

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

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## DISCOURSE

Delivered in the Tabernacle,  
Salt Lake City, Sunday, November 22nd, 1896, by

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[EDITED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

It is an honor to my lot to be called, upon to address the Saints this afternoon, and in responding I earnestly desire that I may be the benefit of the faith and prayers of the Latter-day Saints who are assembled, that what I say may be calculated to strengthen our faith and to inspire us to renewed diligence in discharging the duties and obligations resting upon us as members in the Church of Christ. We meet together very frequently to worship the Lord and to listen to those who are called upon to speak for the express purpose of renewing our faith and being spiritually fed.

If there is one thing more than another that is made perfectly plain in the teachings of the Savior and His Apostles, that faith is of no value to us and will bring no reward unless it be coupled with works. There are no promises made to us by our Heavenly Father that we shall be rewarded, that we shall be entitled to the inspiration of His Spirit, or that we shall make a success of this life, except we shall labor energetically and faithfully to discharge the duties resting upon us. On the contrary, if the inspired teachings go to prove that a faith with which works are not coupled is dead. It has ever been my desire, in laboring among the Latter-day Saints, to inspire them with a desire to obey the commandments of God. I realize that it is impossible for a man to be obeying the commandments of God and at the same time be blessed by Him. I want an individual who has received testimony of the divinity of this faith, by obeying these commandments. I never have that testimony burning in his heart, illuminating his mind, and inspiring him in that straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life. It is through the neglect of duty that we lose the Spirit of God. It is as natural as the sun should lose the light and inspiration of our Heavenly Father through failing to labor diligently as it is that we must exercise our physical beings in order to be healthy and strong. We all know that the blacksmith has a very powerful arm, because he is constantly using it. The pedestrian, who is constantly tramping around the country, develops his limbs; and the man who is constantly practicing singing develops his lungs. The more we labor to develop our physical frame, the greater is the strength of that frame. The mind, also, becomes stronger by being exercised.

In fact, we develop physically, intellectually and spiritually by labor. Although my right arm is the stronger of the two, it requires no argument from me to impress you with the fact that if I were to tie that arm and never use it, in the course of time that arm would wither away. We must exercise all our powers to be healthy and strong. In like manner, if you and I expect to be healthy and strong in the Gospel; if we expect to grow from day to day in the light and inspiration of the Spirit of God; if we expect to expand and keep pace with the onward advancement of the kingdom of God on the earth, then we must labor, and we must labor constantly, energetically and faithfully, for the advancement of that kingdom. The Lord has placed his stamp of disapproval very unmistakably upon idleness. You take a building, fill it with heavy machinery, have that machinery running day and night, and bestow ordinary care upon it; then take another building alongside of it that is never used, and the building that is not used seems to crumble away while the other building remains strong. You take an individual that works early and late, and works hard, and such a man lives to a good old age in comparison with the idle man. You find a man that studies hard, and such a man's mind is bright to the end of his life in comparison with the man that does not do this. The Lord blesses us as we labor. It is recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants that we are agents unto ourselves, and that wherein we do any good work we shall in no wise lose our reward; but that if we are slothful servants and wait to be commanded in all things, our reward lurketh from beneath and not from above. We have the power within us to do good and to keep the commandments of God. There is no requirement made of us by our Father that He has not given us the ability to fulfil. I have often admired the labors of Nephi and his determination to serve the Lord, in contradistinction to the fault finding spirit that was manifested by his elder brethren. These sons of Lehi went up to Jerusalem to get the records from Laban, and after they had had some trouble in trying to obtain them, Nephi's brethren became discouraged. I have been particularly struck with the testimony that Nephi bore to them on this subject. When they were commanded to go by their father, the elder sons murmured and said it was a hard thing to require of them; but Nephi said unto his father, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save He shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which He command-

eth them." Nephi also said to his brethren, at the time I refer to "Let us go up again unto Jerusalem, and let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold He is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, even than his tens of thousands." We all know how He was successful in this, and we have all admired his life and labors. I would exhort my brethren and sisters to remember the faithfulness of this man. The Lord treats us exactly as we would treat our own children. Where is there a father or a mother who does not rejoice when they see their children faithful and energetic? Parents delight to bless such children. But when our children are disobedient and neglect the duties that we place upon them, of course they grieve us and we do not approve of their acts, though we rejoice when they turn again and endeavor to keep the commandments that we give to them. As we rejoice in the humility and obedience of our children, so does our Heavenly Father rejoice in our humility and obedience. And in all ages of the world, whenever the people of God have been humble, prayerful, and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, they have been blessed and prospered, they have been sustained by God, and all has been well with them. But when they have become filled with pride and with a love of the things of this world, and when they have neglected the commandments of God, He has had to punish them, and many times has had to humble them to the very dust. It was necessary that He should do so. We do not punish our children because we fail to love them. On the contrary, it is our very love for our children and the desire we have for their welfare that causes us to punish them. It is a very painful thing for us to administer punishment upon those we love, and yet we prove our love to our children by correcting them. If we allowed them to go their own way, and grow up in carelessness, and from carelessness into wrongdoing, instead of our love being genuine it would be the exact opposite. Of course, it is necessary to exercise charity. We find it recorded in the scriptures that if we give all that we have to the poor, and even our bodies to be burned, and have not charity, it shall profit us nothing. This lack of charity is something that many are guilty of. There is a disposition on the part of many to find fault, to criticise, and to complain of the actions of our brethren. We find, because of recent events, that there is a great deal of talk in some quarters. All I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints is, that if you keep the commandments of God and obey the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, you will