saints of God. In company with my brethren we have been traveling up and down lately, associating with the Saints in the different conferences, trying to speak of things in which we are all interested, things pertaining to the building up of the Kingdom of God, and the establishing of His Zion upon the earth.

I have been very much interested in the remarks which have been made by the various speakers who have addressed you. They have touched upon subjects which concern the whole people.

We are living in a peculiar day and age of the world, a day that is pregnant with very great events, a day that has been spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world was. We are living in an age when the Gospel has been restored to the earth; and that Gospel in this day, as in other ages of the world, has brought life and immortality to light. The spirit of truth, even the gift of the Holy Ghost, has again been restored to the children of men by the opening of the heavens, by the ministering of holy angels, and by the voice of God. A message has been sent forth to the nations to gather together His elect from the four quarters of the earth. We have been gathered together, therefore, according to the word of the Lord, and notwithstanding the numerous afflictions and trials to which we have been exposed for these many years, we possess many privileges, many enjoyments. In a word, we have been greatly blessed of the Lord. Instead of wandering about in sheep skins and goat skins—we have done very little of that comparatively speaking—it may be said of us that "the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage."

It behoves us, therefore, at all times, as far as possible, to comprehend the position which we occupy. Especially does it rest upon the Holy Priesthood, who have the manipulation and management of the affairs of the Church of God upon the earth, to comprehend the position and relationship which they sustain to the Kingdom of God, to the people of God, to the Church of God, and the Zion of God, that they may be enabled to act wisely, prudently and intelligently, and to pursue that course, and help others to pursue it, which leads to prosperity, peace and happiness, in this life, and to exaltations, thrones, principalities and powers in the eternal worlds. We are here for that purpose. We are thus gathered that we may be instructed in regard to those principles, that we may obtain a knowledge of the way of life. Therefore, it is well for each and all of us to consider the position that we occupy.

There has been a good deal said about schools and a variety of other things, all of which has been very well said and very correctly. If men were wise they would need no instruction of that kind. But then we are not wise, we are not educated, we are not intelligent, in regard to the things of God, and yet, comparatively speaking, we are. When we compare ourselves with the rest of mankind, we have made very great progress; for through the medium of the Everlasting Priesthood, by the revelation of the will of God to man, and through the ministration of His Holy Spirit, we have drunk of the stream whereof maketh glad the city of our God. That life and immortality which has been revealed through the Gospel has given unto us a glimpse of things that the rest of mankind are entirely ignorant of. No matter how sincere they may be, and many of them are very sincere in their religious faith and worship, yet they are ignorant of many of the great principles pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and they cannot know them only in the same way, and through the same channel that we received our information—that is, by obedience to the Gospel of Christ, and by the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost. For we are positively told that no man knows the things of God but by the Spirit of God, and the way to obtain that Spirit is the same now as it was in former times. How did they then receive it? What was the instruction then given? "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." And what then? "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." This is the way pointed out in the Scriptures. Are there any other instructions given at variance with this? Certainly not. And if a knowledge of the things of God can only be obtained through the medium of the Spirit of God, and if that Spirit can only be received through obedience to the plan or order laid down in the Gospel, then those who have not yielded obedience to that Gospel are not competent judges of those principles. Then, again, when we come to ourselves, the same reasoning and the same principles hold good. When men are humble, pure and virtuous, and seek unto the Lord for His guidance, for the light of His Holy Spirit to lead them unto the paths of life, that they may comprehend His law, His word and His will—and then obey it as it is made manifest to them—such persons, those brethren and sisters who follow this plan, are a thousand times more likely to comprehend the things of God than those that are careless, indifferent, foolish and wayward, and who neglect the blessings and the opportunities which are offered to them. The light that is in those people becomes darkness, while the path of the others is like that of the just which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. The whole human family, it is true, have a portion of the Spirit of God, but not in the light that we speak of it. A portion of the Spirit of God is given, we are told, to every man to profit withal; but it is the Gospel that brings life and immortality to light. It is the Gospel that places men in communion with God. It is the Gospel that puts us in possession of that principle of certainty that no one can comprehend but those who are in possession of it, and therefore in that respect there is a very material difference between them and us.

