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## DISCOURSE

By Elder ORSON PRATT, Bowery, Sunday Morning, September 16, 1860.

[REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.]

I arise to address myself to the congregation of the Saints who are here assembled, with a degree of pleasure and satisfaction, feeling that it is a great privilege that we enjoy of meeting together in this bowery, from Sabbath to Sabbath, for the purpose of hearing from, and worshipping the Lord our God.

It has always been a great satisfaction to my mind and a source of pleasure to speak of the things of the Kingdom of God, especially on those occasions on which the Lord has condescended to bless me with a portion of His spirit, for the spirit of the Lord gives joy and satisfaction to all those who are made partakers of it, whether it be the speaker or the hearer, and without that spirit no person can expect to enjoy any great degree of happiness in this life or in that which is to come. It is contrary to the nature of happiness for us to undertake to enjoy ourselves independent of the approbation of Heaven, and independent of the Holy Spirit which the Almighty pours out upon those who are honest and upright before Him. There is no happiness in anything else; there is no place worthy of being called a place of happiness only in the enjoyment of the favor of God and of His Holy Spirit. And those persons are truly blessed who have the greatest share of that spirit abiding with them; and when that spirit withdraws from the hearts of mankind, they are truly cursed. In the spirit of the Lord there is peace, there is joy, there is light, there is truth, there is hope and there is faith. Without that spirit all is darkness, all is wretchedness, and all is shut up and closed as it were to the human mind, and future hope, or hope of future blessings and exaltation, are cut off.

Perhaps this may be the last opportunity, for some to come, at least, that I shall have, of addressing the Saints in Utah. In a few days I expect to be wending my way in company with some of my brethren, on another mission to the United States, for the purpose of doing whatever the Spirit of the Lord may direct in those lands. Whether I shall return again to Utah it matters not, if it so be that I keep the commandments of God and do His will. All flesh is in His hands, and He governs and controls all things according to His own righteous will and purposes, and preserves in life whosoever he sees proper, and takes away his servants whenever it seems to him good to do so. Whether I shall be spared many years or few it matters not to me, if I am only faithful to the end. This is my object; this is the foremost thing in my mind, and it should be the foremost in the minds of all the Latter Day Saints. Many great and good men have fallen by the power of their enemies, by the destroyer, by sickness and by accidents, but this is the lot of all mankind, to pass through the veil to go from this stage of existence to another, altogether a different state of existence from this, in many respects. But even this state of existence that we now enjoy, is a pleasure to the righteous; it is a great satisfaction to those that keep the commandments of God. Life is sweet, and there are but very few individuals who are willing to part with it even though they knew with the perfect knowledge that when leaving this mortal state of existence, where we are subject to toil and fatigue, to pain and sorrow; though they knew that they would enter into the presence of God, and enjoy complete happiness in His Kingdom henceforth and forever, yet there are many, who although they might know this with the most perfect knowledge they would pray in their hearts that they might abide here a little while longer. There are but a very few individuals upon the earth among the Latter Day Saints, who desire to die, and I doubt very much whether there have been many persons of that kind, in the past ages of the world, among the true hearted servants of God who desired to die, when they reflected upon the work that they might accomplish and perform in this world, they could still feel to pray for life, even immortal life to be continued unto them.

Why do we desire to live? Is it to accumulate riches? No, this ought not to be the cause of the desire in our hearts, for if we should have power to heap up gold as the sands; if we should have power to collect the treasures of the earth together to a very great extent, and have power to have every thing, so far as this world's goods are concerned, to the fullest extent of our desires, what is it even then? Can we take those things into the grave with us? Can we carry our farms, our houses, our carriages, and other property behind the veil with us? No, we can not. Then why should this be in the hearts of so many of those who profess to be Saints, as the uppermost desire? Why should the people lie awake to study how to collect an

abundance of the things of this life? Why should they cling to the things that must perish and be done away? This is one of the great temptations that beset the pathway of mortal man. He desires to heap up the riches of this world, as though he was to stay here forever. But he may inquire if the original desire is not placed in the heart of man for a good purpose? Yes, it is; but that desire should be controlled according to the law of God and the will of heaven. We should seek for nothing in this dispensation and in the kingdom in which we are engaged—we should seek for nothing, I repeat—that would be calculated to lead our minds astray from the great purposes we have in view as Latter Day Saints; nothing should be permitted to lead our minds from God and His kingdom, and from worshipping Him with the fullness of our hearts. Desires are very good in their places; when dictated by the Spirit of God, they will be gratified in due time. Every man and every woman should seek in a lawful way to procure the things that are necessary in this life to benefit themselves, their neighbors, and the poor that are around them, and make a good use of the blessings God bestows, and the things he intrusts them with in this world. But how many there are among the Saints of the living God, whose hearts and minds are almost overwhelmed with the things of this present life! They covet gold and silver, houses and lands, and other riches in abundance, and they know not why. I should delight to see the Saints of God rich; yes, I should be pleased to see the poorest Saint among us have in his possession all that his heart could desire, if he would use those things properly, that were committed to his charge and according to the will of him that made him. I should also desire to see no poor in the midst of Zion, but that all might be blessed with a good supply of the things of this life. I desire to see the day come when all the Latter Day Saints who have suffered shall have every thing which their hearts can desire in righteousness, of the things of this world when they will be good for them, when they can use them for the glory of God. Until that period shall come I doubt whether riches will benefit the Saints of God. If, peradventure, any of you, by your diligence and perseverance should happen to accumulate riches, to some extent, if you should use them for the purposes which God has ordained, all will be well, but if not, they prove a curse to you instead of a blessing. And I will add that there is one thing that I am confident of, viz: that in Utah there is not much danger of the Latter Day Saints becoming very rich. If they accumulate by their perseverance a sufficiency of breadstuffs and those things that are necessary for their present sustenance and future security against the famines that are to spread desolation in the earth, they will do well. I think there is no people upon the face of the earth need to envy the Latter Day Saints, so far as their temporal prospects are concerned; in other respects, they have great cause to envy them.

