

Scope of the Gospel—Different Degrees of Glory—Free Agency—“Liberty” With a Vengeance—Trials Necessary—Former and Latter Trials—The Spirit of Gathering Illustrated—Judgments Predicted—Zion Already Attracting Attention—Encouragement for the Citizens of Deseret—Blessings Invoked

Discourse by President John Taylor, delivered in the Bowery, Deseret, Monday, June 18, 1883.

I am pleased, as I said last night, to meet with you. I am pleased to talk about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and also about other matters that some think are not so directly associated with the kingdom of God, and yet they are; for all things temporal and all things spiritual, all things that are associated with our bodies and with our spirits, everything that is calculated to promote our happiness and well-being on the earth and to procure for us an exaltation in the kingdom of heaven, are things that are associated with the Gospel and that belong to us as Latter-day Saints. The God who is the Father of our spirits is He that organized our bodies. The God that made the heavens is He that made the earth, and we are dependent upon Him for every blessing that we enjoy. We had very little to do with our coming here, and now that we find ourselves here, we are incapable of sustaining ourselves. We must be sustained of God. There is not one among you here today could leave this place unless God gave you power. We hardly realize these things. In God we live; in Him we move and from Him we have our being. And He has gathered us together, for the purpose of instructing us and preparing us to do a work that He designs to accomplish in the interests of the living and of the dead, in the interests of the whole human family, that exist, or that ever have existed upon the face of the earth. He has gathered us here under the influence and auspices of the Gospel, that we might, under His tuition and guidance, and under the influence of the Holy Priesthood that exists in the heavens and on the earth, bring to pass all things that have been spoken by the holy Prophets since the world was. God is interested in the whole of the human family. He cannot take them all into the celestial kingdom, for they are not all prepared to go there, and you cannot prepare them and He cannot, because they have to be governed by certain laws and certain principles and certain feelings, and if they are not governed by these and will not be governed by a celestial law, they are not prepared for a celestial glory. There are some that may be governed by a terrestrial law, and may be prepared for a terrestrial glory, but not for a celestial glory. Still, they are God's children, and He is doing the best by them He can. Many of you here that have sons and daughters, do the best by them you can. Some of them you cannot do well by, because they will not do right. Now, the Lord had more sons than one. Lucifer rebelled. Adam had more sons than one, and Lucifer came down and operated upon one of them, and Adam could not help himself. He had another son who feared God, and was willing to be guided by the laws of God. Because of this, Cain killed his brother, the same as a great many would like to kill us under the same influence and by the same spirit. Now, as I have said, Adam could not help the action of his son. Cain yielded obedience to the spirit of the wicked one, and he became a man that fostered every kind of evil. He loved Satan more than he loved God. He loved the works of darkness more than he loved the light, and that spirit has existed in the world through all the ages that are past. It existed before the flood and it came down through the flood. It existed among the ancient inhabitants of this continent. It existed among the sons of Lehi. And if you read the Book of Mormon you will find the same principles—one party in favor of right, the other in favor of wrong; the one in favor of obedience to the laws of God, and the other in opposition to the laws of God. The Scriptures say that it must needs be that there be an opposition in all things; and Jesus said it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to them by whom they come. This principle of opposition was manifested in the heavens. Satan was a personage there who had peculiar ideas, very singular ideas. He wanted to do the same as many men want to do today—to take away the free agency of man. Some men would like to take away our free agency and tell us how we must worship and what we must worship. Because Satan wanted to deprive man of his free agency, he was cast out of heaven and he came to the earth to teach that principle, and it has prevailed more or less in every age and under every government. We sometimes hear it said that we are living under the most liberal government there is on the earth. I sometimes say, God save the mark! God save the mark for that liberality that will not allow men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, that will enact laws to prevent men *marrying* wives, while men having many mistresses are sustained. The men who comply with the laws of God are

