

would be a hell to them. I would not wish any person to come here who would not come determined to labor with all his might to build up the kingdom of God, to endure persecution, suffering and adversity, if necessary, for the sake of having an inheritance in the kingdom of God.

I told my friends that the relation they sustained to me was of little consequence compared with the ties that bound me to this people. They have had the chance, and if your friends have had the chance of embracing the truth and have not, do not mourn for them or fret about them, because they are not with you, for unless they have in them the light of the Holy Ghost, if they were here they would be a thorn in your side continually. We have come out from the wicked, let us then rejoice and give thanks unto our Father for all his blessings; let us rejoice that we are delivered from our oppressors and that we are free to live our holy religion, which ought to be dearer to us than all things; and I trust the time is not far distant when we shall be wholly devoted to the cause of God, and to the progress of his kingdom here on the earth. May this be so, is my prayer in the name of Jesus:—Amen.

DISCOURSE

By President Brigham Young, Tabernacle, March 15, 1857.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

I am not in the habit of taking a text, when I preach to the Saints; but I will quote a portion of scripture, and offer a few remarks upon it.

It is recorded concerning the Savior, Matthew 12: 46—50, that "while he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.—Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The Savior's reply to the questions, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" is fraught with a principle that is very little noticed by many. I frequently hear the brethren, and you may hear both them and the sisters, in the prayer meetings where they have a privilege of speaking; say, "I have not a father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first nor second cousin, nor any relative whatever in this church." Do you not hear such expressions made by the Saints? Yes; and I sometimes hear them from this stand.

Whether to the understanding of his hearers at that time, or whether to ours, those questions were correctly answered by our Savior in the observation, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." So far as I am concerned, I do not claim relationship any where else. And I do not think that the Savior will claim any son or daughter of Adam to be his brother, sister, mother, or kin or connection of any kind or description, according to the flesh, except those who do the will of our Father in heaven—the will of Jesus and his Father.

We presume that the Savior perfectly understood his origin, for he was then over thirty years of age, and had been instructed by his Father in heaven and by the Holy Ghost, and had had the visions of his mind repeatedly opened, according to the history given by his disciples; therefore we have no hesitation in believing that he understood his origin, who he was, the errand for which he came into the world, the business he had to attend to here, and understood the end of his mission in the meridian of time. He understood that which you and I do not understand, without the same kind of revelations and teachings as he enjoyed.

Let the human family do as they did in the days of Adam, in the days of Noah, or even as they did in the days of Lot; let parents propagate children, and let one generation succeed another, and this does not change the blood, flesh, bones, sinews, &c., pertaining to our organization in the flesh; this does not change in the least the peculiar characteristics of the organization of our bodies. The Apostle merely hinted at this subject when he said, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."—[Acts 17: 26.]

No matter who they are, nor whether they are upon the islands or upon the continents; no matter whether they are the wild Arabs who traverse the scorching sands of Arabia, the aborigines of our own country who roam over its plains and mountains, or the delicately nurtured dwellers in highly civilized nations; they are all of one flesh and blood.

Consequently we can readily and safely draw the conclusion that a man or woman who has sprung from the loins of Father Adam and Mother Eve, whether upon the islands of the sea, in the west, in the east, or on the opposite side of this globe, is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, as much so as any person now in this house, or in this Territory. But the relationship that I claim, is to those who do the will of our Father in heaven; they are my brethren and sisters.

I know a great many here who have no relatives in this church, using that term in its customary acceptance. Sometimes wives leave their husbands, to come here; mothers also leave their children, and children their parents. Ask them, "Where is your husband?" "In England," or in some other country. "Have you any children?" "Yes." "Where are they?" "They would not come with me."

"Have you any brothers and sisters, or parents?" "Yes, my father and mother are living." "Did they believe the gospel?" "No." "Did your brothers and sisters believe it?" "No, I am a lone person."

