

Object of the Gathering—Necessity of a Temple—Trials of The Saints—Sealing—Visit to Provo

Remarks by President Brigham Young, delivered in the Old Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, February 16th, 1868.

I am thankful that I have the privilege of meeting with you; I am thankful for the blessings of this day, and that I live in this age of the world. The beginning of this dispensation of the fullness of times may well be compared to the commencement of a temple, the material of which it is to be built being still scattered, unshaped and unpolished, in a state of nature. I am thankful that the way is being prepared, and that we have the privilege of erecting a spiritual and moral superstructure—a temple of God. I am happy to be a member of this community; it is my joy, my delight to perform the little services which God has given me ability to do for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the children of men, for the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, and for the bringing forth of His laws.

We have been gathered to the valleys of these mountains for the express purpose of purifying ourselves, that we may become polished stones in the temple of God, for it is written, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” Christ is represented as a living stone, chosen of God and precious, and the Apostle represents the Saints “as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” We “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the Saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.” Then my brethren, “what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” We are here for the purpose of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth. To be prepared for this work it has been necessary to gather us out from the nations and countries of the world, for if we had remained in those lands we could not have received the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood of the Son of God, which are necessary for the perfection of the Saints preparatory to His coming.

The great work of the gathering in the last days was plainly seen by the ancient Prophets and Apostles, and the glory of Zion was portrayed to them by the Spirit; but the sufferings and labors and toils and travels of the Saints to bring about the grand results which they saw they have not particularly described, for very likely the minutiae were not revealed to them; still they plainly saw by the spirit of revelation that the Saints would be gathered in the last days to be perfected and sanctified to become the bride, the Lamb’s wife. I suppose that the visions of the Lord and the revelation of His Spirit given to His faithful people in former times, relating to the Zion of the last days, were much the same as they are when given to His people in our days. When we first receive the Spirit of the Gospel we receive great joy therein, great peace, and great satisfaction to our minds; and we are carried away in the Spirit to behold the beauties of Zion, and to contemplate the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Our brethren and sisters far away among the nations, when they received the gospel, and the spirit of revelation came upon them, delighted to contemplate the gathering of the Saints, it was a matter of joy to them to dream about it and think about it when they would awake from their slumbers. They would reflect upon it through the day, and talk about it in their prayer meetings, and in their prayer circles at home, the subject of gathering to Zion was constantly before them if they lived so as to enjoy the spirit of their religion. This spirit caused their hearts constantly to rejoice; it was not the journey across the sea and across the plains that gave them joy, but it was the contemplation of Zion in its beauty and glory, for they could not see the troubles and disappointments, perplexities and vexations they would have to pass through in gathering to Zion, nor did they think of the hardships they would have to endure after they were gathered. So the ancients viewed the glory of Zion in the last days.

We cannot now administer the further ordinances of God in the fullest sense of the word legally unto the people, neither shall we be able to do so until we have a temple built for that purpose. Some may consider that I am notifying our common foe in saying this, but it is true, notwithstanding, and our common foe knows it. We must be

situated in local circumstances wherein we can efficiently administer in those ordinances of the house of God that cannot be administered to a people while they are scattered abroad among the nations of the wicked. The Apostle John no doubt saw in vision, by the spirit of revelation, Zion in her beauty and perfection, and that Zion would have to be built up by the gathering of God's people out of Babylon. Under the influence of the same spirit the Psalmist exclaims—"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather my Saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." The High Priest Caiaphas, under the influence of the same spirit of prophecy, foretold that Jesus should die for the nation; "and," as John says, "not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The gathering previously foretold is now being accomplished, and wherever the children of men are, if there are individuals among them who would delight to be disciples of the Lord Jesus, forsake sin and sinful company and practices, they are called upon to gather out from the wicked and assemble themselves together at some place designated by the finger of the Almighty. This work the Lord commenced over thirty years ago, and it is still progressing; the call is still to His people among the nations of the earth—Gather out of her my people, be not partakers of her sins lest ye receive of her plagues. When the righteous are thus gathered they will then be prepared for the coming of the Messiah.

It was remarked by Elder Woodruff that he did not think it would be a hundred years before the Savior will come. It is no matter about when he will come; I do not think the Father has yet been pleased to reveal it to any man upon the earth, and I do not know that He has revealed it to the angels. He had not done so in the days of the Savior, and I do not think that He has yet revealed it. Whether He comes today, tomorrow, this week, next week, this year, or next year, it matters not; we should be prepared for His coming, and this should satisfy us. It is our duty to make a close application of the requirements of heaven to our lives, and qualify ourselves to accomplish the work which the Lord has committed into our hands. How can we perform this work? Can we do it by every man turning to his own way, and by following the vain imaginations of his own heart? No, we will all decide at once that we never can perform this labor without being guided and directed by the Lord himself, through the means which it pleases Him to use to bring about the perfecting of His people, to prepare them for the glory which is to follow. I would not question the truth of the statement that the people ordered their lives before the Lord and their neighbors while they were scattered among the nations more perfectly than they do here in many instances, for there they had nothing to try them only the common enemy, and the finger of scorn pointed at them by unbelievers, which made them cling closer to their God; they had not the trials to undergo which the Saints have here. If it is necessary for us to be tried in all things, then weep not, mourn not because we are tried, neither let us object to the Lord directing our course in that path wherein the trials necessary for our perfection lie. If it is in sailing across the sea in ships, in being sick and cast down, in witnessing the sorrow of our dear friends, in receiving temptations and trials to which we have before been strangers; if it is in crossing the country from the United States to this place, by railroad or by ox team, no matter how, the Lord leads His people in this way expressly to give them trials which they have not passed through before, and which it is necessary they should have. While it is necessary that we should be tempted and tried, it is not necessary that we should give way to temptation.

