

## DISCOURSE

BY

ELDER HENRY W. NAISBITT,

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,  
Sunday Afternoon, July 19th,  
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REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

In standing before you for a few moments, I hope to be blessed with a portion of the spirit of God, that we may be repaid for leaving our homes, for gathering together this afternoon to partake of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and in so doing, to renew our covenants, promising continued faithfulness to the principles we have received, to the institutions that pertain to the Gospel, and to the great work of establishing a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth.

This work with which you and I are associated is one of immense magnitude, and to look at it with the natural eye, after taking into consideration the intent thereof, and the material that has been gathered together for the purpose—I say looking at it in a natural sense—with the natural eye we would almost doubt the accomplishment of that which we desire. When we consider how we have been raised and trained, how we have imbibed the theories and doctrines that have come down to us from age beyond age, ideas that we have absorbed into our being from earliest infancy, that with increasing years have been impressed upon us with all the force and influence which grows out of home, out of Sabbath schools, out of religious organizations—when we consider all these things, and then reflect how radical the change the Lord intends to make, we may not wonder at the slowness of the progress that is made by us as individuals or as a community. We may look with but little surprise at the fact, that many who began early and ran well for a time, turn aside, falling by the way, and that there are few comparatively who cling to the new order, sensing it in its breadth and scope, and so applying it to the details of their daily life, that they really become the embodiment, the personified representatives of that which they profess, able to be "known and read of all men."

Among the most potent of the influences that have been established for the work of God there is none secondary to the principle of gathering. The Gospel found us scattered among the nations, it found us saturated with tradition, found us surrounded by influences unfavorable to the development of that character consequent upon subjection to institutions which reflect the mind and will of our Father in heaven. Had the Latter-day Saints remained where they were found by the Gospel the influence which is exerted over them in a gathered capacity would have been comparatively unfelt; or, to use a simile which is pertinent and applicable, we should have been in the condition that our children would be if we attempted to give them an education, and then compelled the teacher to occupy one of our principal thoroughfares, where bustle, turmoil and confusion reigned supreme. We all know that his influence would be comparatively limited, that he would hardly be able to control the exuberance of the spirits of his pupils, or to concentrate their attention upon the lessons which he desired to give. Every passing team would arrest their attention. If a band of music went up the street they would all be on the *qui vive*. If such a procession as that of the circus which we had last week should be in the immediate neighborhood it would require almost superhuman power to prevent children scattering off in order that they might enjoy that procession. And as it is in this limited sense, so it would have been with us, had the education that we have received and are receiving in these valleys, been suggested, or sought to be impressed upon us in our scattered condition, amid the nations of the earth. Our attention would have been arrested by all that was going on around us. The controversies of mankind would have taken hold of our feelings and affections. We should have been more or less partisans in regard to them, and the education that was desirable, and that was intended, would have required a greater length of time and never have been satisfactory in its conclusion. But we have been gathered from the public thoroughfares. We have been taken from the lanes and the byways of the world. We have been taken from the towns and cities of mankind. We have, many of us, been taken from our native lands in fact, and from the surroundings that were part and parcel of our being. We have been withdrawn from the influence of sectarianism, from the power of the churches, from political partisanship, and have been gathered into these secluded valleys, where such discipline can be applied to our mental and spiritual faculties, as is, or may be considered, desirable, by the teacher. When he endeavors to make scholars he gathers his pupils into a common school-room, and thus in seclusion, and under favorable circumstances, progress is certain, and more or less marked. Yet there is a vast diversity in every school, and with us—in ours—there are those who have given great atten-

tion to the lessons that they have received. They begin to comprehend in a measure the problems that are brought before them, by one or more of those who have been appointed and ordained to teach. A few even now almost see eye to eye with them. They begin to comprehend the intent, the nature, the spirit and the ultimatum of the great work in which we are engaged.

