

Poetry.

AVARICE.

Power to acquire, perverted
 Until it like a greedy tiger would
 Destroy a flock, yet not be satisfied;
 A hungry fiend, whose ever craving maw
 Would everything devour, and whine for more.
 Avarice! thy greed for gain is cruel;
 The poor or rich alike become thy prey;
 Thy restless eyeballs cast a wistful glance
 Upon the tiny morsel in the orphan's hand;
 Thou darest not to take with ruthless grasp
 What charity bestowed upon the poor,
 Upon the lone defenceless widow, or
 On the sufferer on his bed of pain;
 With mock refinement and dissembling arts
 Thou art familiar. These oft conceal
 Thy hellish purpose under semblance fair;
 Thy stony heart a stranger to remorse,
 Would fain appropriate man's resting space;
 Nor e'en that sacred gift of God to man,
 The Sabbath, can escape thy coveting.
 Thou would'st coin the last pulsation of the
 Labourer's heart without regret or pity;
 The blood of millions on the battle field
 Have flowed like water to appease thy lust;
 Thou art in league with slander and with theft,
 With treachery and murder. Thy marble
 Soul would sell the just and good for money,
 As did a Judas by his righteous Lord.
 Thou could'st destroy a lovely city; yea,
 A mighty nation; yea, e'en a world;
 To gather from their ashes glittering gold.
 A monarch thou o'er human covenants,
 And every filthy, leathsome beast that crawls,
 And seeks to hide its doings in the dark.
 The genial light of science fades and dies
 Before thy blighting influence, which, if
 No power controlled, would chaos bring again.
 How many thou hast ruin'd and cast down,
 Who, but for thy corrupting sorcery,
 Had shone forever in the path of fame;
 Had used their mighty gifts for good;
 Whose glorious works had, like the fruitful
 rain,
 Been full of inspiration from on high
 To bless and happy the sons of men!
 O'er whom perhaps the angels sorrowed much,
 As when they wept o'er fallen Lucifer,
 But who, alas! from truth had turned aside
 As Demas did for filthy lucre's sake,
 And lost all title with all hopes of heaven;
 By thee seduced and led from crime to crime,
 Till with the damn'd they raised their eyes in
 hell,
 Shut out from peace and joy, bereft of all!
 But sure as ever shone the radiant sun,
 Or glitt'ring stars bespangled heaven's high
 arch,
 So sure the day of recompense will dawn;
 And He to whom all things belong will come—
 Will take from thee thy vast unhallowed gains
 And give them to the good, the just and true,
 Secured forever by a righteous claim.
 Then will the earth from sin and sorrow rest,
 And Avarice afflict mankind no more.

WM. CLEGG.

Springville.

DISCOURSE

By Elder Joseph F. Smith, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Feb. 17, 1867.

Very unexpectedly to me I have been asked to stand before you for a short time this afternoon; and although to me it is a great task to attempt to speak to so many, yet it is a pleasure to be able to express my feelings in relation to the truth. I do not know why it should be embarrassing or a task for me to rise before the Saints, for I feel, when I am in their midst, that I am in the midst of the people of God and my friends, whose faith is in common with, and whose desires to a great extent are the same as my own. I feel that I am in the midst of those who are praying to the same God, desiring the accomplishment of the same purposes and objects; and who are ever willing to lend their faith and prayers for the assistance of those who are called upon to officiate in the ministry, and who are not looking for a fault nor seeking to make one an offender for a word, but whose feelings are drawn out after the truth, and who desire to hear words that will be comforting, instructing and beneficial to us all. Why, under these circumstances, one should feel embarrassed to rise up here is a little singular to me, and always has been. But it is so, unless he who speaks is filled with the Spirit of the Lord to such an extent that he cares for nothing but God and His approval.

I suppose that this embarrassment is, to some extent, owing to false notions—to pride, perhaps, and to feelings that are more or less common to us all, though not founded upon any correct principle. Why should we fear one another? Why should we fear to discharge the duties devolving upon us as the ser-

vants and people of God, under any circumstances or in any place? Why should we fear to stand up and speak the truth, although aware of our weakness and feeling our dependence on God? Have we not the promise that God will give us strength according to our day, and that he will help those who desire it to accomplish all the good that is in their hearts? God has made this promise, and it is our duty to go forward and engage in the work He requires of us, fearlessly and with a determination to carry it out regardless of man, God being our helper.

