

DISCOURSE

BY

PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG,

DELIVERED

In the Third Ward Meeting-House,
Salt Lake City, Sunday Even-
ing, June 21st, 1874.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I AM here in this ward, especially to talk to you, my brethren and sisters. I think I have been here only once before—at the dedication of this house. I have a few things to say to you, which I hope and expect will be received and appreciated according to their merit.

Perhaps quite a portion of this little congregation have left their homes, their friends, the lands of their nativity for the gospel's sake, for the sake of their own salvation and that of their families and friends who would go with them. I will appeal to the experience of my brethren and sisters who have received the gospel, and ask them this question—Is not the gospel dearer to us than anything else and all else on this earth? I think I can answer for all Latter-day Saints, and say, "Surely it is." We hope for life, salvation and exaltation; we have the privilege of the gospel and the ordinances of the house of God, while the inhabitants of the earth, with the exception of comparatively a very few, have not as yet availed themselves of this privilege. We preach the gospel to the people, but they are so erroneously traditioned and so ignorant with regard to the facts pertaining to the revelations and will of God to the children of men, that they turn aside from it and think it no evil in so doing. They are so educated that they can neglect the gospel, and feel measurably justified. This is an item of experience that we could bring before ourselves and others more fully than, perhaps, it would be prudent for me to spend the time to do this evening. But the gospel to us is all in all. To know the will of God and do it is the happiest life that intelligent beings, the children of our Father in heaven, can live. There is no other condition in life that produces the same amount of good feeling, peace, happiness, joy, comfort, contentment and intelligence that the service of the Lord will bring. If a person is very poor and the love of God is within him, he feels rich and happy, and can measurably do without food, that is, longer and better than they can who do not have this experience of the love of God within them.

The person who enjoys the experience of the knowledge of the Kingdom of God on the earth, and at the same time has the love of God within him, is the happiest of any individuals on the earth. We, who believe in and have obeyed this gospel, look forward with the anticipation of obtaining a great amount of knowledge and wisdom. When we embraced the gospel the spirit opened up to our minds the fact that the wisdom, the knowledge and the power of God would increase in the midst of the Saints. This is our experience. I, knowing for myself what the Spirit of the Lord brings to the understanding, testify what it reveals to others. The same spirit that is given to me, to enlighten my mind, is given to others; the same that is given to you I have received, consequently I speak from personal knowledge, from that which I have experienced and understand, and that I live in; and they who live in and enjoy the spirit of our holy religion can testify to this.

There is a portion of this congregation who are young and know but little about the United States, or about the people there; and there is a large percentage of our community who know nothing by experience of the outside world. Ask them if they know anything of California? No. Anything about the States? No. Did you not come from England? No, but my parents did; consequently they have not experience. They have lived here, they have grown up with us. We have brought them up cheerfully and kindly, and instructed and taught them, and they have enjoyed the spirit of life and of wisdom and knowledge. These children who have been born here in the New and Everlasting Covenant do not seem to realize this. This is for the want of experience, which they will obtain in future life. But those of experience, those who have left their homes and their all for the sake of the gospel, are capable of judging better about these matters.

Now we, as Latter-day Saints, hope for salvation; we are living in anticipation of eternal salvation. We have left our homes and everything for the sake of our religion. Many women in our community have left their husbands; many men have left their wives and children; young boys have left their parents and brothers and sisters, and young girls have come away, and left all. They had friends, homes, plenty, parents, brothers and sisters, yet when the spirit of the gospel came upon them they were so enamored with it, and it gave them such light, knowledge and intelligence that they were willing to forsake all, and follow with the Latter-day Saints for life eternal. This is the case with quite a portion of our community. We all, then, started for life and salvation, and we still have no other object.

Now, my brethren and sisters, I wish to ask—Do we not anticipate further knowledge, wisdom and blessings, and further communications by the spirit of the Lord, further demonstrations and further witnesses, revelations, knowledge, &c., in this kingdom? We do, every one of us. We ask the question, again, Do we expect that we have already become perfect, and that we are prepared to be numbered with the sanctified, and that we are now prepared to be gathered with God's elect, and that, if we were to hear the voice to-night—"Behold the Bride-

groom cometh"—we should be numbered with the wise? Do we anticipate this? If we do we are wrong, for we are not prepared. We have passed through a great many scenes, we may say, of tribulation, though I would have all my brethren understand that I do not take this to myself, for all that I have passed through has been joy and joyful to me; but we have seemingly sacrificed a great deal, and passed through many scenes of trial and temptations, no doubt of this. We have had to suffer temptation more or less, and we have taken the spoiling of our goods joyfully. I have, myself, five times before I came to this valley, left everything that the Lord had blessed me with pertaining to this world's goods, which, for the country where I lived, was not a very little.

