

# DISCOURSE BY PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR,

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday afternoon, May 4th, 1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE

For a short time past I have been away from this city visiting in our southern settlements in company with President George Q. Cannon, several of the Twelve Apostles and a number of leading brethren of the Church. We have been south as far as St. George. We visited the Temple on one day, and afterwards met with the people of that city and neighborhood in a two days meeting. We also held a number of meetings in the different settlements on our way there and on our return. We found, generally, among the Saints a feeling to observe the laws of God, to keep His commandments, to live their religion, and to pursue a course that is right and honorable, and acceptable before God our Heavenly Father. The roads have generally been very bad on account of storms but the members of the company enjoyed themselves very well. The people whom we visited seemed to appreciate our coming and the instructions which they received; and I am pleased to meet with you in this your Stake Conference to day.

There are one or two subjects that I have thought I would treat upon slightly, and to this end I ask your attention. It is proper that we should have a thorough understanding of all things associated with our position as a Territory. It is proper, likewise, that we should understand our duties and responsibilities to the nation in which we live. It is also proper that we should understand our duties in a social capacity, duties which we owe to each other, and then it is proper we should understand our relationship to God our Heavenly Father. As intelligent beings, mortal and immortal, acting in a dual capacity, associated with the earth and with the heavens, with things past, things present, and things to come—it is right and proper, I say, that we should comprehend the position that we occupy before God our Heavenly Father, before the nation in which we live, among ourselves as individuals and communities, and be able to act wisely, prudently, intelligently, and according to the laws of God and of the constitutional and proper laws of men.

A thing has occurred in relation to a change of time in this country that I thought I would refer to. I was informed by the Superintendent of our telegraph company that they were purposing to change the time, in the various offices of the company. I immediately telegraphed back to him to stop these things until a general understanding without a general understanding would have a tendency to produce confusion, and confusion is not a thing that should exist in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, with the intelligence that we profess to be in possession of. I found a little thing of the same kind in St. George. I do not know, hardly, how it originated; but when we came to look at our watches and compare them with the time on the town clock there was a difference of about fifteen minutes. Some person had got the idea there that they ought to be governed by the meridian of St. George, which differs a little from that of Salt Lake. This change in St. George was altogether outside of the change that has been adopted in many of the cities in the east. While it is proper for people to understand the true meridian of the places they live in, it would not be considered right for every place to set up a standard of its own, which would lead to a good deal of uncertainty and confusion.

With regard to the alteration made in Salt Lake, any change that is for the better is a thing we ought always to adopt, but anything that tends, as I have said, to confusion ought always to be avoided. Not being informed of the arrangement that had been made, nor of its nature and supposing it to be simply a railroad change, I thought it was rather a strange thing for the people here, say in this city, to change their time at the instance of a railroad or a telegraph company, which must of necessity have their time regulated according to circumstances. But on enquiring more fully into the matter I have found that it is a principle that has been generally adopted—if I have been correctly informed—by the leading cities and states of the east; but just how far and how extensive the change is I am not at present prepared to say. It struck me immediately upon hearing it that if it was anything of a national character and was proposed to be universally adopted it would be a thing we ought to adopt, but if it was a sectional affair it was a thing to be avoided as tending to promote disorder and confusion. I will refer to one or two things wherein every body who reflects a little upon a subject of this kind will see that confusion must necessarily occur unless the change is general. For instance, here on this Temple Block there is a small building or observatory wherein certain instruments are kept for regulating the time, and for other purposes associated with astronomical observations, etc. I remember a number of years ago, at the instance and request of some government officials, who were here, who I believe, were officers of the United States Geological Survey, President

Young ordered a large, heavy rock to be cut and placed in that building for astronomical purposes, and up to the present time, from that place, observations have been taken from time to time, to place us in a correct position in relation to the meridian in which we live, and to correct our time accordingly. As you are aware we have of our own quite an extensive telegraphic arrangement that extends very nearly all over the Territory. That was gotten up years ago in order that we might have rapid communication throughout all of our settlements, and that we at any time could obtain intelligence pertaining to matters associated with disorders connected with Indians and other circumstances that might call forth our action, and this has been used generally among other things to regulate the time of the Territory; that when the meridian was corrected here the proper time would be telegraphed to all the telegraph offices in the Territory; this was adjusted twice a week and hence they all had the same time precisely, and all our watches were correct—that is, if they kept good time; if they did not, of course, they were not correct; but all good watches, no matter where we happened to be in the Territory, indicated the same time. Hence I was a little surprised at the difference of time in St. George, and I told them such things were not proper, ought not to be, and could not be sanctioned, and the same thing would apply to other places and other circumstances.

