

## DISCOURSE

By PRESIDENT DANIEL H. WELLS, Delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday Afternoon, August 9, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I FEEL to bear my testimony, my brethren and sisters, to the doctrines and principles of the holy gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which, we read in the Scriptures, is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe and obey the same. It has been stated here that we are a peculiar people, and that we have a mission to perform on the earth. This is true. Our Father in heaven has a work to perform on the earth, and we have been called to be co-workers with him in bringing to pass his purposes among the children of men. This is a blessed privilege for us. If his purposes could have been advanced and established upon the earth without his having revealed himself, we would not have been called, and the angel would not have come and restored the everlasting gospel in our day. We may go further back, and say, that if it would have been as well for us to remain with our Father in the spirit world, and not to come forth into this world, to pass through the ordeals which await us, we should not have been sent. But we have been sent for a purpose, and that purpose is, that we may accomplish the full measure of our creation, which we could not do without an earthly probation. This was necessary to our advancement, as intelligent beings, and for the progress of the kingdom and glory of God. We had a pre-existence in the spirit world, and we kept our first estate there, or we should not have been privileged to come and take bodies and, by living according to the principles of the holy gospel, prepare ourselves for salvation and exaltation, and to return again into the presence of our Father and partake of his glory. In this connection come in the principles of redemption and of the resurrection, through the power of which our bodies and spirits, after they have passed the ordeal of death, will be re-united and clothed with immortality and endowed with eternal life. I say, if it would have been as well for us to remain in the spirit world we should not have been sent forth to be tested with the misery, woe, sorrow, corruptions, evils and death so prevalent on earth; but it was in kindness to us, his children, that our Father sent us to this earth, that we may show whether we will be faithful in all respects to the principles of truth and righteousness, and to the commandments of God when in the midst of evil. All the requirements of our Father conduce to the blessing and benefit of those who observe them while they live here, as well as ensuring to them the blessings at the end of the race.

The Lord our God never did, and he never will, reveal a principle, give a commandment, or make a requirement of his children on the earth, but what if it is carried out will prove a blessing to every one, for it will enable us to work out our salvation and exaltation by establishing the principles of truth, virtue and honor upon the earth, and these principles, in the very nature of things, must purify and elevate those who live and govern their actions by them. These are the only principles which will endure and stand for ever; while that which is of an opposite character will pass away. Herein is the warfare in which we are engaged, and which we shall continue to wage, as long as we live on the earth. For the evil one is ready, if we will listen to him, to lead us astray and to cause us to make shipwreck of our most holy faith; he will cause light to appear as darkness, and darkness as light, and he will lead us down to destruction if we are not continually on our guard against his wiles and suggestions. But if we observe the principles of the gospel and the commandments of the Lord our God they will bring us peace in the life that now is as well as in that which is to come. Some people seem to think that the pursuits so prevalent in the world are all that are worth living for, and that they will find joy and happiness therein. But such pleasures are neither solid nor lasting, and there is nothing that can be considered real, genuine joy and pleasure within the reach of the human family, but

what is to be found within the purview of the everlasting gospel. The gospel makes men and women free, free from sin—the greatest of all tyrants; and there is no greater slave on the earth than the man who is under the control of his own passions, and who is subject to the dictation of the spirit of evil which is so prevalent in the world. The acts of all such persons bring their own punishment, and it is swift and certain; while those who are controlled by the principles of the gospel have a joy and peace, under whatever circumstances in life they may be placed, which the world knows nothing of, and which it can neither give nor take away, for they have an inward consciousness that their course secures to them the confidence of the Lord our God.