Well, we have passed these ordeals, and we are still going along. Now have we profited by all that we have passed through and experienced, so that we really do consider that we are sanctified and prepared for the celestial kingdom of God, or do we believe that there is something more yet to be done? Why, all hearts reply—There is still understanding in this kingdom; every heart echoes—We expect to learn more, we expect to receive more, we are not yet perfect, we are not complete in our stature as men and women in Christ Jesus. Now I will just ask, right here, shall we ever be learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth? No, I say we shall not, but we shall come to the knowledge of the truth. This is my hope and anticipation, and this is my joy. The Latter-day Saints, as a people, in many respects are shortsighted, we are but babes or suckling infants in the church and kingdom of God, comparatively, and especially since we have been in these valleys. We have enjoyed peace and plenty here; we have been blessed in our families, and in our flocks and herds and in our fields and crops, and we have gathered around us the comforts, and even the luxuries of life, and some, to a small extent, wealth. Now, in the enjoyment of all this is the kingdom of God first and foremost with us? I can say, taking us as a people, that our hearts are too much on the things of this life. We are, perhaps, too skeptical in our feelings with regard to the things of the kingdom. We gather, as we anticipate, mental strength and we think we are capable of judging where we are not capable of judging, and the riches, or the things of this life, I can not in reality say the riches, but a little of this world's goods, sometimes blind the mind and becloud the spirit of a person. I can appeal to the experience of my brethren and sisters, aged and middle-aged and youth, and even to the children. Go to the child and what does its joy consist in? Toys, we may call them, something that produces, as they think, pleasure; and so it is with our youth, our young boys and girls; they are thinking too much of this world; and the middle-aged are striving and struggling to obtain the good things of this life, and their hearts are too much upon them. So it is with the aged. Is not this the condition of the Latter-day Saints? It is. Well now, take us as a people, we anticipate life eternal; we think we are the best people on the earth, and we think we have sacrificed more for our religion than anybody else, though in my belief, and in this respect I probably differ with most of the Latter-day Saints, for the simple reason that God, our Heavenly Father, in his religion, does not require men and women to suffer as false religions do. Take the religions of the heathen, and false systems of religion generally, and they require sacrifices that the Lord does not require. The Lord has offered his sacrifice in the character of his Son; but he does not require us to sacrifice our children or ourselves as the heathens sacrifice to their gods; consequently our sacrifices and our sufferings are not to be compared with those of the heathens. There are professing Christians in our midst who are so strict in their religious notions that they would rise in the morning at five o'clock and walk miles if necessary rather than miss their religious services; and they are those who are so zealous that they would measure the soil from here into old Jerusalem with their bodies if they could, to pay penance, as they call it. God does not require any such sacrifice as this; neither does he require any of these heavy sacrifices which involve the shedding of blood or the loss of life. Such things do not belong to God's religion, they come through sin and transgression. Perhaps they who show such manifestations of their faith strengthen it and do themselves some good. All that is required of us is to sacrifice our feelings and to overcome the adversary by subduing the lust within us for anything but the kingdom of God on the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of our friends and families and of the human family from first to last; that our whole soul may be devoted to the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth, and for the salvation of those who sleep, who died without the gospel. We want to sacrifice enough to do the will of God in preparing to bring up those who have not had the privilege of hearing the gospel while in the flesh, for the simple reason that, in the spirit world, they cannot officiate in the ordinances of the House of God. They have passed the ordeals, and are beyond the possibility of personally officiating for the remission of their sins and for their exaltation, consequently they are under the necessity of trusting in their friends, their children and their children's children to officiate for them, that they may be brought up into the celestial kingdom of God. All that the Lord requires of us is a perfect submission in our hearts to his will. The Latter-day Saints say at once—"This is correct, certainly it is right that we should have no other object and aim in our feelings and affections but to do good and to promote the kingdom of God on the earth." But the weakness of man is such, the humanity with which our spirits are clothed is so frail that we are liable to be overcome. These tabernacles

are dull, subject to sin and temptation, and to stray from the kingdom of God and the ordinances of his house, to lust after riches, the pride of life and the vanities of the world, and these things are prone to be uppermost in the minds of all; old and young, even Latter-day Saints. The infant wants his toys, the children want nice dresses, and this is correct; and when we understand how to rightly use the things of the world there will be the most beautiful children in Zion that ever lived on the earth. But we wish the wealth or things of the world; we think about them morning, noon and night; they are first in our minds when we awake in the morning, and the last thing before we go to sleep at night; and we dream about how we shall do this and how we shall obtain that, and our minds are continually lusting after the things of the world. Is not this too much the case with the Latter-day Saints?

