

## PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR.

At Ogden, Sunday, October 19th,  
1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

I AM pleased to have the opportunity of meeting with you in Conference here, and to talk with you a little on some of the principles associated with our duties in our connection with the Church and Kingdom of God.

The Latter-day Saints occupy a very peculiar position in the world, but I do not know that we have anything very particular to say on that question. It is true, we have used our own agency in coming here, but there are certain purposes of the Almighty associated with our gathering together over which we had very little control. There is a remarkable saying in the Revelation of St. John, in reference to a certain Babylon, which reads as follows:

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

"For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

There is something very significant in the text here quoted. It would seem that John, in a previous part of his vision, had seen an angel who would precede this other. He says:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water."

As Latter-day Saints we have listened to these things from time to time. We have talked about the opening of the heavens, the manifestations of God our Heavenly Father and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, about the restoration of the Gospel, and the organization of the Church and Kingdom of God. We have talked a good deal about the holy Priesthood and the authority of God having been conferred upon man from the heavens, which places us in communication with our Heavenly Father; and also of the organization of His Church in a manner that is in accordance with His will and under His inspiration. We have heard quoted from time to time passages like this:

"Gather my Saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Again:

"And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Many other passages of a similar nature are contained in the Bible, which we all of us, at least, profess to believe in; and by the manifestations of the power of God and the light of revelation, we have been instructed in the things of eternity, and the organization of the Church of God has been effected. It commenced upwards of 54 years ago, and the work has been progressing from that time unto the present; and all the organizations that have been effected pertaining to the Priesthood have been made under the immediate direction of the Spirit of the living God, and have been given unto us by direct revelation in order that we might be instructed in the laws of life and be enabled to accomplish the things that God had designed from before the foundation of the world pertaining to these last days; and with these things we are generally familiar.

When Jesus was upon the earth and His Disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He said:

"When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

In this He had direct reference to the events that are now taking place among us as a people. "Thy Kingdom come." Why? That Thy will may "be done on earth, as it is in heaven." We are here for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the will of God, with the law of God, with the order of God, with the dominion of God; and we are here to establish the Kingdom of God. We are here to be taught in things pertaining to the Church of God and its purification. We are here to build up a Zion of God, which implies the pure in heart. Then we are here to send forth the Gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. We are here to build Temples to the name of the Lord and to administer therein. We are here to represent God upon the earth as His Priesthood, and we are gathered in the different Stakes as you are gathered here to-day, to attend to various duties associated with that Priesthood, and to become acquainted with all the principal features associated with the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth. It is for us as Stakes, as peoples, and as Saints of God, to learn to comprehend the relationship that we sustain to God our Heavenly Father and to His Church and Kingdom here upon the earth, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the Priesthood that is behind the veil; and also to become acquainted with things

upon the earth connected with the welfare of humanity, whether in the land of Zion or in any other land. And we are gathered together for the express purpose of being taught and instructed in all these principles. We are not here, as Jesus was not here, to condemn the world; as He says:

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

This was the prominent object of His mission to the earth, "That the world through Him might be saved;" and we are here to carry out His purposes. We have certain relationships with the world while we are in it that cannot be ignored, and we have certain duties to perform associated therewith that should be respected. As it is, we are here as an integral part of the United States, and we have duties to perform as citizens thereof, and it is expected that we shall fulfil every proper requirement, observe every correct law, and govern ourselves with propriety and uprightness, honor, truth and integrity, and be good citizens thereof; these are things that are expected of all honorable people. And it is proper for us to meet the obligations and duties devolving upon us pertaining to the nation with which we are associated. We have another duty to perform to the nations of the earth. It is to send forth the Gospel thereunto; and for this the Twelve are organized and Seventies, and the Elders are sent forth as the messengers of God, that mankind may embrace the eternal truths of the Gospel by which life and immortality are brought to light; that they, with us, may have the privilege of partaking of the rich blessings of eternal life; that they, with us, may have the opportunity of being instructed in the laws of life; and that they, with us, may be made partakers of all things associated with the Church and Kingdom of God. These are their privileges inasmuch as they will be obedient to the laws and ordinances pertaining thereunto, and live according to the requirements of heaven. Until these things are done, other things will not be accomplished which God has designed in relation to the nations of the earth; for the people of the earth are all His offspring and He feels interested in the welfare of humanity, generally. He expects that we shall do the same. We are building Temples and we are administering in those Temples. What are we doing that for? There is something very peculiar about this matter. Well, we may be doing it in part for ourselves, in part for our wives and our children, in part for our fathers and our mothers, and uncles and aunts, and many of our friends and progenitors that we have been acquainted with, and in part for many others with whom we are not acquainted; that we may be united together and stand as saviors upon Mount Zion. You heard Brother Cannon tell you to-day that there was a company of about 40 going to Logan this morning with one Bishop to fulfil some of these duties, and these things are beginning to be generally understood among the Latter-day Saints.

