

DISCOURSE

By PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, June 8th, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL read the text that my brother Joseph has been talking about—"If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do?" I will read the second verse—"For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart." I shall make a few remarks to the Latter-day Saints and make the application of this scripture as liberal as I feel to. First, I will inquire of my brethren and sisters how far they would like to be righteous and upright in heart,—how far they would like to be Saints. I frequently use the sayings of our natives here and make the application to the Saints. You ask the native if he is a captain, he will sometimes say, "Yes, a little." "How much?" "I am a captain, so much;" another one says, "I am a captain so much," while another one is all captain, or "Pe-up," he is the chief. Well, how much do we want to be Saints? A little, but not much, it would infringe upon our speculations, our covetousness, our prepossessed notions, upon our daily labor, and, the fact is, we want to be just enough Saints to escape the punishment that will come upon the ungodly, and to get into the kingdom of heaven by squeezing in at the door.

I am now going to ask a question of both Saint and sinner. I think I might venture to make the question a national one. Is it good for man to use ardent spirits? In my remarks I shall confine myself, for awhile at least, to this subject, without referring to other traits in the character of the children of men. Is it good for the people in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, or we will say in all the eastern States—the old bay States, away down in Yankee land—to drink and be drunken? I say is it good for us Yankees to drink and be drunken? We have said not, and the time has been, and I do not know but that it continues to this day, when parties carried in their pockets little tin canteens made to represent Bunyan's novel—*The Pilgrim's Progress*, or a small Bible, and those who had them were thought to be preachers. But when they got into a suitable place up went the cup and down went the whisky.

Now is this good? I ask this question of the people of the eastern States, and then come to the middle States, to the western States, to the Southern States, and finally, the whole United States, is it good for men to drink and be drunken? Is it good to use liquor? Is it a benefit to the people? Saints, what say you? Shall I answer the question for you? If I do, I shall say that it is better to let ardent spirits entirely alone than to use them, and that people are better off without liquor than with it.

Now I will refer to the customs which prevailed in this city when it was inhabited by Latter-day-Saints only. Pass through the streets here then, and would you see a man intoxicated from day to day, week to week, month to month, or from one year's end to another? No, I do not suppose a drunken man was ever seen in the streets of this city until strangers came along and demanded, through necessity they said, that liquor be sold, that a house be kept where they could obtain that which they were in the habit of using. I might carry this a little further and touch upon our moral status in other points. Year after year passed away—perhaps twelve or fifteen years—after we came here, and if any families were sick they could send a child, any time in the night, two, three, four or half a dozen blocks, to tell Sister Jones that mother was sick, and Sister Jones could go to the house of the patient, and cross and re-cross, and go over the city a thousand times a night if necessary and never be interrupted or disturbed, or have a question asked, unless the child or Sister Jones wanted to be helped across a ditch for example. Then, if a man was going to or returning from the canyon, or was going to, or returning home from, business, say any time between 9 at night and 5 in the morning, and a brother, sister or child wanted assistance, there

was a hand ready, and the word was—"Yes, I will help you across this bad place, get into my wagon and ride across this slough, the streets are not worked, the road is wet and it is bad passing, I will take you where you want to go: Where are you going?" "To Sister Smith's, she is sick and wants assistance," and they would pass along. Was there a grogshop in this city then? Not one. Was there a place where liquor was sold? Not one, unless it was where it was necessary to make up a little medicine. Compare that with the present status of this city. Is it dangerous now for a woman to pass around this temple block after dark? Yes, she may expect to be grabbed by some ruffian and treated like a brute. Is it dangerous for a man to pass around here in the night? Yes, he may expect somebody or other to put his arm around his neck and stop his breath until another one can rob him.

Here I wish to make the application—Is it beautiful, is it lovely to behold the glory and the excellency of this civilization? What do you say? "Oh, how I do love Babylon." Says one, "How I do love this fashionable coat, this beautiful hat, this pretty frock, that lovely ribbon!" "Oh, see the hat on that lady," and I say, see the five bushel basket sticking out behind. How beautiful it is! And she on stilts, spoiling the spine of her back. How beautiful! It is lovely in the extreme, it is right from Babylon. What do you say, Saints? I must say that when I talk about these things I am like the young man who lost his apples. He was in the habit of swearing a good deal, and one day while driving a load of apples up hill the hind gate of his wagon came out, and before he noticed it he had lost his apples. When he saw the situation said he, "I will not say a word, any swearing that I can do will fail to do justice to the occasion." So with me—any language that I know anything about would utterly fail in conveying a correct idea of the ridiculous nature of the conduct of many who profess to be Latter-day-Saints.