prohibited from voting, while the licentious, the adulterer, the whoremonger, the brothel keeper, the pimp, the procuress and the prostitute have this privilege, and are protected by law and sustained by lawgivers; while they profess to be shocked at our supposed immorality they foster and encourage by their enactments every kind of licentiousness and crime. Such principles as these are from beneath and not from God, no matter under what government they exist. We do not want to proscribe any man in his religious faith. It is none of our business. God did not interfere with Cain. He put a mark upon him. He deprived him of blessings and exaltations. He could not have him associate with the Gods, for He had cast Satan out of heaven who was Cain's instructor: Cain was the son of Adam. He listened to the teachings of Satan, and he became what is called the great "Master Mahan," full of wickedness and full of evil. He killed his brother for two reasons: one was that he did not like his religion, and another was that he wanted his property, the same reasons that influence people against us; and then there is not much love lost between us, for we do not admire their religion. But we do not want their property, their houses and their lands, nor anything that they have, only as we obtain such blessings properly, consistently, honorably and justly, and that is the kind of feeling we ought to have.

But why is it that these things exist? There is a place that some of us hope to inherit, which is called the Celestial Kingdom of God. There is a certain class of people who will obtain a seat in that kingdom, and there are millions and millions who will not. Jesus in speaking on this subject said: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there are that find it." Now, then, in reference to celestial glory, it is necessary that men should be tried here upon the earth, for men upon other earths have been tried as we are being tried. And it was necessary, too, strange as it may appear, that Jesus should be tried. Yes, for it is written, "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 suffering." What! make Him perfect through suffering? Yes. What! had He to be tempted of the devil? Yes. Was He not tempted of the devil in the wilderness? Yes. Did not the devil come and offer Him all kinds of inducements as he does to us? Yes. And did Jesus maintain his integrity? He did. There is a scene that John the Revelator saw upon a certain occasion. He was caught away in the Spirit and he saw an innumerable throng. They were clad in white raiment, and they sang a new song. And he was led to inquire: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And he was answered: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night." Well, how did the world treat such people? It generally treated them very scornfully. Paul tells us, that by faith Moses endured, as seeing him who is invisible; by faith women received their dead raised to life again; by faith men wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Now, why was it that men that were aiming at an exaltation among the Gods should be so persecuted and cast out by men? For instance I might mention a few of them. I might refer to Job and the kind of trials he passed through; I might talk about Abraham and the trials he was called upon to pass through; I might mention Moses and the trials he had to endure; I might bring to your minds many other prominent men of God, but I will come to Elijah, who was a man that feared God and wrought righteousness. The people had departed from the Lord and trampled under foot His precepts, etc. So much so that Elijah was obliged to flee and hide himself in a cave away from the face of man. While in the cave the word of the Lord, "a still, small voice"—came to him saying, "What doest thou here Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Well, it was a critical position to be in, but it was just as critical for many others who lived in ancient times. And this spirit of murder and persecution still exists. It was exhibited in the mobbing and drivings of our people from Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and other places, in the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in Carthage jail, more recently in the assassination of Elder Joseph Standing, and again only a few days ago in an attempt to murder Brother John T. Alexander, one of our Elders in Georgia, the particulars of which you have doubtless read in the newspapers. In the face of such diabolical outrages as these, there is not much room to boast about our liberties. But I merely refer to these things to show that the spirit that actuated men in former times is at work today; irrespective of times, forms of government, places or circumstances.

