

A FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED BY

ELDER JOHN TAYLOR,

AT THE

Seventh Ward Meeting House,
Salt Lake City, on Sunday Af-
ternoon, December 31st, 1876, over
the remains of Ann Tenora, the
wife of Isaac Waddell; and also
over the remains of George W.,
son of Edward Callister.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

AFTER the reading of the 15th
chapter of 1st Corinthians, com-
mencing at the 20th verse, by El-
der David McKenzie, Elder Taylor
said—

It is a sad thing to meet together
as we have done on the present
occasion, and to find here two of
our friends from different families
who have been smitten by the
hand of the destroyer, thus having
to attend to a double funeral cere-
mony. It seems to be my lot to-
day to be mixed up with these
matters, for I have just come from
attending to one funeral in the 14th
Ward; and now I meet again with
you to join in paying our last sad re-
spects to the departed dead. There is
something about these things that
touches the most sympathetic feel-
ings of human nature. God having
planted these feelings in our bos-
oms, I presume it is right and pro-
per that they should be exercised
and cherished.

In reading the history of some of
the ancient men of God, such, for
instance, as Jacob, Joseph, Abra-
ham and others, there was great
reverence and respect evinced to-
wards them, not only by their
friends and relatives, but by stran-
gers. On the death of Jacob there
was a very large concourse of peo-
ple assembled from the land of
Egypt, including "The servants of
Pharaoh, the elders of his house,
and all the elders of the land of
Egypt, and all the house of Joseph
and his brethren and his father's
house. And there went up with
him both chariots and horsemen,
and it was a very great company,
and they mourned with a great and
very sore lamentation." The
Egyptians joined with the relatives
in mourning his death. The same
feeling was manifested when Joseph
and others died. Then were
feelings of sympathy manifested
towards the bereaved and also to-
wards the dead. These feelings
exist more or less among us. We,
like them, have ideas pertaining
to the future, that are pregnant
with importance and that are full
of interest to every reflective mind.

When Abraham died, Isaac
knew that he was a man of
God; he had unquestionably
heard his father talk over com-
munications he had had with God,
and he doubtless knew very well,
when he was taken by his father
to be offered up as a sacrifice, that
it was in obedience to a command-
ment of God; he knew very well
that his father had communica-
tions with the Lord and received
revelations from him, and that he
had distinct and correct ideas
also in regard to the future. Jesus,
you will remember, in speaking of
Abraham, said, "Abraham saw my
day and was glad." Abraham had
promises made to him pertaining
to the land of Palestine, that were
not really fulfilled in his time; and
Stephen, soon after the Saviour of
the world died, in talking about
Abraham, said that God had prom-
ised it to his seed; and yet, says
Stephen, the Lord "gave him
none inheritance in it; no not so
much as to set his foot on; yet he
promised that he would give it to
him for a possession, and his seed
after him, when as yet he had no
child." There are men now living
among the descendants of Abra-
ham who expect to see that prom-
ise fulfilled, when his descendants
will again inherit that land of pro-
mise, and when all things spoken
of by the mouth of the prophets
will be accomplished. The meas-
uring line will yet go forth again
in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem will
yet be inhabited on its own place,
even in Jerusalem. Abraham will
yet realize the fulfillment of the
promises made to him and will
stand in his proper place and pos-
ition as their father and the proper
representative of his seed in the
grand jubilee in this earth, when
the purposes of God shall be accom-
plished pertaining thereunto.

In connection with this it was

said on a certain occasion, "I am
the God of Abraham, and the God
of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God
is not the God of the dead, but
of the living." We also find a
statement in the Book of Doctrine
and Covenants, referring to father
Joseph Smith and others, who it is
said "sitteth with Abraham at his
right hand." "Consequently Abra-
ham lives, and not only Abraham,
but father Joseph Smith, as well as
many others of our brethren with
whom we have been acquainted,
who have died true and faithful to
the cause. From another revela-
tion, pertaining to one of the High
Councils that was organized, we
learn that God had taken them to
himself and that they retained
their Priesthood, that it belonged to
them, and no man could take it
from them, and that they were with
the Lord.