I will now read this text again—"For lo, the wicked bend their bow"—do you know anybody who does this? Do you, Latter-day-Saints, know of any such persons in this city?—"For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart?" Take the people of this city as they were and take them as they are, and make the application for yourselves. The next verse says—"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" I shall apply this in my own way. If I can not suit myself thoroughly I will suit myself as well as I can; if I can not suit you, you must try and suit yourselves. I ask all the Latter-day-Saints, do you like the condition here at the present time? Do you like to walk here in the evening or in the day time, and see and hear what you are forced to see and hear? Do you like to pass these grogshops, or to enter these gambling hells and other mischievous places and see what their inmates are doing? I am going to make my wishes known to you without regard to the feelings of any who may blame me for making these remarks, and I would that I had all the Latter-day Saints who live in this city before me this afternoon. But as they are not here I shall probably ask the bishops and teachers to learn what I want to find out. My brother has been speaking of law. You know that civilized nations are governed by law. This nation is governed by law. There are just as good and wholesome laws in this city, Territory and Government as can be found anywhere. We have just as good laws in these United States and in the different States as can be found, probably, in any country on the face of the whole earth. In carrying out these laws it is our privilege, to magnify ourselves as individual citizens, as a community of men and women dwelling together in a town or city, to sign a petition to the City Council to shut up every bar or grogery there is in this city. Others, who wish to keep the grogshops, and to keep them open morning, night, Sundays and every day in the week have the privilege of getting up a remonstrance. But the man or woman who professes to be a Latter-day Saint who would refuse to sign a petition to have this drunkenness stopped, has very little right to the name, it would be

hard to take their measurement as Saints. I carry in my pocket a rule on which the inches are divided into a hundred parts. Such a rule would be necessary, in my opinion, to measure the standing of those professing to be Saints who would refuse to sign a petition to stop drunkenness. You may differ from me in your opinion, and you have a perfect right to, and I have the same right to differ from you; but it is my opinion that the man or woman whose name is upon our records as a Latter-day Saint, who would fellowship what we see and would to endure here all the time, is a very poor Saint. I have some notion to ask you whether you like these things, and who among you will sign a petition to the City Council to stop them. I must explain here that the evils we see in our city are the result of the acts of men who, though administrators of the law in various capacities, instead of sustaining the laws, say, "Sell liquor as much as you please, pay no attention to the City Council, disregard the laws of this city and Territory, ride over and trample them under your feet, and break whatever law the City Council may make." This is what our administrators of the law say, and to this cause only can be attributed whatever of crime and defiance of law we see manifested here.

It has been said that Brother Brigham has proffered his services to help stop the liquor traffic in this city. I will say, that is true, and I do it upon the principle of justice and truth, and within the bounds of our local laws, and in no other way; and if the inhabitants of this city are disposed to raise their voices and influence against the conduct we see here, and the City Council passes a law to stop the drunkenness and gambling, they will find us—the citizens—ready to sustain them by our faith and works. "For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privately shoot at the upright in heart."

I leave it to the people of the United States, to all good citizens from the Atlantic to the Pacific, if it is not better to live without gambling and drunkenness than to have them in our midst? What would they say if they were to express an opinion on the subject? The leading portion of them would say, "Let us have sober, civil communities," and they would rejoice to see the time when our Presidents, law-makers, and executors of the law would live continually with a sober, steady brain, able to judge between right and wrong, and with willing hearts and steady hands administer the laws to this great nation in righteousness. Will we Latter-day Saints sign a petition to the Mayor and City Council to stop these evils entirely? (Congregation said, "Yes"). I will invite all, whether citizens or strangers, who are in favor of a people living a sober, steady life, to vote on this question, if they desire to do so. (The congregation voted unanimously in favor, by showing their right hands.) Does anybody want to vote against it? Is there a man who wants to lift his hand against seeing a sober, civil, industrious community, a community that will work for what they need, instead of gambling, robbing and plundering for it? If there is a man, either in the church or out, present this afternoon, he is at liberty to make it manifest by the same sign. (No dissentient.) No, we Latter-day Saints go together, and one fault found with us is that we will hang together. I recollect, not over a hundred years ago, there was a certain man in Philadelphia who said—"We are accused of hanging together; we might just as well hang together as hang separate, and if we do not hang together, we shall certainly hang separate." He was a rebel and traitor, so said the English government, and he was talking to his companions, and they had to hang, but by hanging together they saved their necks and gained the freedom of their country. That is the way with the Latter-day Saints, they hang together just enough to save themselves.

