

DISCOURSE BY PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR.

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Monday and Tuesday, (Semi-Annual Conference) Oct. 6 and 7, 1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

IF THE congregation will endeavor to preserve as much order as possible, and prevent the crying and disturbance of children, I will try and address you for a short time. Last evening I made quite a lengthy address in this hall; but we had very good order. There was no whispering, no talking, nor disturbance of any kind. It requires, in a large congregation like this, quite an exertion to speak so as to make the people hear. I am told that the people could not hear half of what was said by several of the brethren yesterday. It is wrong for us to have disorder in the house of God, a place where we meet for instruction.

Last evening I talked of some matters of considerable importance to the Priesthood, of which there was an immense number present; they nearly filled this hall. I wish to continue some of these remarks; for it is necessary that all of us should be instructed in the great principles that God has revealed for the guidance, salvation and exaltation of the Saints of God; and also for the benefit of the world wherein we live. There were very many promises made to eminent men in generations long since past; but these generally had reference more particularly to the benefit of the world of mankind than to individuals.

There were certain great principles involved in the organization of this earth, and one was that there might be a place provided whereon the children of our Heavenly Father could live and propagate their species, and have bodies formed for the spirits to inhabit who were the children of God; for we are told that He is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh. It was requisite, therefore, that an earth should be organized; it was requisite that man should be placed upon it; it was requisite that bodies should be prepared for those spirits to inhabit, in order that the purposes of God pertaining to His progeny might be accomplished, and that those spirits might be enabled, through the medium of the everlasting Gospel, to return unto the presence of their Heavenly Father as Gods among the Gods.

There have been different agencies at work throughout this world's history. Lucifer has been and is one of these agencies. There was a garden planted, and Adam and Eve were placed in it, and there they had communion with God. There was another being there whose name was Lucifer, who is called in some places "the son of the morning." Job speaks of a time at the creation of this earth when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job xxxviii, 7). As it was necessary that there should be a God, a man, an earth and a heaven, it was also necessary that there should be a devil, that man might be tried, and by trial be instructed. Indeed, in the economy of God it was not only necessary that man, but the Savior also should be perfected by suffering. It is written: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews ii, 10.) It was further necessary that there should be a Redeemer according to the plan which was devised from before the foundation of the world, and also that man might be a free agent to act and operate for himself, to receive the good and reject the evil, or reject the good and be governed by the evil. And there were certain rewards promised to those who would obey the laws of God and keep His commandments, and certain punishments inflicted upon those who would not. Satan has made very great ravages among the human family in trying to accomplish his purposes; for he has been the enemy of God and the enemy of man, and in ages past he wrought upon mankind until after a certain period he had contrived to get the great majority of them on his side. Nevertheless, they had the Priesthood among them in those early days as we have among us to-day. After Adam there were Seth, Enos, Mahalaleh, Methuselah, Lamech, and a great many others until we arrive at Enoch and Noah, who operated especially in behalf of the interest of the human family. They preached the Gospel as we preach it, and taught the same principles that we teach. They gathered the people to a Zion as we gather them, and when they had been gathered together they had enemies as we have, who arrayed themselves against them. But Enoch was clothed upon with the power of God. He walked with God for 365 years, and we are told "he was not, for God took him." That is about all that is said about him in the Bible; but we have other information. Many others walked with God, and there was a city that the people were gathered to—a Zion. They walked with God and they were instructed of the Lord; but it took, at any rate, 365 years to accomplish this object.

Furthermore, in the latter days there is to be a Zion built up; but in these

days we are told that the Lord will cut His work short in righteousness. Enoch, in his day, had his messengers go forth among the people, and when they gathered it induced the rage of man and great armies assembled against the Saints: but Enoch prophesied by the power of God, and the earth shook and the mountains trembled, and the enemies of the Saints in fear fled afar off. By and by, when the time came for the accomplishment of the purposes of God, and before the destruction of the wicked, Enoch was caught up to heaven and his Zion with him. And we are told by latter revelation in relation to these matters that a Zion will be built up in our day; that great trouble will overtake the inhabitants of the earth; and that when the time arrives the Zion that was caught up will descend, and the Zion that will be organized here will ascend, both possessed of the same spirit, their peoples having been preserved by the power of God according to His purposes and as His children, to take part in the events of the latter days. We are told that when the people of these two Zions meet they will fall on each others' necks, and embrace and kiss each other.

