

Riches—Hurry—Fashion—Helping The Poor—Mysteries

Discourse by President Brigham Young, delivered in the Tabernacle, Ogden City, Sunday Afternoon, May 26th, 1872.

I am happy for the privilege of standing before this congregation and speaking to them. I am thankful to see the spirit that is manifested by the people to inquire after the truth, to learn the way of life. I rejoice to see the disposition manifested by the Latter-day Saints to attend places of worship. But this is a small part of our faith. I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints that the Gospel of life and salvation is the best institution that we, as mortal beings, can invest in. Go into the financial circles of the world, and you will find men gather and project their plans for business, for railroads, for ship companies, for merchandising, and various other pursuits. You will see those engaged in these companies associate together, confer with each other, lay their plans before each other, investigate them, scan every branch, and every part and particle of their business. We are engaged in a higher-toned branch of business than any merchants or railroad men, or any institution of an earthly nature, and it is pleasing to see the Latter-day Saints meet together to talk over this matter, and to learn the course they should pursue to gain the object of their pursuit. If an inquiry arises in any of your minds with regard to this, I will answer it by saying that we are in pursuit of all there is before us—life, light, wealth, intelligence, all that can be possessed on the earth by mortal man, and then in a higher state, where there will be a more perfect development of the smattering of knowledge than we received here, and all that can be enjoyed by intelligent beings in the celestial kingdoms of our God. Is this our object? Certainly it is. We are not in the same attitude that the people were a few thousand years ago—they were depending on the Prophet or Prophets, or on having immediate revelation for themselves to know the will of the Lord, without the record of their predecessors, while we have the records of those who have lived before us, also the testimony of the Holy Spirit; and, to the satisfaction of all who desire a testimony, we can turn to this book and read that which we believe, learn the object of our pursuit, the end that we expect to accomplish—the end of the race as far as mortality is concerned—and the fullness of the glory that is beyond this vale of tears; consequently we have the advantage of those who lived before us. We are in pursuit of knowledge; and when you meet together, if you have a word of prophecy, a dream, a vision, or a word of wisdom, impart the same to the people.

Let me ask you, my brethren and sisters, Do you want wealth? If you do, do not be in a hurry. Do you want the riches pertaining to this world? Yes, we acknowledge we do. Then, be calm, contented, composed; keep your pulses correct, do not let them get up to a hundred and twenty, but keep them as nigh as you can, ranging from seventy to seventy-six; and when there is an appointment for a meeting be sure to attend that meeting. If there is to be a twodays' meeting in Ogden, come to it; spend the time here and learn what is going on. Watch closely, hear every word that is spoken, let every heart be lifted to God for wisdom, and know and understand every word of prophecy, every revelation that may be given, every counsel that may be presented to the people, that you may be able to weigh, measure, comprehend and decide between that which is of God and that which is not of God. Refuse the evil, learn wisdom, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. If there is a meeting appointed for the Seventies, let them come together, and let no man say "I am in a hurry in my work, and have not time to attend." Every man that belongs to these quorums should be on hand at the time appointed, and not say, "I will work to the last minute, before I start for the meeting." Take time, prepare yourselves, be at the place of gathering promptly, to the minute, that you may hear the first word, then you will hear every word that is spoken and every counsel that is given.

If there is a Bishop's meeting, let every Bishop, Priest, Teacher and Deacon attend, and no man among them say, "I must go and water my grain," "cut my hay," or "gather my harvest;" but attend the meeting, sit until it is out and hear every word. If you have to speak, speak; if you are to hear only, hear every word that is said. If there is a prayer meeting appointed, go to that prayer meeting; go to the ward meetings, attend every meeting that is appointed. I am telling you this, so that you can get rich.

