

DISCOURSE

BY

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Delivered at Logan, Sunday afternoon, August 4th, 1878.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

I have been a good deal interested in the remarks made by my brethren; and in connection with them, I am very much pleased to see you meet in this beautiful house, and in the possession of the privileges you enjoy; and you have a right to enjoy them, because you have made them yourselves. And then again, you did not make them yourselves, only as God assisted you. I think there is a modern Scripture which reads: "Against none is his wrath kindled, save those who do not confess his hand in all things." And there are some other principles connected with these matters that are of a good deal of importance to us. One of the old prophets, in speaking of the people and their relationship to God, says: "The Lord is our God, the Lord is our king, the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, and he shall rule over us." If we could really place ourselves in this position, and feel that we live in God, that we move in God, and that from him we derive our being, and that he holds the issues of life, and every blessing we enjoy whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, either referring to this world or the world to come, proceeds from God. If we, as a community, could comprehend our position in regard to this grand, leading and very important feature of our faith, we should be prepared to receive greater blessings at the hand of the Almighty, and be prepared also to magnify that great and holy priesthood which he has placed upon us. We should be prepared more understandingly to build temples, and to operate in them; we should be prepared to stand as saviors upon Mount Zion, and to operate with God and the holy angels, and with apostles and prophets who have lived before, and with the holy priesthood in the eternal worlds, as well as in this world, for the accomplishment of the purposes of God for the redemption and salvation of the living and the dead; for the salvation and exaltation of ourselves, our progenitors and our posterity. But we need to realize and comprehend our position and relationship to this Almighty.

Some of the brethren who have addressed you have spoken upon our political rights, which is all very correct. It would be a poor thing indeed, if, after God has gathered us from among the nations of the earth to place his name upon us, and to establish and build up his kingdom upon the earth, we should be under the necessity of calling in the devil to help us to do the Lord's work. It is one of those incongruities which the reasonably intelligent and reflective mind will necessarily disown. We are gathered here, not in the interests of any political party or any essential organization, other than that which God dictated and ordained. Why are we here to-day? It is because the heavens have been opened, because angels have appeared, because the revelations of God's will have been made known to man; it is because God and the holy angels, with the eternal priesthood, have thought proper to manifest in these last days the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, which Gospel has been proclaimed to us in the different nations from whence we came. And having yielded obedience to its first principles we have gathered here. We did not come here as being associated particularly with any colonization scheme; we did not come here because of the richness or fertility of the soil; we did not come here because there was gold and silver in our mountains. We had no such idea. We came here because we believed that the Lord had restored the everlasting Gospel; because he had renewed the everlasting covenant; and because he had sent forth the proclamation, "Gather my people together, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice;" and because we had been baptized into Christ, and put on Christ. This is the reason of our being here; and, therefore, as Latter-day Saints, it becomes our first and most paramount duty to build up the church and kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, we all believe this. And there are a number of duties that seem to devolve naturally upon us,

such as to prepare buildings like this, that we may meet in to attend to the worship of God; and to build temples in which to administer the ordinances of God. Who for? The living and the dead; for ourselves, our progenitors, and our posterity. And that we might operate and co-operate with the priesthood behind the veil, in the accomplishment of his purposes towards the human family. This is the kind of labor we are engaged in. But I occasionally think we are something like the disciples who lived in the days of the apostles on the Asiatic Continent. It is said of them, that they saw in part, and prophesied in part, and of course comprehended in part. But they thought then, and we think now, that when that which is in part is done away, and that which is perfect is come—and which the Lord is trying to introduce as fast as he can—then we shall see as we are seen, and then we shall know as we are known; then we shall comprehend as God comprehends in relation to all of these subjects which we have been reflecting upon and praying about. But we only comprehend in part at the present time. We are something like our little children—when they begin to walk a little, they make awkward stumbles, oftentimes falling down and scratching themselves. Our Father watches over us, the same as our mothers did when we were babies. You all know what watchful care a fond mother bestows upon her little child; how anxious she is about its safety and welfare. But our children frequently think they are much smarter than their parents. They would think nothing at all of taking hold of a razor and cutting their fingers with it, or running over rough and dangerous ground. We are, in many respects, a good deal like them. We see in part and comprehend in part; and some of us have been so long steeped in the superstitions and traditions of the age, and are imbued with false religious and political ideas and notions, and so inoculated by the world, that we hardly know what is right and what is wrong. We want a little of God in the kingdom of God, a little of man, and I am sorry to say, a little of the devil in the kingdom of God, so that we might all mix up together and be hail fellows well met, God and all creation together. That is not the calculation of the Almighty. He has called us together; what to do? Let me tell you what the prophet said: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." And what will he do with them when he gets them there? "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Who would give them pastors? The Lord. One of the prophets, in speaking of this time, when people should be very much better than we are to-day, says: "And they shall be all taught of God." But some of us would like a little infidelity with it, a little of this world's politics, a little of the theories of men, and a little false tradition with it; and it is difficult for us, with all our traditions and erroneous training which we have inherited from our forefathers, and which we have been brought up in from our early childhood, to divest ourselves from them, and listen to the pure word of God, and be governed by the laws of life.