It is not strange to me to see the kind of spirit and animus that is frequently manifested against the Saints of God. This principle and spirit of antagonism to the rule of God and to His government and laws, is as old as the creation of the world. It began in heaven. The third part of the hosts of heaven, we are told, were cast out because of their rebellion against God. We are informed in our late revelations, that Satan desired to take away the free agency of man, just as men are seeking to take away ours just as men have sought to do in different ages. Satan rebelled against his Father, and he was cast out, and one third of those spirits that had not received tabernacles were also cast out with him. What did he do when he was cast out? He began to persuade the sons of men to do the same thing on earth that he had done in heaven. You can read of Cain and the course he pursued, and yet Cain professed—and there are a great many who do it now—to recognize God his Heavenly Father, while at the same time he was in league with the devil. Cain was called the great Master Mahan. Still he was a religious "cuss." Excuse the expression; but we have a great many such to-day. Abel was told to offer up sacrifice, and he did so. He brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them up as a sacrifice to the Lord; and the Lord accepted his offering. Cain offered up the first fruits of the earth. He was going to be, as I have said, a religious "cuss," a religious hypocrite—as if God was not acquainted with what he was doing!—as if He could not read the contents of his heart!—as if He did not know that Cain had made a compact with Satan! He knew all about it, and understood all about the principle. Cain went to work and offered his sacrifice. But the Lord knew of his hypocrisy and deception and of his plotting and planing against Him; for we are told that Cain loved Satan more than he loved God. The Lord would not accept his offering. Cain felt annoyed about it. He wanted to serve the devil, and at the same time receive the blessing of God, the same as many do to-day. They would like the blessing of God but want to have the devil mixed up with it. Finally, the Lord spake to him. He asked him why he was wrath, and why his countenance was fallen? I presume that he tried to make out that he had not been treated right, in that the Lord accepted his brother's offering and would not accept his. But the Lord told him: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted, and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." After a while he began to do something that men are guilty of to-day. What was it? He coveted his brother's flocks and herds, as many people covet our property here. What else? In order to get him out of the way he killed him. He apparently had nobody to recommend to do the killing—as some are recommending that we be killed—so he had to do the business himself. The Lord again interrogated Cain. "Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." And the Lord went on to tell him that for his crime he should be looked upon as a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.

I need not go into further detail: I simply desired to show that this spirit of hatred against God, His laws and His people is nothing new. The history of this world is full of examples of this kind. We are told that in former times the servants of the Most High wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; it was said in Jesus' day that they killed the Prophets and stoned those that were sent unto them; and finally, when the Son, himself, came they said this is the heir, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. Jesus said, If they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry? They beheaded John the Baptist, they crucified the Savior; and His Apostles were martyred for the same truths that He, himself, had proclaimed; and the Christians of those days under the rule of Pagan Rome were thrown in to the arena to be devoured by wild beasts; they were imprisoned, slaughtered, and tortured in every conceivable way, and it is said of one Roman emperor, Nero, that he had the Saints covered with inflammable materials and then set on fire to light the streets of the Imperial City. When Christians were in possession of the same spirit they did no better, as exhibited in the persecutions and destructions of the Waldenses, the Albigenses and the Huguenots, in the application of the tortures of the thumbscrew, the rack, the faggot and the fire, and of other species of refined cruelty by those who professed to be the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Our history has been a history of the same kind of scenes. Joseph Smith, in his lifetime, was persecuted and driven from place to place. He was maligned, vilified, scourged, tarred and feathered and finally murdered in cold blood by a mob with blackened faces, in violation of the pledge of protection of the governor of the State of Illinois. It may be asked, why are we here to-day in these valleys of the mountains? Because we had to flee from Missouri to Illinois; from Illinois into these mountains, to seek for that protection among the savages of the plains which was denied us by the civilization of the age under the auspicies of a boasted Christianity; and the same spirit of vilification, falsification and abuse still follows us.

At frequently recurring periods frenzied demonstrations are made by religious fanatics and political demagogues against the Latter-day Saints; a hue and a cry is set up by these pretended apostles of freedom and champions of the rights of man, and it is made to appear that "there are terrible things in the land of Ham, and wonderful things in the Red Sea."