As they in that day were placed under the guidance of the Almighty, so are we. As they had a work to perform associated with the welfare of the human family, so have we. As they had the Gospel to preach, so have we. As they had a Zion to build up, so have we. As they needed the support of the Great Jehovah, so do we. As they were dependent upon Him in all their movements, whether in relation to earth or heaven, so are we. The work in which we are engaged is one that has been introduced by the Great Eloheim, the God and Father of the human family, in the interests of His children. And wherever and whenever these principles have existed, this same being that was in the garden with our first parents still goes forth and has gone forth as a raging lion seeking whom he may devour, seeking whom he may lead astray, seeking whom he may deceive, seeking whom he may divert, seeking whom he may lead down to death. And in these latter days God has introduced these same principles with the same object in view. He has revealed the same principles of heaven, and, as heretofore, in the interest of humanity. Who was Enoch? Was he a man of God? Yes. Who were the Elders with him, were they men of God? Yes; and they received their instructions in that Zion that was then built up, and more or less directly from God; for Enoch walked with God. Whom was Enoch operating for? For God his Heavenly Father. He was there, as Jesus was on the earth in his time, as he said, not to do his own will, but the will of His Father who sent him. And whom did those people operate for? They operated for the welfare of the human family who would receive the truth and be governed by it. And whom did Jesus and His Apostles in their day operate for? For the benefit of all the world. Jesus Himself appeared as the Redeemer of the world, and He commissioned His Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." What is this salvation and condemnation? That would take a long time to tell. Suffice it to say that there are bodies celestial, bodies terrestrial, and bodies telestial; one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; but straight was the gate and narrow was the way that led unto the lives, and few there were at that time and few there have always been who have gone in thereat. And what was it that they sought? It was the Celestial Kingdom of our God, that they might come forth in the first resurrection and be one with the Father and one with Jesus, and belong to the Church of the First Born whose names are written in heaven, and become Gods among the Gods, and participate in all the glory of the Celestial Kingdom. But few there were who found the narrow path. It is so to-day. Were the Apostles of Jesus commanded to preach the Gospel? Yes. Are we commanded as they were? Yes. What was the position of the Apostles? They were simply messengers of life and salvation to a fallen world. What are the First Presidency, the Twelve, the High Priests, the Seventies, and the Elders to-day? What are they? Bearers of life and salvation to a fallen world, the messengers of God to men, the legates of the skies, commissioned by the Great Jehovah to introduce the principles of eternal life and gather in His elect from the four quarters of the earth and to prepare them for an exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God. And what becomes of those that choose the other path? They are still God's children, and He feels interested in them. What will He do with them? They will be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and according to the light and intelligence which God communicates to them. Then there is another glory—a telestial glory. Those who enter into that glory will also be judged according to their deeds and be rewarded according to their acts. We are told of others who will suffer the wrath of God, and in the revelations given to us we learn that eternal punishment is God's punishment, that everlasting punishment is God's punishment, for He is eternal, and He is everlasting. We are informed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. We are told, too, that the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who were destroyed because of their wickedness, were shut up in prison, and they re-

mained there for a long, long time. How long? We read that Jesus, who was put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison that sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. How long had these people been there? At a rough guess about 2400 years. It was quite a painful ordeal to go through. It is one that none of us would like very much. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God—a fearful thing to violate His laws. We have gathered here that we may learn those laws, the laws of God, the laws of life, and prepare ourselves under His guidance for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God. But are all the Latter-day Saints going into that kingdom? No. How is that? It is just as Jesus declared. "It is not everyone that sayeth Lord, Lord that will enter into the Kingdom of God, but he that doeth the will of the Father who is in heaven." Did Jesus come to do the will of His Father in heaven? He did, and He expects all who aim at Celestial glory to do the same, and if they do not they will not get there. He says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have we cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" And He will say unto them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not, you have not lived as becometh Saints." Oh, say some, that don't mean the Saints. No, it don't; but it means many who profess to be Saints. Do the world profess to cast out devils, to heal the sick and to do many mighty works? They do not. Do the world prophesy in His name? No. Do the world preach in the name of God? They preach in His name, many of them, without having the authority, as we have heard at this conference; but they do not prophesy in His name, and they do not propose to do many mighty works in His name, but many of our Elders do—Elders who magnify their calling and honor their God. On the other hand there are Elders who are careless, wayward and rebellious against God and His laws—who seek to trample under foot the principles that He has revealed—who seek to set themselves up to guide, direct and manipulate the affairs of the Church and Kingdom of God, and yet these same persons know nothing but what they know naturally, as do the brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed; and we none of us know anything only as God instructs us. We are indebted to Him for the introduction of this work, and for all the information pertaining thereto. It has been from no man nor set of men, nor organizations of a professed spiritual or temporal nature, that we have received intelligence pertaining to the things of God, the Church of God, or the Kingdom of God. It has come directly from the Lord through the Gospel of the Son of God, which brings life and immortality to light; and if men think—and we every once in a while meet with such characters—they know better than the Lord how to manipulate affairs they will find out their mistake. The Lord will say to them, "Depart from me, I never knew you;" for it is not everyone that sayeth Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the Kingdom of God, but he that doeth the will of our Father in heaven.