I will ask this question of the few who are here—What think ye, my brethren and sisters of experience, you that have enjoyed the light of the spirit, you that can see the travail of the Saints, do you think that this people called Latter-day Saints are traveling in the path that they should go in? Do you think that they offer their oblations and sacrifices to the Lord as they should? What do you think about it? What is the general expression through our community? It is that the Latter-day Saints are drifting as fast as they can into idolatry, drifting into the spirit of the world and into pride and vanity.

You read in the revelations given to John on the Isle of Patmos, concerning the latter days, that a voice was heard crying to the Saints in Babylon "Come out of her, O my people, be not partakers of her sins, lest ye receive of her plagues, for her sins have reached unto heaven." &c. Has this voice been heard? Yes, the Latter-day Saints have heard it. Has the angel flown through the midst of heaven and delivered the gospel to the children of men? Yes, we believe all this. Do we believe that the Lord sent his messengers to Joseph Smith and commanded him to refrain from joining any Christian church, and to refrain from the wickedness he saw in the churches, and finally delivered to him a message informing him that the Lord was about to establish his kingdom on the earth, and led him on step by step until he gave him the revelation concerning the plates? Yes, this is all correct. Did Joseph receive these revelations? He did. Did the heavenly messengers come to Joseph and commit to him the keys of the Aaronic priesthood? Yes, we believe all this. Did they commit to him the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood? Yes, this is all correct, we believe all this. Did the Lord speak from the heavens through Joseph, commanding his people to gather out from the wicked before the scourges—sickness, pestilence, wars, bloodshed, and the various calamities spoken of by the prophets and apostles, should pass over the nations? Yes, we believe the Lord has called upon the people who received the gospel to come out of Babylon, to separate themselves from the wicked and to stand in holy places preparatory to the coming of the Son of Man. All Latter-day Saints believe all this; then I say, if we do believe it let us act up to and be true to our faith and to the knowledge that we have of God and his kingdom. This is what is required of us.

We have passed from one thing to another and I may say from one degree of knowledge to another. When Joseph first received the knowledge of the plates that were in the hill Cumorah he did not then receive the keys of the Aaronic priesthood, he merely received the knowledge that the plates were there and that the Lord would bring them forth, and that they contained the history of the aborigines of this country. He received the knowledge that they were once in possession of the gospel; and from that time he went on, step by step, until he obtained the plates and the Urim and Thummim and had power to translate them. This did not make him an apostle, it did not give to him the keys of the kingdom nor make him an elder in Israel. He was a prophet, and had the spirit of prophecy, and had received all this before the Lord ordained him. And when the Lord, by revelation, told him to go to Pennsylvania, he did so, and finished the translation of the Book of Mormon; and when the Lord, in another revelation, told him to come back, into New York State, and to go to old Father Whitmer's, who lived in a place opposite Waterloo, and there stop, he did so, and had meetings and gathered up the few who believed in his testimony. He received the Aaronic priesthood, and then he received the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood and organized the church. He first received the power to baptize, and still did not know that he was to receive any more until the Lord told him there was more for him. Then he received the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood, and had power to confirm after he had baptized, which he had not before. He would have stood precisely as John the Baptist stood, had not the Lord sent his other messengers, Peter, James and John, to ordain Joseph to the Melchizedek priesthood. Then, after some of the brethren had been out preaching he had a revelation that they should go up to the Ohio. I knew of them, though I was not acquainted with them before they went up there. They were sent by some of my family, my father saw and conversed with them. Then the way opened for a large gathering in the State of Ohio. Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Samuel Peterson, David Whitmer, John Whitmer and a few others went up there and preached the gospel, and they came among the members of the society called Campbellites, formerly members of the Close Communion Baptists, their leader's name being Alexander Campbell. This man preached the doctrine that baptism was for the remission of sins, and that the church, but when the brethren

came to these societies and taught them, not only baptism for the remission of sins, but the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, they believed it and were baptized for the remission of their sins, and received the laying on of hands for the Holy Ghost, and then received other ordinances.