Some people get scared. I am not a particle scared. "Why," they say, "don't you think they will swallow us?" If they did, I think they would be something like the whale that swallowed Jonah—they would throw us up again. I do not think we are quite swallowed up yet; but we should have been but for the interposition of the Almighty. There is one thing, however, that the world does not comprehend—and I think, sometimes, that the Saints do not comprehend it—and that is that the Lord reigns. There is a Scripture which says: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice. The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble." If the Lord did did not reign we should be in a very peculiar position; in fact, to use a somewhat vulgar expression, we should be "in a bad row of stumps." But the Lord has decreed to accomplish certain purposes. He decreed it before the world was framed or the morning stars sang together for joy. He laid out the plan associated with humanity that He decreed should be accomplished. He understood about the fall of man. He understood about the redemption that would be required to redeem man and bring him back into His presence. He understood all about the opposition to the principles of truth and the power of Satan as it would be manifested in the different ages of the world, and the ruin, desolation, misery, confusion and destruction which would insue inconsequence of Satan possessing this power and dominion, for he is called the prince and power of the air, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience and leads them captive at his will. They don't know this, but it is nevertheless true. And then the Lord understood another principle, namely, that the time would come when the power of Satan and the power of the wicked would be overthrown; when the Zion of God would be established; when a reign of righteousness would be introduced; when there would be a communion between the Priesthood on the earth and the Priesthood in the heavens, and when correct principles would be introduced, and the rule and government of God would be established in the earth, and continue until the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ, and He would reign with universal empire over the nations of the earth. This is a thing that has been spoken of by all the prophets, and it is the time of the restitution of all things since the world was.

Very well, this is the work, then, which is committed unto us, and it is well for us to comprehend the position we occupy; to understand the path we walk in; as the Scriptures say: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

As a people we have an important work to perform. We must proclaim the Gospel to the nations of the earth. For this purpose, we are first gathered together. Then we are taught, then we are organized. We have our quorums of various kinds. We have the First Presidency; we have the Twelve; we have the Presidents of Stakes; we have High Councils; we have Bishops; we have Priests, Teachers and Deacons; we have Seventies, High Priests, etc., and all of these various organizations have their several duties to perform. It behoves every one of them to comprehend those duties, and to fulfil them. And I would say to the Presidents of Stakes; I would say to the Bishops; I would say to High Councils; I would say to all men holding authority, Priests, Teachers, etc., that they are not here to condone men's offences and to pass by and look over the iniquities of men, but to purge them out, to prune the tree, to purify the Church of the Living God. These officers are placed in the Church for the perfecting of the Saints. Do the Saints need perfecting? Yes, or you would not find such things as Brother Joseph F. Smith referred to this morning. They would not be known among us. People would not be found shuffling their children over into the hands of the enemy to be educated—to be led down to death. If such people ever get into the celestial kingdom—and I very much doubt that they ever will—they will find those children that might have been there with them wallowing in misery; and those children will point up to them, if they may, and say, "Father! mother! I blame you for this; for it was you that led me to it." I tell you such people will reap sorrow in this world and in the world to come. Therefore, be careful how you treat your children; not the part of fathers and mothers to them, and not the part of unnatural monsters, who, having been enlightened to a degree by the Spirit of the Lord, trample under foot the things of God and cast your offspring into the arms of the corrupt, of the evil and of those who are seeking your life and striving to destroy you.