We are placed here on the earth that we may be tested. We are very independent beings, we have our agency, and can choose the road to life or the road to death, just as we please. If we would secure eternal life we shall have to take a course to command the confidence of our Father in heaven, and to accomplish this, we must not be weary in well doing, for it is said that only they who endure will receive the reward. Endure what? Why, the trials, temptations and difficulties that we may have to encounter in the path which the gospel marks out. Our path, as followers of the Savior, is beset with evil on every side, and with influences which, if yielded to, will bring us under the power of the oppressor. They may seem alluring, to a greater or less extent, and so they are, for the power of evil has great influence in the earth. The wealth of the earth has long been controlled by the evil one, and he has bestowed it upon whomsoever he has seen fit. Perhaps this has been ordered so in the economy of our Father for the benefit of his children. We must learn to trust in God. As was said here this morning, we must live by faith. What is a man good for who, just as soon as an obstacle presents itself before him, flies the track and says, "I will have no more to do with this or with that. It is true it purports to come from our Father in heaven, but I can not see the benefit that will accrue to me in observing it, and I will seize that which offers present benefit, regardless of the consequences." That man proves to all that he is not worthy to receive eternal riches. A Latter-day Saint should live so that he can bear the scrutinizing eye of the Almighty, in secret as well as in public. This should be his course all the days of his life, then when the day comes in which the wicked will call upon the rocks to hide them from the face of the Lord, he will rejoice in meeting his Father, and will join in rendering praise and thanksgiving to his name, for the privilege of again beholding him. This will be the lot of the righteous—those who have served God in their actions as well as with their lips; but sad indeed will be the fate of those who have been hypocritical, who have professed with their lips, but have not possessed in their hearts. They will dread to meet the face of the Lord, they have a certain fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of the Father.

Now, it is true, that while in the flesh we are subjected to many trials and temptations; but we are not like those without hope. The apostle says we are subjected in hope. In hope of what? Latter-day Saints who faithfully live their religion have the hope of a glorious resurrection and eternal life. It is part of the experience of Latter-day Saints to be subjected to trial, in some things perhaps more than the wicked, that they may gain the ascendancy over their own passions and all the evils which beset them. Our passions are given us for a good and wise purpose. They underlie our existence. They give us nerve and energy, and power to execute and carry out; but they are not given to be our masters. Those heaven-given gifts—reason and intellect, should reign and bring passion into complete subjection, and they will do so if inspired and directed by the Spirit of God.

We have been gathered from the nations of the earth that we may be taught the ways of the Lord. It was remarked here this morning that there was need of a reformation in the world. If it were not so the Lord would not have undertaken it, and things would have been permitted to go along as usual. But the Lord saw the necessity for a change. All had departed from the

path of life. The authority of the holy priesthood had been taken back into the heavens for a wise purpose, and also for the advantage of the children of men upon the earth. Better for them to be without it than to possess and not to obey its high behests; but when the set time was come for the Lord to establish his kingdom, he again sent forth the gospel to the children of men, knowing that it would find many honest-hearted people who would be willing to receive instruction from heaven, and stand in the day of his power. The gospel is to go forth to all nations and tongues on the earth, that all may have an opportunity of being co-workers with God in establishing his kingdom on the earth, which is destined to stand for ever and to absorb all other kingdoms. This is inevitable and will come to pass in the Lord's own due time. The elders of Israel are going to the nations and gathering therefrom the honest in heart, and through them the Lord is revealing his purposes to the children of men, and the institutions of high heaven.

This is the mission of the Latter-day Saints, and every one of them who is faithful to his calling is a co-worker with the Lord in the establishment of his purposes, and he will find his reward here and hereafter. Is it not glorious to know that we are engaged with our Father and God, and with holy beings who have gone behind the veil, in carrying on this great reformation which the Lord has commenced on the earth? I say it will never be confounded, never, no never. The principles of the holy gospel will last for ever, and they will exalt all whose lives and actions are controlled thereby, and who will live by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. Such persons will never be prevailed against in time and in eternity. There is nothing surer than this, because this gospel will go on from conquering to conquer, until all nations, kindreds, tongues and people will come under the sceptre of Immanuel, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. Evil will work out its own overthrow. The wicked will prey upon each other to their own destruction, and in the Lord's own due time the earth will be rid of evil doers, whereas those who are based upon the Rock of Ages will endure for ever. This is just as natural as any principle of philosophy that exists, and it is bound to come to pass. Our Father has passed through these ordeals and has trodden the paths we are treading. He kept his second estate, and has attained to his exaltation. We have the privilege of following in his footsteps. It has been revealed in our day who we are, and the relationship we hold to God. We have learned that God is our Father, and that we are his children, *bona fide* his children. Not in a spiritual sense alone, but when we say, "Our Father who art in heaven," we mean just what we say.