There is not much chance for the Latter Day Saints to grow rich in this Territory, I mean according to the meaning of the term in the world. There is and ever will be too much to be done in various kinds of labor, for the building up of the kingdom of God. Your land, of course, yields abundantly where it is well cultivated, but it requires a great deal of toil to accomplish it; about three or four times the labor is required of the farmers and agriculturists than is required in other countries. Why, it takes a man almost one half of his time to get his fuel from the canyons, about one quarter to irrigate the soil, and of course the rest is well occupied with the other duties of life. This being the case, then there is not much prospect of soon becoming very rich. We ought, nevertheless, to be thankful for the blessings we enjoy, for the Almighty has brought us into a country where we have not the privilege of heaping up riches, and ruining ourselves forever. It takes a people a long time to prepare themselves for riches. The old principle which was planted in the hearts of our ancestors, which was a principle of covetousness, as practised by the gentiles in all ages, has become a part of the nature of the human family, by tradition, so much so that it seems to be one of the most difficult things to root out of the hearts of men. To accomplish this the Lord has to train the people, year after year, in order to get it out of their minds, and he has given us a very thorough training and experience in order to deliver this people from this covetous feeling and principle.

If we reflect back upon our past history, and I believe that the Latter Day Saints are acquainted with that history, either by actual experience, by reading or by hearing it verbally recited; suffice it to say that they are pretty well acquainted with the history of this church for the last thirty years. What has the Lord been trying to accomplish since the rise of this church? Has he not been trying to accomplish one of the greatest events

and one of the greatest works ever accomplished among mankind? Yes; he has been trying to eradicate from the people the old leaven of the gentiles that has been established in the hearts of men for so many generations, and to prepare the Saints for the great work of the last days. In regard to heaping up a multitude of the riches of this life, all our past history shows that the Lord was so determined to rid us of this principle as far as possible, in order that we might enjoy riches when he shall see fit to bestow them upon us, that he suffered us to be driven from our inheritances, to undergo many privations and thus be prepared for the vicissitudes of future life.

We need not be faint hearted nor discouraged in regard to the riches of this life, for this people are bound to be the richest of any people upon the face of the whole earth, in the Lord's own due time. That will be in fulfilment of prophecy, and no people that ever dwelt upon this earth ever came up to what the Latter Day Saints will be in the accumulation of the things of this life, but when we reflect upon these things we ought to pray earnestly that we may never be put in the possession of those things until we are rid of those feelings of selfishness and covetousness. (Prest. B. Young: We shall not be, for the Lord knows that wealth would certainly be a curse to us.) It frequently looks very curious to me, looking at it naturally, and causes me some astonishment when I see the pride and arrogance of the children of men, for I see that the whole bent of their minds is upon the wheat and corn that they grow; their contemplations seem to be upon the plans and means by which they can best accumulate the treasures of this world. Who would place their minds in this direction when they see thousands and millions perishing and annually going into their graves, and who would believe that they would be so exceedingly anxious to heap up millions more than they actually need? They see scores of their neighbors cut down upon their right hand and upon their left; they have the experience before them to prove that all must go into their graves without carrying with them the goods and riches of this world. Why is it that it does not take away this feeling from them either morning or night? Men of this mind lie awake during many of the silent hours of the night to calculate how they can the easiest accumulate riches.

We have brought these principles and notions with us; we have inherited them from our fathers; they were instilled into us by our parents, and we have to get rid of them as soon as we can in order that we may be prepared to receive the true principles in the proper spirit. We ought to be thankful that we are in a country where we cannot get rich as easily as we desire to; a country where it takes from morning till night in hard labor to get the common necessities of life, and that this will continue until the Lord says that our hearts are prepared, and we are capable of enjoying the good things of this life.

