

journal of discourses brigham young

Journal of Discourses Brigham Young is a significant collection of speeches and sermons delivered by prominent leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), particularly during the early years of the church's establishment in the 19th century. This journal serves as an essential resource for understanding the teachings, doctrines, and historical context of the church during this formative period. In this article, we will explore the origins, content, significance, and impact of the Journal of Discourses, with a particular focus on the contributions of Brigham Young, who was the second president of the LDS Church and a pivotal figure in its history.

Origins of the Journal of Discourses

The Journal of Discourses was first published in 1854 and compiled by various editors, with George D. Watt being one of the primary contributors. The collection includes speeches given by leading church figures, including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and others. The primary aim of the journal was to document and preserve the teachings of these leaders for future generations, as well as to provide a means for church members to access the doctrinal insights and guidance provided during church meetings.

The journal was published in a series of volumes, with a total of 26 volumes released between 1854 and 1886. Each volume consists of discourses presented during various gatherings, including general conferences and local meetings. The publication quickly gained popularity among church members and became an important tool for teaching and learning within the LDS community.

Content and Structure

The content of the Journal of Discourses primarily consists of sermons, addresses, and discourses delivered by church leaders. These speeches cover a wide array of topics, including theological principles, church governance, moral teachings, and social issues. The journal is structured in a way that allows readers to easily reference specific speeches and teachings. Below are some of the main themes present in the Journal of Discourses:

Theological Insights

1. **God and the Nature of Deity:** Many discourses delve into the nature of God, the Godhead, and the relationship between humanity and the divine. Brigham Young, in particular, emphasized the corporeal nature of God and the potential for humanity to become like Him.
2. **Salvation and Exaltation:** The journal addresses doctrines of salvation, the plan of redemption, and the importance of baptism and temple ordinances. Leaders often spoke about the necessity of following the teachings of Christ to achieve exaltation.
3. **Revelation and Prophecy:** The role of modern revelation in guiding the church is a recurrent theme.

Speakers often emphasized that God continues to communicate with His children through prophets and personal revelation.

Social and Moral Teachings

1. **Family and Marriage:** The importance of family and the sanctity of marriage are prominent topics. Discourses often included teachings on the eternal nature of family relationships and the significance of plural marriage, which was practiced by some church leaders during this period.
2. **Community and Cooperation:** Brigham Young and other leaders frequently spoke about the importance of building a strong community, emphasizing cooperation among members for economic and social stability. This included teachings on self-sufficiency, mutual aid, and the establishment of communal enterprises.
3. **Education and Self-Improvement:** The journal also highlights the value of education and personal development. Leaders encouraged church members to seek knowledge and improve themselves spiritually, intellectually, and socially.

Significance of the Journal of Discourses

The Journal of Discourses holds immense significance within the LDS Church for several reasons:

Preservation of Teachings

The journal serves as a vital record of the teachings of early church leaders, providing insights into their beliefs and practices. As the church grew and evolved, these discourses became a point of reference for understanding church doctrine and history.

Historical Context

The Journal of Discourses offers a window into the socio-political and cultural environment of the 19th century, particularly in the American West. It reflects the challenges faced by church members, including persecution, migration, and the establishment of new communities in Utah. The discourses frequently address these challenges, providing a sense of resilience and purpose among church members.

Doctrinal Foundation

The teachings found in the Journal of Discourses continue to influence contemporary LDS theology and practice. Many of the principles articulated by Brigham Young and other leaders have been integrated into church doctrine and are still taught in church meetings and classes today.

Brigham Young's Contributions

Brigham Young's contributions to the Journal of Discourses are particularly notable, as he was a key figure in the establishment and growth of the LDS Church. His discourses reflect his leadership style, theological insights, and vision for the church.

Leadership Style

Brigham Young was known for his pragmatic and sometimes controversial approach to leadership. His speeches often addressed practical issues facing church members, such as settlement patterns, agriculture, and economic development. He emphasized the importance of self-reliance and community cooperation, urging members to work together for the common good.

Theological Insights

Young's theological contributions are also significant. He expanded on Joseph Smith's teachings about the nature of God and humanity's potential. His discourses often focused on the idea of becoming like God, which has become a foundational belief in LDS theology.

Controversial Topics

Brigham Young's teachings included some controversial topics, such as polygamy. His discourses often defended the practice, emphasizing its perceived necessity in the context of the church's growth and the establishment of strong family units. These teachings have been the subject of much discussion and debate within and outside the church.

Impact and Legacy

The Journal of Discourses has had a lasting impact on both the LDS Church and the broader landscape of American religious thought. Its influence can be seen in several areas:

Teaching and Doctrine

Many Latter-day Saints continue to reference the Journal of Discourses in their study of church doctrine. It serves as a historical document that provides context for contemporary teachings and practices.

Scholarly Research

The journal has also become a valuable resource for scholars studying the history of the LDS Church, American religious movements, and 19th-century American culture. Researchers often turn to the Journal of Discourses for insights into the beliefs and practices of early church leaders and their followers.

Contemporary Discussions

In recent years, the Journal of Discourses has been revisited in discussions about church history and doctrine. Its teachings are often examined in light of contemporary issues faced by the church, including questions of gender, race, and modernity.

Conclusion

In summary, the Journal of Discourses is a crucial resource for understanding the teachings and history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, particularly during the leadership of Brigham Young. Through its preservation of sermons and discourses, the journal provides insights into the theological, social, and cultural contexts of the 19th century. Brigham Young's contributions to the journal reflect his leadership style and theological insights, shaping the beliefs and practices of the church that continue to resonate today. As the church moves forward, the Journal of Discourses remains a testament to the enduring legacy of its early leaders and the ongoing journey of its members.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Journal of Discourses?

The Journal of Discourses is a collection of sermons and speeches given by early leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, primarily from 1854 to 1886.

Who is Brigham Young?

Brigham Young was the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and played a key role in the westward expansion of the church and the settlement of Utah.

How many volumes does the Journal of Discourses consist of?

The Journal of Discourses consists of 26 volumes, which compile the teachings and discourses of church leaders, including Brigham Young.

What topics are commonly addressed in Brigham Young's discourses?

Brigham Young's discourses often cover topics such as theology, community building, governance, and practical living principles for church members.

Why is the Journal of Discourses significant in Mormon history?

The Journal of Discourses is significant because it provides insight into the beliefs, practices, and cultural context of early Latter-day Saints and the foundational teachings of the church.

Are the teachings in the Journal of Discourses considered doctrine?

While the Journal of Discourses contains teachings from church leaders, it is not considered official doctrine by the church; doctrine is established through canonized scripture and official church publications.

How has the Journal of Discourses influenced modern Mormon thought?

The Journal of Discourses has influenced modern Mormon thought by providing historical context and teachings that continue to be referenced in discussions of church doctrine and practice.

Where can one access the Journal of Discourses?

The Journal of Discourses can be accessed through various online resources, libraries, and some church-owned archives, as well as in print.

What is a common misconception about the Journal of Discourses?

A common misconception is that all statements made in the Journal of Discourses are binding doctrine, whereas many are personal opinions of individual leaders.

What role did the Journal of Discourses play in the establishment of Utah?

The Journal of Discourses played a role in establishing Utah by providing guidance and encouragement from church leaders, shaping the community's values, governance, and social structure during the settlement period.

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