We talk sometimes about the thing we call the kingdom of God. Now, if it is the kingdom of God, it is not the kingdom of man; it is not our kingdom only so far as we are subject to its laws, which are the laws of God. We have made attempts lately, under the direction of our venerable and respected President Young, who has left us and gone behind the veil, to organize the church of God, and this organization has spread, more or less, through the Territory. But it is a good deal with us as it was with the boy in Salt Lake City. A stranger, walking along, said, "Boy, are you a Mormon?" The boy answered: "No, sir, I am not, but dad is." "Oh, he is?" "Yes, sir; but he does not potter much at it." It is a good deal so with many of us. We have our individual affairs and our own operations, which occupy our attention, and we have little time to attend to the things of God. We have an organization of our priesthood; we have our stakes organized with president, with high council, with bishops and their counselors, and priests, teachers and deacons; and we have our seventies' quorums, our high priests'

quorums, and our elders' quorums; all of which are in accordance with the order that exists in heaven. But how little many of us think of this. Yet we are doing pretty well, as has been remarked here. I have no feeling of complaint in my mind about the doings of the people generally. I think that you have manifested a zeal, liberality and generosity in the building of this house that is praiseworthy and commendable; and I think you have manifested the same in the progress that is exhibited in the building of your temple here. But these are only very small parts of the duties of this priesthood which we have taken upon us; very little parts indeed. How many of our bishops are there who do not comprehend really and truly that they hold their priesthood from God? that they administer in the cities of Zion, or ought to, by virtue of that priesthood; and therefore ought to be fathers over the people over whom they preside, baying self and its interests in abeyance, laboring as good shepherds in the interests of their flocks, and thus operate for God and in the interest of his people over whom they preside? Some do understand this, and are operating in it according to their ability; but a great many do not comprehend the position of things in relation to these matters. If a man is appointed a bishop, is it that he may aggrandize himself? No. Is it that through his position he may monopolize certain interests? No. It is expected of him that he will operate in the interest of the church of God, and more especially in the interests of the community over whom he presides. That is the way I understand this matter; and these are some leading features by which a bishop ought to be governed. And in our bishop's courts, when cases are brought before them, they ought to be as free from partiality in their judgments as the Gods in the eternal worlds are, and feel to administer justice and righteousness, and seek for the Spirit of God to actuate and govern them in all of their decisions. And the same spirit and feeling ought to actuate the high council. They are making a record of which there is a record kept in heaven; and so are the bishops. And when you are administering in any of these offices, God will hold you to an account, and the priesthood on the earth will hold you to an account; and you are now writing a history in indelible characters that never can be erased. If for every word and secret act all men shall be brought to judgment, how much more will the public acts of public men be brought into account before God and before the holy priesthood.

Here, for instance, is the president and his counselors, who preside over this stake. They ought to feel interested in the welfare of every man, woman and child in the stake, so far as they come under their observation; and these men, by virtue of their high calling, ought to be full of life and the Spirit and revelations of God, to comprehend things as they are presented to them, and that they may administer justice in righteousness, and rule over the people in that way and manner that will secure the favor and approbation of the Most High; always seeking first the interests of the kingdom of God and the flock that God has given them the oversight of.

Now I will mention some things here that my attention has been called to, in regard to union, and union of effort. We have had a great deal said about the United Order, and about our becoming one. And some people would wish—Oh, how they do wish, they could get around that principle, if they could! But you Latter-day Saints, you can not get around it; you cannot dig around it; it will rise before you every step you take, for God is determined to carry out his purposes, and to build up his Zion; and those who will not walk into line he will move out of the way, and no place will be found for them in Israel. Hear it, you Latter-day Saints, for I say to you in the name of Israel's God that it is a revelation from the Most High, and you cannot get around it. There seems to be difficulties in the way at present; but we shall surmount these. The only way for us to do now, in consideration of the weaknesses and infirmities with which we are surrounded, is to do the very best we can, and advance those interests as near as we can, practically and in their spirit and essence, until we can bring about the thing that God designs, for men are not

prepared for these things yet in full. But we are in part, as they of old prophesied in part, and understood in part; and by and by that which is perfect in relation to these matters will be introduced. Joseph Smith tried to introduce this order, but such was the corruption, covetousness, fraud and injustice of men, that he found it almost impossible to do it. This was the idea he conveyed, if not the precise words that he used in speaking upon this subject. We have made various attempts to do what the Prophet Joseph tried to do. In some places they are doing very well, and in other places very poorly; I can tell you this much about it, it is pretty hard work to make sheep out of goats. Did any of you ever try it? Let me quote you a passage of our Savior's: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."—"A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." And he prayed to the Father concerning them: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Or, in other words, God sent him and his people knew it and knew him, but the world believe it not; but when this oneness should be brought about, the world would know it. And when we become one in all things, our condition will be a spectacle for God, angels and men to gaze upon with delight; and the world then will know that God is with us, and that we are his Israel, and that he is our guide, our shield, our deliverer.