Nevertheless, as I have said, it is necessary that we pass through certain ordeals, and that we be tried. But why is it that we should be tried? There is just the same necessity for it now that there was in former times. I heard the Prophet Joseph say, in speaking to the Twelve on one occasion: "You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God, and (said he) God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God." Some people have wondered why so many of the Twelve fell away. God tries people according to the position they occupy. Joseph Smith never had many months of peace after he received the truth, and finally he was murdered in Carthage jail. I was with him on that occasion, and therefore know a little about it. And as I told this young man whose life had been attempted in Georgia; said I, "Brother Alexander, they shot at you and didn't hit you, but when they shot at me they hit me; so that you got off a little easier than I did." But all these personal things amount to but very little. It is the crowns, principalities, the powers, the thrones, the dominions, and the associations with the Gods that we are after, and we are here to prepare ourselves for these things. We are after eternal exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom of God. And we want to feel that this is the main object of existence, that this is why we were born, and that God has revealed Himself from the heavens, restored the Holy Priesthood and gathered us together in order that we might form a nucleus through whom He could communicate His will; through whom He could accomplish His work upon the earth and introduce the Gospel of the Son of God to the nations of the earth and gather together His elect from the four quarters of the globe; through whom He could introduce upon the earth the principles that exist in the heavens, that we might be taught to do the will of God on the earth as it is done in the heavens, that we might be a pure people, a virtuous people, a holy people, free from the vices and corruptions of the world, and that we might learn the laws of light, truth and intelligence from the fountain of all intelligence, for we are told the glory of God is intelligence. This is why we have been gathered together. It is rather a singular thing to see a host of people gathering here from all the nations of the earth. You cannot prevent people from gathering here. They are brought under the influence of the Gospel and they cannot help themselves. They have to come.

Now, I will here relate a circumstance associated with the gathering, that took place in Liverpool, I suppose, about 43 years ago. We had just been driven out of the State of Missouri, and were in the midst of very hard times. You sometimes think you have hard times now. Why, you do not know anything about it. They tell us they persecute us for polygamy now. What did they persecute us for when we had no polygamy? Yet we were driven from our homes, and many of our people—some of them old revolutionary soldiers—were shot down like dogs in many instances. We were driven from pillar to post, from one place to another, robbed, pillaged and despoiled of everything we had. There are many of the brethren and sisters here, I presume, who are acquainted with these things.

Well, the Twelve were told to go to the Far West, some 200 miles distant from Quincy, Illinois, where many of the Saints were then staying. We did not have railroads then whereby we could travel as we do now. We had to go with our teams, and we had to go among a people that would kill everyone of us as quick as they would rattlesnakes. We were told to go and lay the foundation stone of the Temple, and thus fulfill the revelation that had been given on the subject. Arrived at the spot we prayed and sang hymns. We had with us a man to lay the foundation stone, the man that was appointed, by revelation for that work—Alpheus Cutler, Bishop A. A. Kimball's grandfather. The stone was duly laid according to the order which was designed, after which—right upon the foundation stone—Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith were ordained into the Quorum of the Twelve, and Norman Shearer and Darwin Chase into the Seventies. Chase apostatized and was afterwards with the soldiers under Col. Connor's command who had a fight with the Indians on Bear River a number of years ago, where he was mortally wounded. Many people declared that this revelation would never be fulfilled. But it was fulfilled; and we took our departure for Europe.

Now, it was not a nice thing, after being pillaged, robbed and driven from our homes to leave our families and proceed on a mission to Europe. But the Twelve had to do it, and they did do it. There were two that did not go—John E. Page and William Smith, and both of them apostatized. The wrench that the Prophet Joseph spake about was too much for them. But the rest went. They felt it was an honor to go on that mission even under such unpropitious circumstances.