All of these duties and responsibilities devolve upon us. All these things are within our reach. As a people, if we live our religion and prove ourselves worthy, we are privileged to enjoy all the blessings and mercies which God our Heavenly Father has conferred upon us through the medium of the Gospel and our obedience thereunto; and we wish to perform our duty to everybody—to perform, as they say in the Church of England, our "duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call us." It has pleased God to call us to these lands and to make use of us for certain purposes in the interest of humanity and for the welfare of a fallen world. This is the object of our being gathered together, and that we might build up a Zion unto the Lord, and be instructed in all the principles of righteousness, truth and integrity and everything associated with our present and future happiness, and thus become the blessed of the Lord and our offspring with us.

These are some of the things devolving upon us. Hence Zion is beginning to lengthen her cords and increase her Stakes, and we are spreading out in the north, in the south, and in various different directions. We are seeking to look after the welfare of the Saints of God in their various settlements wherever they may be, and to protect them in every way that it is possible for us to extend protection, on the principle of union, harmony and brotherhood, inspired by the Spirit of the living God. Hence it becomes the duty of the First Presidency to look after all these things, and sometimes, under peculiar circumstances, we are obliged to send a few Saints from one Stake to strengthen other Stakes of Zion, that the people may be preserved in their rights and their liberties from the aggressions of unscrupulous people, who are seeking to take advantage of the circumstances with which our people may be surrounded.

We complain sometimes about our trials; we need not do that. These are things that are necessary for our perfection. We think sometimes that we are not rightly treated, and I think we think correctly about some of these things. We think there are plots set on foot to entrap us; and I think we think so very correctly. At the same time we need not be astonished at these things. We need not be amazed at a feeling of hatred and animosity. Why? Because we are living in a peculiar day and age of the world, which is distinctively called the latter days, wherein it is said that God will have a controversy with the nations of the

earth. There are some things about these matters that men do not understand. They think that men manipulate the affairs of men. They do in part, and they are used oftentimes as instruments by the Almighty and sometimes by another power that is called Lucifer, just as circumstances may be. But in regard to the nations of the earth, God sets up one nation and pulls down another, according to the counsels of His own will. And we read of nations that years ago flourished and were great, prosperous and powerful, of which we now know nothing only as we learn it from a few pages of history; they are obliterated and blotted out as nations, and do not exist to-day. Nations and empires have risen and fallen; they have grown, increased, and prospered, and then decayed, crumbled, and died. The Lord manipulates all these things according to the counsels of His own will. But men generally understand very little of these matters; for there has been very little communication with God for ages, until He was prepared to reveal His will in these last days. Yet men profess to fear God, and a great many of them seek to worship Him. There is something very remarkable said by the Prophet Isaiah when he had his vision opened in regard to the events that should transpire in the latter days; he says:

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof."

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

"The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word."

"The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish."

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant."

"Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

There are many statements made by the Prophets in relation to these things—that the Lord would pour out His judgments upon the earth. Jesus speaks of the destruction that should come upon the people, that should befall Jerusalem, that should encompass nations, and of scenes that should transpire in the latter days—that the sun should be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord should come. Associated with this is a part of the work in which we are engaged. A voice was to be heard, as I said before, saying:

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

"For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

In accordance with this declaration, which is a part of the great programme that we Latter-day Saints believe in, we have been gathered unto this land, which we denominate the land of Zion. We have come out from the world and some of us hardly know why; yet we have come, having obeyed the Gospel and having received the gift of the Holy Ghost. There has been a feeling and a spirit operating upon us that has enlightened our minds and propelled us forward. Our great aim was, when we were in other lands distant from this, to make every effort we could to come to the land of Zion. Did we understand what it was for? In part we did, in part we did not. We came to it because we thought it was the land of Zion. We came to it, if we comprehend ourselves, that we might not partake of the sins nor receive of the plagues of Babylon; that we and our wives, and our children, and our associations might be free from the corruptions, abominations and evils that exist and prevail throughout the world; and that we might come to a place where we could learn the laws of life, where our children could be brought up in the fear of God and where we had hoped to be able to worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences. Sometimes we think we have made a little mistake in this. I guess not; for we shall yet understand one thing, and so will the nations of the earth—that "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." Yes, we shall all learn that "the Lord reigneth."