Such persons are apt to feel a spirit of despondency, to mourn and complain, "O that I had a father's house to go to; or if I had one person whom I could visit and call sister, how happy I should be; but I am a stranger here, I have no relatives in this kingdom." Is that feeling correct, or incorrect? I say that it is incorrect; such conclusions are not true.—That man or woman that is a child of God, that honors his or her calling in the kingdom of God on the earth, is just as much your brother or sister as any person you have been accustomed to claim that relationship with. If you see a woman who lives her religion, who is owned of God, you see a person that is flesh of your flesh, blood of your blood, and bone of your bone, altho' she may have been born upon the opposite side of the earth from where you were born. Those who actually live the religion we profess, are as much your brothers and sisters as are those born of the same earthly parents. Jesus understood this, as we may learn from his expression, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Let your hearts be at rest, for you have brothers and sisters here to visit; they are your connections, your relatives, your brethren and sisters.

A great many have an experience that has proven to them the truth of this doctrine.—Ask those individuals, those who at times have desponding feelings about the absence of their relatives, when they are in the light of the Spirit, when the joys of salvation fill their bosoms, whether they would prefer the society of their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters whom they have left behind, or whether they would like to associate with them better than with their neighbors here, and they will tell you, "No." Would you visit them, as quick as you would a good saint? "No." Do you have the same feeling and fellowship for them, as for a saint? "No." Are they as near and dear to you, as those who are Saints? "No." And yet, when the Spirit is gone from them and they are left to themselves, they are apt to feel lonesome and cast down, to be filled with desponding feelings and to cry out, "I wish I could see my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters; I wish they were here." And I wish you to understand that your brethren and sisters are here, even according to the flesh. Yes, according to the connection and relationship we bear to each other, to our Father and God, and to our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.

It is true that I have not altogether the experience that those have whose parents would not embrace the gospel, nor any of their father's family. My father and step mother embraced the plan of salvation as revealed thro' Joseph the Prophet; and four of my brothers, five sisters, and their children and their children's children, almost without exception, are in this church; also many of my cousins, uncles, and other classes of what we call relatives or relations, are in this Church. But I had this trial, when I embraced this gospel, "Can you forsake your friends and your father's house?" This was in the vision of my mind, and I had just as much of a trial as though I had actually been called to experience all that some really have. I felt, yes, I can leave my father, my brothers and sisters, and my wife and children, if they will not serve the Lord and go with me.

I did not ask my wife whether she believed the gospel; I did not ask her whether she would be baptized. Faith, repentance and baptism are free for all. I did not know, when I was baptized, whether my wife believed the gospel or not; I did not know that my father's house would go with me. I believed that some of them would, but I was brought to the test, "Can I forsake all for the gospel's sake?" I can, was the reply within me. "Would you like to?" Yes, if they will not embrace the gospel. "Will not these earthly, natural ties be continually in your bosom?" No; I know no other family but the family of God gathered together, or about to be, in this my day; I have no other connection on the face of the earth that I claim. And from that day to this, if my father was still living, or my mother, and would not believe the gospel, embrace it, and then live it, or if any of my living brothers and sisters would not, I would rather meet a Saint who was a beggar in the streets and bid him welcome to my house, than to receive a visit from any of my unbelieving connections, even though they had the wealth of the Indies. I was brought to this test in my own feelings, in the first of my experience in this church.

Here are our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. And perhaps it would be strictly correct to say that we have fathers in the gospel, spiritual fathers, for the Apostle Paul called Timothy, whom he brought into the church, his "own son in the faith," and charged him to "be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; to be careful—cautious—with regard to the people that believed in Jesus Christ; to learn the disposition and the nature of the people, that he might understand himself and those he taught; and alluded to others that were traveling and preaching; building up churches, or presiding over them after they were built up.

Looking at the conduct of many, yea, very many as we can see it exhibited in this our day, they want the mastery, the influence, the power. They want to be able to say to the people, "do this, or do that," and have no objections raised. They would have the people obey their voice, and yet they do not know how to gain the affections of the people; they do not understand the dispositions of the people.

Paul observed the same difficulty in his day. Many Elders were preaching and presiding, who were ignorant, aspiring and tyrannical, and but few of them treated the people as kind and benevolent fathers treat their children.—There were not many fathers, but there was a disposition to be "many masters," as we see here.

The most of our Elders want to be obeyed, as strictly as you are taught by them from this stand that this people ought to obey br. Heber, or br. Brigham; as strictly as they preach to you to obey our counsel. I do not threaten you much; No. If I have not wisdom and power to gain the influence necessary for me to wield in the midst of this people, without cursing them, without telling them that they and their substance shall be cursed, and that if they do not do as I say they shall go to hell—without threatening the people all the time with my judgments and the judgments of the Almighty—I say, let Brigham sink a little lower and get into the field where I can find my true level—where I can be made more useful.