We as Latter Day Saints, not only have the promise of earthly riches and temporal comforts, but what is far more joyful to us and more satisfactory to our minds, is that we look forward to an eternity of riches, to a perpetual increase of wealth, to be given unto us, if we are faithful before the Lord; to be enjoyed upon righteous principles; to be enjoyed where no covetousness shall mar our feelings; to be participated in by the Latter Day Saints when they have clean hands, pure hearts, when they can use the blessings bestowed upon them according to the mind and will of God, and in peace, where riches will impart the most perfect happiness to the Saints of the living God.

These are the riches we should seek after first; these are the treasures that our hearts should be set upon—the riches that are behind the veil, that extend beyond this mortal sphere; the riches that are as enduring as eternity. It is these riches that will be able to endure and stand when all earthly riches shall vanish away like the dream of a night vision.

Thirty years ago next January, by a revelation that was given through the Prophet Joseph, we were told to seek earnestly for the riches of eternity, and the Lord said it must needs be that my people shall be tried and proven, that they may be prepared to receive that which is in store for the faithful, seek first for the riches that are in the future life; seek first, as our Savior bade his disciples, the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you, that are needful and necessary.

It will be thirty years next Wednesday since I was baptized into this Church, almost one-third of a century since I have had an opportunity of understanding the things of the Kingdom of God, in some measure, of being baptized into that Kingdom which shall endure for ever! How shall I look back upon these thirty years? In many respects I look back with exceeding great joy; in some respects with exceeding great sorrow. I can

see where I have failed in many things, and that if I had lived as faithful as I might have done, I might have done more to the honor and glory of God.

I might have been a person more humble and diligent in obeying counsel, more faithful in the discharge of many duties that are required of a person holding the Priesthood; I might have taken a course that would have been better for myself, in many respects, better for mankind, better for my family and for the cause and Kingdom of God. You can easily perceive then, that reflection upon these things gives me a degree of sorrow. But after considering all these matters when I reflect upon the little good that I have done, and upon the travels and labors that I have performed, the success that has attended my efforts, and the few good desires that I have had to build up the Kingdom, I certainly have great joy. I feel a satisfaction in my own mind in contemplating my past life; I feel a joy and satisfaction that I would not part with for all the luxuries and honors of this present life; these would be nothing in comparison with it. I ever expect to look back upon the past period of my history with joy, so far as the good is concerned; I shall have to reflect with pleasure that I have preached the gospel to so many, that I have so often borne my testimony to the great work of the last days, in which we are engaged. I shall never regret any of the testimonies that I have borne in regard to the future events that are coming upon the earth; I shall never have to regret exhorting mankind to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, to believe in the laws, doctrines and ordinances of the Church and Kingdom of God, and in the Holy Priesthood restored to man in this generation. Have I any reason to regret these things now? No; and I should very much dislike being placed back thirty years in my history, and to have to live my life over again, I should be exceedingly fearful that I might not live it as well as I have done; I should be afraid of taking a step that would prove my overthrow. How long I shall live hereafter it matters not; I desire to live if it is the will of my Heavenly Father, and if it is His will I desire to die; I desire to be perfectly submissive. Death has lost his terrors to me; I feel no fear of pain, for it is only momentary. There is pain in yielding up this mortal tabernacle, in many cases, but what is it? It only lasts for a few minutes, a few hours, days or weeks, and then all is over.

The great object of our existence is to have the mind and the spirit right, the feelings and passions under control; to have the mortal man that dwells within, led and dictated by the Holy Spirit. If that is right the pain and suffering of the body is but small. If we have hope of eternal life; I do not mean that kind of hope that exists among the christian world at large, or that which exists among the Pagans or Mahomedans, but I mean that kind of hope that is based upon a sure foundation, a hope that we can really depend upon, a hope that is not built upon a sandy foundation, but one that takes hold of the things in eternity, that lays hold of the things of the Most High God; a hope founded upon the promises of the Almighty, upon the Priesthood which is after the order of an endless life, and obedience to the laws of Heaven and those of the Kingdom of God on the earth; a hope that blooms with immortality and eternal lives.

This is what imparts confidence to man and takes away the fear of death, distress and terror from the minds of the Saints.—

Have I this hope? I have to some degree, and I would to God that I had it to a greater degree. Promises have been showered upon my head; blessings have been pronounced upon me by the Priesthood at different times; other blessings have been sealed upon me through the Holy ordinances of the gospel by the proper authority, but I contemplate that these are conditional, there is a small degree of trembling and fear that after all I may prove unfaithful, and that I may not be able to endure unto the end.

The great promises of our Savior to his Apostles have been made upon this condition. It is true there are some promises that God has made upon some subjects without conditions. We might mention the following in the revelation upon marriage, concerning sealing blessings upon persons and sealing them up to eternal life, sealing upon them blessings for time and for all eternity, at the time when the man and woman go forth and are sealed by the Priesthood having authority to do this. This remains upon them, if they are sealed unconditionally, at least the revelation says if such an one transgresses he shall be destroyed in the flesh and suffer until the day of redemption, and then they shall come forth and inherit all that was placed upon their heads by the servants of God, on the condition that they have not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost or shed innocent blood. This would seem to be as near an unconditional promise as can well be made