

JOURNAL OF DISCOURSES

BY

PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR,

HIS COUNSELLORS,

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

AND OTHERS.

REPORTED BY

GEO. F. GIBBS, JOHN IRVINE AND OTHERS.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN ALL THE WORLD.

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DISCOURSE BY APOSTLE ERASTUS SNOW,

DELIVERED AT LOGAN, SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 6, 1882.

(Reported by Geo. F. Gibbs.)

GOD'S PECULIAR PEOPLE CALLED A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS — THEIR MINISTRY THUS FORESHADOWED — THE MELCHISEDEH AND AARONIC PRIESTHOODS — THEIR RESTORATION IN THE LATTER-DAYS — THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL—EPHRAIM AND MANASSEK—THE LINEAGE OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH—PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION —THE DISPERSION AND GATHERING OF ISRAEL — THE PRIESTHOOD ENDLESS, ADMINISTERING IN TIME AND ETERNITY — THE BLINDNESS OF THE GENTILES TO THE THINGS OF GOD — THE RESULTS OF PERSECUTION—THE FUTURE OF THE FAITHFUL.

I will call the attention of the congregation to the words of the Lord through Moses, spoken to the children of Israel, contained in the 5th and 6th verses of the 19th chapter of Exodus :

“Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

In connection with this passage I will read the words of the Apostle Peter, as recorded in the 5th verse, 2nd chap. of 1st Peter :

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

Also the 9th verse of the same chapter :

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called ye out of darkness into this marvelous light.”

Elder Penrose referred this morning to the fact of so large a portion of the Latter-day Saints being called and ordained to bear some portion of the Priesthood, remarking that at times he had queried in his mind as to why this was so appointed unto us. This reminded me of the Scriptures I have just read in your hearing. The consideration of the subject involves the whole mission of the Latter-day Saints. The promise of God to ancient Israel contained in the first text sets forth the purposes of Jehovah in choosing the seed of Abraham especially and separating them from other peoples and nations, and taking them under His especial care and guidance, and leading them as he did out of Egyptian bondage with a mighty hand and an out-stretched arm and planting them in Canaan in fulfilment of the promises made to their father Abraham, and to Isaac and Jacob. And when God called Abraham to leave his father's house and go to a land which he should show him and which he afterwards promised to him and his seed for an inherit

chief. While the tribe of Levi, unto which Moses and Aaron belonged, was specially charged with the administration of affairs of the lesser Priesthood under the law, yet Ephraim, the peculiar and chosen son of Joseph, was the one whom the Lord had named by his own mouth and through the Prophets, to inherit the keys of presidency of this High Priesthood after the order of the Son of God. In this also we see the fulfillment of the covenants and promises of God; not that Joseph by birthright inherited this blessing, for Reuben was the first-born among the twelve sons of Jacob; but we are told in Chronicles, the 7th chapter, that Reuben forfeited this birthright by his adultery, and that God took it from him and conferred it upon the sons of Joseph; and of the sons of Joseph he chose Ephraim as the chief; and while the Patriarch Jacob, as we read in the 49th chapter of Genesis, adopted into his own family two of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, yet he placed Ephraim the younger foremost, and blessed him with the chief blessing, saying, that Manasseh shall be great, but Ephraim shall be greater than he; he shall become a multitude in the midst of the earth. Another Scripture also says concerning scattered Israel, that Ephraim has mixed himself among the people; and speaking of the gathering of Israel in the latter-day dispensation, the Prophet Jeremiah has said that God would gather Israel and lead them as a shepherd does his flock, and says he, I am Father to Israel, but Ephraim is my first-born. Now, if Ephraim has been scattered and has mixed himself with the people until their identity is lost among the nations, how are they going to be recognized and

receive the promised blessings—how is it that Ephraim shall be the first-born of the Lord in the great gathering of the latter-days? If we turn back to the blessing which Moses gave to the twelve tribes of Israel, as found in Deuteronomy, we shall there see that in blessing the tribe of Joseph, he especially charged them with the duty of gathering the people from the ends of the earth. Said he, Joseph's horns are like the horns of unicorns, which shall push the people together from the ends of the earth, and they are the thousands of Manasseh and ten thousands of Ephraim; showing that it shall be the ten thousands of Ephraim and thousands of Manasseh who shall be in the foremost ranks of bearing the Gospel message to the ends of the earth, and gathering Israel from the four quarters of the world in the last days. Whoever has read the Book of Mormon carefully will have learned that the remnants of the house of Joseph dwelt upon the American continent; and that Lehi learned by searching the records of his fathers that were written upon the plates of brass, that he was of the lineage of Manasseh. The Prophet Joseph informed us that the record of Lehi, was contained on the 116 pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgement is given us in the first Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters, thus fulfilling the words of Jacob upon Ephraim and Manasseh in the 48th chapter of Genesis, which says: "And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers

Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the land." Thus these descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim grew together upon this American continent, with a sprinkling from the house of Judah, from Mulek descended, who left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi, and founded the colony afterwards known as Zarahemla and found by Mosiah—thus making a combination, an intermixture of Ephraim and Manasseh with the remnants of Judah, and for aught we know, the remnants of some other tribes that might have accompanied Mulek. And such have grown up on the American continent. But we are not informed that the Prophet Joseph and the first Elders of this Church who were called and chosen of God to bear the Priesthood and lay the foundation of this work, were descended from any portion of those remnants that peopled America anciently, and whose history is given us in the Book of Mormon. Yet we find in the Doctrine and Covenants the declaration concerning the first Elders of this Church, that they were of the house of Ephraim; and another passage referring to the wicked and rebellious, says, they shall be cut off from among the people, for the rebellious are not of the seed of Ephraim. And there is a passage in the Book of Mormon which is a part of the prophecy of Joseph written on the plates of brass and quoted by Lehi, concerning the Prophet Joseph Smith, who, it says, was to be raised up in the latter days to translate the records of the Nephites, and whose name should be Joseph, and who should be a descendant of that Joseph that was sold into Egypt, and also that that should be the name of his father.

Now if the Prophet Joseph Smith was that chosen vessel out of the loins of Joseph, it may be asked by some, what evidence have we of this lineage? I answer, the testimony of God, the best of all testimony, for no record kept by mortal man can be equal to it; and that, too, by reason of that quaint but sensible old maxim, "it takes a wise man to know who his father was, but a fool may find out who his mother was." And even if we had the lineage of the fathers, it would not be as sure and certain to us as the word of the Lord. For he has had his eye upon the chosen spirits that have come upon the earth in the various ages from the beginning of the world up to this time; and as he said to Abraham, speaking of the multitudes of spirits that were shown unto him in heavenly vision, you see that some are more noble than others? Yes. Then you may know there were some others still more noble than they; and he speaks in the same manner of the multitude of the heavenly bodies; and said he to Abraham, thou art one of those noble ones whom I have chosen to be my rulers. The Lord has sent those noble spirits into the world to perform a special work, and appointed their times; and they have always fulfilled the mission given them, and their future glory and exaltation is secured unto them; and that is what I understand by the doctrine of election spoken of by the Apostle Paul and other sacred writers: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be confirmed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Such were called and chosen and elected of God to perform a certain work at a certain time of the world's history and in due time he fitted them for that