What, then, would you do? Would you entertain harsh feelings? No; but if I had been living in Adam's time and had had children, I do not think I should have sent them to be educated by Cain. Would you? I think some of you would. I do not think I should. I do not think I would do it now, and I do not think any decent man would—no man or woman who has the light of the Spirit of God, could do it. Well, but what would you do? Would you persecute them? No; but I would let them severely alone. They are very plausible. They are very nice. So was the devil. Like him some of those people would like to deprive us of our free agency. They are of their father, the devil, and the works of their father they will do. There are some ministers of the Gospel, even, occupying prominent positions, who advocate the use of the cannon, the musket, and the bayonet, in order to rob, murder and plunder the Latter-day Saints. What for? Because we happen to claim the right of free agency in regard to our religious worship and think we ought to enjoy it, and when we do we feel we are simply carrying out a constitutional principle and are not interfering with anybody. Whose religion do we interfere with? In Salt Lake City we have Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics and others; do we interfere with them? No. Do we persecute them? No. Do we get up tirades against them? No. Do we publish falsehoods about them? No. The truth would be too bad if told about some of them. There is no need of lying; and if any of them were persecuted in any way or in any place among our people, I would be the first to step forward in their defence; because I do believe in the free agency of man, though they don't and while they boast of this being a land of freedom they seek to bring us into bondage. Why is it then that we are persecuted? Who have we sinned against? What laws have we broken? Will they please tell us wherein we have violated the laws of the Constitution of the United States? Will any of the savants at Washington or anywhere else tell us what we have done? They make us guilty of crime only on the principle of falsehood, defamation and the violation of truth, for you know, and we all know, that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the charges that are made against us are baseless fabrications. I am not speaking of these things in anger. I feel more to sympathize with those people than anything else; but I certainly don't want them to teach my children. As I have said, we do not interfere with them in their religious worship. Are they Baptists? They can baptize by immersion if they like. Are they sprinklers? Then they can sprinkle if they like. I do not propose to interfere with them. But because we believe in certain principles which God has revealed they must go to work to deprive us of the privilege of putting our belief into practice. As I have said, there is nothing new in that. It don't affect me one particle, but I wished to mention some of these particulars for your consideration, that you may comprehend your true status to-day. For example, they passed a law which we consider unconstitutional, and which interferes with our religious rights. If I were to ask this congregation if they believed plural marriage to be a part of our religion—and that it was revealed by God and that we did not enter into it until He revealed it unto us—why this congregation would all say they believed in that thing. What! believe in plural marriage? Yes. Why do you believe in it? Because it is according to your preconceived ideas? No; but because God revealed it. That is why I believe in it. That is why you believe in it. Now, all who believe as I do, hold up your right hands. [A sea of hands went up.] All of a contrary belief make it manifest by the same sign. [Not a hand was raised.] There is not one contrary vote. Now, they interfere with us and say we shall not worship God according to the dictates of our conscience; but that we shall marry just as they do, and commit vile irregularities "out of the marriage relation" as they do. What is that? Why, it is a doctrine of the devil. As I have said, he sought to take away the free agency of man, and because of that he was cast out of heaven. They are striving to do the same thing in these United States to-day. They are seeking to deprive you and I and thousands of people in this Territory of religious liberty, without trial, without investigation. They have proceeded on the principle of tyranny and coercion, if not on the principle of blood, just as Cain did. Well, shall we feel very angry? I don't. I honor men who act as men, but I cannot honor men whom I know to be hypocrites. Still we have these things to suffer. Our Elders go out to preach the Gospel, and they meet the hireling priests, who, because they cannot withstand their arguments, get angry, and when some men get angry, as you are aware, they act on the "knock down" principle—or use tar and feathers, the bludgeon, or some other of those refined adjuncts of civilization, and if these will not do, then they take to shooting, a practice which has been resorted to in different places not so very long ago, against our Elders. Why do they do this? Because, say they, we preach false doctrine, and they recommend that the musket and the bayonet be brought to bear upon us. What a strange argument against truth! Yet these are things that are sought to be crowded upon us because of our religious faith.

As I have already inquired, what shall we do? Do as they do? Oh no! They talk about our corruption. Let me ask you who introduced prostitution here in our midst? Has it been done by this people—the Latter-day Saints? No; for a man or a woman guilty of anything of that kind is immediately severed from the Church. You know they are. Who, then, introduced prostitution? Our Christian civilizers. Who maintain prostitution here? Our Christian civilizers. That is a fact. And they are making some headway in this Stake, I am told in regard to billiards, etc. Let me ask, who introduced billiard halls and gambling hells in our midst? Our Christian civilizers. Have any of our people done so? If they have, I say to you Bishops, cut them off from the Church. Who maintain these institutions here by law? Our Christian civilizers—Christian judges, associated with Christian churches—crowd them upon us and we cannot get rid of them without violating law. That is the position we are in to-day? Do we want much more of that civilization? I think not. Who sustain drunkenness and saloons in our midst? Our Christian civilizers. How many saloons have we in Salt Lake City? [President Joseph Smith: Forty-five] Forty-five rum shops in Salt Lake City! Who sell this rum and keep these establishments? Our Christian civilizers. And who patronize these places? Sometimes some of our own people thus disgrace themselves—who ought to hide their heads in shame to be found mixed up with and taking part in these corrupting and damning influences. Can't you Latter-day Saints let such things alone? Oh for shame! For shame! Have we any people engaged in this degrading business that we know of? [President Joseph F. Smith: In Salt Lake City two who profess to be Latter-day Saints.] They ought to be cut off from the Church. Any man who will deal in that liquid damnation ought to be cut off from the Church. They don't belong here. A saloon is not one of the institutions of modern Christianity. Shall we join hand and glove with them? No, we can't do it. Do we hate them? I don't. If they were hungry I would feed them; if they were naked I would clothe them; if they were sick I would administer to them; that would be my feeling; but I say, my soul, enter not thou into their secrets and mine honor with them be not thou united. That is what I say; and while I would treat them aright and treat them kindly, yet I don't want them to teach my children; I don't want them in my house or to be associated with them. What, with no outsiders? Yes. There are thousands of honorable men, tens of thousands and millions of them in the United States and all over the world. It is not honorable men who engage in the things that we are talking of; but a bastard Christianity, which, in its present methods towards us is a system of hypocrisy and falsehood.