The Prophet Joseph told us just before we left that we must not preach the gathering to the people, because at that time there was no place to gather to. "Preach the first principles of the Gospel," said he, "but do not say any thing about the gathering." We did as he directed us. The principle of gathering was not preached; but a great many came into the Church—a great many thousands were baptized. Myself and an uncle of Brother Joseph F. Smith—that is, his mother's brother—ministered in Liverpool; we raised up a Church there; I remember on one occasion a certain sister came to me and said: "Elder Taylor, I have had a singular dream, and I do not know what it means." We had not preached, as I have said, the principle of gathering, because Joseph told us not to preach it. "What is the nature of the dream?" I enquired. "I thought," said she, "there were a number of Saints standing on the pier head, (the place where the vessels start from), and they seemed as if they were bound for somewhere. They said they were going to Zion, and they sang the songs of Zion; and you were with them. Now, can you interpret the dream for me? "I guess I could," said I, "but let it alone for the present." We could not prevent people from being impressed in this way, we could not help the Lord giving them dreams, neither could Joseph Smith. It was the privilege of the Saints to have revelation for themselves. John the Baptist had appeared to Joseph Smith and conferred upon him the Aaronic Priesthood, and he conferred it upon others. Peter, James and John came and conferred upon him the Melchizedek Priesthood. Then Moses, among others, appeared to him, and bestowed upon him the keys of the gathering, whereby Israel should be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, including also the ten tribes. Joseph had conferred this upon the Apostles, and the Apostles had conferred it upon others, and when they laid their hands upon the people and told them to receive the Holy Ghost they received it. Joseph Smith might tell us it was not wisdom to preach the principle of gathering; but we could not help the Lord revealing that principle through the medium of the Holy Ghost, which was to teach us all things. The Holy Ghost had operated upon this woman—and upon many others at the same time—in this way. Afterwards we received a letter from Brother Joseph stating that we might teach the principle and instruct the people to gather to Nauvoo. Now I could interpret the dream. I could have done so before had I not been prohibited. What, then, is it that makes people desire to come here? Here are people from Germany, Scandinavia, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and from different parts of the United States—what in the name of common sense made you desire to gather here? Why, men that held the Priesthood of the Son of God had, among other things, been instructed to teach this principle, that it was a gathering dispensation, the keys of which had been conferred upon Joseph Smith, he in turn had conferred the power upon others, and the Elders went forth and preached this Gospel with the power associated therewith. That is the great secret why people gather here. We have come here in order that we may fulfill the will of God, and the word of God, and the law of God. We have come out of Babylon. We have come out of confusion. There is confusion in the world everywhere; confusion amongst religionists, politicians, infidels; and there is no one anywhere, outside of this Church to say, "thus saith the Lord." Men do not know how to approach God, and none are willing to listen to His teachings but the Latter-day Saints, and it is sometimes hard work for them to do it. Men teach their own theories, ideas and opinions, and hence confusion and disorder prevail in the world. Hence, in order that God may have a people who will carry out His designs and accomplish His purposes, He has introduced the Gospel, and under its influence people have been gathered together to this land, as we see them here today, and as they are to be seen throughout the length and breadth of this Territory. The world, as I have said, is full of confusion, and there will be worse confusion by and by. We had a great war upon this continent some years ago; but there will yet be wars pass through these United States, and through other nations, until it will be mournful to hear the report of the bloodshed, the sorrow and trouble that will be caused thereby, as also by pestilence, famine and earthquake, and the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds, and storms and tempests, etc., etc. We have been gathered together from among the nations of the earth in order that God might have a people who would obey His law; who had been baptized into one baptism; who had all been partakers of the same spirit, and who had, as I said before, learned to approach the Lord in the proper way; for there is a medium opened out whereby men can approach God and learn His mind and will.

Did God place in the Church in former times Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists for the perfecting of the Saints, for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ? He has in these last days done the same thing, only more perfectly, because the dispensation with which we are associated is "the dispensation of the fullness of times." It is a dispensation that embraces all other times.