Associated with these principles are all the common affairs of life—that is, we have bodies like other people; we need food, we need raiment, we need habitations to live in, we need land to cultivate, fields, gardens and orchards; our children are born as others are, and we live and exist pretty much as other human beings. They are the children of our Heavenly Father, and so are we. But the Lord has seen fit to gather us together, and has opened our way, and our lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places. Yet every time the Saints have been gathered together there has been manifested on the part of the wicked a spirit of oppression, a spirit of persecution, a blood-thirsty spirit, a spirit which would seek to rob us of our rights, to despoil us of our homes and inheritances. This we have expected among other things. We have never dreamed of anything else than that such a state of things would exist. I remember when I had the Gospel first preached to me—before I was baptized; I heard a lecture something like this: "Now, we have nothing particular to promise

you, only the favor of God if you will live righteously and keep His commandments. You may be persecuted, afflicted, imprisoned or put to death for the testimony you may have to bear, for the religion you are called upon to obey; but we can promise to you that inasmuch as this is the case you will have eternal life." Well, we have had a little of the other mixed up with it. And I have seen mobs gather from time to time, in different parts of these United States, and I have had to meet them time and again. For instance, I was driven from Missouri years ago, together with the whole people. We were robbed and pillaged, and we had to take and throw in what little we had to help each other. Everybody that had a team turned it in to help his brethren away from whom? From their Christian persecutors—that is, so-called Christians. I wish we had another name for them. (Laughter.) We helped one another out until we reached Illinois. I was there and I know what I am talking about. Did I feel very unhappy? Not at all. I enjoyed myself just as well as I do to-day. I felt quite easy. I have been accustomed to these things and there is nothing very particular about them. By and by we built up the beautiful city of Nauvoo. We also built a temple there and officiated in it, and received many precious blessings from the hands of God that the world know nothing about, and never will know until they embrace the Gospel of the Son of God. But we were driven again, and we are here to-day. Did we leave our property? Yes, I did, quite an amount, and so did many others. We had a city there, and we left it. What was done to us before this? We were mobbed, plundered; we were brought before courts; we were persecuted and proscribed; that was done to us when we were there, and in many instances we had to defend ourselves by our own right arms, or suffer from crawling assassins who were seeking our lives. I had to do it time and time again, right in that land. I have had to have guards in my house, so had President Young, for nearly two years, to keep from being assassinated. I was in prison with Joseph and Hyrum when they were shot down in cold blood. We were there under the protection, or professed protection, of the Governor, who told Dr. Bernhisel and myself that we had better not bring any arms with us to defend ourselves, and who pledged his faith and the faith of the state for our protection. I saw that faith violated and trampled in the dust. I saw these men, to whom protection was promised, shot down in cold blood by assassins gathered for the purpose. These are things that I have witnessed in the few years that I have lived upon the earth. When I left Nauvoo I left a very good house, very well furnished. I left carpets on the floors, stoves in the rooms, crockery ware in the cupboards, and I got into my carriage, with my family, and left it to seek that protection among the Red Indians that we could not find among the people that lived in this boasted land of the free and home of the brave, this vaunted asylum of the oppressed. We were protected here among the Indians, and I felt perfectly safe among them. I would as soon go among the Red men to-day who traverse these mountains, as I would anywhere else, and feel myself just as safe.

I speak of these things to show some of the feelings that have been exhibited. Well, says one, didn't you feel angry? Oh, no, not particularly so. I felt it was all right. It was a part of the programme. I needed education and other people needed it, and it was necessary we should be placed in a position that we could have it. We did not feel very unhappy. We felt quite comfortable. What! when you left your homes? Yes, I felt as easy as I ever felt in my life. I felt at least that I should be safe from the hands of blood-thirsty men and mobocrats, and that I should be put in a position that I could protect myself better than I could there, and others felt a good deal the same way. I remember we used to sing a song something like this:

"On the way to California,  
In the spring we'll take our journey,  
Far above Arkansas' fountains,  
Pass between the Rocky Mountains."

[Laughter.]

That is the way we used to sing. I remember a little boy of mine—he was then, though he is not a little boy now, for it is about 39 years ago—used to sing this, and all the boys around. He met his grandfather one day, who calling him by name said: "Joseph, you won't sing that when you leave your home and go out yonder." "Oh, yes, grandfather," said he, "I will sing that then." Finally we got outside. By and by his grandfather came along, and he ran out to meet him. We were then camped out in about a foot of snow. He ran towards his grandfather and began to sing:

"On the way to California," etc.