As we reached nearer home I heard that the City Council of Salt Lake had adopted the new time. That might be all well enough provided other things were right. But the City Council of Salt Lake does not govern the Territory. There are a number of cities in the Territory with their Mayors, city officers and municipal regulations possessing equal rights with the city of Salt Lake, and although it might be thought proper to regulate matters in regard to this thing, say in this city, yet at the same time it would be equally as proper that other cities, other towns and other peoples should be consulted. Hence in view of these things, being president of the telegraph company, I sent a telegram, such as I before referred to, requesting the gentleman who had charge of our telegraphic operations here to stop everything of that kind until we could have a correct understanding of these matters and see how far they extended and what was their nature; for it is proper that we in a Territorial capacity should act in accord in a matter of this kind. I have been told since by him and others that the thing is very generally entered into, and if it is, then it would be proper for us to adopt it, and if not, it would not be proper. There is a very great difference of time, for instance, between here and Boston, and there is quite a difference between here and California. We are a long way west of one and east of the other, and this difference of longitude produces differences of time as all who have studied this subject are acquainted with.

Now, then, this is one of those things that it is necessary to consider well before changes are made, in order that unanimity and harmony may prevail among us in regard to things that appear very small in themselves, but which would make great confusion if not properly regulated. Our Territory extends several hundred miles. For instance St. George is about 300 miles south of this place—with some variation, of course—and then our northern settlements extend quite a distance; but we can very easily regulate the matter of time in our Territory, because there is only a slight difference between one place and another, perhaps fifteen or sixteen minutes, as most of our important settlements lie in a belt nearly north and south with a limited extension east and west. If this change was not generally adopted in the United States then we should not be in harmony with them if we adopted it, and the same difficulties would exist as have existed heretofore, which is desirable should be removed, and I am inclined to think from what little I have heard that this change will perhaps be a very good one, and if so, after consulting the various authorities throughout the Territory, then we should feel at liberty to adopt it; but I do not think it is proper for one city, or two, or three, as the case may be, to make an arrangement affecting the whole Territory, because no City Council can go outside of its own city limits, and as all others are concerned, these are matters about which the people generally should be consulted, and therefore I sent the telegram previously mentioned, in order that we might look into these matters and have things adjusted upon correct principles, and if it is a national thing, of course we will comply with it, and if there are things that are loose about it we do not want it. We do not want to be changed about by irresponsible individuals and thrown into confusion even in so small a matter as time.

This may appear a very small thing to some, but it is one of those things that interferes with the order and harmony that ought to exist among peoples and nations. I might enter into considerable conversation about the way that things are arranged in regard to latitudes and longitudes and the various operations and principles that exist among the nations pertaining to these matters. But that is a subject that does not concern us at present and therefore I shall pass it by. Suffice it to say in regard to this proposed change, that if we find it is correct and general throughout the United States

or at least some of the leading prominent cities and states of these United States, there would be no great difficulty in us adopting it in this Territory; but I speak of it to show that it is not an individual affair, nor an affair that belongs to a city, nor two or three cities, but it is a thing that belongs to the Territory and ought to be considered by the people thereof.

There is another thing that I have heard a little about. There has been a very unpleasant affair associated with the trial of a murderer here who has been twice previously tried and convicted and still the matter is before the courts. Who is to blame, is not for me to say; that is a matter that is associated with the Judiciary, and they I suppose are responsible for their acts. It is customary, in many parts of these United States, when the Judiciary is supposed to have done wrong, to introduce "Judge Lynch," and for the people to constitute themselves into a tribunal and to take the responsibility of hanging the supposed criminals, or in some way taking their lives. I have heard that some remark had been made here in regard to this man, Hopt, who has, as we understand it, killed a young man under very aggravating circumstances, and that the people had felt very indignant about the course that has been pursued by the courts pertaining to this matter, and some one had cried out when he was on the way to prison, "Lynch him!" I want to state here that we do not want any lynching among us. Let other people do that kind of thing if they want to, it is not a doctrine we believe in, it is a principle that we are opposed to in every form and in every shape, and I thought I would speak of it to-day in order that you might know, at least, what our feelings are in relation to these matters. We have laws given us to be governed by; and I think we are told in one of our revelations that it is proper to obey every law that is constitutional. The Judiciary is a tribunal that has been appointed, and provisions made for it, by the Constitution of the United States, and there are laws passed for the arraignment of criminals, and for the adjustment of all matters pertaining to the Judiciary, and if inaccuracies should exist or even wrong or bias of any kind should prevail we have no right to change the order and principles which have been laid down by the Constitution of the United States and by the laws thereof; and if any officers of the law in the Judiciary, in their place, operating under government, transgress or violate the laws, they themselves are amenable and may be held accountable for their acts, and that is the proper way to adjust these matters, and not to take the law, as we say sometimes, "into our own hands;" we have delegated that power to another authority and must hold that authority responsible for its acts. A body of men assembled in the shape of a mob, under excitement, are not the proper tribunal to tamper with human life; and it is not proper for us as Latter-day Saints to embark in any such enterprises, but to maintain intact every law and every correct principle, and if others violate law, let them bear the responsibility and not us. We do not want to be mixed up with these affairs. We sometimes talk about the injustice we have received; very well, we are able to bear it quite as well as those who administer it, and we are prepared to abide the result. If laws are passed against us that are inimical to us and to our institutions, and which we conceive are in violation of the Constitution of the United States, we will try legal remedies and protect ourselves by those means that are provided by that instrumentality for the protection of the citizens of the United States. That is the position we should assume in relation to all our affairs. Therefore, having heard there was some excitement on foot in relation to this trial, I thought I would make this statement to you; and I say to you Latter-day Saints do not imbrue your hands in anybody's blood, but leave such matters to the due course of the law. We don't want to have anybody's blood upon our garments. Let those who commit such acts be responsible for them, be they right or be they wrong. We will seek redress for any and all of our grievances in a legitimate manner, such as is provided by our organic act and the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Now in regard to the question of polygamy about which there has been a great deal said: The nation in which we live is most egregiously ignorant upon this subject, and many of the legislators and others who dabble in it know nothing of what they are doing; they are perfectly ignorant, and every step they take is violative of the rights of American citizens, and has a tendency towards trampling under foot the Constitution of our common country. A gentleman, Mr. Edwards Pierpont, who was the Attorney General in President Grant's administration, called on me some time ago, when something came up in regard to this question. I told him that we considered that the laws which had been enacted against us were unconstitutional, and that we intended to test them by the principles laid down in the law, and by the statutes of the United States, and that we should contend for every constitutional right that belonged to us; and although we had withdrawn from voting yet we did not consider ourselves disfranchised. We withdrew from the polls, it is true; but we did so, as I told him, because we believe in being governed strictly by the law, and did not wish to place ourselves in the po-

