

## DISCOURSE

By Elder JOHN TAYLOR, Delivered  
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REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I AM pleased to have the privilege of meeting with the Saints in this place, and of speaking to them such things as the Lord may place in my mind to communicate. I am well aware that I do not know how to speak and that you do not know how to hear unless we are all under the influence and guidance of the Spirit of the living God. We are spiritual beings, and literal and temporal beings; we have to do with time and eternity, and, as we can know nothing about eternity and nothing about God only as he shall reveal it unto us, it follows as a necessary consequence that all the theories, ideas and dogmas of men can be of no avail in instructing the human family in things pertaining to God and eternity. This holds good in regard to all of our affairs in life, whether it be the life that now is or the life that is to come. We know very little about the world we live in. We know very little about ourselves, about our own bodies, about the spirit and mind of man, or the operation of the Spirit of God upon that spirit and mind; and much less about eternity, about God and heaven and about the designs and purposes of the Almighty; and it is folly for man, unaided and undirected by the Almighty, to attempt to teach things pertaining to the kingdom of God or to the welfare and happiness of the human family. We, as human beings, and especially as Latter-day Saints, who have given some attention to these matters, and feel ourselves identified with the church and kingdom of God upon the earth, have ideas that differ very materially from those of the world, and that difference may be traced to the influence and operation of the Spirit of God upon our minds through obedience to the first principles of the gospel of Christ; for while the world of mankind generally have repudiated the order of God and the institutions of his house, we, as believers in him and in the establishment of his kingdom upon the earth in these latter days, occupy a very different position from that of the rest of the world.

The Scriptures definitely inform us that no man knoweth the things of God but by the Spirit of God. The gospel teaches us how we may obtain a knowledge of that Spirit, and that is, by repenting of our sins, being baptized in the name of Jesus for their remission, and having hands laid upon us for the reception of the Holy Ghost. And as we have complied with the first principles of the gospel of Christ and partaken of the Holy Ghost, we have had some slight manifestations of the will, designs and purposes of the Almighty in relation to us, to those who have lived before us, and those who shall come after us; in relation to the worlds that are and that are to come. I say that we have had some slight idea of these things and that it has originated from the peculiar position that we occupy through our obedience to the first principles of the gospel of Christ. Other men do not—can not—comprehend things as we do; they have not the means of demonstrating the truth of the gospel as we have, not having complied with its first principles. That which is light, intelligence, intelligent, happy and glorious to us, is confusion and darkness to them. They can not conceive of it; they can not comprehend the laws of life, nor understand anything pertaining to the kingdom of God. I do not care what intelligence they may possess in regard to other matters. I do not care how profoundly learned they may be in the arts and sciences of the world. They may have studied mathematics, examined the physiology of the human system, if they have made themselves acquainted with geology, mineralogy and the structure of the earth on which we live and of the planetary system and the motion of worlds with which we are surrounded; they may have made themselves acquainted with history, geology, botany, law, physics, literature and theology, and all this knowledge, and much more than this, and if they are not in possession of the Holy Ghost, the principle of revelation, the light of eternal truth, they can not comprehend the Kingdom of God.

You have all read about Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night. Nicodemus thought there was something good about Jesus, but there was not enough manhood about himself. He was something of a sneak, the same as you sometimes see some men now. He wanted to come to Jesus, but he had not manhood enough to do so by daylight, so he came by night—under cover of darkness, and said he "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he can not see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus did not understand this, and he said unto Jesus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom

of God." He could not even see the Kingdom of God unless he was born of water, and he could not enter into it unless he was born of water and of the Spirit.

This was the statement of Jesus, and it may account for the singular feeling we see manifested among the children of men towards us as a people. Men of ability and learning will come into our midst and say, "You have a remarkably fine country here, and you have exhibited a large amount of intelligence, industry and perseverance. We do not know anything about your religion, nor about its principles. We were inclined to think unfavorably of it from the many reports we heard abroad concerning you; but now that we see your order, diligence, perseverance, improvements, your beautiful cities and villages, your railroads and the various enterprises you have engaged in; when we see your freedom from the vices which generally prevail in the world, we think there is something peculiar about it, but what it is we do not know." They can not see the kingdom of God—they have not been born of water, that is the trouble with them. I frequently talk with ministers of various denominations on these subjects, but they are as blind as bats—they do not know anything about them. They can talk about politics and history, and they can discourse philosophically on various branches of art and science, but when you come to the Kingdom of God they are egregiously ignorant, and they fulfill the words of Jesus, that no man can see that kingdom unless he is born again.

Take a retrospective view of the history of this people. See their position and the position of the church and kingdom of God, years ago and now, and then look at the things to come; talk of the kingdom as it was, as it is, and as it will be. There is something great, magnificent, and glorious to reflect upon—something which every Latter-day Saint, who has his mind lit up with the Spirit, intelligence and revelation which flow from God, admires; and he feels to say in his heart, as one said in former days: "Let this people be my people, let their God be my God; where they live let me live also, and where they die let me be buried; and let me be their associate and mingle with them in time and in eternity. This is the kind of feeling that the Spirit of God imparts to every Latter-day Saint who lives his religion and keeps the commandments of God.

