

DISCOURSE BY PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

DELIVERED

In the St. George Tabernacle, Wednesday evening, Nov. 9th, 1881.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

I feel pleased to have the opportunity of again meeting with you. There are many things that if I had time, I should like to talk about. However, there were one or two statements, that I made yesterday which I will further explain. In speaking of the position of the people and of their settlements in this southern country, I then stated that President Young did not make any mistake in laying out a city here, nor in building a Temple here; that it was quite as important a move as any that could have been made in the interests of the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth. If I were to enter into the details of that move, I should speak of it perhaps in a two-fold capacity; but I will speak for a short time, at least, upon some of the leading features associated with the position that we occupy here in these valleys of the mountains.

We are quite a long distance from the outside world. It is true there are railroads and more are being made; and it is right there should be. That is their part of the business. In this way, and in many instances, they are assisting us to build up the kingdom of God, but they don't know it. If they did they would not like to do it.

The position that we occupy in these valleys of the mountains, is a very peculiar one. When we came up here the first place that was designated was Salt Lake City. President Young said that he had a manifestation that that was the place. There was a valley, a very good valley, a comparatively rich valley, a valley that was well watered, a valley that could be irrigated without much labor, where the streams were quite easy of access and where a small community could easily raise their sustenance; and this we did. Now had we landed in a place like this at first, it would have been more difficult, people would have become more discouraged, and some of them felt very much discouraged as it was, some going to California because everything looked so forbidding. Yet others thought it would be a pleasant place to reside in, a place where a living could be as easily obtained as in most other places, except we go to some of the rich lands of Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, etc. But there were other circumstances associated with these things that would have made it difficult for us to sustain ourselves even in those places. For instance we lived in a rich land back in Missouri. Everything there seemed to grow at a very rapid rate, everything increased very fast. I have heard some people tell such big stories about the productiveness of that country that I have sometimes been afraid to tell what I myself knew of it, for fear that people would not believe me. For instance, I have seen fields of corn that a regiment of soldiers could ride into them and they would be out of sight; and I have seen beans grow where corn has been planted where the corn stalks have served as bean poles; and I have seen pumpkins and squash grow among them, three crops growing the same year and at the same time. That country, nevertheless, has many drawbacks. In that country we were very unhealthy. We were subject to what is called fever and ague every year; in fact, in the spring we used to think we did well if we didn't happen to die off in the fall. Why could we not stop there? Because the land was too good, and we were easy of access to men desirous to possess our property, and they told us to move on, and we had to go. We had to leave Missouri, and I suppose God intended to try the Saints, to let them pass through certain kinds of experience and place them in a position that they would have to lean on Him. Some of the people rebelled against these things in their feelings. Among the rest, I remember being much shocked at the remarks of Sidney Rigdon after he had been imprisoned with the Prophet Joseph in Richmond jail, as well as many others. I visited them in jail, and Sidney Rigdon made a remark soon after he got out, to the effect, that if God did not care anything more about us than He seemed to do,