I will say to the Latter-day Saints, there cannot that community be found on the face of the whole earth that, as a community, is as well off as we are here in these mountains. There are more women and children, with their

husbands and fathers, sleep under their own roof in the midst of the Latter-day Saints than in any other community on the face of this earth, in civilization; and less women and children go without food and clothing than in any other community in Christendom. Looking around among the Latter-day Saints I will ask, How many are there who have been taken from cellars, from pits under ground, or from their little rooms, where one pound, or five dollars, would buy everything they possessed on the face of the earth, and brought to this country and taught how to plant their potatoes, beans, beets, carrots, how to raise their cucumbers and squashes, their corn and their wheat, how to milk a cow; feed a calf, take care of the chickens; how to build a pigpen and put a pig in it; to take the offals of the house and give to the pig, and how to raise a calf or a colt, experience they never had before in their lives? Yet they have learned this economy, and some of them, I am sorry to say, lift their heel against the Almighty and his anointed. I am happy to say, however, that the large percentage of those who have been thus rescued from poverty, and placed in circumstances of comfort and independence, are still in the faith. How many are there here today who never owned a chicken or a pig, and could not keep a cat because they had nothing to feed one on, who now ride in their wagons, have their carriages, horses, fine harness, fine stock of cows, and have butter, milk, cheese and wool at their command, and granaries full of wheat, and their barns, if they have them, full of hay? Do not the facts which present themselves before us, prove that this very desirable change has taken place in the circumstances of many? Then come to meeting. Appoint your meetings, Elders, and call the Saints together and instruct them in the things of the kingdom of God. We have missionaries that are traveling through our settlements, and no people need preaching more than the Latter-day Saints. They know the way, but they are forgetful, and they want somebody or other to come along and holloa to them, and say, comparatively, "I will warm your ears, my lady;" "Brother, I will warm your ears." "Wake up!" "What are you doing? Are you after this mine? Are you after that job? Are you after that piece of work? Did you pray in your family this morning?" "No." "Why?" "I was in too much of a hurry." Stop! Wait! When you get up in the morning, before you suffer yourselves to eat one mouthful of food, call your wives and children together, bow down before the Lord, ask him to forgive your sins, and protect you through the day, to preserve you from temptation and all evil, to guide your steps aright, that you may do something that day that shall be beneficial to the kingdom of God on the earth. Have you time to do this? Elders, sisters, have you time to pray? This is the counsel I have for the Latter-day Saints today. Stop, do not be in a hurry. I do not know that I could find a man in our community but what wishes wealth, would like to have everything in his possession that would conduce to his comfort and convenience. Do you know how to get it? "Well," replies one, "if I do not, I wish I did; but I do not seem to be exactly fortunate—fortune is somewhat against me." I will tell you the reason of this—you are in too much of a hurry; you do not go to meeting enough, you do not pray enough, you do not read the Scriptures enough, you do not meditate enough, you are all the time on the wing, and in such a hurry that you do not know what to do first. This is not the way to get rich. I merely use the term "rich" to lead the mind along, until we obtain eternal riches in the celestial kingdom of God. Here we wish for riches in a comparative sense, we wish for the comforts of life. If we desire them let us take a course to get them. Let me reduce this to a simple saying—one of the most simple and homely that can be used—"Keep your dish right side up," so that when the shower of porridge does come, you can catch your dish full.

I am not going into the details, to instruct my brethren particularly how to get wealth; but in the first place, do not be in a hurry. I make that as a general remark. Do you want your house neat and clean? Do you want to keep your children neat and clean? Do you wish to see every portion of your dwelling, from the cellar to the garret, from the woodhouse to the parlor, neat and clean? Certainly, every sister wishes this; then do not be in a hurry. I shall tell you a little circumstance that occurred some eighteen years ago, when we had been on a visit to the Indians. We had reached Farmington, on our way home, and stopped at a certain house. I think there were twelve of us in company. Our teams were taken care of. When I alighted from my carriage I looked at my watch and we went in, sat down, and chatted with the master of the house, while his wife prepared dinner for us. I noticed this lady. She whispered to a little girl to take her baby out of doors and amuse it; then, when her baby was out of the way, she moved about without the least noise—not a word was heard from her. She brought everything she needed from the buttery and cellar to the kitchen where she spread her table, and she mixed and baked her bread, cooked her fruit and meat, and from the time we alighted from the carriage until she came and whispered in the ear of her husband, "Dinner is ready," it was just fifty-five minutes. Said I to myself, "There is a housekeeper." I could not help but see this; every time she walked back and forth she accomplished a certain amount of business. I saw this