This community is not affected so much by that which troubles mankind elsewhere. The barriers of the everlasting hills enclose the settlements of the Saints. The peace that prevails here is favorable to reflection, to consideration, and to application of the things with which they are identified, and in the hours of school and of education, also in the estimation of the teacher, they are all probably making some progress in the knowledge of the science of the divine life. As in all other schools, however, there are some who are more apt than others. They learn more readily, they put into practice more easily that which they learn; they comprehend theory and principle more distinctly, and they exhibit in their manner and life that they understand something more than others do the advantage and value of that which they have had presented to them for consideration. It would not be for me, probably, as an individual, to find fault with this diversity, because I see it everywhere around me. In the most limited and narrow circle you see a diversity of organization and of ability to think and grasp that with which men and women come in contact. There are some vastly more ready than others; there are some that are comparatively slow; but whether slow or quick there is even in the slowest some comprehension of the nature of the work in which we are engaged. Where there is mental and spiritual laziness; where there is a species of indifference—of negligence, in regard to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and testimony, providence appears to so surround us by circumstances that attention is forced in the direction which is desired. The probability is, that never was spiritual activity more general among the Latter-day Saints than it is to-day. Those who have been absorbed in the interests of every-day life, who have been most anxious to make for themselves a foothold in these valleys, to secure for themselves a home with its comforts and conveniences, and that measure of wealth that they consider necessary—even among this class there is an awakening to the question of the present time. This is not only the case with the older portion of our community, but the influence thereof is felt among the young people of Utah Territory. Thousands of young men that had never given religion any special consideration, that had never realized to any extent the value of the principles of the Gospel, are now exhibiting a large amount of mental and spiritual enquiry. They want to comprehend that force which appears of such immense interest and magnitude to our nation and among mankind. They want to understand the spirit of that organization that has brought their fathers from the nations of the earth, and has made them the subjects of opprobrium, opposition, persecution and imprisonment, and of other manifest evils that for the moment appear to afflict the Latter-day Saints. Travel where you will through this Territory, and you will find an exhibition of this spirit of enquiry. It is not confined to the families of the most devoted, of those who hold the highest position ecclesiastically in the Church; of men who have spent most of their life in the missionary field, but in the families of the masses and among the indifferent this spirit of enquiry is making itself felt and heard. There is more thought, there is more reflection, there is more consideration, there is more faith, there is more of a desire to know and understand the reasons for local turmoil and opposition, and for national legislation, on the part of the rising generation of Utah Territory, than probably at any other period of our past history. Neither is this confined to the male portion of our population. From observation and inquiry, I have been led to believe that even with the gentler sex there is a disposition among many to know for themselves, to try to comprehend the situation, to understand the difficulties with which we are surrounded, and to give a reason satisfactory to themselves for that excitement which is everywhere experienced. I look upon this as the most hopeful of all the manifestations that are now among the people, indeed as one of the signs of the times. We look for intellectual and spiritual activity on the part of the young male portion of our Church organization. We expect this because naturally they will have to bear "the burthen of the word of the Lord." It is from their ranks that every missionary corps will be recruited from time to time. They are supposed to receive in due time the authority of the Holy Priesthood. They are expected to minister in the institutions and ordinances of the Gospel, and they are, and have been, told that from their ranks in these last days will be taken those who will finally bear off the Kingdom of God. We have laid no such responsibility upon our daughters. They are not called upon to travel in the nations of the earth. They are not called upon particularly to take an active part in the authority of the priesthood. They don't minister in our public stands as a rule. To be sure they have their

own special circle of opportunity, they have their own organizations; but to our brethren, older or younger as the case may be, is committed the public administration of the Gospel. Consequently when we see these manifestations we do so without surprise. We look for them. We expect them. The fulfillment of prophecy demands them. The nature of the organization with which we are identified depends upon the labors of the youth of Israel. It is expected of them that they will be valiant for the truth; that they will be workers in the midst of the nations; that they will always be ready for the harvest field where the laborers are probably already far too few. But in regard to our daughters, they are not expected to go out and confront the enemy and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They move in a different sphere—the sacred circle of home is theirs. Their province there is to train, to mould and fashion the mental and spiritual or religious character of the rising generation that shall come or be sent into the midst of the homes of Israel. While the husbands and fathers of these families are out in the midst of the nations, the influence that the wives and mothers are called upon to exert is in their own neighbourhood, among their own families and friends; in this narrow and comparatively contracted circle they are expected to work. While we count upon the young men and the middle aged and the experienced men in the leading departments of the ministry, we also count upon the influence of our daughters, our wives, and our mothers—we expect that their influence shall be a power at least in their own special department, and I am not sure, upon consideration, but that theirs is really the most important position. Viewed in the light of experience, who is there that remembers so well the advice or the counsels of his father as he does that of his mother. Thousands of us remember when we knelt at our mother's knee and said our little prayer—when we drank in her counsels and listened to her suggestions, and these went with us into all the stormy battle fields of life. We were indebted to her for a thousand and one things that have helped to make the best of what we are. It was the influence, the prayers, the faith, the devotion, the affection of our mothers that made us, in a great measure, what we find ourselves to be. It was their quiet words of rebuke when we would have run into by and forbidden paths that restrained us, and gave assurance of moral safety, and power over many a temptation. This has been the experience of thousands. I presume that almost all the Latter-day Saints, in looking back to their early days, can realize that the teachings of their mothers has had more to do with keeping them in the path of rectitude than had the teachings of their fathers. Observation in this city and in this Territory all tend to establish this fact. Look abroad among our neighbors. Watch the sons and daughters of those families where the mother has been careless and indifferent to the truths of the Gospel, and you will probably find that, on the death of the father, or in his life even, they have been scattered to the wind. They have gone to the right and to the left—to the north, south, east and west. But look at those families that have continued faithful to the truth, and you will as certainly find that in the majority of cases it is due to the influence, to the prayers and winsome love of a real uturing and encouraging mother—a God-fearing, devoted, intelligent Latter-day Saint—who has thus been rightfully the medium of salvation to her own posterity. And this is so as a matter of necessity. It is the result of the circumstances by which we are surrounded. Our circumstances are vastly different to those of men in general. The duties that devolve upon my brethren, the labors that they have to perform, the calls that are made upon their time, throw the responsibility of the rearing or training of families almost entirely into the hands of the wives and mothers of Israel. How many thousands of us have to leave home for our daily labor when our children are all in bed? How many thousands are there that return from that labor after their children have retired? And when a man looks forward to the Sabbath morning, to a day of enjoyment, when he counts that he will have the opportunity of seeing his children together, he is called hither and thither; he is on the home mission perchance, or he goes out to teach in the district confided to his care; he has this duty and the other duty that demands his time and attention, and his family becomes almost a secondary consideration to him. To be sure he may exercise his faith; he may endeavor to set a good example; but to the subtle influence of the wife that he has taken from among woman-kind is left the culture—the education of his children. And where a man can go forth and feel that he has left behind him the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, that he has left a wife who has a testimony for herself that the Gospel is true, one who has determined she will give her life and all the power she possesses to the training and education of her children in love for that Gospel, that man is without anxiety, comparatively, as to the future. He knows that all will be well with the little ones that God has given or confided to parental care, and that all the influences that grow out of the organization called home, will be exerted in favor of right, in favor of truth, in favor of the Gospel, in favor of obedience to the authority of the