I have felt this way when traveling in the world, perhaps more so than it would be possible for me to feel here; for when one is thrown upon his own resources, or I may say upon God for assistance, he realizes that he has but few friends; he lives nearer to God, exercises more faith, is more diligent in prayer and is, therefore, more alive to the duties devolving upon him than when associating in the midst of his friends. I have often reflected why I should tremble and fear to stand before the Saints, the Prophet, or the Apostles, and let them hear my voice, or to give expression to my thoughts. Again, I have thought was there anything in me, any secret feelings that were not right, or that I feared were not right, and for expressing which I would be censured; and even were this the case, how foundationless is such a fear, for were there any thoughts and reflections within me not of God, or not true, why should I be fearful to express them where they might be corrected? Would it not be better to express them and have them corrected, than to harbor, cling to and reason upon them until I convinced myself that they were right, when to have them corrected would perhaps prove a very great trial to me, if not my overthrow.

When I look at and think of myself I do not know that I now entertain or have ever entertained a thought which I would be ashamed of my friends or the servants of God knowing. I desire so to live continually that my thoughts and feelings may be right before God, that my heart may be pure and open to the influences and dictations of the Holy Spirit, that I may be led wholly by the truth, and in the path that leads to eternal life. These should be the feelings of every Saint; if they are not mine, they should be, and when I look at and think of myself, I feel that this is the case. Yet we are all fallible, all liable to err, susceptible of prejudices and assailed by good and bad influences. In every condition of life we are more or less liable to be influenced and controlled in our thoughts and actions by the circumstances by which we are surrounded; the result is we are sometimes alive to the truth and faithful before the Lord, full of kindness, friendship and love towards our brethren—the servants of God—and towards the work in which we are engaged; and sometimes we are luke-warm and indifferent about these things. I would love to see the time when we could so live in the enjoyment of the Holy Spirit, every moment of our lives, that no circumstance nor influence could be brought to bear against us that would change that even tenor which is inspired and called forth by the influences of the good Spirit.

Will this time ever be? While surrounded by so many imperfections, clothed in mortality, and subject to the weaknesses and failings of the flesh, will the time ever be when we as a people, with such glorious promises, privileges and rights, and with such inestimable blessings, shall enjoy the Spirit of God to the exclusion of every other influence that exists? Will we ever be able to enjoy the Spirit of the Lord, while in mortality, to such a degree that we can govern ourselves and not give way one moment to an evil thought or passion? I do not know; but this I do know, that we now have all that is necessary to enable us to attain to this perfection in the truth and the knowledge of God. If we have it not now, I do not believe we ever will. "Why," inquires one, "what have we now? We have the promise of Almighty God that He will give His Spirit to guide, strengthen and assist every individual to accomplish all the good in his heart, if he will only come up to the standard He has established. Besides this promise which the Lord has made, we have the holy priesthood, a powerful auxiliary in our hands if used properly, to enable us to overcome the evils that surround us in the world. But when engaged in our daily avocations, or tried

by poverty, sickness, enemies, false friends, or when we are spoken evil of, we too often forget that we hold the priesthood, that we are Elders in Israel—the servants of God—chosen to accomplish His great work in the last days. The result is we regard ourselves simply as men mixed up with and surrounded by sin, and we are apt to drink into the spirit around us, forget God, our callings and the responsibilities resting upon us, and become like others, through giving way to evils which they practice.

I have seen individuals, of whom we might expect better things, give way to evils of this kind until I have heard them say "What is religion?" "In what is one religion better than another? Mormon, Jew, Catholic, Protestant, or any and all religious denominations in the world are all after the same thing, and there are good and bad in all, and there is about as much evil among the Latter-day Saints as among any other religious denomination." "Why," say they, "look at the Methodists, some of them are as pious, good and faithful and are as good citizens, neighbors and friends as any you will find among the Latter-day Saints or any other denomination; or go among the Catholics and you will find some as honest, virtuous, upright and charitable as any you will find among the Latter-day Saints." This being their opinion they decide that one is just as good as another. Now it is true that, so far as moral worth is concerned, we may find hundreds of thousands in the world who are honest, moral and upright to the best of their knowledge. I believe that among the inhabitants of the earth to-day, notwithstanding the vast amount of corruption and sin and the almost universal moral degradation, there are thousands of good, honest, well-meaning people.

So far as they have light and knowledge and understand the principles of truth, so far do thousands of the inhabitants of the earth to-day honor them in their lives. But that does not constitute them the people of God, neither does it argue that they have the holy priesthood, nor that the gospel in its purity and fulness has been revealed to them; nothing of the kind. Then I say that they are wanting. Although I feel liberal in my heart towards mankind, and willing to accord this truth to the benefit of the honest in heart; yet I am compelled to acknowledge that they are lacking. And because there are good people out of this Church as well as in, that does not argue that we have not the priesthood, that God is not in communion with us, that we are not in fellowship with Him, nor that we are not the people He has chosen, through whom to accomplish His great work in the latter days. It simply proves what the prophets and the servants of God have often said, that there are honest people in the world who are not in this Church, and for that reason the gospel is preached to the nations, that the honest may be gathered into the fold and family of God, that they may take a part in the building up of His Kingdom in the last days.

