

The Young Missionaries—Increasing Unbelief of the People of the World—Teachings of Jesus and His Disciples, Etc.

Discourse by President Heber C. Kimball, delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, July 19, 1863.

I have no doubt that the people in general suppose it is a very easy thing for me to arise and speak to them, but I realize my weakness as well as other men, and probably I feel as diffident as most other men. When I first went forth to preach to the world I suffered a great deal in my feelings, probably as much as any man that ever attempted to preach. When I reflected upon my own inexperience I felt like a child, and I do today. For this reason I think much about those young men who have gone forth to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They will feel the need of being assisted by the Almighty when they are traveling through the European countries. Part of them are under twenty years of age, and they will realize their dependence upon God more than ever they have done before. I was over thirty years old when I commenced preaching the Gospel, but they are all young and well adapted for learning, hence they have many advantages. In those early times we did not know one hundredth part of the principles of the Gospel that we now know; in fact, there was but very little revealed, and we had not learned to understand the Scriptures except to a very limited extent. We had a little understanding of what was already revealed and written in the revelations given through Joseph the Prophet. I look over these things when I am thinking of those boys, and that is not all, I pray for them continually. I never bow before God without asking him in the name of his Son to remember those young men, and I know he will bless them with the power of his Spirit to guide them in the way of life. They do not know scarcely at present whether they understand much about the principles of the Gospel or not, and they will not really know until they have had some experience more than they had here at home. They are brought into a position where they will feel the necessity of calling upon God, and when they get home again they will find that they have had quite an experience, such an experience, too, as will be of lasting benefit to them. I used to think that anybody knew as much as I did, for I had very little confidence in myself, but I had confidence in God or I could not have preached at all. They will have just such feelings, and if they have any confidence at all it will be in God. Well, this is the case with most of us, and it is right; our confidence should be in him and not in ourselves, for without his assistance we are nothing and can do nothing towards the salvation of the human family. To be sure, the world are as ignorant as we were in relation to the Gospel of Christ, but we are the chosen of the Lord and he will support us in all our undertakings in righteousness. In those early times we were made to realize the truth of the Scriptures which Paul addressed to the Corinthians—

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”—1 Corinthians, i chap., 26-29 verses.

The world are in the same or a more ignorant condition than we were before the Gospel found us. We live in a very peculiar time; it is a day of warning and not of many words. The Elders now have to labor a great deal harder to bring people into the Church than they did in the first rise of it. There is not now one man brought to the knowledge of the truth by receiving the Gospel to where there was a hundred thirty years ago. It seems as though the people are blinder now than they were thirty years ago, and ignorance prevails to a greater extent than it did at that time. Jesus says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. xi., 28-30.

Now, brethren and sisters, reflect upon these things, and remember that those who have embraced the Gospel and do not make it their study to promote the interests of the kingdom of God, neglect their duty to that kingdom of which they are subjects. It is the duty of every one to labor day by day to promote each other's happiness, and also to study the well-being of mankind. When we take a course opposite to this, we become uneasy, unhappy and discontented; we are not satisfied with anything that is around us; our food, our raiment, our habitations, and all

that we possess becomes an annoyance to us; now what is the cause of this? It certainly does not originate with the Spirit of God, for that will never render anyone unhappy. You all understand, when you are in the right, that it is the spirit of the world, or that spirit which controls the world, which causes people to feel in this way; and unless they drive it far from them it will lead them down to sorrow, misery, and death. It is a spirit that inclines to kill and destroy, and that inclines the wicked to waste away everything there is upon the earth. The Saints should be particularly careful to avoid the influence of this spirit of destruction, for it is not of God, and we can all see now it leads mankind to destroy each other.

Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is very easy to understand that a man can see very little of a kingdom unless he goes into it, and a man to see and understand the kingdom of God must first become a member of the Church of Christ, and then he progresses until he has an opportunity of looking into the kingdom, of becoming acquainted with its officers and laws, and hence it is that Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." When the kingdom of God is organized upon the earth, it is done to protect the Church of Christ in its rights and privileges, so that you see the Church makes a government to protect itself, but who knows what that government is? All those to whom it has been revealed, and no others. Let the Saints reflect upon these matters which I am laying before them. Think of your holy endowments and what you have been anointed to become, and reflect upon the blessings which have been placed upon you, for they are the same in part that were placed upon Jesus; he was the one that inducted his Apostles into these ordinances; it was he who set up the kingdom of which we are subjects. This is the kingdom of which all the Prophets spake, and to which Daniel alluded when he said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." It is a blessing to have the privilege of entering into the kingdom of God and partaking of the privileges and blessings that are bestowed upon its members.