that if He allowed us to be hauled around as we had been, he did not care about serving such a God. That is, he found the trials were heavier for him than he was capable of bearing, notwithstanding that he had seen the Lord and had had visions pertaining to the celestial, terrestrial and telestial kingdoms, in which he had seen the position of men in the future, and the purposes of God regarding the nations of the earth, and had borne testimony of it in connection with Joseph Smith, as we find recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Yet when trials came his knees faltered, and the knees of many others have faltered in the same way. Now, we talk about lands, good rich land. Why did we not stay in Missouri? Because people would not let us. It was just so in Illinois. Why did we leave there? Because, as I have heard Brother George A. Smith say, we left because we could not help ourselves; at least, that was the purport of his saying. I think the Lord was very merciful to us in Salt Lake Valley. I believe we landed just in the right place. The people commenced to establish themselves; they began to find that they could raise crops there, and that the land was very productive. We stayed there for a while and began to make little settlements and little excursions out into the surrounding country. The people had all kinds of difficulties. I remember once, in Bountiful, there were three or four families went up to settle there, and they felt that there was not enough water, and that they could hardly get along. They got to quarreling about water rights, as we do sometimes. I do not know of much quarreling down here; I do not think you have as much water to quarrel over as they had. Afterwards President Young was moved upon to begin to make settlements in other places. We had now obtained a foothold. We had a place where we could raise all the grain necessary for our sustenance, where we could raise sheep, cattle, etc. We pushed out to Ogden on the one hand and to Provo on the other, and then occupied some of the best places in Salt Lake Valley, in Utah Valley, and on the Weber. We began to increase; more immigrants came in, and others began to come from above. Things went on. A Temple was started there, but it seemed to progress very slowly; as well it might when we consider the substantial nature of the building. When we started, we had nothing but wagons to haul the rock on, and they were very big rock, if you remember. Those rocks had to be hauled about 17 miles in those wagons, and owing to the liability of the wagons to break down, this work gave us a great deal of trouble. To-day, and right along for a number of years past, since the railroad has been built, it is not uncommon to bring in some three or four car loads at a time, delivering the rock in the Temple yard. Then it was thought best to commence down here. Why? Let me tell you some other things and show you about the settlements north and south, and especially south. If you remember, Brother Geo. A. Smith, as much as 25 years ago—I don't remember exactly how long—came down and made a settlement at Parowan and another at Cedar—and here is Bro. Henry Lunt present, who was one of that number. He came to Cedar at that time, and they tried to start iron works at that place. And then Bro. Joseph Horne and some others were sent down to see if cotton could not be raised in this district of country in the hope that something could be done whereby we might produce the raw material for the manufacture of our clothes, and they stayed a little while somewhere not far from here, some five miles south on the Santa Clara, I am told. There was a rich little settlement up there. Some time after a great deal of it was washed away. I remember the struggles Brother George A. used to have. He labored under difficulties, being so very heavy, and not as active as most men; but he was a man of great energy. He would come down here and bring a few men, and would settle them down and go back again. By and by he would bring some more down, all that he could pick up that would volunteer. By the time he came down again he would find half of the others had gone. They did not want to stop. They thought the land was set up on edge and had never been finished, and they had all kinds of notions. Then he would return to the city and drum up a few more recruits

and take them down; and by the time he got here he would find that a good many of those he left had also gone. Finally they became weeded out and left, until he got a lot of folks who, if they had considered it a duty to go on to a barren rock and stay there until they should be instructed to leave, would have done it. It needed just such an element to come to this country. What Brother Snow said here referring to the sad fact of there being such a number of widows in this place whose husbands had gone to their graves through having worked themselves to death, was perfectly true; but, then, we don't want to cry about it. We may as well laugh as cry about the past. You have done a great deal of hard work. In coming down from Pine Valley we found immense dugways in the most forbidding places, and it has required all the perseverance, energy, intelligence and faith of even those men who were capable of living on a dry rock—it required the combined energy of the whole to accomplish these things, and a good deal of faith too.

Still President Young urged forward the people; Brother George A. Smith and Brother Erastus Snow urged them forward, and others urged them forward, and there was a general feeling to build up this southern country. Finally it was found that our Temple in Salt Lake City would take such a long time to build, it was thought best to erect one down here. Why? Because there was a people living here who were more worthy than any others. Who more worthy of the blessings of a Temple than those who had displayed the self-abnegation exhibited by the pioneers of the south? God inspired President Young to build a temple here because of the fidelity and self-abnegation of the people; and, furthermore, that there might be an asylum here for those living further south to be administered to in the holy ordinances of God. I speak this for your credit—not that all of you are of that class, but let those that are worthy take the credit, and those that are not, need not take it. This Temple was built and we went into it, and a great many thousands of people have been administered to, and for, within its walls. People have administered for themselves and for their progenitors. Over 150,000 people, Brother McAllister says, have been administered for in this Temple. Don't you think it is worth while building a temple where such a work can be done? If life is worth anything, if salvation is worth anything, if the life of our friends and brethren with whom we shall be associated in the Kingdom of God is worth anything, then I think a good work was done in the building of this Temple. In other words, it was a wise move. Why? Because it helped to sustain this part of the country. Means were brought from other places down here to supply the people with means and labor, thus it has been a blessing both to the living and the dead. You men who comprehend things aright, you would not take in exchange anything that could be conferred upon you for the blessings you have received in that Temple.