Now that I have your minds, I want the bishops to ask the minds of the people of their wards on this subject, and see what they say. Let the wicked lie in wait and accuse and find fault with the Latter-day Saints as much as they please, but we go in for truth and righteousness, we go in for a civil community; we go in for honesty and not plundering our neighbors; we believe in laboring for what we want and accumulat-

ing honestly. I want the bishops to go to and find out how many in their wards will sign a paper to the City Council, asking its members to pass a law for the suppression of liquor selling and enforce the present law against gambling. I am thankful that I have the privilege and am willing to put my name at the head of such a paper, for I am opposed to these things. At the present time it seems to be impossible for the City Council to license people to keep bars for the accommodation of strangers. They would be glad to do so, and would be reasonable with those who wanted them, but owing to circumstances it does seem that our citizens will be bound to stop the whole of it, or else let a few ride over every law enacted for the preservation of the peace and good order of the city.

I wanted to make a few remarks upon the subject touched upon by my brother, but I shall not have the time. I frequently think, in my meditations, how glad we should be to instruct the world with regard to the things of God, if they would hear, and receive our teachings in good and honest hearts and profit by them. I have been found fault with a great many times for casting reflections upon men of science, and especially upon theologians, because of the little knowledge they possess about man being on the earth, about the earth itself, about our Father in heaven, his Son Jesus Christ, the order of heavenly things, the laws by which angels exist, by which the worlds were created and are held in existence, &c. How pleased we would be to place these things before the people if they would receive them! How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me—namely that Adam is our father and God—I do not know, I do not inquire, I care nothing about it. Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, it was created expressly for him, and after it was made he and his companions came here. He brought one of his wives with him, and she was called Eve, because she was the first woman upon the earth. Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and holds the keys of everlasting life and salvation to all his children who have or who ever will come upon the earth. I have been found fault with by the ministers of religion because I have said that they were ignorant. But I could not find any man on the earth who could tell me this, although it is one of the simplest things in the world, until I met and talked with Joseph Smith. Is it a great mystery that the earth exists? Is it a great mystery, that the world can not solve, that man is on the earth? Yes, it is; but to whom? To the ignorant—those who know nothing about it. It is no mystery to those who understand. Is it a mystery to the Christian world that Jesus is the Son of God, and still the son of man? Yes it is, it is hidden from them, and this fulfils the Scripture—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost," who have no faith, and who pay no attention to the Spirit of God. These things are called mysteries by the people because they know nothing about them, just like laying hands on the sick. Is it a mystery that fever should be rebuked and the sick healed by the laying on of the hands of a man who is endowed with authority from God and has been ordained to that gift? "Oh yes," say the ignorant, "we know nothing about it." That is true, but where is the mystery? Will the ignorant receive the truth when they hear it? No, they will not, and this is their condemnation, that light has come into the world, and they choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. That is the fact in the case. What is the mystery about it? They do not understand invisible things. Ask the wicked, "Do you know anything about the laying on of hands?" "Oh yes, such a man—a man who is wicked in his whole life—has the art of laying on of hands for curing the tooth-ache, fevers, wounds," &c.; and now, in fulfillment of the words of the ancient prophet, thousands of people seek unto "wizards who peep and mutter," &c., but they will not seek unto the living God. I can say to all the inhabitants of the earth that before what is called spiritualism was ever known in America I told the people that if they would not believe the revelations that God had given he would suffer the devil to give revelations that they—

priests and people—would follow after. Where did I declare this? In the cities of New York, Albany, Boston, throughout the United States and in England. Have I seen this fulfilled? I have. I told the people that as true as God lived, if they would not have truth they would have error sent unto them, and they would believe it. What is the mystery of it?