You never hear me plead with nor threaten the people much, nor chastise them often and severely for not obeying my counsel. Is it right that others should do so? Yes, it is all right, if they are so disposed; I have no fault to find with regard to others' urging the people to obey counsel. But if I do not give the Saints and others the counsel of the Almighty, and that too by the Spirit of my mission, they are at liberty to dictate me, or to correct me in every error I commit; and certainly I should commit great errors, if I did not enjoy and have the Spirit of my mission, and counsel according to the will of the Lord. If all who are called to responsible stations would look at themselves precisely as they are, I will venture that we would have many more fathers than we now have, and fewer masters to drive the people.

As I have frequently said to the brethren, stop, hold on. If you have sheep and have become a shepherd in the fold of Christ, you must bear in mind that you must know your sheep and that then they will know you, that is, if you have got sheep. Perhaps some of you are nursing a flock of goats, and do not know the difference. But if you actually have a flock of sheep, you should, instead of hallooing, "shoo, shoo, shoo, get out of the way," and driving them, take a course that when they hear your voice they may begin to bleat and run for their shepherd, because he has a little salt for them. When the sheep hear the voice of a good shepherd they expect to hear the words of life; and every one that has the knowledge of God will know and understand that such a shepherd is acting in his duty, and they will walk up to his counsels and example. Do all the shepherds take a wise course? No, and the reasons have been told here times enough.

Elders of Israel and Bishops, be fathers and take a course by which you will win the affections of the people. How? with your silken lips? No, no; but with the fear of the Almighty. Do you know that men and women of God love truth? They do not love sophistry, it is an abomination to them. When men are smooth as oil, with a smile always upon their countenances, as some Elders have, to gain an influence, the love people have for such men is rotten, is without foundation; and in the day of trouble, when they need a foundation in their people, they will find that it will fall to the ground, and that the people will pass by them and say, "we do not know those men." Let your influence and your power be gained by the power of the Lord Almighty, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven—and see that you have within you a well of water springing up to everlasting life. Then when your brethren and sisters come around you they will drink at that fountain and say, "we are one with you."

You hear the Elders teaching the people to try and have confidence in God, and saying, "do have confidence in the ordinances of the house of God; brethren and sisters, try and live your religion; try and have confidence in your religion; have confidence in your God; have confidence in the Elders of Israel, that lead you; have confidence in your Bishops and other presiding officers, &c."

You know that almost every man who becomes a public speaker uses certain peculiar words to convey particular ideas—selects a vocabulary and arrangement more or less peculiar to himself—thereby causing that great variety of style observed in speakers and writers. I have mine, which is peculiar to me. Did you ever see a man who had such a peculiar vocabulary as br. Heber has? I never did. Orson Hyde has a mode of expression peculiar to himself, and so has every public speaker. My use of language is good to me; and though others may use different words to convey the same ideas, let me give out those ideas in my own style, according to my understanding.

Now to return to those teachings by the Elders, in such cases I would say to my dear brethren—to those who are of the household of faith—try to get a little confidence in yourselves, and then try to live so as to have confidence in your God. Ask even an infidel whether he believes that the wonder workings of nature—the strange phenomena which he sees and cannot account for—are produced, and he will answer, "yes, I know they are." Do you know that men, women and children are healed? Yes, you know they are. You behold those remarkable phenomena, though you cannot fully account for them. You believe in a great many things which you do not understand, but do you believe in yourselves? No, that is the grand difficulty with every one of us.

I will take my own experience. When men and women bring their sick to me, if I had the power I would heal all that should be healed. And if I had perfect confidence in myself, and the Lord had that confidence in me which I should then have in him, no power beneath the heavens could prevent the power of God from coming on them and healing them through me. But I have

not yet attained to perfect confidence in myself in all circumstances, neither has God in me, for were such the case He would answer every request I made of him—every wish of mine would be answered to the letter. And this is the difficulty with the people, they have not attained to perfect confidence in themselves; neither have we as yet sufficient grounds for that degree of confidence.