and was gratified. Now, sisters, you may do likewise, if you are not in too big a hurry. Instead of shouting, "Sally, where's the dishcloth?" "Susan, where's the broom?" or, "Nancy, have you seen the holder? I want the holder," be calm and composed; you are in too much of a hurry. Hold on, be easy, never let your nervous system rise above your judgment and the collection of your thoughts, and have a place for everything, and everything in its place. Let your judgment be master, and when you start to do a thing you will know exactly what you want to do. I have seen hundreds of ladies fly to the cupboard, and then say, "Well, now, I declare I don't know what I came for." They were in too much of a hurry. It is just so with men. I see them through the world, I have watched their progress for many years, and I see that many of them are too much in a hurry. If we are not in too much of a hurry we can attend these twodays' meetings, and talk to each other. Are you full of faith? You can tell whether I am or not by looking at me. You can tell whether the brethren who have been speaking to you are full of faith in the Gospel by the look of their countenances. You can see this if there is not a word spoken; we can tell by our feelings when we look at a congregation whether they have faith or not. I see there is a great amount of faith in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, and I wish there was a little more patience and obedience. Perhaps I have said enough with regard to these meetings. Elders, appoint your meetings, and invite the people to come to them. I want now to go to other matters.

I will tell you, my brethren, my own feelings with regard to the conduct of the Latter-day Saints. In the first place I will say that we are governed and controlled too much by the feelings and fashions of the world. We lust after the leeks and onions; we yield ourselves to the spirit of the world too much. You will excuse me, for I must say a few words with regard to this. It is true we are bound, and it seems that men's bounds are set by each other, more or less. If I, for instance, were to have a coat made to suit my own taste, I do not know any of my family and perhaps my friends, and especially the tailors, merchants and business men, but what would say, "You are an oddity," and they would think, "You are not fit for society, because you do not fashion and pattern after others." I commence here, you know, at myself. Well, I will say that I am bound, I cannot accomplish my own wishes in these things altogether. Perhaps others cannot. I go to a tailor and say, "I have a piece of cloth, and I want you to make me a coat." He cuts that coat to suit himself. I do not see a fashion that suits me. What use or comeliness is there in putting the legs of the pantaloons on my coat?" Well, perhaps the tailor will be a little moderate, and will cut it down considerably; but if I were my own tailor I certainly should leave off—what shall we call them? "Bustles," "Grecian Bends," or what shall we call them? Though these coat sleeves are not exactly like the sleeves of the frocks or dresses worn by the ladies forty or fifty years ago, which they used to call mutton-legged sleeves, shaped just like the ham of a mutton. I recollect there used to be considerable said about them. Sometimes a paper would come out and tell of the wreck of a ship, on board of which were a hundred and fifty passengers; but, they would say, "Thanks be to kind Providence, the ladies took all the male passengers into the sleeves of their dresses, and went ashore." Such narrations as these, you know, were only meant as a satire upon the fashions of the day. Now I am coming right to the point, and I wish to say to some of my sisters, not to all, that if I were my own tailor I should cut my own coat to suit myself. "What would be your fashion" says one? I will tell you. I have a coat here which you can see—if I were to take hold of a swillpail, this part of the skirt must drop in; and if I took hold of a milkpail I must take the coat around by the other end, and hold it, or else it is in the milk. I see no convenience or beauty in it. That which is convenient should be beautiful; and I want my coat cut so that when I lift a pail of water, or a milk or swill pail the skirts shall not fall into it; and so with the pockets, I would have them convenient. If I were a lady and had a piece of cloth to make me a dress, I would cut it so as to cover my person handsomely and neatly; and whether it was cut according to the fashion or not, custom would soon make it beautiful. I would not have eighteen or twenty yards to drag behind me, so that if I had to turn around I would have to pick up my dress and throw it after me, or, just as a cow does when she kicks over the milkpail, throw out one foot to kick the dress out of the way. That is not becoming, beautiful or convenient—all such fashions are inconvenient. Take that cloth and cut you a skirt that will be modest and neat, that does not drag in the dirt nor show your garters, but cut it so that it will clear the ground when you walk, when you are passing over the floor it will not drag everything on the floor, or in the street as you pass along. Put enough into the skirt to look well, and if we are to go into particulars, of course, we would have to say, we must use enough to cover the person. I do not expect mother Eve even did this. We could relate some little incidents of our past experience, that perhaps would not entertain the people, and still, perhaps, they might learn something from them. For instance, in some circles it has been fashionable for a lady to