sition of obstructionists, and therefore withdrew ourselves from the polls until we could have an opportunity of legally contesting the action of the Congress of the United States in this matter, and that we should certainly contend for our rights inch by inch and would never give up one iota of them. And these are our feelings to-day. If there are wrongs we will contend against them legally, constitutionally, and properly, and submit to every constitutional law of the land all the time; but where people take it upon themselves to interfere with our religion and with our private rights, and to trample us under foot, we don't intend to be trod upon in that way, but we mean to take the steps which have been pointed out by the properly constituted authorities of our nation, and protect ourselves as best we may. We are contending here for the principles of human liberty; and while there is a disposition among many of this nation to tamper with the liberties of man, we feel bound in behalf of ourselves, in behalf of our posterity, and in behalf of millions of honorable men in these United States to maintain and sustain all correct and proper laws and to preserve our individual and collective rights, and not allow them to be torn from us by men with imperialistic ideas of centralization, a principle that the founders of this nation fought successfully against in the formation of the government of this country.

It is not for us to put ourselves in the wrong. It is our duty to maintain the right and to uphold and sustain the Lord, His truth, and the principles He has revealed, which, in the name of the Lord, we will maintain, and all who believe it say Aye [The large congregation responded with a loud "Aye"]. We will try to do these things; we will try to maintain our rights and the rights of all men. This we will do in behalf of ourselves, in behalf of our children, and, as I have said, in behalf of thousands and millions of men in these United States whom certain prominent characters seek to despoil of their rights and liberties.

There are other things that exist in the world that it may be proper for me to say a few words upon. A great amount of confusion exists in this country and also in Europe. One of the difficulties that seem to exist is the trouble between capital and labor. I understand that, since we have been gone, there was a general strike among the employees of the Union Pacific Railroad Company. Fortunately it was adjusted in a very short time and no trouble resulted therefrom. This is one of the troubles that affect the people of this nation, of England, of France, of Germany, of Russia, and most of the peoples of the nations of Europe and in parts of Asia. All kinds of combinations are being entered into to accomplish the objects of the workmen, and then among the capitalists to preserve themselves from what they term the aggressions of the laborers. It is not for me to enter into a lengthy detail of these things. Every newspaper we read gives us an account of something of this kind, of the various troubles that exist in this nation, and in other countries. Perhaps there is no nation at the present time more severely afflicted with secret combinations of one kind and another than the Russian Empire.

Now, we do not wish to mix ourselves up with these affairs. We are not here to control the social or political affairs of others. We are here and have a mission to perform in the interests of humanity, in all the world. We have no enmities to cherish. We have no particular wrongs to redress, further than can be redressed in a legitimate manner. We do not believe in the methods adopted, say by the Fenians. We do not believe in the nihilistic notions of Russia. We do not believe in the communistic ideas that prevail in Germany, in France and other nations. We do not believe in the use of gunpowder, or dynamite, but, that we should seek redress in a legitimate, legal and constitutional way. And if any of you should be associated—I do not believe that any of you are—with these things, cease them, let them alone, and let the potsherds of the earth contend with the potsherds of the earth. Let us fear God and carry out the principles that He has given unto us to introduce and to maintain.