Holy Priesthood and the revelations of Jesus Christ. Then it is comparatively pleasant to be surrounded with wives and children. But if, perchance, he has those that are indifferent, that are not filled with a desire to propagate and perpetuate the principles of life and salvation, then it becomes a difficult thing. He is filled with anxiety at home and abroad. He knows not what will become of those children that he has been the instrument of bringing into the world, and many a man known in Israel, under those circumstances, has gone abroad as an ambassador of the truth, notwithstanding the faith he might exercise, not feeling quite sure that the influence of home would be exerted in favor of that for which he originally left his native land, and for which he has thus left home, and which is really dearer to him than life—indeed, the one tangible thing pertaining to this time, or the eternities to come!

Here a great number of important questions might be started; not questions in regard to our experience, probably, for men may have curious ideas in their mind as to the wisdom exhibited by themselves from time to time; but questions in regard to our sons and daughters who may be thoughtful, and who half comprehend the social situation. Such sons will think well before they assume marital and fatherly responsibility. When they come to make their selection of the daughters of Zion they will have anxiety that such selection may be made in wisdom, that it may not be the result of a passing fancy, merely the outgrowth of something we call love, yet love divested of intelligence, divested of judgment, divested of comprehension as to the necessities of the prospective situation; and if this is the thought exhibited in our sons and daughters, our sons will want to marry those that are good Latter-day Saints, women that are not afraid or ashamed to bow the knee, and to ask God the Eternal Father to give them wisdom in their selection of a partner for life; women that are not afraid to bow the knee when they are invited to come together by their presiding or other sisters; women that have received such testimony in regard to the truth of the Gospel that they can stand up in the strength thereof, aided by the spirit, and bear the same before all mankind; women that are able, under the influence of that testimony and spirit, to train and educate the children that God may honor them with. These are the kind of women that our most earnest and best young men will look for. They will not be satisfied with a pretty face alone; they will not be satisfied with a fashionable and stylish appearance; they will not be satisfied with those that incline to vanity and frivolity, or those that are aliens to the covenants of the holy Gospel. Why, I remember when I was but a lad in the little branch with which I was connected, made up of boys and girls, without experience of the world almost, it was an everyday occurrence in all our gatherings for our young sisters to get up and bear their testimony to the truth as they enjoyed and understood it. They would lead out when occasion required in prayer. They would lead out in singing when they were invited to go into the public streets or into the little villages round about where the brethren might be sent to preach. They were always on hand, and the education they received in this way redounded to their good, and when they gathered to Zion that influence thus acquired is felt to-day in their neighborhood and home; it is such sainted women that have reared good families, for their children rise up and call them blessed. But you get together now a large congress of our young ladies, or a small one in our ward meetings, how many are there that will stand up and bear their testimony? How many of our daughters ever think of retiring by themselves and engaging in prayer? How many of them when they are courted by some of our sons—sought for as a wife—how many of them will take counsel of God as to the wisdom of the step they are desired or pressed to take? How many will ask, when they are in love, as it is called, that if this step—this suggested marriage—is not in accordance with the mind and will of God, if it is not for their best interest, if it will not be productive of happiness, that barriers may be thrown in the way of its consummation? Is this a common thing among the young people of Israel? I hope it is; I would fain hope it is. I would fain believe that in this, the most momentous period in the life of every young woman—I would fain hope, I say again, that they all take counsel of their parents and of the Almighty; I would fain hope that they will make this a matter of prayer! And I would also hope the same in regard to our sons. I would like to believe that all our sons, when they come to look for a wife, and feel like taking up the responsibilities which pertain to married life upon the earth—that they would be intent in seeking and finding those that will be workers and co-workers with them in the great work of the last days—real helpmeets for themselves, and those that will be real mothers to their children, mothers that will help and encourage in all the duties and responsibilities which the Gospel inevitably requires.