Hence there is a great work for us to do. There is something comprehensive in it. It is indeed the dispensation of the fulness of times spoken of by all the holy Prophets since the world was. It relates to the interests of men that now live; it relates to the interests of men who have lived, and it relates to things that are yet in the future. It is a thing in which the Gods in the eternal worlds are interested, and all the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets that have lived upon the earth are all interested in the work in which we are engaged. There is a Priesthood in the heavens, and we have the same Priesthood on the earth, but there should be a closer communion between the Priesthood on the earth and the Priesthood in the heavens; it is desirable that we should be brought into closer proximity, we want to be advancing as Enoch advanced. After the appearance of Jesus upon the earth there was to be a certain power who would make war with the Saints and prevail against them; and it is said "they shall be given into His hands until a time and times and the dividing of time," (Daniel vii, 25;) but in this day we are told that "the Saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever," (18 verse). You and I may violate our covenants; you and I may trample upon the principles of the Gospel and violate the order of the Priesthood and the commands of God; but among the hosts of Israel there will be thousands and tens of thousands who will be true to the principles of truth, and God in the heavens, the holy angels and the ancient Priesthood that now live where God lives are all united together for the accomplishment of this purpose. The Lord will roll forth His purposes in His own way and in His own time. And having thus organized, as I before stated, it is not for us to act as we may think individually, but as God shall dictate. We have a regular order in the Church. You brethren, who hold the holy Priesthood, understand these things. Has God not given to every man a portion of His Spirit to profit withal? Yes. Has He not done more than this to the saints who are true and faithful? Has He not given to them the gift of the Holy Ghost? He has, and they know it and realize it. They are brought in-

to communion with each other, and into communion with God and the heavenly hosts. But having this Spirit do we need others to guide us? Yes, all the time. Why? Because of the powers of darkness, the influence of Satan and the weakness of human nature. We need watchmen upon the towers of Zion who are on the alert to look after the interests of Israel, and to see that God's people do not go astray. Hence it becomes the duty of the Teachers to look after the people, to see that there is no hard feeling, no covetousness, no fraud, no adultery, no iniquity of any kind, but that purity, virtue, holiness and righteousness prevail among those that they preside over. And how far does this extend? To every place where there is a ward or a portion of a ward—to the utmost extremity. It may be compared unto the body—from the head to the feet, from the toes to the fingers, and to every other part. All the officers necessary for the work of the ministry are to be found in the Church, and everything has been organized according to the order of God. Are any of these men who are called to presiding positions autocrats—men who exercise undue authority over the feelings and associations of their fellow man? No. Have any of them the right to disregard the feelings of their brethren, trample them under foot, and act as tyrants? No. Have the Apostles, or High Priests, or Seventies, or Elders, any such right? No. Brother Cannon will read an extract from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants on this question.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON then read as follows from Sec. 121 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants:—

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson:—

That the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion, or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood, or the authority of that man.

Behold! ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks; to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

We have learned, by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile.

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death;

Let thy bowels also be full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly, then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy sceptre an unchanging sceptre of righteousness and truth, and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee for ever and ever.

PRESIDENT TAYLOR continuing his remarks said: We have seen many specimens of the characters referred to in this revelation read by Brother Cannon. These things continue to exist more or less. Some people are very desirous sometimes to instruct me about how I ought to manipulate and manage affairs. Well, if they were set as my instructors I should be much pleased to get all the information I could from them, and I would be pleased to get information from the humblest person in existence—if it was information. Among other things I find that a good many begin to think that we are very much persecuted and proscribed in our marital relations, according to the revelations which God has given us, and there is sometimes a little trembling in the knees. I am pleased there is not much of it, but there is a little once in a while. Sometimes I get advice from outsiders, from the newspapers, etc., and sometimes from some of our brethren, (but from very few of our brethren) in relation to these matters.

God has given us a revelation in regard to celestial marriage. I did not make it. He has told us certain things pertaining to this matter, and they would like us to tone that principle down and change it and make it applicable to the views of the day. This we cannot do; nor can we interfere with any of the commands of God to meet the persuasions or behests of men. I cannot do it, and will not do it.