The Gospel that has been revealed to us, as it was in Jesus' time, glad tidings of great joy to all people who will receive it and be governed by it. It has a tendency to bring into subjection the wayward passions of men. It teaches us to control our actions, to be subject to all correct laws and to all correct government, to seek unto the Lord for guidance and direction in all our ways, to fear God individually and collectively in our families, and to treat our neighbors, our friends, our brethren, and all men kindly, and not to seek the injury of any person or any nation, nor to plot or contrive or enter into any machinations or combinations to injure anyone.

The revelations which have been given to us some forty or fifty years ago, and that are recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, tell us of the very state of things that are in existence to-day in this nation and other nations. They tell us about secret plots and contrivances which should be organized with the view of upsetting governments and destroying men. And in the Book of Mormon when reference is made to the age in which we live, it is written (II Nephi, xxvi, 22): "And there are also secret combinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the devil,

for he is the foundation of all these things; yea, the foundation of murder, and works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever." And in another place, referring to the same era (Mormon viii, 40), the inquiry is made: "Yea, why do you build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord; and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground for vengeance upon your heads?" You Latter-day Saints, for it is to you I am speaking here to-day. These plots and combinations are instigated by the powers of darkness, and so are the evils that they are designed to correct. They are all from the same source, oppression, in many instances, on the one hand, and combination and resistance on the other—all without any guidance from above or any direction from the Almighty, each man pursuing his own course and following the devices and desires of his own heart. Confidence is being betrayed, rights trampled under foot, and hypocrisy on every hand. Those very men who preach to us about our supposed licentiousness are wallowing in filth, corruption and degradation, and I often say, "My soul, enter not thou into their secrets; mine honor, with them be not thou united."

We are here to establish principles of justice and equity, love and brotherhood, not in name but in reality, in truth, and according to the laws and principles which emanate from the great God. He has introduced His Gospel in order that the principles thereof may spread among all the nations of the earth. We are not, as is represented, the enemies of mankind, but the friends of all mankind, no matter whether they believe as we do or not, no matter what their thoughts or feelings may be on religious topics, or whether they have any religion or not; they are our brethren and sisters and God is our Father and their Father, and He expects us to treat them right. Why has He called upon the Twelve Apostles to go forth as messengers to the nations of the earth? Why has he called upon some thousands Seventies or upwards for the same purpose? Their special mission is to be bearers of life and salvation to the nations of the earth; not introducers of dynamite, of confusion, contention or strife, but to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, to tell men to love one another, to honor God, to worship Him and to fear Him; to tell men that God has restored the ancient Gospel, and to offer unto them those principles which He has revealed, just as the Disciples of Jesus were commanded to do in their day. The Son of Man did not come to destroy men or destroy the world, but that through Him the world might be saved. And this is the message we hope to communicate to the human family, and to tell them that if they will obey the laws of God and be governed by the principles of righteousness, and associate themselves with the people of God, and pursue a course that is honorable, upright and honest, and be men and women of integrity, truth and virtue, and lay aside their licentiousness, covetousness, pride and corruption of every kind, God will bless them in time and throughout all the eternities that are to come. And while we are teaching these things abroad and gathering the people to Zion, that they may be taught of God and instructed in the laws of life, it is proper that we ourselves should act wisely, prudently and intelligently in all things. God has called us to do a great work, and in the name of Israel's God, we calculate to do it [Amen]. We are building our temples for that purpose, that we may be brought into a nearer relationship to the Almighty and understand His laws more correctly than we do now, and be taught in regard to those principles associated with eternity as we as time, and to stand as the Scripture says, as saviors upon Mount Zion. These are the feelings that we wish to influence and govern us. But we cannot and will not enter into the corruptions of the world; we cannot and will not be governed by the follies and devices, evils and corruptions, that they are seeking to introduce into our midst; so help us God, we will not do it. We will be true and faithful to God and to our religion, that when the great day of accounts comes we may be able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Let the world manage their own affairs. I will tell you what you will see before a very distant day—that those who will not take up their swords to fight against the neighbors will come to Zion for safety. You can write this down. Hence, we will endeavor to carry out all correct principles, and maintain the rights and freedom of men; for God has made us all free, and no man shall bring us into bondage. If this people will fear God and work righteousness, submit to His law, preserve their spirits and bodies pure, and keep the Lord always before their eyes—I ask no odds of any people that live on the face of this wide earth; for God will rule and reign and triumph. He has set His hand to accomplish His purposes, and He will sustain His people, His Israel and His Zion, and build up His Kingdom, and woe to them that fight against Zion, for God will fight against them. Amen