Now, if all our homes were thus organized, what would be the result throughout the length and breadth of this Territory? What would be the result if every young man and young woman who are in a position to marry were to be married in the right place, at the right time, sealed by the sanction and

the authority of the Holy Priesthood what do you think would be the result in the midst of Israel in a very little while? Why, the result would be great, much greater than could be shown on the reflection of a moment! Yet we every now and again hear of those around us that do not feel any desire to be married in this way. They have gone in an opposite direction. Consequently their marriages are in a sense null. There is realization of the importance of marriage; there is not that realization of the responsibility growing out of a relationship that there should be; there is not that abiding spirit of that sense of obligation and blessing in such a home that should be; there is not that there are not the advantages that would be if this great and important matter was arranged and consummated under the best conditions. The feelings and practice of our sons and daughters are in regard to this distance; if it is thoughtfully or less considered; so will it be a ill for the future of this Territory. Imagine, now, if you can for a moment that the vast hosts who are growing up, and those that are beyond marriageable age, in all our settlements should repudiate the Gospel in relation to marriage; imagine their not seeking the counsel and advice of their parents, imagine their not seeking to have blessing and approbation of their presiding authorities; that in their there should be no God, no prayer, religion, and what do you suppose would become of the Kingdom of God upon the earth? What do you suppose would become of the influence of the Gospel and the power of its institutions among mankind? What should be in the position that was when he was shorn of his strength departed from him he became as weak as other men an easy prey to his enemies that round about him. So it would be us, if we were to depart from the laid down by heaven and reveal for the construction and consolation of our present and future homes.

These are teachings pertaining to the Gospel. They could not be taught—or if taught would be valueless to us—in the world influence and importance could have been felt as they are felt in Territory by the power and of our Father in heaven. We realized the value of these things if our homes are built upon a foundation, the Latter-day Saint Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—will continue to live flourish and spread abroad upon the face of the earth, until it shall fulfill its destiny and fulfill the to which it has been assigned.

I believe as I said in the beginning that there is an increased spiritual inquiry among our sons and daughters regard to the institutions of God, want to know the foundation which their fathers have built, where that spirit of inquiry is early directed there will be strength in the midst of Israel, numerical increase of the next years will give additional faith, vigor, power, life and influence to this Territory and in all the stories round about. We cannot laugh at, to despise and to indifference all the assaults enemy; for Zion will be built on rock. Her sons and daughters as numerous as the sand upon the shore; they will have been under the influence of the institutions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of the efforts and tactics of the angels will never be able to sway their integrity, or cause them to that which they know to be true.

These are considerations that out of our conditions. The conditions that surround us are the unpardonable parent of a great portion of the inquiries that are being made by sons and daughters, many of whom have been indifferent heretofore regard to the principles of the Gospel. I remember when Buchanan's entered this Territory—a very early period in our history of years many who had been away from families and from the Church returned here. When they saw the danger of a conflict they turned to share in the danger which was posed to be imminent; they felt the influence of that spirit to stand by brethren and sisters in the moment of persecution. And so it will continue. Those that have been indifferent times of peace, when clouds of when the wind began to blow, persecution rages, those, I say, have been careless and indifferent burnish and put on their armor then stand valiantly forth in defense of the truth.

I pray God to inspire His people throughout these valleys to reflection and consideration, and after this reflection and consideration may there be an increase of determination to win and defend the right, no matter what it brings imprisonment, persecution life or death, for triumph, will in case rest upon their labors and efforts in the establishment of truth.

May the Lord grant this blessing ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A lady riding in an omnibus for herself seated by an old woman was exceedingly deaf. "Did you try electricity?" said she, raising her voice. "What did you say miss?" asked you if you ever tried electricity for your deafness." "Oh, yes, I did! It was only last summer I struck by lightning; but I don't as it did me a mite of good."