In relation to these things there
is something very interesting to all
right-minded persons who are good
and faithful Latter-day Saints. We
believe that these men of
whom we have spoken, as well as
Adam, Seth, Noah, Enoch, Me-
thuseelah and all "the Church of
the first-born whose names are
written in heaven" have their
proper position there, as well as
the apostles who lived cotemporary
with the Saviour. Of these worthies
it is said that when Jesus shall
come they will come with him,
clothed with power and glory. In
another place we are told that they,
the apostles, will "sit upon twelve
thrones, judging the twelve tribes
of Israel."

Again, there are other things as-
sociated with these matters, all
bearing more or less upon the same
points. When God selected Joseph
Smith to open up the last dispensa-
tion, which is called the dispensa-
tion of the fullness of times, the
Father and the Son appeared to
him, arrayed in glory, and the
Father, addressing himself to Joseph,
at the same time pointing to the
Son, said, "This is my beloved
Son, in whom I am well pleased;
hear ye him." As there were great
and important events to be introduc-
ed into the world associated with
the interests of humanity, not only
with the people that now are, but
with all people that have ever lived
upon the face of the earth, and as
what is termed the dispensation of
the fullness of times was about to
be ushered in, Moroni, who held the
keys of the unfolding of the Book
of Mormon, which is a record of the
people who lived upon this Ameri-
can continent, came to Joseph
Smith and revealed to him certain
things pertaining to the peoples
who had lived here and the deal-
ings of God with them, and also in
regard to events that are to trans-
pire on this continent.

Then comes another personage,
whose name is John the Baptist.
He ordained the Prophet Joseph to
that portion of the priesthood of
which he held the keys, namely,
the Aaronic, or lesser priesthood.
Afterwards came Peter, James and
John, who held the keys of the
Melchisedic priesthood, and of the
dispensation of the fullness of times,
they being the last in their day to
whom it was committed, and there-
fore they came to him and revealed
to him the principles pertaining to
the Gospel and the events to be
fulfilled. Then we read again of
Elias or Elijah, who was to act as
a restorer, and who committed to
him the powers and authority asso-
ciated with his position. Then
Abraham, who had the Gospel, the
priesthood and patriarchal powers,
in his day; and Moses, who stood
at the head of the gathering dis-
pensation in his day, and had these
powers conferred upon him. We
are informed that Noah, who was a
patriarch, and all in the line of the
priesthood, in every generation
back to Adam, who was the first
man, possessed the same. Why
was it that all these people should
be associated with all these dispen-
sations, and all could communicate
with Joseph Smith? Because he
stood at the head of the dispensa-
tion of the fullness of times, which
comprehends all the various dis-
pensation that have existed upon
the earth, and that as the Gods in
the eternal worlds and the priest-
hood that officiated in time and
eternity had declared that it was
time for the issuing forth of all
these things, they all combined to-
gether to impart to him the keys of
their several missions, that he
might be fully competent, through
the intelligence and aid afforded
him through these several parties,
to introduce the Gospel in all its
fulness, namely, the dispensation
of the fullness of times, when, says

the apostle Paul, "He might gather
all things in Christ, both which are
in heaven and which are in earth,
even in him." Consequently he
stood in that position, and hence
his familiarity with all these vari-
ous dispensations and the men who
administered in them. If you were
to ask Joseph what sort of a looking
man Adam was, he would tell you
at once; he would tell you his size
and appearance and all about him.
You might have asked him what
sort of men Peter, James and John
were, and he could have told you.
Why? Because he had seen them.

We are living in this dispensation,
which is pregnant with greater
events than any other dispensation
that has ever existed on the earth,
because in it is embraced all that
ever existed anywhere among any
people of the earth. Hence why
we look upon Joseph Smith as so
great and important a character in
the world's history. I think he was
one of the greatest prophets that
ever lived, Jesus himself excepted.
Enoch was a great man, a mighty
prophet, he had a great many
sacred and heavenly things com-
mitted to him. He performed a
great work in his day—he walked
and talked with God, he preached
the gospel and gathered the people
as we do, and then he and his city
were caught up to heaven; to return
to earth in the latter days. He
performed his work and afterwards
God took him. How Joseph Smith
will compare with him will be bet-
ter understood when Zion is built
up and redeemed, and Enoch's
Zion comes down to meet it. They
both held important positions and
both will stand in their lot as
decreed by Jehovah.