"There," said he, "grandfather, I can sing that now." Well, I speak of these things to show some of the incidents I have passed through. We came out here and we found this country a desert, covered generally with sagebrush, and a few scattered Indians straggling around. We had to commence to build our houses, for there were none here when we came; and since then the wilderness and the solitary places have blossomed as the rose, and the desert has been made glad, as foretold in the Scriptures. We feel that we are kind of half comfortable in these valleys of the mountains, but the devil is not dead yet. (Laugh-

ter.) We did not think he would be; we have a work to perform, and we propose, by the help of the Almighty, to accomplish that work. We don't expect to be disappointed in it either, and we don't anticipate that it will be overturned. We believe that God lives in the heavens and manipulates the nations of the earth, and woe to them that fight against Zion! I tell them in the name of God that He will fight against them. (Amen.)

This is my testimony in relation to these matters. People may think they are very smart in persecuting the Saints, but by and by they will find they are on the wrong side of the question, and many of them will find it out when it is too late. They will find it out when the harvest is past and the summer is ended, and they will say, "My soul is not saved." You Latter-day Saints that begin sometimes to be tremble at the knees, and afraid of certain circumstances, had better trust to the living God than give way to fearful forebodings in these matters; for Zion is onward and upward, and God is on her side, and He will protect His Israel if we will only be true to Him. We are here for that purpose. God will sustain Israel and stand by His people. (Amen.) There is one thing very certain, very certain indeed, and that is, whatever men may think and however they may plot and contrive, that this Kingdom will never be given into the hands of another people. It will grow and spread and increase, and no man living can stop its progress. Hence I feel quite easy, as I said before, for the Lord reigns, and let the people rejoice.

From time to time we have certain raids made upon us. Something of that sort seems to be afloat to-day, and I wish—I was going to say I wish I could talk about something better—but these matters are as proper as anything else, as far as I know, for they are things we have to meet face to face. We Latter-day Saints—what are we? Professors of religion. Are we? Yes. There are laws being enacted in order to deprive us of our religious rights, whereas the Constitution of the United States says that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Is that true? Read it for yourselves in the Constitution. This is what we profess as Americans. We have men in our midst who have introduced test oaths, whereas the Constitution says that "no religious test shall ever be required"; yet they have introduced test oaths and people are obliged to swear certain things that the Constitution says shall not be permitted. Are we American citizens here? I think so. Have we any rights? I think we ought to have. Are they being trampled upon? Yes, they are; and these things are being done with impunity. How is it? Why, the Constitution is treated by the politicians of to-day as the Bible is treated by professors of religion. You talk with "Christians" upon the Bible and you will find that they believe it when it is shut. They will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to send it to the heathen, but when you come to open it they themselves don't believe in it. Ask them about Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, and Deacons. Have they them? No, they do not even profess to have them. Ask them about being baptised in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins by men having authority, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and you will find that they don't want to hear anything about these principles. They do not believe them. Why they object even to people being married for eternity! They believe in men and women being married only until death doth them part. That is a very cold affair. We do not believe in being married for time only. We believe in making covenants for eternity, and being associated with our wives and children behind the veil. We have received instructions from the Lord in regard to these things, and we are desirous to carry them out. As I have said, the Constitution provides that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Yet men are asked what their religious faith is; right here in our courts to-day. These are things that we as American citizens have a right to look into; to look well after our liberties, and to watch well our enemies; for these are not only our enemies, but they are the enemies of human liberty, the enemies of the rights of man and the enemies of God. It is for us to look well after these things, and in our elections and in all like matters, to see that we are very particular about the management of these affairs, and that we are not over run and cheated out of our liberties by unscrupulous men. I speak of these things at this your Conference for your information and for your warning; and would say, be united, diligent and energetic, and stand for your rights as men.

I remember some little time ago a gentleman named Mr. Pierpont (who was Attorney-General under President Grant) called upon me. I was pleased to see him, and am pleased to see all honorable gentlemen. I invited him to dinner and we had quite a chat. But here let me introduce another affair. At the time when the Edmunds law was passed I was living in what is known as the Gardo House. I had most of my wives living with me there, and after looking carefully over the Edmunds law I thought to myself: Why Congress is growing very wild; this Government is getting very, very foolish; they are trampling upon