wear, perhaps, twelve yards in the skirt of her dress, but when it came to the waist, I guess three-quarters of a yard would have been enough. I will relate a circumstance of which I heard, that took place in the metropolis of our country. A gentleman, a stranger, was invited to a grand dinner party there. The ladies of course were dressed in the height of fashion, their trails dragging behind them, and their—well, I suppose there was a band over the shoulder to the waist, but I do not recollect whether the gentleman said there was or not; but one gentleman present, who knew this gentleman was a stranger, said to him, with all the loveliness and elegance in his heart that one could imagine—“Is not this beautiful? Did you ever see the like of this?” “No sir,” said the party questioned, “never since I was weaned.” Well, all this, you know, is custom and fashion.

Now, I wish to say to my sisters, if you will be just a little more moderate, I should like it very much. Some of you, and especially the young sisters, may say, “Why, Brother Brigham, how do your daughters dress?” I will say, to my shame, many of them, and many do not. Then I must have a great many, for if I have many that do and many that do not, that will amount to a great many. But I guess I will let it go. Some of them are modest, delicate, neat, and look beautiful, and do not want twenty-four yards for a dress, nor seventeen. But this is uncomely, uncouth and ill-looking. What shall I call it? A camel’s back? You will say they go from the lady to the camel, and from the camel to the lady, and so on and so forth. They are called, I believe, “Grecian Bends,” but I do not think this term is exactly proper. Are they comely in appearance? No, they are not. Then I should like my daughters and my sisters to lay them aside. They should dress neatly and comely, and to suit themselves, but not to suit anybody else. We have the ability to tell what looks well, just as well as anybody else. We need not go to New York, London, or Paris to tell whether a coat looks well if it has a collar half an inch wide. Do you recollect when collars were not more than that? I do, and I recollect when they were about six or seven inches in width. Now we need not go to Paris to ask them whether a coat looks just right with a half-inch or a five-inch collar; we are the judges, and can decide that just as well as anybody else on the face of the earth. I would not swap my eyes with any living person for beauty and comeliness. I would rather trust to my eyes for beauty, excellency and comeliness in dress, than any other person’s eyes I know of. We should be our own judges. This, I say, to my sisters. Pause, reflect, look at the facts in the case as regards the folly and expense of fashion. Take the people of this city, and if you can form a correct estimate of the cost of the useless articles they wear. (I think I brought this subject up a year ago this summer, when here.) Just take these useless articles that do no good to the body of the persons who use them, and we would find that the means expended in their purchase would enable us to relieve many poor, suffering, distressed creatures abroad in the nations of the earth, and bring them here and put them in a situation in which they would be healthy, wealthy and happy. If we make a calculation on this subject we shall find that the waste of the Latter-day Saints is immense. There is a little town, south of here, the ladies of which—the F. R. Society, took it into their minds, along in the latter part of the winter, when we commenced calling upon the people to assist the emigration of the poor this summer, to give the eggs that their hens laid on Sunday. If they did not serve the Lord themselves they resolved to make their hens do it one-seventh of the time; and over a month ago I heard they had raised by this method about eight hundred dollars. Would they miss this? No, they could do without these eggs very well. Suppose the ladies of Ogden, who, on account of the many ribbons and needless articles they require, are unable to give anything else they have, should give one-seventh part of the services of their fowls to the bringing of the poor here! If Ogden had commenced this last January, thousands and thousands of dollars might have been raised by this time. Can you think of such a trifling thing as this? Suppose that every man who practices the disgusting habit, says to himself, “I will stop eating tobacco, and the means I spend in buying it I will give to emigrate the poor;” or, that, “what I pay out for liquor I will give to emigrate the poor;” and each of the ladies says, “What money I pay out for my tea or coffee” (and tobacco, liquor, tea and coffee are four very useless articles) “I will give to emigrate the poor,” how much could be saved, do you think, in this little community? Go to the stores, and ask them how much tobacco they have sold for twelve months past. Take these little retail stores, and then go into the retail departments of the wholesale stores, and we should find in this little town, I will ensure, that within the twelve months past, more than twelve, yes, twenty thousand dollars have been paid for tobacco, and I will say ten or twelve, and perhaps twenty thousand more for liquor; and then I will say twenty-five or thirty thousand more for tea or coffee, and I guess I could go up to forty thousand dollars, right here in Ogden. It is immense, the people have no idea of it, unless they go and look for themselves. Get the statistics, and then you will know with regard to the facts in the case.

