

THE LATTER-DAY WORK—OBEYING THE COMMANDMENTS

DISCOURSE BY ELDER ORSON PRATT, DELIVERED IN THE NEW TABERNACLE,

SALT LAKE CITY, MAY 5, 1870

Reported by David W. Evans

It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I arise before so large an assembly of people this afternoon, in the capacity of a General Conference. It is truly wonderful to me that God has begun so great and important a work in the day in which I am permitted to live. I do not read in history of any other work of a similar character since the creation of the world. We behold before us, in these interior wilds of North America, a great people called the Latter-day Saints—a people whose faith and doctrine are one, who believe in the same God, and in the same great plan of salvation; who believe that God has established His kingdom on the earth for the last time. It has been a manifestation of faith on the part of this people to gather here; they have exhibited to one another and before all mankind that they have faith in the doctrines which they have received. What other purpose could have gathered out so great a people? If we had gathered into a healthy, rich country where there was an expectation of bettering our condition, temporarily; where there were prospects of our becoming exceedingly rich in the goods of this world, it might have been supposed that we had some selfish motive in view in thus assembling ourselves together. But there were no such prospects before us. We came here, some 1,200 miles, from the Eastern settlements to this

isolated region, almost naked and barefoot, having been despoiled by our enemies—having suffered the loss of property to the extent of millions—having been reduced to the last degree of poverty. We came here—not into the midst of a land of cities and villages, not into the midst of a country where all was prepared for us beforehand; but we came into the heart of a desert, since, in some measure, reclaimed from its barrenness and sterility. We came because we had faith in our religion, because we not only believed, but most of us knew with a certainty, that God had spoken from on high and had commanded us to gather together. In this we have manifested a sincerity that ought to be convincing to all the world that we have embraced a religion in all of the depths of the sincerity of our hearts. We did not care for the riches and honors of the world; we did not care for the pleasures of our native countries, nor for the luxuries with which those countries abounded; but we came because we verily believed in our hearts that it was our duty to do so in obedience to the voice of the Lord through His servants. It is true that some of this people came to this land because they were forced hither by persecution; but whether obliged to come or not we, many of us, clearly understood from the spirit of prophecy and revelation, as manifested through our prophet and leader before his