Enoch received many revelations
and obtained great power from God,
and unquestionably the influence
of that power was felt by the sur-
rounding peoples. For when cer-
tain peoples gathered themselves
together against him and his people
in a belligerent attitude, Enoch
stood forth and prophesied, and the
earth shook and trembled, and the
people stood afar off and fled from
his presence. Of the power he
possessed and the heavenly mani-
festations he had, we have very
little account.

When speaking of these various
dispensations, ideas altogether dif-
ferent present themselves to our
minds. My mind has been always
more or less engaged contemplating
the wonderful works of God. Even
at an early age, before I became ac-
quainted with the principles of our
revealed religion, I frequently used
to ask myself, "Who am I? What
am I? What am I doing here?
What is the object of my earthly
being? Where did I come from,
and where am I going to?" I have
since had the same reflections; but
now I have a better method of ar-
riving at conclusions, the Gospel
having enlightened me in regard to
a great many of these principles.
When we entertain and speak of
the things of God and his dealings
with humanity, we do not deal
with things small and insignificant
in their character, but with things
great and stupendous, things that
are worthy the care and supervision
of the great God. When the Gods
created the earth, they did it for
certain purposes. Having organ-
ized it according to the eternal pur-
poses of God, they separated the
waters from the dry land, so that
the land appeared. They next
caused light to shine upon it before
the sun appeared in the firmament;
for God is light, and in him there
is no darkness. He is the light of
the sun and the power thereof by
which it was made; he is also the
light of the moon and the power
by which it was made; he is the
light of the stars and the power by
which they were made. He says it
is the same light that enlightens
the understanding of men. What,
have we a mental light and a vis-
ual light, all proceeding from the
same source? Yes, so says the
scripture, and so says science when
rightly comprehended. All these
things were organized according to
the eternal purposes of God in re-
lation to the earth on which we live,
and then man was placed upon it;
and afterwards the beasts, birds
and fishes and seeds of every kind,
everything bearing seed after its
kind, having power to propagate
its own species and perpetuate it-
self on the earth. I do not wish
now to deal with details, for that
would lead us from the subject.

What next? Man is placed upon
the earth. For what? The very first com-
mand given to him was to be fruitful and
multiply, and replenish the earth. Or in
other words, "I have put you in possession
of certain faculties for a certain purpose.

I have prepared the earth for you. I have
my spirits living with me in the eternal
heavens, and in the proper time it is my
will that they shall come forth to inhabit
tabernacles." He organizes every thing
according to these principles. Then man
appears in a certain condition, and
there is but a shadow between him and
the heavens that nothing but the light of
the gospel can remove; a forgetfulness, as if
we were puzzled over an uncertain dream;
a curtain is spread over the whole human
family, and they are thrown upon the
world to struggle along as best they can,
having to contend against great powers
and unseen influences that exist and
whose object is to war against humanity.
For Satan had already been struggling in
the heavens among the sons of God, from
whom he dissented, and thus he became
the devil, and they that took sides with
him became his angels. We are told they
numbered a third of the hosts of heaven,
and whilst they fought and struggled with
the Gods for the power and supremacy,
they were cast out from heaven and they
came here, where Satan became the prince
and power of the air. What to do? To
tempt and try fallen man. They wander
up and down the earth for this purpose;
thus man is placed in a position to be
tried, combating as he has to do with all
manner of influences which seek his over-
throw.

While in this condition it was necessary
that man should receive additional power
and intelligence to enable him to combat
successfully these evil influences; hence
the gospel was revealed to him. If after
receiving this light and knowledge he
should fall a prey to the enemy of his
soul, he would become more or less sub-
ject to the rule of this evil power, and thus
suffer according to the extent of his fall.
But if he should contend against these
powers and spirits and against every weak-
ness his flesh might be heir to and come
off victorious, he is promised celestial
glory in the eternal worlds and eventually
to become as a God.