We have not only learned who we are, but the purpose of our creation and our future destiny. I have not given myself a great deal of uneasiness about the future. I have felt that, if I could act my part properly as I pass along through life, whether I attained to anything hereafter or not I should be content. The peace and happiness which I have day by day in my inmost soul is its own reward; and I have long been satisfied that there is nothing worth having outside the purview of the holy gospel, and the peace, satisfaction and joy which it brings me I would not exchange for all that this world can bestow. As for the future, I am satisfied that it will be altogether satisfactory and will bring all that I can ask for and more than I can now comprehend, if my course day by day now is what it should be. I have no fears that my exaltation will not be as full and complete as I shall be capacitated to enjoy. And whether it is or not I have an inward peace through taking this course that, of itself, is a continual feast, which sustains and buoy me up under every difficulty and obstacle which presents itself before me.

I think this should be attraction enough to entice every son and daughter of Adam. I think that the children of our Father can not afford to throw away these blessings. I think that we can not afford to take the name of God in vain. We can not afford to drown our reason in ardent spirits. We can not afford to sin against God and to violate his commandments. These

practices cost too much. No man or woman can afford to walk in the paths that lead to death. They are beset with misery, envy, jealousy and with everything that produces discomfort, and at the end thereof death, and misery both before and after death. Said Jesus—Fear not him who has power only to destroy this body, but fear Him who can cast both soul and body into hell. Let us take the course, then, that will save us here and hereafter. Let the body go, if necessary, if it intervenes between us and the faith of the holy gospel and our duty to God. If we are brought into a position in which the life of the body imperils our faith in the gospel let the body go cheerfully and willingly. We should pour out our blood as freely as the water that runs, rather than violate our fidelity to the principles of eternal life, or our most holy covenants before the Lord, or rather than deny the word after having tasted the powers of the world to come. To know God and Jesus whom he has sent is eternal life, and rather than deny them and turn again to the things of the world, like a sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire, let this poor body go. It will go sooner or later anyhow, and we should esteem it a privilege to lay down our lives in defence of the principles of the everlasting gospel. We should not rashly run into danger, but we should take a wise course and, at any cost, determine to rise above the evils that are in the world and be faithful to the truth, holding on to the iron rod, without swerving to the right hand or to the left; and if there is no other alternative, rather than swerve, let the body go. It will be a happy exchange, and we will receive it again crowned with glory, immortality and eternal life.

Now Latter-day Saints, are you willing to do this? Oh yes, hundreds and thousands would, if necessary, walk up to the cannon's mouth, in defence of the truth and priesthood, who will not live their religion. Such persons will suffer loss if they are not careful. We cannot afford to neglect our duties. We want to attain to celestial glory. We do not feel as though we could be satisfied with anything short of that. No Latter-day Saint, who has ever reflected upon these things, feels that he can be satisfied short of celestial glory. We could not be satisfied with a celestial nor even with a terrestrial glory. We want to attain to the highest of all. We have set out for that, it is the goal for which we are bound, and we feel that nothing short of that will satisfy us. How many will come short of it I do not know, but I know that in order to attain to it we must be careful to observe all the duties which are incumbent upon us. We have no promise of that glory unless we do. The revelations of the Lord, through his servant Joseph, tell us that whosoever can not abide a celestial law will not inherit the glory of the celestial kingdom. There are many called Latter-day Saints who are anxious to obtain their endowments, washings, sealings and anointings, and baptisms for themselves and their dead, and who would think they were deprived of very great blessings if they could not have these privileges; and yet they act as though if they could only snatch these blessings from the hands of the servants of the Lord they would be all right, and they could do in other respects just as they please. They could neglect to pay their tithing and the observance of the commands of the Lord generally, and walk after their own vain imaginations all the days of their lives. What a fatal mistake is here! By your own works ye shall be judged, whether they be good or evil. A man may attain to all these ordinances, he may keep his path hidden in iniquity for a season, but the time will come when every evil doer will stand before the Lord in his own naked deformity, he will be stripped of his hypocrisy and subterfuge of lies. The gigantic superstructure of Satan, that has so long wielded influence in the earth, will be swept away, and in that day all who stand will do so by their own virtue and integrity. No man can afford to do an evil act. If it is unseen by his fellows, he himself knows it, and the Lord knows it, and that is two too many—two witnesses to establish his guilt, and he can not dodge it, it will be known, as it were, on the housetops. Therefore, brethren and sisters, let us be diligent in all things, even in what are consid-

