

**ATTENTION AND REFLECTION NECESSARY TO AN  
INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE—SELF-CONTROL—UNITY OF  
THE GODHEAD AND OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

A DISCOURSE BY PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE,  
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REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

I have the same diffidence in my feelings that most public speakers have, and am apt to think that others can speak better and more edifying than I can. There are but few public speakers but what feel more or less timidity. That is probably not so much a man-fearing spirit as it is a natural delicacy or timidity. All of you have doubtless to some extent realized the same feeling, either in large or small assemblies, and also in social conversation. People generally are more or less disturbed and thrown off their balance by the sound of their own voices, especially when speaking to an audience, even after being much used to addressing assemblies. Some of our most eloquent and interesting speakers would rather do almost anything than speak to the congregations that assemble here. That diffidence or timidity we must dispense with. When it becomes our duty to talk, we ought to be willing to talk. If we never exhibit the knowledge within us, the people will not know really whether we have any. Interchanging our ideas and exhibiting that which we believe and understand affords an opportunity for detecting and correcting errors and increasing our stock of valuable information. I have frequently thought that I should be very happy if I could hear the Elders of Israel speak their feelings and impart

their knowledge pertaining to their fellow beings, to earthly things, to heavenly things, to godliness, and God.

I am sensible that people are not gifted and capacitated alike. There is not that depth of understanding and intensity of thought in some that there is in others, neither is there the same scope of perception. Some are quick to apprehend, while others are slow. Also while a speaker is communicating his opinions, views, and feelings, a portion of so large a congregation as this will perhaps be giving the most strict attention, while the minds of the other portion are wandering at the moment he may be advancing rich ideas, clothed in language choice and eloquent. That inattention by some leads to a difference of understanding among the people, through a misapprehension of the speaker's meaning. True, some persons may use language that a portion of the congregation are unacquainted with; consequently, they could not be expected to readily apprehend the idea designed to be communicated, though that is by no means a common incident in teachings from this stand.

If a congregation wish to be instructed so as to understand alike and alike receive an increase of wisdom and knowledge, their minds must be intent on the subject before them.