The Latter-day Saints are often drawn into circumstances that are most peculiar, and sometimes very trying, yet there exists no other people on the earth who enjoy the privileges and the freedom that we do. Our laws are often trampled upon with impunity, and the offender goes free. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints often commit sins that if they were to commit in the world would cut them off from the church antichrist, yet we retain them as members of the Church of Christ in mercy, and in consideration of the weaknesses of poor human nature, and they pass along unscathed, receiving the fellowship of their faithful brethren and sisters with the hope that they will reform and learn to live their religion more faithfully.

It is absolutely necessary that the Saints should receive the further ordinances of the house of God before this short existence shall come to a close, that they may be prepared and fully able to pass all the sentinels leading into the celestial kingdom and into the presence of God. Our brethren and sisters who are scattered abroad must be gathered to be tried, and then to be blessed with a preparation for a glorious reward. This people will be tried more or less while they remain in the flesh; they may even be called as Abraham of old was to offer up that which is the most dear to them of all earthly objects for the Gospel's sake. Some have already forsaken all and followed

Christ; they have left their children, their husbands, their wives, their brothers and sisters and dear friends, some hoping again to see them, and many never expecting to see them again in this life. We shall be tried in all things, and the Lord is now disposed to try us by calling upon us to be of one heart and of one mind, to submit to be guided and dictated, governed and controlled by Him through the constituted authorities of His kingdom. We should not consider this a trial above what we can bear.

Is the wife tried because her husband wishes to dictate her and give her good and wholesome advice? Is somebody tried because his bishop wishes to control him for his good? Your bishop is very likely doing the best he can to advise the members of his ward for their best good. Does he advise you to do wrong? All the members of that ward who are full of faith and the power of God will be of one heart and mind with their bishop, and will go with him in all things, and while union continues in the Lord, He will cause every move they make to culminate for the greatest good to that people and the cause of truth. If a bishop counsels the people of his ward to swear shall they swear? No. If he counsels them to steal shall they steal? No. If he counsels them to lie and bear false witness shall they do these wrongs? No. If he teaches them to break the Sabbath shall they break the Sabbath? No. If a bishop or any other officer in this Church shall counsel the people to violate any of the laws of God, and to sustain and build up the kingdoms of this world, I will justify them, and the Lord will justify them in refusing to obey that counsel. But if they counsel you to do right, which they do, take their counsel. Instead of supporting antichrist we have agreed to give our time, our talent, our substance, our all, for the building up of the kingdom of God.

Do right, and you will be tried all you wish to bear, and if you overcome, being made perfect through suffering, your reward will be eternal life in the kingdom of God. Do wrong, and continue in doing wrong, and you will have trials more than you can bear, and be damned at last. When we receive chastisement let us not be discouraged, but be more faithful, enduring temptation, hardship, and perplexity, trusting in God, and walking in the light of His countenance day by day and hour by hour. By pursuing this course our life will be a cheerful and happy one even in the midst of severe trials. We have now some little trial to endure, but not much. We are part of a great nation; it has been one of the happiest and best nations that has ever existed with regard to liberty, the greatness of its institutions, and the land which it occupies. The Lord says—Let my servants and handmaidens be sealed, and let their children be sealed. This great and happy government under which we have lived so long says we shall not perform the ordinance of sealing. This may be a small trial to us for the moment. We shall see who will conquer—whether God will have His way in making manifest His purposes and having them fulfilled, or whether the wicked will have their way. They have had it, and have succeeded many times in overcoming the Saints and destroying them to that degree, causing them to apostatize, and putting them to death, that the Priesthood was taken from the children of men; but this is the last dispensation, and we shall see whether they succeed in this kind of proceeding now as they have formerly done.

The Lord has revealed His will for His servants to take more wives than one. Our government says that a man shall not have but one wife, though he may have as many mistresses as he pleases; he may ruin and destroy as many of the daughters of Eve as he pleases; but he is forbidden to acknowledge but one as his wife. The government says you shall only have one wife; the Lord says take unto yourselves wives; and Saints obey the Lord, and we shall see who will come off victorious. The ordinance of sealing must be performed here man to man, and woman to man, and children to parents, etc., until the chain of generation is made perfect in the sealing ordinances back to father Adam; hence, we have been commanded to gather ourselves together, to come out from Babylon, and sanctify ourselves, and build up the Zion of our God, by building cities and temples, redeeming countries from the solitude of nature, until the earth is sanctified and prepared for the residence of God and angels.

