

What the Gospel Teaches—Revelation From God Necessary—The Faith and Doctrines of the Latter-Day Saints

Discourse by Elder John Taylor, delivered in the Fourteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, Feb. 1, 1874.

[Continued From Page 376, Vol. 16.] John the Revelator, when on the Isle of Patmos, wrapt in prophetic vision, said—"I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, crying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.'" He also saw a time when a certain power "would make war with the Saints, and prevail against them, and they should be given into his hand until a time, times and the dividing of a time."

Well then, to come back, to accommodate my strange friend, whoever he may be, I will say that we, the Latter-day Saints, believe this Gospel just as Jesus taught it. We believe in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we should reverence him as the Son of his heavenly Father and our Father. We believe in the ordinances that he introduced, and that were practiced by his disciples; we believe in the same Spirit and revelation that they believed in. I do not wish to argue these matters, or to go into details, for time would fail on the present occasion; but the Scriptures are before us, and I shall only attempt to touch upon some of the principles that Jesus enunciated, and which were taught by him and his disciples; and it is for believing in God and Jesus Christ, in prophecy and revelation, that we are continually arraigned before the world as impostors and deceivers. We believe in being honest to ourselves and with everybody, whether they are with us or not; we believe in men acting all the time as though they were in the presence of God and holy angels, and that for all their acts they will be brought to judgment, for we believe that God will bring men into judgment "for every word and every secret thought." We believe a good deal as David says—Who is he that can dwell with devouring fire, and among everlasting burnings? That man who has feared God in his heart, and who has not lied in his heart, that man who will swear to his own hurt and change not, a pure, virtuous, holy man who regards the rights of others as he regards his own; a man who will concede to others all that he would ask for himself, and who seeks to promote the welfare of the human family.

The Elders of this Church have been called, as the disciples of Jesus were in former times, to go and preach the Gospel without purse and scrip. I have traveled hundreds and thousands of miles on this errand myself, and I see men all around me here who have done the same. What for? To benefit mankind, to tear away the veil of ignorance, to combat error, to reveal truth, to make known the Divine will, to tell to the human family that God has spoken, that angels have appeared, that the heavens have been opened, that light and intelligence have been communicated to man, that the everlasting Gospel has been restored, and that we, in this age, can enjoy the same blessings that the Saints enjoyed in former days, and to point out to them the way of life and salvation. We have received this commission from our God, and we have endeavored faithfully to fulfill it, so that our blood may be clear, and that when we come to stand before the Great Eloheim, when all nations shall be gathered together, we can say, "Oh God, we have finished the work which thou gavest us to do."

What else? We are standing now rather in a political capacity. How is this? We cannot help ourselves, the Gospel told us to gather together. Do the Scriptures say anything about it? Yes; but if they did not, and God gave us that command, the silence of the Scriptures would make no difference at all. But they do, for the ancient Prophets had a view of the gathering of the Saints in the latter days; they saw them flocking to the mountains like doves to the windows; and through them the Lord declared that he would gather his people "from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south." It is said—"I will take them one of a city and two of a family and bring them to Zion, and give them pastors after my own heart, who will feed them with knowledge and understanding;" and in speaking of the calamities of the last days he says that "in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance." But we gathered because the revelations given through our Prophet commanded us to do so, these revelations agreeing with those given on the same subject formerly.

Standing in this capacity, we form a large body of people. We have lived in different places, and as the believers in

the Gospel in other ages were persecuted, so have we been; and having been persecuted and driven we have come here, as Geo. A. Smith said on a certain occasion, "because we could not help it." We could not live in Nauvoo, yet we neither injured nor robbed anybody, neither did we interfere with anybody's rights. They drove us from Missouri and from Illinois, and here we are, and what now? We were on Mexican territory when we arrived here, having been forced to flee from the United States because we could not have protection. Why was it? Who can tell why it was that people who strewed their garments and spread branches of palm trees in the path of Jesus, crying, "Hosanna, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord," should cry, a short time after—"Crucify him, crucify him?" Said Pilate, "I wash my hands of this just man's blood;" and the people said, "let his blood be upon us and our children." Terribly have they realized that invocation, for the avenging hand of the Almighty has been heavy upon them, and in every nation in which they have sojourned, they have been robbed, stripped, their property confiscated, and they have been deprived of all the rights of men. The time will come when God's wrath will be satisfied towards them, and when they will again be his elect people and gathered to their own land, even to Jerusalem, where, as the Prophet says, "The measuring line shall go forth, and little boys and girls shall again play in the streets of that city;" and when the Son of God will descend and "set his feet on the Mount of Olives, and it will cleave in twain, and there will be a great valley, and they will flee from before him like as they fled in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah;" and "the Lord our God," we are told, "will come and all his Saints with him," and there will be "deliverance in Zion and in Jerusalem in the remnant whom the Lord our God shall call."

Well, we are here in a political capacity, inhabiting a Territory, and forming an integral part of the United States. Whom do we interfere with? Nobody. Do we rob or pillage anybody, or interfere with the rights of any? No. Do we make incursions on the citizens of surrounding Territories? No, we interfere with the civil or religious rights of no persons in this or any other city or Territory; we never did, we do not now; but we cannot help being in the capacity that we occupy today. We form a body politic, and have necessarily become a Territory, and we could not help ourselves if we would. But we do not interfere with anybody, we observe all good and wholesome law. People will lie about us; but that makes no difference, they lied about Jesus. Our enemies say—"You are a bad people, and that is the reason we persecute you." That is what the enemies of Jesus said about him; it was not because he was good; you never saw a religious persecution got up on that account, all such persecutions have been "because of the wickedness of the people." The Scribes and Pharisees, after seeing Jesus heal the blind man, said—"Give God the glory, for we know this man is a sinner, it is true that he cast out devils, but he does it through Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Well, if they persecuted the Lord of the house, they will persecute the members of his household; if they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry? The fact is, there is, and always has been, and always will be, an antagonism between truth and error, light and darkness, between the servants of God and the servants of the adversary. The devil is called the father of lies, and he delights therein. What difference does that make to us, what do we care about it? Very little. But suppose we are oppressed. We have stood it before and we can stand it again. Suppose they should pass proscriptive laws against us. All right, if the nation can stand it we can. I will risk upholding and standing by correct principles which emanate from God. We will cleave to truth, honor, holiness, and to all the principles that God has revealed to us, and we will go on increasing in every good.

This nation and other nations will be overthrown, not because of their virtue, but because of their corruption and iniquity. The time will come, for the prophecies will be fulfilled, when kingdoms will be destroyed, thrones cast down and the powers of the earth shaken, and God's wrath will be kindled against the nations of the earth, and it is for us to maintain correct principles, political, religious and social, and to feel towards all men as God feels. He makes the sun to shine on the just as well as on the unjust; and if he has enlightened our minds and put us in possession of more correct principles than others have, let us be thankful and adore the God of Israel. Let us thank our heavenly Father for his goodness towards us in making us acquainted with the principles of the everlasting Gospel, and let us go on from strength to strength, from purity to purity, from virtue to virtue, from intelligence to intelligence; and when the nations shall fall and crumble, Zion shall arise and shine, and the power of God shall be manifest among his people. No man can overturn or permanently hurt those who do right. They may kill some of our bodies, but that is all they can do. We shall live and shout among the assembled throng, in the eternal heavens, "Hosanna, blessed be the God of Israel," and his kingdom shall grow and increase until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ, and he will rule and reign forever and ever.

May God help us to be faithful in the name of Jesus. Amen.