What, then, have we to do? To preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth. What else? To gather the people

together, all those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. They were to come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south. They were to be gathered one of a city and two of a family, and brought to Zion that they might be taught and instructed in the principles of eternal life. And I want to say that God having gathered us together, and we having entered into a covenant with Him, He expects us to obey His law, and be governed by the principles He has revealed. We are here to build up the Church of God, the Zion of God, and the kingdom of God, and to be on hand to do whatever God requires—first to purge ourselves from all iniquity, from covetousness and evil of every kind: to forsake sin of every sort, cultivate the Spirit of God, and help to build up His kingdom; to beautify Zion and have pleasant habitations, and pleasant gardens and orchards, until Zion shall be the most beautiful place there is on the earth. Already Zion is attracting the attention of the people of the world. I have all kinds of people calling on me—Lords, Admirals, Senators, Members of the House of Representatives, Members of the Parliament of England, of the Reichstag of Germany, and the Chamber of Deputies of France—all classes come and they say, “You have a most beautiful place here!” Why, yes. And by and by the kings of the earth will come to gaze upon the glory of Zion, and we are here to build it up under the instruction of God our Heavenly Father. Zion shall yet become the praise and the glory of the whole earth, and, as I have said, kings and princes shall come to gaze upon her glory, and we shall be able to teach their senators wisdom, and their philosophers intelligence; for we shall be all taught of God. God has called upon us to do this work, and He expects us to do it. We must preach the Gospel, and we will preach it; and if we have to meet with opposition and with death staring us in the face, all right. We are for God and His kingdom, and for the principles of truth and righteousness. We need not trouble ourselves about the outside, for God will take care of them and of us. He will say to the nations of the earth—to this nation and to other nations—as was said to the waves of the mighty ocean: “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

I will tell you a feeling I had some years ago. I was over at Fillmore. From there you can see right on to this desert. And I thought—as I looked across this immense valley—if there was only water there, what a magnificent country that would make! I remember I thought thousands and tens of thousands could inhabit that land if it only had water. I did not then know the position of things. I have now had an opportunity of visiting Deseret and looking at the river, and am pleased to find you have such an abundant supply of water. An immense population could be sustained with the amount you have. I suppose the river shows its best now; the water is high; but if that water could be properly manipulated, it does seem to me—provided you can conquer the mineral in the soil—that a vast amount of land can be put under cultivation and an immense population sustained. I am told that you are troubled with saleratus in the land, but I am also informed that you are learning to conquer that by flooding the land instead of making furrows for irrigation. Already, in some places, where they have been troubled with saleratus they have the richest and most productive soils. Those lands which were not too much saturated with the mineral are in many instances the most fertile that we have in the Territory. You certainly have a fair opportunity for development; having a large area of land, which I am told is productive, and with the proper application of the water, and a concentration of effort I can see no reason why this cannot be made a very flourishing, beautiful and populous place.

President Taylor next proceeded to counsel the Saints in regard to sundry local affairs. He appreciated the difficulties they had had to encounter in that region owing to the nature of the soil and the giving way of the dam on one or two occasions. He complimented them, however, on what they had been able to accomplish in spite of all difficulties, and counseled them to persevere, promising that their efforts to subdue and conquer the land would be blessed of the Lord. He also counseled them to come closer together. At present, it appeared to him, they were scattered over too much ground. It would be better to get together and begin building a nice little town on each side of the river (if that suited them), than to be scattered as they are now. In this way the place could be made attractive. Good buildings of all kinds could be erected. Trees could be planted in the streets. Gardens and orchards could also be planted in the various lots. And in this manner Deseret might be made a very desirable place.

He concluded as follows:

God bless you. God bless your lands, that they may be fruitful and that the labors of your hands may be blessed;

and God bless the waters, that they may be nourishing and strengthening to your lands, and be pleasant to use for drinking and for culinary purposes; and God bless your gardens and your orchards—that is, when you get them—that fruitfulness may rest upon them; and God bless the President of your Stake and his counselors, and Brother Lyman and his brethren of the Twelve who labor among you from time to time; and God bless your Bishop here, and all the Bishops of this Stake and their counselors, that the Spirit of God may rest upon them, the spirit of truth and intelligence, to enable them to carry out all things they desire in righteousness, that this land may be blessed of the Lord; and God bless your wives and your children and all the people, that salvation may flow unto them, and that they may walk in the paths of life; I ask my heavenly Father to seal upon you these blessings, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.