We lay hands on the sick and wish them to be healed, and pray the Lord to heal them, but we cannot always say that he will. We do not always know that he will actually hear our prayers and answer them. Sometimes the Elders will get that faith; and the sisters will often lay hands on their children and have faith and confidence in themselves that God will answer their prayers, and say to fevers and pains, "be ye rebuked and stand far from this the afflicted," and it is done. But you have to attain to this power by your faithfulness and confidence in yourselves, that God will answer your prayers. We know that the Lord often heals the sick; and we believe all the time that he is able to do so, but will he because we ask him to? That is the question, and we are often doubtful about it.

Do you think that I would have let my brother die, if I had the power the Lord has? Would I have let Jedediah go behind the veil, had I had that power? No; though in that I might have gone contrary to the wishes of the Almighty. For want of the knowledge which the Lord has, if I had power I might bring injury upon myself and this people.

We must have knowledge pertaining to ourselves, and that knowledge will give us the key to know how to ask and obtain; and without that knowledge we cannot have eternal life, which is "to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." If we have that knowledge we will know how to ask so as to obtain, and not ask amiss—we will ask and have our requests granted. How can we have that knowledge? By applying our hearts to wisdom and our lives to rectitude; by living as perfectly before God as we know how; by doing those things that we know to be right, those about which we have no doubt or dubiety, and never doing that which we are suspicious is wrong, and then be satisfied and not crave after that which is not for us, but let it remain in the hands of God. If we can obtain faith and confidence in ourselves, there is no lack in the power of God; neither is there any lack in his diligence, for he is always on the alert.

In our ignorance and darkness we may be led into error, if we follow our feelings, as I just now observed might have been the case in regard to retaining br. Jedediah, as also br. Willard, br. Whitney and many others. Had we had the power, would we have parted with Joseph? No, notwithstanding his work was finished on the earth. Many ideas have been imbibed and advanced concerning the death of Joseph. It was precisely as the Lord had decreed, designed, willed and brought it about. No power could have altered it in the least. He had finished his work on the earth. Still if you and I had had the power without the knowledge, we would have kept Joseph on this earth, and then he would have failed to perform his mission in the spirit world.

I learned, during the intermission, that several understood br. Heber to say, in his remarks in the forenoon, that Joseph was resurrected. He did not say any such thing, but left the sentence with a word understood at each end of it, or a sort of conjunction disjunctive at each side of it. I thought at the time that many would understand br. Heber as saying that Joseph was resurrected, and I take this opportunity to correct that misunderstanding. Joseph is not resurrected; and if you will visit the graves you will find the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum yet in their resting place. Do not be mistaken about that; they will be resurrected in due time.

Jesus had a work to do on the earth. He performed his mission and then was slain for his testimony. So it has been with every man who has been foreordained to perform certain important missions. Joseph truly said, "no power can take away my life, until my work is done." All the powers of earth and hell could not take his life, until he had completed the work the Father gave him to do; until that was done, he had to live. When he died he had a mission in the spirit world, as much so as Jesus had. Jesus was the first man that ever went to preach to the spirits in prison, holding the keys of the gospel of salvation to them. Those keys were delivered to him in the day and hour that he went into the spirit world, and with them he opened the door of salvation to the spirits in prison.

Compare those inhabitants on the earth who have heard the gospel in our day, with the millions who have never heard it, or had the keys of salvation presented to them, and you will conclude at once, as I do, that there is an almighty work to perform in the spirit world. Joseph has not yet got through there. When he finishes his mission in the spirit world, he will be resurrected; but he is not yet done there. Reflect upon the millions and millions of people that have lived and died without hearing the gospel on the earth, without the keys of the kingdom. They were not prepared for celestial glory, and there was no power could prepare them without the keys of this priesthood.

They must go into prison, both saints and sinners. The good and bad, the righteous and the unrighteous must go to the house of prison, or paradise, and Jesus went and opened the doors of salvation to them. And unless they lost the keys of salvation on account of transgression, as has been the case on this earth, spirits clothed with the priesthood have ministered to them from that day to this. And if they lost the keys by transgression, some one who had been in the flesh, Joseph, for instance, had to take those keys to them. And he is calling one after another to his aid, as the Lord sees he wants help.

Jedediah is not asleep, his spirit is not dead, he