The Christian world read of, and think much about, St. Paul, also St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. These men were faithful to and magnified the priesthood while on the earth. Now, where will be the mystery, after they have passed through all the ordeals, and have been crowned and exalted, and received their inheritances in the eternal worlds of glory, for them to be sent forth, as the Gods have been for ever and ever, with the command—"Make yourselves an earth, and people it with your own children?" Do you think the starry heavens are going to fall? Do the Christian world or the heathen world think that all things are going to be wrapped up, consumed, and annihilated in eternal flames? Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe the great things that God has purposed in his own mind!

My brother said that God is as we are. He did not mean those words to be literally understood. He meant simply, that in our organization we have all the properties in embryo in our bodies that our Father has in his, and that literally, morally, socially, by the spirit and by the flesh we are his children. Do you think that God, who holds the eternities in his hands and can do all things at his pleasure, is not capable of sending forth his own children, and forming this flesh for his own offspring? Where is the mystery in this? We say that Father Adam came here and helped to make the earth. Who is he? He is Michael, a great prince, and it was said to him by Eloheim, "Go ye and make an earth." What is the great mystery about it? He came and formed the earth. Geologists tell us that it was here millions of years ago. How do they know? They know nothing about it. But suppose it was here, what of it? Adam found it in a state of chaos, unorganized and incomplete. Philosophers, again, in talking of the development of the products of the earth, for instance, in the vegetable kingdom, say the little fibres grew first, then the larger vegetation. When this preparatory stage was completed then came the various orders of the animal creation; and finally man appeared. No matter whether these notions are true or not, they are more or less speculative. Adam came here and got it up in a shape that would suit him to commence business. What is the great mystery about it? None, that I have seen. The mystery in this, as with miracles, or anything else, is only to those who are ignorant. Father Adam came here, and then they brought his wife. "Well," says one, "Why was Adam called Adam?" He was the first man on the earth, and its framer and maker. He, with the help of his brethren, brought it into existence. Then he said, "I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state. I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to its increase there will be no end. I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh, that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle or a dwelling place as mine has, and where is the mystery?"

Now for mother Eve. The evil principle always has and always will exist. Well, a certain character came along, and said to Mother Eve, "The Lord has told you that you must not do so and so, for if you do you shall surely die. But I tell you that if you do not do this you will never know good from evil, your eyes will never be opened, and you may live on the earth forever and ever, and you will never know what the Gods know." The devil told the truth, what is the mystery about it? He is doing it to-day. He is telling one or two truths and mixing them with a thousand errors to get the people to swallow them. I do not blame Mother Eve, I would not have had her miss eating the forbidden fruit for anything in the world. I would not give a groat if I could not understand light from darkness. I can understand the bitter from the sweet, so can you. Here is intelligence, but bind it up and make machines of its possessors, and where is the glory or exaltation? There is none. They must pass through the same ordeals as the Gods, that they may know good from evil, how to succor the tempted, tried and weak, and how to reach down the hand of mercy to save the falling sinner. The Lord has revealed his gospel and instituted its ordinances that the inhabitants of the earth may be put in possession of eternal life. But few of them, however, will accept it. I have preached it to many thousands of them who are naturally just as honest as I am, but through tradition there is an overwhelming prejudice in their minds which debars them of that liberty I have in my heart. They would be glad to know the ways of God, and to know who Jesus is, and to reap the reward of the faithful, if they had the stamina, I will call it, the independence of mind necessary to embrace the truth, to say, "I know this is true, and if there is no other person on the face of this earth who will defend it, I will to the last." But this is not in their hearts, it is not in their organization, consequently they do not manifest it. What mystery is there about it? None whatever. What is the mystery in Jesus being the Son of God and at the same time the son of the Virgin Mary? You know what the infidels say about this, but their words are no worse than the practice of many in the Christian world.

I do not want to be found fault with, but if I am it is all the same to me. There is no mystery to me in what God has revealed to me, or in what I have learned, whether it has been through Joseph, an angel, the voice of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost or the Spirit of the Lord; no matter how I have learned a thing, if I understand it perfectly it is no mystery to me. It is like making one of these pulpits, or a house like this. This is no mystery to me, I dictated it, and a great many say it is a great piece of architecture to have a single span, so large as this roof and composed of wood that will sustain itself. But it is no mystery to me. I know the strength of the materials and how to place them together. It is no mystery to me to build a temple or a common house. But you take a gentleman or lady who was never beyond the confines of a densely populated city, who never saw wheat grow, and who never saw cattle in the fields, and it is a great mystery to them to see them. Why? Because they never saw such things before, and they know nothing about them, but it is no mystery to those who know all about such things. Do you think it any mystery to angels to know how the various organizations are brought on earth? Not the least in the world. There is no mystery in all this to the Gods, no mystery in them to the prophets and apostles whom they send, and to whom they reveal them; it is all plain, every day, common sense, just as much so as with anything else in the world—we understand it.