What next? We find the powers of
darkness beginning to prevail in the hearts
of fallen man. For instance, the first two
living sons, one of them killed the other
and was a murderer. What a prospect;
how the devil would laugh, saying, "Since
Cain has slain his brother Abel, there is
no son remaining but a murderer, so what
becomes of your kingdom? But God gave
unto Adam another son named Seth,
who represented the interests of his
father and the interests of God. And
in order that they should not be led down
to the gates of death, Jesus was provided
as a saviour, as a lamb slain from before
the foundation of the earth. And hence
Job said, "Deliver him from going down
to the pit; I have found a ransom." God
made this provision in the beginning; he
knew that man would fall and would pass
through these ordeals, for known to God
are all things from the commencement of
the world. It is written here in the Book
of Doctrine and Covenants that the planet
on which he lives is a great Urim and Thum-
min, which reveals everything pertaining
to this lower world and its inhabitants.
And the holy beings who reside there can
gaze upon us mortals whenever they
please, looking also into the future or the
past; hence they know it as it is.

But he provided a saviour, and in the
early ages of time they looked forward
to the coming of the Messiah, as we now
look back to it. Of the multitudes on the
continent of Asia who comprehended
these things, we have very little knowl-
edge; the accounts of what transpired
among them are very meagre. On this
continent they spoke very plainly about
the gospel and the coming of the Redeemer
and although very plain are quite
limited. Then a great many plain and
precious parts have been taken away from
these scriptures.

Do you think the Jews to day would
want to publish things pertaining to Jesus,
describing the manner in which he would
come? I should think not. In a conver-
sation I once had with Baron Rothschild he
asked me if I believed in the Christ? I
answered him, "Yes, God has revealed to
us that he is the true Messiah and we
believe in him." I further remarked,
"Your prophets have said, 'They shall
look upon him whom they have pierced,
and they shall mourn for him, as one
mourneth for his only son, and shall be in
bitterness for him, as one that is in bitter-
ness for his first-born.' And one shall
say unto him, 'What are these wounds in
thy hands?' Then he shall answer, 'Those
with which I was wounded in the house of
my friends.' Do you think the Jewish
Rabbies would refer you to such scripture
as that? Said Mr. Rothschild, 'Is that in
our Bible?' 'That is in your Bible, sir.'"

The Book of Mormon and the Bible refer
to many other similar passages referring
to the same event, as well as passages
referring to the Saviour's birth. "Behold,"
says Isaiah, "a virgin shall conceive, and
bear a son, and shall call his name Im-
manuel." Again the Saviour says, "Abra-
ham saw my day and was glad. Ancient
people of God, in whose hearts was en-
kindled the flame of inspiration, looked
forward to that memorable event when
the Lamb slain from before the foundation
of the world would offer himself as a sac-
rifice, whilst we look back to the same
thing. We break bread and eat, and we
drink water in the presence of each other
every Sabbath day, and we do it in remem-
brance of the broken body and shed blood
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
and this we will continue to do until he
comes again. When he does come, the
Latter-day Saints expect to be among
that favored number that will eat and
drink with him at his own table in our
Father's kingdom. I expect this just as
much as I expect to eat my supper to-
night.

There is something truly grand in the
reflection of the Saviour's return to the
earth, and man and his fall and his re-
demption. We read of certain men that
lived at various times, who, by virtue of

the priesthood they held, identified them-
selves with the cause of God, and interest-
ed themselves in the redemption of the
world. The priesthood they had is ever-
lasting, it administers in time and eternity,
and the men who held it live forever, and
they continue to operate in their several
positions and priesthoods. Just as the
angel who appeared to John on the Island
of Patmos. The apostle fell at the feet of
this heavenly messenger to worship him.
But the angel said unto him, "See thou
do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of
thy brethren that have the testimony of
Jesus: worship God." And as Moses and
Elias who appeared to Jesus and to Peter,
James and John on the Mount; and as
Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James
and John and others appeared to Joseph
Smith.