What then would you do? Why, let us attend to our own business, go on with the work that the Lord has given us to do. Let us look well to ourselves, every man and every woman. Let us train up our children in the ways of life. Let us see that they are instructed in the laws of God, and that they are kept from the snares of the adversary. Avoid corruption of every kind. Preserve our bodies pure. Preserve our spirits pure. Be honest, upright and virtuous. Sustain every principle that is good, everything that is calculated to lead to God, to truth, to virtue, and to the establishment of correct principles among men. God expects these things at our hands. It is for the President of this Stake, and for the Bishops he has around him, and for all men in authority, to set their faces against wickedness and corruption, and wherever they find any evil, to root it out and not condone it. We do not want corruption in our midst; and men or women, professing to be Saints, that cannot preserve their bodies and spirits pure and that can not adhere to the principles of the truth as God has revealed them, we don't want them among us.

Again, there are some other things to which I wish to refer. I have heard some people say, "Don't you think that we are in very great danger now?" We should be if the Lord did not rule. We should always have been in danger if the Lord did not reign. We should always have been in danger if He had not taken care of us. "But," say some, "don't you think that when our Legislature meet they had better go to work and pass a law doing away with polygamy?" No; no such thought ever enters my mind; and as I said in the few remarks I made this morning:

"We want no cowards in our ranks,
Who will our colors fly;
We call for valiant-hearted men,
Who are not afraid to die."

No yielding up of principles that God has revealed. What, turn our backs on Jehovah! and place ourselves in the hands of men who would deprive us of the last vestige of liberty, and take our lives if they had the power? What! shall we forsake God our Heavenly Father? No, never! And all who are for God and His Kingdom say Amen [The audience responded with a loud "Amen."] We want no trembling in the knees, nor anything of that kind around us. Let those who hold such ideas go among the other class and advocate their views with them, but not with us. These are my feelings and my views in relation to this matter. If we can be true to ourselves, true to our God; if we can maintain our virtue, our uprightness, our integrity; if we can be honest and upright and cultivate the spirit of kindness, harmony and union among ourselves, God will take care of Israel, for He will fight our battles. And what else? I will tell you what you will see by and by. You will see that Scripture fulfilled wherein it says, "the wicked shall slay the wicked." And the time is not very far distant when another Scripture will be fulfilled, namely, "that every man that will not take up his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety." In Zion there will be safety. We must therefore cleave to the truth and work righteousness, and God will take care of the balance. The Kingdom of God will be built up. The will of God must be done on the earth as it is in heaven. Will such a thing as that ever take place on the earth? Yes, as sure as you and I are here to-day it will. Then, if the Kingdom of God is to come; if the will of God is ever to be done on the earth as it is done in heaven, where can it commence except it is among the Latter-day Saints; for there is no other people under the heavens who acknowledge the authority of God? They do not really acknowledge the rule of God or the government of God anywhere among all the nations of the earth; and if His will is ever done on earth as it is done in heaven, where shall it start but in the land of Zion and among the people of Zion?

Now, I would say to your Presidents, and to your Bishops, and to your High Counselors, and you brethren holding the Priesthood in this Stake of Zion, cannot you begin to introduce these principles here, and cannot you fathers and you mothers do the same? It will not be long before the most of us who are present will pass behind the veil, and would you not like to be found on the side of the Kingdom of God; that when you meet the general assembly and Church of the First Born in the heavens and God the Father of all, you can say, "I have been true to God; I have been true to the principles which He has revealed; I have been true to the Kingdom of God, to the Zion of God, and to the Church of God, and now I am here, O Father, in thy hands, and I am ready to do anything that thou hast for me to do." This is the position in which we want to place ourselves. It is not what we shall eat or what we shall drink. We are doing first rate about these things. You don't look as if you suffered much in the flesh here about. And I will tell you another thing, and that is, as fast as you are prepared for it, God will not only deliver you from your enemies, but He will pour riches into your laps until you will not be able to contain them, although to some riches would be the greatest curse that could be given them. You, the people of Zion, will be the richest of all people. You will possess not only the riches of this world, but the riches of the world to come; for when the earth is redeemed we expect to come back and inherit it. We shall then have a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. We expect then to have our place here, for "blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." We are working for these things, and we will go on with the work and let the world wag. Let them get up a commotion once in a while. There is nothing new in that. It is the old rick. If we are faithful God will bless us, and Zion will arise and shine, and the glory of God will rest upon her. But woe! to them that fight against Zion, for God will fight against them. Amen.

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