We are engaged in a work that God has set his hand to accomplish, and he has made use of us as instruments, and he will also use others who shall yet be gathered, to build up his kingdom, and to introduce correct principles of every kind,—principles of morality, social principles, good political principles; principles relative to the government of the earth we live in; principles of salvation pertaining to ourselves and our progenitors and to our posterity, and pertaining to the world that was, that is and that is to come; and, as I said, he is using us as instruments. It is true that we blunder and stumble; it is true that we are surrounded with all the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, but with all our weaknesses and foibles clinging to us the Lord has called us from the nations of the earth to be his coadjutors and co-laborers, his fellow-workmen and assistants, in rolling forth his purposes and bringing to pass those things that he designed before the world was. It is true that the Lord made man perfect, but man has found out many inventions, and he is very much degenerated, and is all the time prone to weakness, corruption, folly and vanity, and God knows it, and he knew it when he selected us. But what could he do? He could not select angels to associate with him in regenerating the earth and its inhabitants, for they were not very proper associates. He had to select just such beings as there were, and in the first place he revealed himself from the heavens to Joseph Smith. He made known to him some of the first principles of the gospel of Christ, and then unfolded unto him certain things pertaining to the organization of the church of God upon the earth, the church in its organization, with presidents, apostles, high priests, sevens, bishops and their councils, high councils, for their instruction and guidance, and with teachers, priests and deacons, and so forth. He organized his church here upon the earth, and revealed unto these various quorums their several duties, and placed upon them certain responsibilities, told them what they were, and revealed unto Joseph Smith all things pertaining to the first organization of his kingdom upon the earth. He told his disciples, as Jesus told his, to go forth without purse or scrip, to preach the gospel to every nation and kindred and people and tongue—to call upon them to repent of their sins, to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins, to have hands laid upon them for the reception of the Holy Ghost; to lay hands upon the sick and to cast out devils, just as Jesus told his disciples to do; and said he: "Freely you have received, freely give." "Go without purse or scrip, trust in me, I am your father, I am the God and father of all the spirits of all flesh. I have you under my special control, I will stand by, I will sustain you, my spirit shall go with you, mine angels shall go before you to prepare the way for you." This is what he told Joseph Smith, and the elders went forth, according to word that God had given them, and they told you and told others to repent of their sins and be baptized in

the name of Jesus for the remission of them. And what then? You should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which should take of the things of God and show them unto you; it should unveil the heavens to one, give the spirit of prophecy to another, the gift of interpretation to another, the gift of healing to another, and so forth, the Spirit dividing to each man severally as he saw fit.

These elders went forth and preached to you Latter-day Saints now before me, this very gospel I have been laying before you, and there was something in your spirit ready to receive it. You could not tell why nor wherefore, but you believed it to be a message sent from God, and you went forth into the waters of baptism and were baptized, and you received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and you then knew for yourselves of the truth of that doctrine which God had committed unto them; and you, in turn, were ordained, and you also went forth to preach the same gospel, with the same results, for you saw the power of God manifested. You saw the sick healed, and the power of God attend your ministrations. You saw the lame leap for joy, those who were downcast, inspired and led to rejoice through the principles of eternal life, and thus the Lord has perpetuated the same thing until the present day. Mixed up with that have been other things. We have been gathered here. What for? What did we come here for? Who knows? We came here because God said he would build up his Zion in the latter days.

Under the teachings of Joseph Smith and President Young, the Elders of the church have preached the gathering, and this is a gathering dispensation. But there is something else to be done besides simply being introduced into the spiritual ordinances of the church of God: there is a kingdom to be established. We have gathered from the east and the west, from the north and the south, for a spirit rested upon the people to gather together, and no man could prevent them. All of you know how this feeling operated upon you, just as much as when it operated upon you by baptism—when you had the Spirit of God upon you you could not resist it. I remember a circumstance that transpired in Liverpool some thirty years ago. We were told at that time by Joseph Smith not to preach the gathering, for we had been driven from Missouri, and as there was no particular specific place, he thought it was not well to say anything about gathering until a place should be prepared, then we should have instructions and could teach it. That was all well enough, but we could not keep it from the people. Why? They had received the Holy Ghost, and that took of the things of God and showed them to the people, and you could not hide the gathering from them. I remember a sister coming to me on one occasion and saying, "Brother Taylor, I had a curious kind of a dream the other night." "What was it?" "Well," said she, "I dreamed there was a whole lot of Saints standing at the pier head down below here, in Liverpool; and there was a vessel there and it was going off to America, and we were going to some place they called Zion. I was going, you were going, and the Saints were all going. I thought I would ask you the meaning of it." I told her I would tell her one of these times. We could not keep it away from the people. If we had been told not to baptize and lay hands on them we could have kept it from them, but when they had been baptized and had hands laid upon them they received the Holy Ghost, and that Spirit showed the things of God to them and we could not hide them from them, hence from the time the people in the nations began to obey the gospel to the present there has been a feeling in their hearts to gather up to Zion. The Saints abroad have desired to come here, and the Saints here have desired that they should come, and this is why we have sent as many as five hundred teams in a year to fetch our brethren from the Missouri river who were unable to come without assistance. What have we done this for? Well, some people may say it is a grand emigration scheme; but we say it is a scheme of the Lord to build up his kingdom and to gather the people together, according to the saying of the old prophets—"I will take one of a city and two of a family and bring them to Zion." "What will you do with them?" "I will give them pastors after my own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding," that is what I will do with them when I get them to Zion.