There were then blessings of a temporal nature, as well as of a spiritual nature, connected with the labor performed in the building of that house. There was another thing. In establishing the kingdom of God it was necessary that there should be a strong place somewhere here between the land south and the land north. It was necessary that there should be a foothold here all through these valleys of the mountains between Salt Lake City and north of Salt Lake City clear away, as you have heard President Young say, on the backbone of the American continent. And why? We make remarks sometimes, but I always like to get at the bottom of them. Why is it better for us to be here than to be somewhere else? If we had been in Missouri we should have been mobbed and robbed long ago. If we had been anywhere in Central America or South America where we could have been reached, our Christian friends would have come there and stolen what we had from us. But, furthermore, President Young, who was governed by the inspiration of the Spirit of God in leading the people forth in the way he did, expected that these railroads that are now coming would come along. Years ago I expected the same thing, because I saw them at work here and clear away into Mexico. I had it manifested to me, and Brother George Q. Cannon here has heard me speak about the matter. Didn't

you Brother Cannon? (Brother Cannon: Yes, sir.) At that time I was very sick. I told President Young of some things that I then believed would take place, among the rest was this railroad building. And if there had not been some pretty strong places, such as a settlement on Salt Creek, a settlement at Beaver, a settlement at Parowan, a settlement down here, etc., we never would have been able to carry out the will of God, and we should have been in a different position with regard to other settlements further south than we are to-day. Now your young men are beginning to say, they want room. There is plenty of room south. Here is Brother Snow, who has been working like a beaver, and there are others, who are doing the same, establishing settlements in the various valleys south, in Arizona, in Colorado, and all through this southern country, until we now occupy, as I have stated in other places, some 800 miles of country in a direct line, running north and south.

What did we have when we left Nauvoo? Not much. Any property to spare? I think not. I think many of us would have gone without shoes, without clothing, unless God had interposed in a miraculous manner in sending down—I was going to say, a shower of clothing. You remember that Brother Kimball prophesied at a certain time that clothing would be as cheap here as in the East. Regarding this some people felt a good deal like the man did when Elijah prophesied about a measure of meal being sold for so much. Says one man; if the heavens were to open this could not happen; but it did happen; and the other happened that Bro. Kimball talked about. When the gold fever burst out, people brought clothing by the wholesale and sold it for a mere song, and let you sing the song; until the wants of the people were all supplied. Who supplied them? These men. Did they want to do it? No, it was the Lord who controlled these matters. He started up this feeling which brought the people here, and they acted more like crazy men than any I ever saw. They were ready to give us their goods almost for nothing. The Saints at that time in Salt Lake City were supplied with all the necessities of life brought by traders whom they knew nothing about, and they traded off their cattle and their horses and anything these people could pack away. Here was a manifestation of the work of the Lord, of the will of God, and the protecting care of our heavenly Father over His Saints.

As I told you yesterday we have traveled among the Saints and found thousands of happy homes, good farms, good gardens and orchards, cattle, sheep, horses, etc., and that the people generally are now in a very prosperous condition. What has it originated from? We certainly did not bring it about. God has blessed our labors on the land and increased the water for our sake.

Now, having said so much upon this subject I will turn to our political position. We have already made in Salt Lake City numbers of very nice places. You have also got some very beautiful buildings here. I am sorry to see so much saleratus yet in the land; I wish you had a little easier times; but while I am inclined to sympathize with you, yet I do not want my sympathy to overcome my judgment about matters of this kind.