Now suppose we say we will take the means we are spending for tea and coffee, liquor and tobacco, and useless articles in dressing, and we will give this to the poor; we would soon have a wealthy purse. Who has given anything this season? How many of you have given the first five dollars this season to bring the poor to Zion? If there is a man or woman in this house that has given anything for this purpose, do me the favor to hold up your hand? (One or two hands were held up.) I have given a very little, just a trifle. Sometimes I give a thousand, sometimes two thousand, mostly two thousand, and that is but a trifle. I suppose many would say, "Why, that is no more for you than five dollars for me." Well, perhaps it is not. I have nothing but what the Lord gave me, that is certain; and if he wanted the whole of it, for the gathering of the poor this year, he is just as welcome to it as I am to eat with you when you invite me to your houses. But one thing I can say of a truth, I have not been in a hurry, I have taken things moderately, kindly, calmly, and have "kept my dish right side up."

Well now, you who want to give a little to help the poor, please hand it over to Bishop Herrick. Bishop Herrick, will you please get the bishops together, and request them to ask every ward in this county to give something for the gathering of the poor, and see who will assist in this good work?

If we will not be in a hurry, and will pray in our families, pray in secret, attend our meetings, be patient and live so that the Spirit of the Lord will dwell within us, and witness to God every day of our lives, by faithful obedience to his requirements, that we are his, I will say we are bound to get the wealth of the world. We read in this good book (the Bible) that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Everything belongs to him, and he is going to give it to his Saints; and all our concern and care should be, to be sure that we are Saints. Then it is all right, it is by a deed of warranty—a warranty deed, and he will warrant and defend it, if we will serve him, and be satisfied with his providences, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but serving him with an undivided heart all the days of our lives. If it pleases him, and he wishes us to travel and preach, go to the right or to the left, to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south, to live here or live there, to do this or to do that, to have little or much and be perfectly satisfied and contented, his blessings will be secured to us by a warranty deed, and he will warrant and defend it.

If we are not Saints it is a great pity. We have the experience of those who lived before us, we have the testimony of the fathers, we have the sayings of Jesus and his Apostles, and we can peruse them and can exercise faith in the name of Jesus, and be guided by the Spirit of the Lord by which these testimonies were given; and we can know whether we are Saints or whether we are not. It has been proclaimed that there is a great difference between us and the Christian world. There is. Is the difference because we believe in another religion? By no means. The difference arises from the fact that we believe this Bible, wide open, from Genesis to Revelation. They believe it, sealed up, never to be opened again to the human family. They believe it shut, we believe it open; they believe it in silence, we believe it proclaimed on the house top; and when we scan the Bible and the feelings of the Christian world, we find that it is, as has been proclaimed here—there probably never was a day on the face of the earth when infidelity reigned more completely in the hearts of the children of men than it does now. We, as Christians, believe in God, in Christ and in his atonement, in repentance and obedience, and in receiving the Spirit; but what are the facts in the case? We are persecuted, our names are cast out as evil, we have the world arrayed against us. And who are at the head of this? The Christians. You go to a real infidel—one brought up to disbelieve in, and pay no attention to, this book as the word of God, and we receive little persecution from him; none whatever in comparison with what we receive from those who profess to believe it. Where are their witness and testimony that they are right and that we are wrong? We have the Scriptures to testify to the right and righteousness of the cause we have espoused. They shut up the Bible, say they are Christians, and cry, "False prophets, false teachers, delusion, delusion, heresy, outcasts, kill them if you cannot get rid of them without, they must leave, we cannot endure them any longer!"

