

THE GATHERING—PRACTICAL DUTIES—EMIGRATION OF THE POOR—MISSION TO ST. JOSEPH

DISCOURSE BY ELDER ERASTUS SNOW, DELIVERED IN THE NEW TABERNACLE,

SALT LAKE CITY, APRIL 8, 1868

Reported by David W. Evans

Thirty-eight years ago the Prophet Joseph Smith, in a little upper room in Father Whitmer's house, Fayette, Seneca County, New York State, gathered six men together by commandment of God, and proceeded to organize the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Perhaps this was the smallest number with which a church was ever organized. But the Savior compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed, which, He said, is the least of all seeds, but which, when grown, becomes greater than all herbs, so that the fowls of the air can lodge in its branches. From this small beginning the Latter-day Saints have become a great people. That which has brought this about, specially, has been the fulfilling of the commandments of God, given through Joseph and the ancient prophets, in reference to the gathering of His people from Babylon in the latter days. One reason assigned by the Lord for the gathering of His people is set forth in the revelations of St. John, where He says, "Come out of her, O my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This, in a few words, explains the chief reason for the Lord requiring His people to gather together. But the prophets Isaiah and Micah assign another good reason—they predict that the mountain of the Lord's house in the last days shall be established

in the tops of the mountains, and the nations shall flow unto it, saying, "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; for he will teach us of his ways, that we may learn to walk in his paths."

These two scriptures show unto us that the Lord has required His people to gather in the last days, that they might escape the sins of the wicked, and the plagues which shall be poured out upon them, and that they might be taught in His paths, taught to govern themselves, to correct their foolish habits and customs, and to train themselves and their offspring that they may be able to build up Zion according to the law and order of Heaven.

We have already made a commendable advance in this direction. I rejoice in moving to and fro among this people to see the spirit of improvement manifested by them in both temporal and spiritual things, and the increase of unity in their midst. Yet there is still room for further improvement in all these matters. There is one principle which fathers and mothers, and the Elders of Israel generally, should understand and teach to their children, that is, what trials and tribulations this people have passed through to establish themselves in this, their mountain home; and that these things have been borne for the Kingdom of Heav-