

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 7.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, JULY 30, 1898.

VOL. LVII.

DISCOURSE

Delivered at the Sixty-eighth Annual Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday, Morning, April 8th, 1898, by

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

My brethren and sisters, I have been unexpectedly called upon to make a few remarks and as I have not premeditated upon what to say, it is just occurred to me to follow some of the remarks that have already been made to us this morning, by reading from the fourth chapter of Mosiah:

"Believe in God; believe that He is, and that He created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that He has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

"And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that He would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that ye have known of His goodness, and have tasted of His love and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and His goodness and long suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel;

"And behold, I say unto you, that if ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of Him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.

"And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.

"And ye will not suffer your children, that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel with one another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers; he being an enemy to all righteousness;

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another:

"And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor: ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish.

"Perhaps thou shalt say, the man has brought upon himself his misery, therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just.

"But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this, the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done, he perisheth for ever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God.

"For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have; for both food and raiment, and for gold and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?

"And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling on His name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has He suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay: He has poured out His Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped, that ye could not find utterance, so exceeding great was your joy.

"And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives, and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how had ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another?

"And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done.

"I say unto you, Wo be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him; and now, I say these things unto those who are rich, as pertaining to the things of this world.

"And again, I say unto the poor, Ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts, that I give not because I have not; but if I had, I would give.

"And now, if ye say this in your hearts, ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned, and your condemnation is just; for ye covet that which ye have not received.

"And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you; that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God, I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants;

"And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not

requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again: It is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.

"And I would that ye should remember, that whosoever among you that borroweth of his neighbor, should return the thing that he borroweth, according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin, and perhaps thou shalt cause thy neighbor to commit sin also.

"And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many, that I cannot number them.

"But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not."

I have been reading the words of King Benjamin to the people as recorded in the fourth chapter of Mosiah in the Book of Mormon, and I don't know but what they apply to us today, in many ways, as completely as they applied to those unto whom they were spoken. Yet, I believe I can confidently say that the Latter-day Saints, as a rule, are among the most hospitable, generous and kind-hearted people that can be found upon the earth. Not long ago one of our Elders returned from a mission in the South. There had been a question raised in his mind as to whether the Latter-day Saints in Zion would be as open-handed as hospitable, as kind-hearted and as willing to receive and entertain a stranger as were the people of the South, and he determined to put the matter to the test. The story of his visits to some of our people here is published in the Improvement Era, No. 6. I cannot give it to you in detail, but will only attempt a brief outline. Representing himself as a minister of the Gospel from the state of Tennessee, traveling without purse or scrip, as the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were generally doing, he called upon Brother B. Y. Hampton of the Hampton House and asked for entertainment without charge. Brother Hampton readily consented to take care of him. He next called at the Temple Barber Shop, with a similar representation, and asked for a "shave and shingle," on the same terms, which was readily complied with, and he was asked to "come again." He next called upon Brother Henry Dinwoodey, and presenting himself as before, asked for means to pay his fare on the railroad, going north, whereupon Brother Dinwoodey handed him out the money. Needing a mainspring in his watch he called upon Brother John Daynes and Son, and introduced himself as before, and they cheerfully repaired his watch. He then called upon Col. Thomas G. Webber of Z. C. M. I. and