Some may say to me, "Why, Brother Brigham, you seem to know it all." I say, Oh no, I know but very little, but I have an eternity of knowledge before me, and I never expect to see the time when I shall cease to learn, never, no never, but I expect to keep on learning for ever and ever, going on from exaltation to exaltation, glory to glory, power to power, ever pressing forward to greater and higher attainments, as the Gods do. That is an idea that drowns the whole Christian world in a moment. Let them try to entertain it and they are out of sight of land without a ship, and if they had a ship it would have neither sail, rudder nor compass. "What," say they, "God progress?" Now, do not harriet the God that I serve and say that he can not learn any more; I do not believe in such a character. "Why," say they, "does not the Lord know it all?" Well, if he does, he must know an immense amount. No matter about that, the mind of man does not reach that any more than it comprehends the heaven beyond the bounds of time and space in which the Christians expect to sit and sing themselves away to everlasting bliss, and where they say they shall live for ever and for ever.

If we look forward we can actually comprehend a little of the idea that we shall live for ever and ever; but you take a rear-sight, and try and contemplate and meditate upon the fact that there never was a beginning and you are lost at once. The present and the future we can comprehend some little about, but the past is all a blank, and it is right and reasonable that it should be so. But if we are faithful in the things of God they will open up, open up, open up, our minds will expand, reach forth and receive more and more, and by and by we can begin to see that the Gods have been for ever and for ever.

Some of our philosophers have tried to reveal the first cause. I would change the position of the whole affair. I would plant my position in the ignorance of man that undertakes to prove or show the existence of a first cause. He had better go to work and prove himself a fool to begin with and then stop, for all his reasonings, arguments and researches with regard to the first cause only prove that he is a fool. Excuse me for this rough expression, perhaps it would be better to say that he comes far short of knowing or understanding himself in the least degree, and his researches are contracted to that degree that he is lost in ignorance of himself. Is this the fact? It is. We can know nothing until we learn it, and when we come to a knowledge of facts they are no mystery to us. Take one of these native Navajo women down south here into a factory and show her the machinery for weaving blankets, and if she has never seen anything of the kind she would laugh at such nonsense. Says she, "That is not the way to weave blankets, why do you not tie your web up to the limb of a tree, fasten the other end down, and then take a stick and do just so? That will never weave a blanket." By and by she sees the blanket finished, but it is a mystery to her, and she can not understand anything about it, because she has not learned it. It is so with the whole human family.

You will excuse me for detaining you a little longer than usual. I wanted to ask the brethren and sisters if they did not think my brother, Joseph Young, pretty good. He is nearly seventy-seven years of age and had a severe sickness last winter. Do you not think he is pretty hale, and doing pretty well? I think he is. I like to see him here. I know that he has been trying to tell the people with regard to the things of God for fifty years past. If I were to live and learn as I have for forty years past—since I have been in this church—for a thousand years, I should only have just commenced to learn the great lesson of eternity.

I do hope and pray—and I want you to listen how I shape this prayer, instead of praying my Father in heaven in the name of Jesus to make you and me faithful—I pray that we Latter-day Saints may be faithful to the covenants we have entered into with our Heavenly Father and with one another, and to live our holy religion, for we do know how. I need not ask the Father to make us faithful any more than I need ask him to come and sow our wheat for us, not a particle, for we know all about it. Be faithful, do right and live so as to be worthy of life everlasting. Amen.

— A Pennsylvania paper congratulates itself on the fact that Tom Scott can't control the through route to Heaven.

— Miss Anna Dickinson has been more numerously married (in the papers) than any other maiden on the platform.

— Professor Mitchell says that the world will be so cool 1,000,000 years from now that no one can live in it. Let us weep.

— T. A. Rhett, formerly chief of Joe Johnston's staff, is now a full fledged Egyptian general.

— A Cynic describes marriage as an altar on which man lays his wallet and woman her affections.