ed the small things, though there are no small things connected with our duties and callings as Saints. We can not afford to live without paying our tithing, because it is a law of heaven, one of the requirements the Lord has made at our hands for our own benefit. Covetousness is idolatry. We cannot afford to have anything intervening between us and the Lord our God. We must serve the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind. If we are so covetous that we cannot pay our tithing, there is an obstacle in the way, and we have become lukewarm and indifferent in the cause of God. It is no matter how poor we may be, if we have ever done anything in the line of our duty in the kingdom of God, it has brought with it peace and salvation. We are never sorry for it afterwards unless we turn away from the truth. If we neglect any duty, tithing or any other, we feel under condemnation. No matter how poor we may be we should pay our tithing, if we have to receive it back again at the hands of the bishops, it is a blessing and a benefit to us. As Joseph F. Smith remarked at Tooele, that poor widow who pays her tithing, will receive from one to five hundredfold. She is sure to do it, and so with every individual.

But it is not the poor, as a general thing, who neglect their tithing. It is oftener the wealthy than the poor. The man who has a hundred dollars can give his ten. If he has only ten he can give one easier than another man can give ten. If he has ten thousand, it is harder for him to give a thousand, and the more he has the more difficult it is for him to pay his tithing. It has always been so, I apprehend; anyhow, it is so at the present time. We can not afford this. If we expect to attain to celestial glory we must abide the law of the celestial kingdom. There is no obstacle in our path that we can not overcome. If we are determined the Lord will help us. He does and has done so all the time, and he will continue to do so.

How many times have we been benefitted by pursuing the course which the God of heaven has marked out for us to walk in? How often has he delivered his Saints in times past? How many times has he rebuked, under the administration of his servants, the sickness of a child or the member of a family? Should we not then have an increased confidence to come again, and to put our dependence in him, knowing and realizing that he is faithful in performing that which he has promised? Having paid our tithing once, and received the blessing, should we not approach the altar again with renewed confidence and zeal, relying and trusting in God for the future, without fearing any disaster coming upon us? I think this is good philosophy, it brings its own reward in the very nature of things. Then why not feel encouraged in going to meeting and in attending to the duties required at our hands, partake of the sacrament, put away evil feelings one against another, and come to the table of the Lord with pure hearts and clean hands, to commemorate the sufferings and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? One great reason why the Sacrament was instituted was that we might not forget him, nor our Father in heaven, who sent him. Said Jesus, "Do this until I come." He will come again, most assuredly, in power and great glory. Who will be prepared to receive him? Where are the people who will be able to stand at his second coming, when he will take the reins of power into his own hands?

Is it reasonable to suppose that Jesus will send his messengers to warn the world, that all people may have an opportunity to obey the gospel and to be prepared for his coming? I think it is reasonable to suppose that he will commence a preparatory work on the earth before he makes his descent. This is the work, brethren and sisters, in which we are engaged—preparing for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that when he comes he may have a people, zealous of good works, ready to do his bidding, instead of crucifying him as they did before. Then let us go to with our might, devoting ourselves and whatever the Lord gives unto us to him and his kingdom. Let us not sift our ways to strangers, but let us be diligent and faithful in sustaining every righteous principle. This is our duty and privilege. Let us divest ourselves of the evils so preva-