When you compare the systems, creeds and governing principles among the sects and religious denominations in the world, where will you find one that is perfect, or that is calculated to lead men back to a unity of the faith and to God? Where will you find a system or a denomination of religious people in the world who have such principles embodied in their faith? You cannot find such a system, if you go beyond the pale of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "Well," inquires one, "are those principles embodied in our faith? Is that principle of government here that is calculated to unite not only this Church but the whole human family in one faith? Are we not to some extent divided one against another, and have we not selfish thoughts and feelings, and do we not have strife in our midst, and do we love one another with a brotherly love and act under the influence of the good Spirit all the time?"

If we did act under its influence and followed its dictation continually, we would be one, and bickering, strife and selfishness would be laid aside, and we would look after and be as zealous for our neighbor's as for our own good. But we still see in our midst controversies, differences of thought and opinion, one up and another down, and the same thing regarded in a different light by different persons, &c. Why is this? Because the gospel net has gathered in

of every kind, and because we are only children in the school; because we have learned only the first letters, as it were, in the great gospel plan, and that but imperfectly. And one cause of the diversity in our thoughts and reflections is that some have had greater experience and comprehend the truth more perfectly than others. But does this prove that the gospel we have embraced does not contain those principles necessary to unite all mankind in the truth? No, it does not. What are these great principles that are calculated to unite the whole human family, and to cause them to worship the same God, adhere to the same counsel and be governed by the same voice? They are the principle of revelation, the power of God revealed to His people, the belief in the hearts of the people that it is God's right to rule and dictate, and that it is not the right of any man to say it shall be thus and so; nor are the people required to obey these principles blindly—without knowledge.

When we learn the truth and understand what is for our greatest good, we will feel in our hearts that it is God's right to rule and reign, and to say to us what shall be, and that it is our privilege to obey, and there will not be a feeling in our hearts contrary to His dictation. We will then feel that whatever is, is right; and in this we cannot then rightly be called superstitious, blind, or deluded, for that would be impossible because we will then be governed by higher light and intelligence—by that intelligence which convinces us that God lives, reigns, made the earth and all things it contains, that He is the Father of all, that we are His children, and that all things are in His hands. We will then comprehend this and, consequently, will feel that it is His right to say and ours to do. But how is it to-day? We do not practically comprehend these facts to their full extent, our own selfish interests more or less blind us, we measurably stand in our own light and choke the channel of blessings from Heaven, and cannot fully receive from the Giver of all good that blessing, exaltation and glory that He is ever willing to bestow upon all who will acknowledge and love Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

This is a great and important work—one that we do not fully comprehend. When the Spirit of the Lord rests powerfully upon us, we realize it to some extent; but we do not always have that Spirit in such copious measure, and when we are left to ourselves we are weak, frail and liable to err. This shows to us that we should be more faithful than we have ever been, and that day and night, wherever we are and under whatever circumstances we may be placed, in order to enjoy the Spirit of the gospel we must live to God by observing truth, honoring His law, and ever manifest a vigorous determination to accomplish the work He has assigned us.

I thank the Lord that I have the privilege of being associated with this people; and, whatever men may say or do, I desire that the testimony of the truth may continue with me, that I may ever realize for myself that the gospel has again been revealed to man on the earth.

It seems to me that to-day, or I may say this present moment is a moment of trial for this people. I have often heard the President say, in relation to our having been driven from our homes, hated and mistreated by our enemies and the enemies of truth, that we were not then particularly tried. I believe it. I believe that then we were more happy and better alive to the work we are engaged in than many are to-day. I believe, of the two, take the period when the Saints were driven from the State of Missouri or subsequently, when we were driven from the State of Illinois, and compare it with the present day, that to-day is the day of trial for this people. When you go along the street, and meet a man or a woman, do you know whether he or she is a Latter-day Saint or not? There was a time when we could walk up and down the streets and tell by the very countenances of men whether they were Latter-day Saints, or not; but can you do it now? You can not, unless you have greater discernment and more of the Spirit and power of God than I have. Why? Because many are trying as hard as they can to transform themselves into the very shape, character and spirit of the world. Elders in Israel, young men, mothers and daughters in Israel are conforming to the