There are some things that Bro. Lorenzo Snow is doing that are very creditable; but it is not the United Order. He is working with the people something after the same principle that our sisters teach the little ones how to walk; they stand them in a sort of chair which rolls along, and the babies appear delighted, they think they are walking. But we have not learned how to walk yet. And then there are other institutions scattered throughout the Territory, having the same laudable object in view, many of which have most excellent principles among them, and they manifest a most admirable spirit; but they only see in part, and know and comprehend in part. And you here are doing pretty well in some things; but some of you are like it was said by President Young of Bro. now, that he had got the folks into the United Order without their knowing it. You have hardly got one foot in yet; but you are aiming at progress, and are making some little advancement. For instance, I hear you have a kind of commercial business here in connection with some other interests that you are trying to unite on. This is very proper; and it is proper that your president should dictate in such matters; it is his business to do it, and it is your duty to be governed by such principles and follow such instructions as may be given in regard to these things; and keep together, and let this individualism be held in abeyance, and let us feel that we are all holding the holy priesthood, and that we should, as brethren, operate in the interests of the church and kingdom of God. I suppose this thing could go on and increase, and everything in regard to your commercial relations could be operated with one common consent, under the proper authority and administration of the priesthood, and you all labor unitedly, with singleness of heart before God. And what would be the result? You could not be preyed upon by outsiders; you would have no middle-men living off you, and what speculations might be entered into would be in the interest of the community. And then you could operate in regard to your farming interests, and the disposing of you grain, and cattle, sheep, etc. And operating and co-operating together, you will be able to form a phalanx in this valley that will become a power in this part of the land. And then if you could go to work and manufacture your own leather and cloth, and make your own boots and shoes and harness, and your own wearing apparel, men's and women's wear, as they are doing in Brigham City, a great deal of remunerative employment could be furnished your own people and it would be the means of putting trades in the hands of many of your boys; and

by and by you could become a self-sustaining people. The people of the world comprehend this principle that we are striving to accomplish among ourselves. There has been quite a talk lately about something that has existed in France. You will remember that in the late war with Germany, the French nation was badly beaten, and an enormous debt was the result, which the French government has since paid. And how? The first Napoleon, in his day, introduced what was called at that time the "Continental system," which meant nothing more nor less than home manufacture. Every encouragement was extended to the people of that nation to raise and manufacture everything possible, that they might become independent of other nations for their sustenance. And this was the secret of their success in paying their indebtedness incurred by the late war. We have had enough talk about these things; the only thing left is to contrive in all our various settlements, to introduce such things, gradually and according to circum stances, as will subserve the interests of the people, and make them self-sustaining. And then let the people throughout the Territory do the same thing, and we shall be progressing in the march of improvement, and get by and by to what is called the United Order. But I will tell you one thing you can never do—unless you can get the United Order in the hearts of the people, you can never plant it anywhere else; articles and constitutions amount to very little; we must have this law, which is the law of God, written in our hearts. Many men associated with these institutions do not act in good faith. I have seen men unite with them, thinking that they could get a very easy living by preying upon the people who were more confiding and honorable than themselves. Will such men be blessed? No, they will not but the curse of God will rest upon them for trying to pervert his purposes; and it would have been better for them never to have entered into such connections. These have been some of my reflections in relation to these matters.

We have here seventies and elders. I wish to talk a little upon some things associated with their callings, for there are a great many of them present to-day. I suppose the great majority of the brethren here are either seventies, high priests, or elders—three prominent quorums in the church and kingdom of God. Now then, what are we called to do? What, for instance, is the duty of an apostle? We used to understand it to be our duty to go to the ends of the earth and preach the Gospel; and I may say we have traveled hundreds of thousands of miles to accomplish that object. But some of us are getting white-headed. As I was saying to one of my wives a little while ago, Your head is getting a little grey, but mine is not (it is white). And it is so with many of the Twelve; they have got past that some time ago. But the Twelve went out, and were always ready to go out, and are to-day if required. And I will say of my brethren who are around me, I do not know of a better set of men in existence, nor could I tell where they can be found. I will bear this testimony concerning my brethren of the Twelve. They are ready to do what God requires of them at any time. Now, we have had a great many honorable men among our seventies, our high priests and elders, who have gone forth with alacrity, as have the Twelve, filled with the spirit and power of their calling, feeling to rejoice all the day long, and sing, hallelujah, the Lord is our God; they have been the means of gathering the house of Israel, as they are to-day in these mountains. Shall they have credit among Israel? Yes; and so will they have credit before God and the holy angels. But the Presidency or the Twelve, or the seventies, or the high priests, or the elders, never could have done it, unless God had been with them. They went forth in the name of God, bearing precious seed; and they returned again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. And God will hold all such men in honorable remembrance in time and through all eternity. But a great many are getting like myself, they are getting old; and we cannot expect them always to be going. But then, they have a lot of boys growing up, and we expect the boys to step forward and take the place of their fathers, and try to do something in the in-