Then the Lord revealed to Joseph to go out to the Ohio, and he went up; and after he went up he then understood and was taught of the Lord to send men to the west to hunt out a place for the centre stake of Zion. They went according to the revelations that Joseph received, and finally Joseph went up to meet them, in Independence, Jackson County, Mo., on the borders of the Lamanites. You can read all this in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Then he had not received all at this time, and at the time that Zion's Camp, as it is called, went up to Missouri, in 1834, so far as I am aware Joseph had never received any intimation as to there being a patriarch in the church. On our return home from Missouri, my brother Joseph Young, while conversing with me, asked if it would be right for our father to give us a blessing. Said he—"I feel just as though I want my father to give me a patriarchal blessing." When we reached Kirtland we talked with Joseph on this subject, and he said, "Certainly," and finally we appointed a day, and Brother Joseph, the Prophet, came to where we met and ordained my father a patriarch, and he was the first man ordained to the office of patriarch in the church, and he blessed his children; and soon after this Joseph ordained his father a patriarch and his father called his children together and blessed them. Then Joseph had another revelation, that a record should be kept, and when this was revealed to him, he then had his father call his house together again, and blessed them over and a record was kept of it. This is to show you, and especially those who have no experience in the church, how the Lord has led this people along, led them along, led them along.

We were driven from Missouri after Joseph went up there, and we came to Nauvoo, and the Twelve went to England. While we were in England, I think, the Lord manifested to me by visions and his Spirit things that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to any person concerning them until I returned to Nauvoo. Joseph had never mentioned this, there had never been a thought of it in the church that I knew anything about at that time. But I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself, and when I returned home and Joseph revealed these things to me, I then understood the reflections that were upon my mind while in England. But this was not until after I had told him what I understood. I saw that he was after something by his conversation, leading my mind along, and others, to see how we could bear this. This was in 1841; the revelation was given in 1838, but the doctrine was revealed before this; and when I told Joseph what I understood, which was right in front of my house in the street, as he was shaking hands and leaving me, he turned round and looked me in the eye, and says he—"Brother Brigham, are you speaking what you understand, are you in earnest?" Says I—"I speak just as the Spirit manifests to me." Says he—"God bless you, the Lord has opened your mind," and he turned and went off.

About this time came a revelation concerning baptism for the dead. I knew that in my traveling and preaching, many a time, I have stopped by beautiful streams of clear, pure water, and have said to myself—"How delightful it would be to me to go into this to be baptized for the remission of my sins." When I got home Joseph told me it was my privilege. At this time came a revelation that the Saints could be baptized and rebaptized when they chose, and then that we could be baptized for our dead friends, but at first it was not revealed that a record should be kept of those who were baptized; but when he received an additional revelation to that effect, then a record was kept. Hundreds and thousands, I suppose, were baptized before any record was kept at all, and they were baptized over, and a record kept of the baptisms and the names of the administrators, those who acted for the dead, and of the dead, and of the witnesses. You can read in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants the letter that Joseph wrote when he was away from home in regard to having witnesses at these baptisms. I relate this to show you that the Lord did not reveal everything at once; but I need not dwell on this any longer.

I will now say to my brethren and sisters, the Lord, in the first place, commenced to bring the people together upon the ground of union and oneness; but they could not bear this. You can read, on page 161, of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, a revelation given to the Coloville branch. Lemon Copley had a tract of land that was to be given to the Saints, and they were to build up a stake of Zion until there was another place prepared for the centre stake; but he apostatized and the people went away. Before this the Lord revealed to Joseph that the people would gather out from Babylon, and establish the kingdom of God upon the principles of heaven. They went up to Jackson County, Mo., with this in their faith, and with the express understanding that when they got there everything was to be laid at the feet of the Bishop, not at the feet of the Apostles, as they did anciently. Then, you know, they sold all they had and brought their substance and laid it at the feet of the Apostles. The revelation given through Joseph was to lay all at the feet of the Bishop, who was to distribute it among the people, according to the revelation given for that purpose, for their benefit. But they could not bear this, consequently they were driven from Jackson County, and assembled again, some in Caldwell and some in Daviess County, and finally they were driven from the State. This was in the fall of