The testimony has gone forth that whosoever will repent and be baptized for the remission of sins shall receive the Holy Ghost. This is the only way whereby mankind can be saved. Still mankind will devise systems of their own, in preference to walking in the way which God has marked out: and it appears that every man has his own way and wishes to walk in the path which he himself marks out, and it is a good deal with mankind as the writer of the Proverbs describes it, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

When people embrace the Gospel they are then called upon to do all things which Jesus has commanded them, to live by the instructions of the Apostles and Elders of the Church. If they have been guilty of stealing, they must steal no more; for if they are found guilty they will be cast out as the law of God prescribes. They must not bear false witness, nor do anything that is forbidden in the ten commandments, which you know we were all taught to reverence when we went to the Sunday school in our childhood. Is that all that is required of us? No, those ten commandments do not constitute one hundredth part of the commandments that God gave to Adam in the beginning. Just let us look at these commandments, and then compare them with some of those given in our own day. In the 20th chap. of Exodus we find the Lord introducing the subject by reassuring the Israelites that he was the Lord their God; who had brought them out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage, and then he proceeds to speak and to command them what to do and what not to do; and in these commandments, which I will read to you, the Almighty shows that he is very jealous of his honor, and that he requires the undivided service and worship of his people. It will not do us any harm to look over those commandments, but it may do some of us a great deal of good, and, therefore, I will call your attention to them. We find them written in the following language—

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

“Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

“But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

“Thou shalt not kill.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“Thou shalt not steal.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.”—Exodus, 20 chap., 3-17.

These items contained in the above commandments are things that we ought all to consider and have a more lively interest in. We should read them occasionally, as well as other parts of the word of God, and we should endeavor to cultivate that which we see to be good.

We have the Priesthood of the living God in our midst, that Priesthood which is after the order of Melchizedek; it is the authority which God instituted in the beginning, and there is no salvation nor exaltation without it. If the present generation wish an exaltation in the kingdom of God, and desire the benefits and blessings of the Priesthood of the Most High, they must bow in obedience to the mandates of Heaven. Through this Priesthood the law of God has been revealed to man in this generation, to let mankind know that he still lives, and that he still has a care for his children and watches over them with paternal affection. Among the revelations which we find in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants there is one which was given in Feb., 1831, in which is contained the general outlines of the law which is to govern the Latter-day Saints. You may read the whole of that revelation when you have time; I will only call your attention now to the 6th and 7th paragraphs, which read as follows—

“And now, behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come.

“And again, I say, thou shalt not kill; but he that killeth shall die. Thou shalt not steal; and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out. Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out. Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else. And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out. But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; But if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. Thou knowest my laws concerning these things are given in my scriptures; he that sinneth and repenteth not shall be cast out.”

Thus you see that the Lord was very particular in giving commandments through Joseph Smith at the

commencement of this Church, and these commandments apply to all who embrace the Gospel, and without obedience to these, in connection with the rest of the revelations and commandments that have been given to this Church, there is no promise of salvation in the celestial kingdom. It is true there are many moralists and men who in many respects are very good, who do not embrace the Gospel; all such will be rewarded according to their works. If their works are good, good will be restored unto them; and if their works are evil they will be punished for their sins. And remember, the Lord says that those who lie shall be cast out of the Church, and this applies to every man and woman, and they can read it for themselves in the Book of Covenants. We are also commanded there not to speak evil of our neighbors, for if we do and do not immediately repent, the penalty is that we shall be cast out of the Church. Now, how important it is that we should observe these commandments and do them, especially as the Bible says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."—James 2, 10. You know if a man lies he offends in that particular and breaks one of the commandments, and he that said, Thou shalt not bear false witness, said also, Thou shalt not kill, therefore, by breaking one part of the law of God a man becomes a transgressor, and the law given to us in our day says that all such shall be cast out of the Church if they do not repent.

Now I touch upon these little things, knowing that if you do not hear and obey these, you will not pay any attention to the greater things. If I disregard any of the little things that pertain to my duty, I am guilty in the sight of God, and it is just so in regard to the law of the land. It is precisely so here with our laws in Utah; they are good, and well adapted to our circumstances and condition; but yet there are some persons who are not willing to observe them.