Now, we have really the foundation for a prosperous State. We started with nothing a little while ago. I think we have made pretty well at it. You have had hard times; still you are living and thriving; there are none of you naked or without shoes, hats or bonnets. You seem to be provided with a great many of the good things of this life. You seem to be doing tolerably well. I know very well that you have a hard struggle to make two ends meet; I understand it. But there is one advantage you have—no one will want to steal away your place from you; will they? (Laughter.) I do not think they would want to carry it off. I do not think they would want to drive you away because of your extraneous wealth; consequently, you are free from this trouble. That is not the fix of the nations of the earth. Go to some of the nations to-day and look at their condition. Take England for instance; they are prospering very well, but look at the trouble they have had in Ireland. They have tried to benefit that people in one way or another, but they seem to spurn those bene-

fits and are inclined to stir up commotion which is not unlikely to end in bloodshed. We are not troubled in that way. In Russia, look at the horrible condition they are in. They have secret societies, as spoken of in the Book of Mormon. They are engaged in all kinds of plots, plans and calculations. They have tried to kill their present Czar, after having assassinated his father. There seems to be a feeling of uneasiness and trouble among the nations. Then again, in Turkey, they have had a great deal of trouble there. It has leaked out lately that the Sultan, who was said to have died a natural death, was strangled, and they have lately been prosecuting his assassins. There are terrible forebodings among the nations of the earth because of troubles that seem to be threatening them. Here we have had our own President killed, and a little while ago President Lincoln was assassinated, and there seems to be a spirit of that kind rampant, and it will grow worse and worse. Not long ago in Pittsburg there was a shocking state of things, where they burnt up and destroyed property to the amount of three millions of dollars or more. We have apparently prosperous times. There is now a lull in the storm, but it is only a lull to burst out more violently by and by. You will see it. There are elements at work to uproot the government and destroy the foundation of society, and to take away the rights of men and pull down the bulwarks of this government, and scatter to the four winds the principles by which it has been governed, and to let loose the wildest passions of men. These are some of the things that are taking place. These are the elements that are at work to-day. They are running around, and through, and among the people almost everywhere. And it will not be long before there is trouble again in the United States. These inflated times will by and by bring about a great reaction, and then there will be trouble and difficulty; and so these things will continue to increase.

Now, we are here in the tops of the mountains, far away from these things. We are here learning the laws of life and the principles of truth, and we are here as saviors upon Mount Zion, operating in the interests of humanity, sending forth missionaries to the nations of the earth, gathering people together; and when they are gathered together, we build temples and administer in them. We are here, forming closer connections with the heavens, with God our Heavenly Father, with Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and with the ancient Apostles, Prophets and men of God. We are here participating in some of the greatest blessings that ever were conferred upon mankind since the world was formed. We are here as those that God has selected from the nations of the earth, that He may plant among us the principles of eternal truth, and that we may operate with Him and with the Priesthood behind the veil in the interests of all humanity that have ever lived upon the face of the earth. We are a blessed people; we could only comprehend our position. And we need not be too anxious about the affairs of the world. Men of wealth, men of standing, men of position, men who stand in high places, are beginning to tremble and quake everywhere. They are looking forward with terrible forebodings to something that they fear is coming upon the earth. They do not know what it is, but it will burst upon them and their forebodings will be realized.

But we will look at this matter again. Could we be in a better place? I think not. Let me show you the reason for that. We are a very small people, and we are in the midst of a very large people. We occupy these valleys among these rugged mountains, and we dwell in deserts, and in many of the most forbidding places. We see people living in little places, on little streams of water trickling along, and perhaps all of it would go through an inch pipe without much pressure, and they are professing to farm and raise fruits, vegetables and vines in such places, wrenching their living from the barren desert soil. And they do live, but it is hard sledding, and there is a great deal of it here. Now then, go over the ground we have traveled to get here, say starting from Utah county to Juab, from Juab to Fillmore, from Fillmore to Beaver, from Beaver to Parowan, and so on down through here, and among these rocks where little sel-