I find some men try to twist round the principle in any way and every way they can. They want to sneak out of it in some way. Now God don't want any kind of sycophancy like that. He expects that we will be true to Him and to the principles He has developed, and to feel as Job did—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Though other folks would slay us, yet we will trust in the living God and be true to our covenants and to our God. These are my feelings in relation to that matter. We have also been told that "it is not

mete that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood," and yet some people would like very much to do it. Well, they cannot do it; because if we are here, as I said before, to do the will of our Father who sent us, and He has told us what to do, we will do it, in the name of Israel's God—and all who sanction it say Amen—[the vast congregation responded with a loud "Amen."—and those that don't may say what they please. [Laughter.] If God has introduced something for our glory and exaltation, we are not going to have that kicked over by any improper influence, either inside or outside of the Church of the living God. We will stand by the principles of eternal truth; living we will proclaim them, and dying we will be true to them, and after death will live again in their enjoyment in the eternal worlds. That is my feeling; so I don't feel very trembly in the knees, and I do not think you do, generally. I see sometimes a disposition to try to ignore some of the laws that God has introduced, and this is one of them. People want to slip round a corner, or creep out in some way. There is something very creepy about it. There was a man in former times, we are told, came to Jesus by night. His name was Nicodemus. He was one of those persons who did not like the daylight. I have known some people who would want to be baptized in the evening, or get into some corner that they might not be seen. Well, there is not much to such folks. Jesus was very unpopular, quite as unpopular as we are, in His day. Nicodemus was a prominent man among the Jews, and he thought it might injure his reputation if he was seen visiting that Nazarene to get instruction from Him, so he crawled in at night. Jesus talked quite plainly to him, as you can read for yourselves; but we find some folks of a similar kind now creeping around. They have not the manhood to stand true to their colors and to their God. Some folks think that we polygamists are very much indebted to our brethren who are monogamists to help to steady the ark, (God save the mark!)—(Laughter.)—to help to save us, and that we need such men in the Legislature, etc., and to fill our various offices. Well, I won't tell you all I think about some of these things, but I do think we are all of us dependent upon God our Heavenly Father, and if He don't take care of us we shall not be taken care of; if His arm is not extended in our behalf we shall have a poor showing; but if God is with us, we ask no odds of the world, for He governs the destinies of the human family. He puts down one man and exalts another. He dethrones one king or president as the case may be, and sets up another, and He rules as He pleases among the nations of the earth and all the children of men, although they don't know it. We live in Him, we move in Him, we have our being from Him. We are not dependent very much upon the monogamists about any of these things. You need not plume yourselves very much in these matters; and I will tell you, if you want to get along smoothly you had better find among your various neighbors, when you have some matter of difficulty to settle, some of these polygamists and ask a little counsel at their hands. They will be able to advise you about many things, especially if they are men of God, humble men, living their religion and keeping the commandments of God.

There are some few things I have been reflecting about, and have noted them down, and I think I shall read them now.

The distinction being made between Polygamy and Prostitution:

1st. Congress made a law which would affect both; and cohabitation with more than one woman was made a crime whether in polygamy or out of polygamy.

2nd. The Governor turned legislator, added to this law, and inserted in a test oath to officials, the following words regarding cohabitation, "in the marriage relation;" thus plainly and definitely sanctioning prostitution, without any law of the United States, or any authority.

3rd. The United States Commissioners, also without legislation, adopted the action of the Governor, and still insisted on this interpolation, in the test oath in election matters, and placed all polygamists under this unconstitutional oath, and released prostitutes and their paramours from the obligations placed upon others.

4th. The Prosecuting Attorney has sanctioned these things, and pursued a similar course; and while he has asked all the "Mormon" jurors certain questions pertaining to their religious faith in the doctrines of the "Mormon" Church, and challenged them if they answered affirmatively as to their belief in polygamy, he has declined to ask other jurors whether they believed in prostitution, or whether they believed in cohabiting with more than one woman or not.

5th. Chief Justice Zane when appealed to on this question refused to interfere, or give any other ruling, and thus aided in packing the jury.

Thus a law was first passed by Congress which has been perverted by the administration, by all its officers who have officiated in this Territory and made to subserve the interests of a party who have placed in their political platform an Anti-Mormon plank; and have clearly proven that there is a combination in all the officers of state, officiating in this Territory, to back up this political intrigue in the interest of party, and at the sacrifice of law, equity, jurisprudence and all the safeguards that are provided by