1838. I recollect, in Far West, Joseph, talking upon these matters, said—"The people cannot bear the revelations that the Lord has for them. There were a great many revelations if the people could bear them." I think it was the eighth day of July, 1831, Joseph had a revelation that the people should consecrate their surplus property for the building of the temple there in Far West, for the support of the priesthood, for the paying of the debts of the Presidency, &c., which I could give an account of, for I was present when it came. Joseph was doing business in Kirtland, and it seemed as though all creation was upon him, to hamper him in every way, and they drove him from his business, and it left him so that some of his debts had to be settled afterwards; and I am thankful to say that they were settled up; still further, we have sent East to New York, to Ohio and to every place where I had any idea that Joseph had ever done business, and inquired if there was a man left to whom Joseph Smith, jr., the Prophet, owed a dollar, or a shilling. If there was we would pay it. But I have not been able to find one. I have advertised this through every neighborhood and place where he formerly lived, consequently I have a right to conclude that all his debts were settled.

We will now pass on. You know the history with regard to our leaving Nauvoo. Now I have it in my mind to ask the question of the Latter-day Saints—Are they in earnest? Do they mean what they say, when they say they believe that Brother Brigham Young is the legal successor of Joseph Smith, the Prophet? We believe in Joseph, the Prophet; he sealed his testimony with his blood, consequently we can, with impunity, believe on him a little better than if he were living. When he was living his testimony was not in force upon the people as it is now. But is Brother Brigham the legal successor of Brother Joseph? This people, called Latter-day Saints, by their acts, by their voting, say they believe he is. Well, we will admit the fact. I have a little to say, then, and shall come back to former days with regard to the duties of the individual who leads the kingdom of God on the earth.

In all ages of the world that we have any knowledge of, when there was a people on the earth whom God acknowledged as his people, he has invariably dictated them in spiritual and in temporal things. This question was agitated year after year in the days of Joseph. The first two bishops in the Church—Edward Partridge was the first, I was well acquainted with him, and Newel K. Whitney was the second—questioned the propriety of Joseph having anything to do with temporal things. Joseph would argue the case with them a little, and tell them how things were, and bring up scripture to show them that it could not be otherwise, that it was impossible for the Lord to dictate people, unless he dictated them in temporal affairs. The very first act after believing is a temporal act. After I hear the gospel preached and believe it, I go down into the waters of baptism, which is a temporal act; it is an act that pertains to my mind and my body. I will that my body shall be down into the water and be immersed for the remission of my sins, consequently, have to go to the elder who taught me the gospel, the spiritual portion of the kingdom, and apply to him to administer the temporal ordinance, and he has to do it, having taught the doctrine he officiates; the act, and you will find it through life, every circumstance, in every case the man that dictates the spiritual kingdom of God must dictate the temporal affairs; it can not be otherwise. I say this to you because the idea in the minds of a few of the people is—"Brigham ought not to meddle with temporal affairs." They said so to Joseph, and they said so much about it that I went into the Temple at Kirtland and challenged the men who were querying on this, to prove or bring up one instance where God did not manifest his will concerning temporal things whenever he had known his will to the children of men in establishing his kingdom on the earth. They always came to the floor, they would not, there was nothing else for them to do, they prostrated every person. There were William E. McElhanna, John F. Boynton and Lyman Johnson, who belonged to the Twelve, Frederic G. Williams, second counselor to Joseph, and two-thirds of the High Council all talking about this and I went into the Temple and just challenged them to show wherein the Lord ever conferred upon any man in the world the power to dictate in spiritual affairs that did not in temporal affairs? They could not do it. I told them they could not draw the line between the spiritual and the temporal. All things were created first spiritual, and then temporal. Everything the spirit world was presented as we see now, and this temporal earth was presented there. We were in the spirit world and we came here into this time, which, in eternity, nothing in the world only change of time and seasons allotted to change of being that makes it time to us. It is in eternity, and we are just as much in eternity now as we shall be millions of years hence. But it is time measured to finite beings, and it is changeable, and we call it temporal, while the fact is all spiritual in the first place, the temporal, then spiritual and made immortal, consequently you can not divide them. I say this for those to reflect upon who think that there is a difference between temporal and spiritual things. I do not say, for I do not know, that there is any such here.

Now we come to our present condition. You know the past. These children who were born in this city or Territory know what they can remember, and many of them are old enough to have many recollections and can see and understand a great many things; but the older ones know that this people have drifted just as far as they can without a reformation. Every spiritual mind knows this. I will now say, my brethren and sisters, that while