Well, we have gathered from the nations year after year, until to-day we find ourselves a large people, actually occupying a Territory some five hundred miles in length. What is the result of this? Why have we got to have a political organization—we cannot avoid it. The church has gathered us together, the Spirit of God has operated on our minds, and we are here an integral part of the United States of America, and we cannot help ourselves. If we wished to do so we could not annihilate ourselves or blot ourselves out of existence, and we do not want to if we could. But the necessities of the case have forced us into the very position that we now occupy—namely, a Territory in the United States of America; and as we are here, we, like other people, have to eat, drink, wear clothing, build houses, make farms, and so on. God has ordained all these things before, and we, as part of his creatures, have to do our part towards beautifying his footstool.

Finding ourselves in this capacity, we must have our courts. It is true that, formerly, our individual matters were regulated by our high councils, bishops' councils, teachers, and so forth; but in some of the revelations it says, "Let him that steals be delivered up to the laws of the land." Well, here we are, and we occupy a political position, and we cannot help it, and nobody else can help it. You who live here form a city, and you must have city regulations. You want police to guard you from the inroads of wicked men, either among ourselves or outsiders, no matter who, to protect the peaceable, industrious, honest and virtuous, and you must have some kind of government to do it. In a church capacity, whether here or abroad, we could cut the thief or drunkard from the church if we had a mind to, but here, if we cut a man from the church, we can not cut him from the State, he is still a citizen of the United States, and in the United States. In other places they make laws to punish theft, licentiousness and other crimes. It is true they do not carry them out; they do not care to do it, but they have such laws, and a variety of others to regulate property matters, and so forth. And we are compelled to enact such laws for safeguards around the whole community, for among other things we are beginning to possess property. We have farms, and they are in the United States, and we have to apply for patents for them, just as they do anywhere else, and we have to conform to the processes of law in all these matters, the same as any other people have. We have also to plough the ground, and to fence it, and to have our neighborhood, city and county regulations here in Utah among the Saints, just as the people do elsewhere, for, as I have already said, we are part of the body politic of the United States.

It has been thought good to apply for a State government for us. Here is Brother George A. Smith going down for that purpose. Why so? Why do you do that? Is not that of the world? Yes, and we are of the world and in the world, and we can not get out of it until we are called out of it by old age or some accidental death. We are here and we have to act, and we live, move and have our being, like other people. We are not here to interfere with the rights of anybody. People may want to rob us, but we do not want to rob anybody. We want to protect ourselves in every legal and equitable way from the aggressions of those who would seek our overthrow, and the overthrow of the kingdom of God on the earth.

Well, finding ourselves thus organized, what have we to do? Why, we have our bodies and our spirits, we are temporal beings, we are immortal beings; we have to do with time and with eternity. We had very little to do with coming here, we came by some manner of means—we hardly know how, and we have to leave when the time comes, and we can not help ourselves. Then the only thing we ought to do is to act as wise, intelligent beings before God. The world have no idea of God, and they do not acknowledge him. He may develop, through one person, the principle of electricity, but the world will say it is some wise man that did it. He may, through another, develop the power of steam, but they say, Some wise man did it. Through another God may make known the light-giving power of gas, to another the tapping of the earth to bring forth oils for illuminating purposes; but the world say, "Some wise man has done this." Men do not like to acknowledge God; it is just as the Scriptures say: they will not acknowledge him in all their thoughts. They want to get rid of him, and they give the glory to men for doing this, that and the other. Fools that they are! What do they know about these principles? Who organized the principles which they found out? Did man? Did he organize the principle of electricity or give it its vitality and power? Did any of our savants? No, they could not. Who placed the principle of power in steam? Did man? No, he could not do it. They want to throw off God where they can, while we want to bring him in and have him one of our crowd; that is the difference between us and them. They find out something which God has made, just as the little child when it discovers its fingers for the first time. It had them long before, but when they first attracted its attention it seemed to fancy it had made a great discovery. God organized the child and placed its spirit within its body, and it at last found out that it had a hand. And the scientific babies of the world just discover some of the properties of matter, some of nature's laws, created by God long before, and like Nebuchadnezzar they cry, in the pride of their hearts, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Yes it is, and it is as much of a Babylon or Babel as the other was.

Well, God has commenced to do a work, and he began, in the first place, with the very first principles of the gospel, and he has led us on gradually, until we find ourselves in our present position, and we have got a beautiful land here, haven't we? And yet they call our leader a murderer, and those who are his co-laborers the most infamous blackhearted scoundrels that ever existed. Are these the works of murderers that you see around here? Excuse me for referring to these things, but I do it to contrast between one thing and another. We always knew they were liars, and so to-day.

What are we after? What are the world