In speaking with the prophet Joseph
once on this subject, he traced it from the
first down to the last, until he got to the
Ancient of Days. He wished me to write
something for him on this subject, but I
found it a very difficult thing to do. He
had to correct me several times. We are
told that the "Judgment shall sit and the
books be opened." He spoke of the vari-
ous dispensations and of those holding the
keys thereof, and said there would then
be a general giving up or accounting for.
I wrote that each one holding the keys of
the several dispensations would deliver
them up to his predecessor, from one to
another, until the whole kingdom should
be delivered up to the Father, and then
God would be "all in all." Said he, "That
is not right." I wrote it again, and again
he said it was not right. It is very difficult
to find language suitable to convey the
meaning of spiritual things. The idea
was that they should deliver up or give an
account of their administrations, in their
several dispensations, but that they would
all retain their several positions and priest-
hood. The Bible and Doctrine and Cove-
nants speaks about certain books which
should be opened; and another book would
be opened, called the Book of Life, and
out of the things written in these books
would men be judged at the last day.

To continue. We find Satan getting great
power. Enoch there appears, who is com-
missioned to go forth and preach the gos-
pel, as we are doing in this our age. He
succeeded in converting people, and
they gathered together and built up a city,
and they were three hundred and sixty-
five years in becoming fully established
in the truth. By the time we shall have
had a little more experience we perhaps
shall have become a little more prudent,
realizing the position we occupy to the
authority of the priesthood and power of
God, and our dependence upon Jehovah,
realizing too our own failings and weak-
nesses, and learning to lean upon God and
go forth as his servants in his holy fear,
and developing within us those nobler at-
tributes that exalt man to the presence
and image of his Creator. This the gospel
will do for us if we will only let it. It
will bring us into communication with God,
and through it we shall know and under-
stand him and his laws, and the principles
of eternal truth.

What next? God had to destroy the
world. People then were like the corrupt
of our age; they are crumbling to pieces,
and they will continue to decay, for the
seeds of dissolution are rooted in them,
and they in their present condition can no
more be united than you can make a rope
out of sand—the materials are not cohesive
and this nation will go down. Not only
our nation but other nations will crumble.
Thrones will be cast down and empires
will be no more. The whole earth will be
shaken and men's hearts will fall them,
in consequence of the things that are coming
upon the earth. Why? Because of all
their sins and iniquities, and further be-
cause they reject God in rejecting the gos-
pel of the Son of God, which is being
preached among them, loving darkness
rather than light.

Did God punish the people anciently who
thus rejected him and his servants? Yes
he cut them off from the face of the earth,
and planted another seed. Why? Because
it was just and proper and right that he
should do so. What, just to destroy a
whole people? Certainly, it was the very
best thing that he could do for them. If
I were going at it, I do not know that I
could do things any better. What, kill
so many millions of people? Yes. How do
you make this out? If I were one of those
spirits—and I expect I was there, and
perhaps we had a hand in it for aught I
know—if, I say, I were one of those spirits
in the eternal world and saw the corrup-
tions of their hearts when the gospel had
been preached to them, and the spirit of
God was withdrawn from them, and they
left to themselves to indulge their wicked
desires, and acts, preparing themselves for
perdition and teaching their children
iniquity, I should have felt like saying,
"O Lord, have we got to go to the
earth and receive bodies through such cor-
rupt men? Is it right and just that we
should endure the evils that they would
entail on us in consequence of their sinful
acts with which we have had nothing to
do?" "No," says the Lord, "I will cut
them off and raise up a better seed." He
did so, and by doing so he prevented these
wicked people from propagating their
species. They were all cast into prison,
where they remained until the Saviour ap-
peared among them, after his crucifixion.
He opened their prison doors and preached
to them the same gospel that they had
rejected and which the Jews rejected. If
these spirits in prison receive the glad
tidings of great joy and live accordingly,
they will, as we are informed by the Lord
in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants,
inherit a terrestrial glory, because they
were found not worthy of propagating
their species, they were not worthy to be-
come fathers and mothers of lives.

The Lord then commenced the race
again with Noah, but according to the his-
tory we have of his family, the Lord had
to bear a great deal with them. There
was nothing very remarkable about them