I feel that I am a weak, frail mortal; I realize that we are all frail beings, but those that suppose we cannot observe the laws to which I have referred, are mistaken. I know that I can refrain from evil, and I also know that any other person can who tries. It is quite a common thing with the world to commit sins, and then to argue that they cannot do any better, but this is a misunderstanding; any person who tries can refrain from evil.

What effect does this gospel produce among the inhabitants of the earth? Does it unite them together in one, and make them all of one heart and one mind? No, but it would produce this effect if the people would receive it, and universally adopt it as their rule of action, instead of which a great majority of mankind reject it, and hence it produces the effect which Jesus said his mission would. He remarked: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."—Matt. 10:34-36. This has truly been one of the results of the preaching of the gospel. The Elders have converted one here and another there; they have fulfilled the scripture which says: "I will take two of a family, and one of a city, and bring them to Zion."

We now see a similar condition of things politically, to what has long existed religiously. Our own country is now suffering in consequence of this spirit of opposition, and it is causing many hearts to mourn because of losing their friends, and when the trouble will be at an end, is not for me to say. Now the Presbyterians of the North are preaching and praying against their Presbyterian brethren in the South; and this is precisely the condition of the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and Shakers, and I am really sorry that such is the case. There are many honorable and peaceable citizens who are moving West in consequence of the lamentable state of our once happy and peaceful country.

When I think of these things I always reflect upon the travels of this Church; I call to mind our trials and privations in leaving Kirtland, Ohio. I call to mind our blessings and our troubles in the State of Missouri; I think of what we passed through and endured in the State of Illinois, and I shall not soon forget our wearisome and toilsome journey from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters, and then from the Frontiers of Iowa to these peaceful valleys. I rejoice many times in my reflections when I consider the goodness of the Almighty unto us, in bringing us to this goodly land. Here we can enjoy ourselves in the liberty of the gospel; we can make ourselves comfortable, and surround ourselves with the comforts and blessings of this life. In this respect we are privileged and blessed above many of our fellow creatures, and our blessings ought to cause us to look with compassion upon, and have charity for those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. It is our duty to consider what we were before we heard the gospel; we were quite as ignorant of God, Angels and heaven as the children of disobedience now are, but through the

medium of Joseph Smith we were brought to an understanding of the principles of eternal life, and many of us have since been to the nations to teach them repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. Jesus set the example, and although he was without sin he submitted to the ordinance that he might fulfil all righteousness. John objected to perform the ordinance, but after Jesus had informed him it was requisite that he should honor the law of heaven, John then consented to officiate. As a proof that that was acceptable, the heavens were opened, and a voice heard to say—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now this conduct of our Savior was an example to all mankind, and every person who desires salvation must pass through this ordeal. By being baptized and keeping all the commandments, we become the beloved sons and daughters of God, the Holy Ghost descends upon us, and we are continually enlightened by its benign influences. After becoming members of this Church it becomes our duty to set a good example before all men, to pursue a course that will be acceptable in the sight of God and worthy of imitation, and let me encourage everyone to be faithful to their covenants, and live pure and holy lives before God.

The members of this Church are all blessed with the privilege we enjoy this day, of partaking of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ. When Christ instituted this supper he enjoined its continuance upon his disciples, and we have been instructed to observe it in this generation. Jesus remarked at his last supper: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."—Luke 22. 15, 20.

To some it may be a curiosity that we partake of water instead of wine. [President B. Young: Tell them that the Lord told Joseph that he would accept of water]. Yes, the Lord has warned us against taking impure wine, and in a revelation given to Joseph Smith as early as September, 1830, he revealed his will on this subject in the following language—"Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins. Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine neither strong drink of your enemies; Wherefore, you shall partake of none except it is made new among you; yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth. Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth."—Doc. Cov., Sec. L., Par. 1 & 2. This is what we are doing this afternoon, and, brethren and sisters, let us be faithful and remember in partaking of this ordinance, we renew our covenants, and we have a promise that we shall receive a renewal of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to be humble and to perform the duties that are enjoined upon us as Saints.