Where is their proof, where is our proof? What criterion shall we go by? We have the Scriptures, we have the Prophets, Jesus and the Apostles; we have the revelations of the Spirit of God to ourselves; we have the truth within our hearts, and all this is proof to us of the validity of the faith that we have embraced; and if it is correct, and the Bible is correct; if it is true, and the Lord has spoken through his servants, they must be wrong, and their own mouths shall judge them in the latter days; and if they are to be judged by the Saints or by the Almighty you

will find the secret, and that will be out of their own mouths they will be judged. We have the testimony of all this for ourselves.

How are you going to know whether this work is true, whether the Bible is true, whether Joseph was a Prophet, whether Jesus was the Savior, and his Apostles were correct in their teachings? There is no way for you and me to know these things but by the Spirit of God; and if we live so as to enjoy the light of that Spirit, the light of revelation, it will be in us like a well of water springing up to everlasting life. If we do not live thus, we are in the dark as well as they.

All religion is a mystery. Do we know this? Certainly. I have an experience in this, and so have the elder members of this community: we have lived with the Christians. What have been the declaration and the sayings of the wisest of the wise among them? Is God a personage of tabernacle? "I know not." Does God dwell anywhere, is he a local being, or is he a traveling being? "I know not." Does he possess a body, parts and passions? "I know not." What of his Son Jesus? What of the evil? Acknowledge there is evil in the world—that character that fell from heaven—the Son of the Morning, has he a located place where he dwells? "I know not." That is the answer. What do you understand by the Scriptures? "We do not know what to understand, they are a mystery, and beyond our comprehension, we cannot comprehend them. We are students of divinity, but the Scriptures are a mystery to us." I recollect once, in my early career, well nigh forty years ago, conversing about two hours with a cousin of mine, who had finished his studies to be a priest. As I left him he said to me, "Cousin Brigham, I have learned more divinity from your mouth today than I have learned in my four years' study. You have told me things that I know are in the Scriptures, and I know they are correct, for I feel in my heart and can testify to the truth of them; but," said he, "they are not in the books, neither in the mouths and hearts of our teachers; our preceptors do not understand them, and I have learned more divinity from you in two hours than in all my life before." This is their experience. Have they knowledge? Go after it, and you will find an aching void, a shadow instead of a substance, words which are wind, instead of realities.

We would take the world of mankind by the hand and lead them to life and salvation, if they would let us. It was said in my office, a few days ago, by a party of railroad men, while conversing with me about us as a people, "President Young, you are not known, your people are not known; we shall know you better hereafter, and they need not publish about you as they have, or, if they do, we shall know better than to believe them. Why do they publish such things? We are glad to become acquainted with you." I replied, "For over forty years I have been striving with all my might, in my weak capacity, and with my limited knowledge, to make the world acquainted with us and our doctrines. There are also thousands and thousands of Elders who have traversed this earth over, without purse or scrip, trying to get people to learn who the Latter-day Saints are, and what they believe in, and why have you not known us? The Bible, Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, are published to the world with other works, giving to the whole reading world the principles we are proclaiming. Why are we not known? I will tell you why: the liars are industrious, and, according to the old saying, a lie will creep through a keyhole and travel leagues and leagues while truth is getting up, wiping her eyes and putting her shoes on. That is the reason, and you believe lies instead of truth. "And," said I, "from this time henceforth, when you read an article about the people of Utah, read it candidly and honestly, and the Spirit will tell you whether it is true or a lie, and believe the truth about us."

I will say again, brethren and sisters, do not be in a hurry. Brethren, if you want to get rich, live so as to enjoy the Spirit of the Lord. You will then know exactly what to do in all matters. You want the spirit of wisdom in all your business transactions, and just as much in farming as anything else. We want the Spirit of the Lord from the least chore of labor that we perform, to the highest spiritual duty devolving upon the highest man in the kingdom of God. We want the Spirit of the Lord to guide and direct us through this world, to teach us in spiritual things and in temporal things, that we may learn how to gain to ourselves the riches of eternity, and secure to ourselves eternal lives.

God bless you. Amen.