Our enemies say we shall not do this, and here will be a trial, as it has been for a long time past. One of the first objections that was urged against Joseph Smith was that he was a money digger; and now the digging of gold is considered an honorable and praiseworthy employment. They are hunting for gold all over the country, doing the very thing which they condemned in him. The next fault they found with Joseph and the Saints was that they were stirring up the slaves to rebellion against their masters; and this was published abroad. Have they not done, and are they not now doing, the very thing for which they falsely blamed the Saints? The next accusation was that the Saints took more wives than one. Whether they will make one grand sweep of it in the future, and all conclude to

take more wives, I cannot say. I wish they might; I do not, however, wish this for any private benefit it will be to me or to God's people, but that they may make women honorable wives whom they now destroy, and conduct themselves more like human beings who bear the image of God than they now do before Him. It is for their own sakes that I wish this, and for the sake of the unfortunate females whom they outrage. I would like you to behold your little darling sisters and daughters here throwing themselves in the way of the Gentiles. Any Mormon brother or father who can suffer this to go on without reproof or advice must be ignorant of the consequences. The Lord says to the sons of Israel, take the daughters of Israel to wife, and make them honorable, and let them multiply and replenish the earth, and fill up the measure of their creation, that their names may be had in honorable remembrance to the latest generation on earth and in eternity. Supposing that the Latter-day Saints had possessed the city of New York for the last twenty years, as they have these valleys of Utah, and the young women of that city from sixteen years of age to twenty-one had been in the hands of Mormon Elders as wives, how many would have now been living and honorable mothers of a bright, intelligent, and vigorous race of men and women, that have met an untimely grave, husbandless, childless, friendless, disgraced, and forgotten? Under such circumstances there would have been now living in honor, according to moderate calculation, from two to four hundred thousand females, whose filthy and corrupted remains are now mingling with the dust of that sinful city.

This is a waste of life. Who will be answerable to God in the day of judgment for such acts? The voice of the Lord is gather out from her, my people, that ye partake not of her sins nor of her plagues, and build temples to My name, and seal up My sons and daughters to eternal life, to prepare them for My coming, for "the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion; and also the Lord shall have power over His Saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon Idumea, or the world." For, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say—"Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Devouring flames have already taken hold of the dry tree, and the hand of God in judgment is beginning to be felt by this nation, and soon will be upon all nations under heaven. Who will acknowledge the hand of God in the sufferings, travails, and deliverance of this people from the hands of their persecutors, and His handiwork in sustaining them in the wilderness, through sorrow, affliction, poverty, and wretchedness? All the faithful Saints will do it; but how few outsiders, as we call them, will stop to pray to God in the name of Jesus to know if this work is true; they pass it by as a thing of nought, as unworthy of their attention; they are so absorbed in the affairs of this world that the preparation for the next scarcely enters into their thoughts, and many of this class are honorable men.

I rejoice when I contemplate the work of the last days, and survey the Saints in their possessions in Utah. I have but one text which I desire to keep before them—it is to forsake their sins and become united as one man in the purpose of all their temporal acts, that their labors may all center in the building up and sustaining of God's kingdom instead of building up the kingdoms of this world.

For their consolation I will say to my brethren and sisters that we have had a very happy time on our short visit in the south, and I think I never experienced greater peace, sweeter peace, than I have done on our short visit to Provo a week ago. We left the city a week ago last Friday, and returned again to this city on the Tuesday following. We had a most excellent meeting at American Fork, and everybody and everything seemed to cry peace on earth and good will to men. When we returned home we found rumors that there had been difficulty in Provo, and some of the brethren had been killed. Br. Heber C. Kimball, in conversing upon this subject in the School of the Prophets, remarked that the brethren voted that we should go to Provo and that the angels of the Lord should accompany us, but he did not expect that they would all go with us and leave you without any. There are good Saints in Provo, and they want to be better Saints; they may have committed errors, but when you arrive at the truth of the matter, they wish to be Saints. We are all called to be Saints, to be filled with the purity of God, and with the power of the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus—the spirit of revelation—we are called from darkness into light, from error to truth, from the power of Satan to the living God, we are called from the kingdoms of darkness to the kingdom of God and light, and, by and by, we shall be chosen because we are worthy, and it will be said to us: "You have lived the life of a Saint, now you are chosen to be an heir of the celestial kingdom of our Father and God." Let us not forget, my

brethren and sisters, the gathering of the Saints for sanctification and preparation to inherit all things. Let us live closer to our duty, that we may be sanctified and be prepared to dwell together in the celestial kingdom, which may God grant. Amen.