Whatever transpires, if we are faithful in this kingdom, will all tend to the happiness, pleasure, and exaltation of this people. We ought to be the happiest people on the face of the earth, for we are blessed with a knowledge of the gospel, with an understanding of the ordinances which pertain to eternal life, and we are blessed with peace while our neighbors are afflicted with a desolating war.

Brethren and sisters, I exhort you above all things to hold fast to your integrity, seek for righteousness and cleave unto it, and if you see anything that is contrary to these holy principles among this people, you may know that it is not good. There is no person in this Church who can increase in the knowledge of God, in the spirit of revelation, in the gift of prophecy, in visions or in dreams, unless they cleave unto God with full purpose of heart, but by being faithful these gifts will be multiplied unto the Saints.

Now when I went to England the first time I did not say anything about the gathering. About ten days after I had baptized brother George D. Watt, he came to me, his face shining like that of an angel, and, said he, just as sure as the Lord lives the Saints will gather to America. I told him to prophesy on, for I knew it was of God. I name this

circumstance to show that the Spirit makes manifest to individuals many things of which they have never before heard. Now what is there to prevent the Latter-day Saints enjoying those gifts and graces of the gospel which they used to enjoy when they first joined the Church? What can prevent us from obtaining a knowledge of things past and things to come? There is nothing to prevent even our little boys and little girls having these gifts and blessings, except it be a slackness on our part in our duties towards God. I know there is a slackness with many of this people; there is a spirit of division, of contention and strife creeping in among the Latter-day Saints, but still I am happy to know that with the majority there is a great improvement. I know also that those brethren that are engaged in assisting to gather the poor, their blessings will be great indeed; they will have a reward in the present and in the future. On the other hand it is a matter of regret that there are others who do not feel interested enough to make up their butter and carry a tenth of it into the Tithing Office. Some of them think it is too small a matter, others are indifferent and don't care anything about it, and thus a great many of the people neglect their tithes, and do not put them into the Lord's storehouse; hence the poor, the laborer upon the public works, and the families of our missionaries lack many of the comforts of life, which the people who are laboring exclusively for themselves constantly enjoy. I presume you all remember what Christ said in regard to the poor widow who gave her small donation at the treasury of the synagogue, but lest some of you should have forgotten it, I will remind you of it: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."—Mark 12. 41, 44.

Let me now say to the Latter-day Saints, if you will cast in your tithes and your offerings you will be blessed with greater abundance; the Lord will open the windows of heaven and bestow upon you a greater blessing. It will be with you as the Lord spoke through Malachi to the Israel of his day; after rebuking them the Lord promised them a great blessing. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.—Malachi 3. 8, 12.

This will be our blessing if we are faithful; then let us awake to righteousness and we shall be abundantly blest. Let us all volunteer to help President Young in every endeavor that he makes to push forward this great work, and then we shall never again want for bread, for the Lord will shed forth rain upon the earth to water our crops, and we shall raise all the bread we need, and have some to spare for our friends. I have seen the time when our brethren have had to eat beef-hides, wolves, dogs and skunks. You may smile, but I can tell you that it was no laughing matter at that time, for there were many who could not get even dogs to eat. Many of the brethren in those trying times were clothed in skins of wild animals. I felt impressed to prophesy to them, and I said, "Never mind, boys, in less than one year there will be plenty of clothes and everything that we shall want sold at less than St. Louis prices;" and I thought when I came to reflect upon it that it was a very improbable thing, and brother Rich told me that he thought I had done up the job at prophesying that time, but the sequel showed the prediction to be of the Lord. In less than six months, the emigration to California came through here laden down with good clothing, bacon, flour, groceries, and everything we wanted. The opening of the gold mines had caused them to rush for the scene of excitement; they came with their trunks full of the best of clothing, and they opened them and turned out a great deal of the clothing, and the brethren and sisters bought good coats, vests, shawls, and dresses at a mere nominal price, and in this way the Lord supplied our wants, and he will do so again if the circumstances ever require it. This is the God that I believe in, and in him I put my trust. I know also that he will fight our battles from this time henceforth if we will only do right. He will turn our enemies aside and cause all things to work together for our good. Therefore, let us trust in him, and he will send his angels to watch over us, and he will preserve us as in the hollow of his hand.

May the Lord multiply his blessings upon you, brethren and sisters, and upon all the faithful ministers and Saints throughout the world, and may He bless all those who do good, who love righteousness and desire the welfare and building up of Zion; I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.