

Written for this Paper.

### LIFE'S DIVERSITY CONSIDERED.

The diversity of thoughts, things, desires, possessions in this life, as associated with individuals, communities, or nations, constitute a vast field for observation, for speculation, perchance; and comment thereon is just as liable to be erroneous as to be correct, to be false in fact as to be true.

Some have endeavored to account for this diversity by assuming that much if not all of this life is the result of pre-existent conditions and conduct, and these assert further that the future will be as evidently the result of the present. Others take an altogether different view, in assuming that this is a condition of probation, of trial; and looking at it from the ordinary standpoint it is easy to conclude that the essential essence of trial is deprivation, that things once possessed and enjoyed are as a vague yet forceful memory; which is the parent of aspiration, desire, effort, and the probable prophecy of finally renewed possession in this life or the life to come.

It is assumed on the hypothesis, that diversity of power, capacity, possession, were as varied there as here, that accumulation, increase, progress, was "native and to the manor born" with some, while others were comparatively stationary, or unable even under the superior conditions of that line to make that individual headway which is claimed as the undisputed destiny of intelligent beings.

From a human standpoint deprivation seems the acme of trial. It is the keen edge of sorrow, when death removes the dearly loved. The weeping wife or mother and the strong man bending to the storm which downs his household's goods are evidences of this. The man reduced from affluence in which he has been raised, to which he has been accustomed, is by reason thereof unnerved and tried. The one who from a condition of freedom is delivered bound hand and foot to slavery, is vastly more affected than the one in serfdom born, and with his fathers the unappreciated victims of unknown and inexperienced freedom.

The past is largely veiled from the human race; but is not the love of beauty, order, intelligence, refinement, truth, righteousness, possessions, income or normal to the intelligent spirit? Is not appreciation, longing, interest and desire, the subtle, voiceless or expressed, testimony to pre-existent and satisfied opportunities and conditions? Or is our love of excellence but a stimulus and prophecy of something yet to come, the evidence only of capacity and not the whisperings of experience?

Can it be, then, that there are men now possessed of wealth, influence, power, who were strangers to either era they tabernacled in the flesh? Is it possible that they sought for this probation, for these gifts, endowments and blessings, with the promise that they would demonstrate under new conditions (not their ability only) but their fair, honest, sanctified use for humanity, of that which might be theirs in the way of trial, allowed as their opportunity and desire? Is it possible that there are those in poverty, dwelling in hovels, who had their

palaces in the past, yet now in deprivation having their covenants and faith tested, submitting to humiliation and tears, yet without murmuring "condemning the cross," and "despising the shame" (as Jesus did) that eventually they may "sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on High?" Are there men entrusted with power, influence, authority, that it may be demonstrated how unfit they are for the exercise of rule, and that by this experience they might if possible learn? Are there men subject to oppression, to tyranny, to abuse, to misunderstanding, to misrepresentation, that they may prove their patience, their endurance, their submission, after having been tried already with rule? Who can answer these questions, and give a solution to the multitudinous and inexplicable (almost) queries that must arise in the heart of every thinking man?

Temporal prosperity does not then appear to be always a mark of special favor as granted by divine purpose, but it may be the outcome of persistent seeking in this, coupled with promises and covenants made heretofore; and it may also be that that which to human eye and estimate is poverty, failure, non-success, is the indisputable answer to prayer and the expression of intense faith, that no transient thing might intervene between the soul's allegiance to God and truth in the midst of temptation and throughout a probationary career.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be false and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," were the words and wish of Agur; "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content;" said an old writer, and the old church catechism urged upon its learners, to be "content in that station of life into which it hath pleased God to call them." But these conceptions of sanctified resting upon the Divine hand are altogether incompatible with modern strain and ambition. Men want the earth, communities are jealous of each other, nations are all reaching out after possessions, selfishness and aggrandizement seem to be the all conquering and triumphant forces of this generation, whether individuals or combinations point the way.

Ancient Israel clamored for a king and their prayer was answered; the widow in the New Testament cried out against her adversary and was avenged because of her importunity. A well known business man attributes his wealth to his persistent seeking therefor, and claims that had he given the same attention to spiritual truths that he could have been as successful that way as in the other. So perchance some men have achieved success in this direction or that, because having set their affections on that thing, their prayer has been answered in wrath and indignation, until that which they wrongly esteemed as the means became an end a lever of destruction rather than—of expected blessing and use.

Pooling all these issues, with their causes and effects, motive, originally the main spring, loses its tension by misapplication; money, lands, learning, influence, authority, good and

legitimate when honorably acquired, can become when perverted instruments of oppression, of personal aggrandizement, or as Paul had it, "a staking horse for gain!"

The idea of responsibility is a myth to many men, for circumstances and indulgence have weakened the moral sense; perverted religious sentiment; dethroned every lofty conception of manly duty; and having smoothed the way for self-pride and personal laudation, God, the arbiter of destiny and Giver of good, is as far from thought as stewardship, whether the endowment be talent, business ability, the power of accumulation, the capacity for knowledge, or the possession of authority or influence so called.

The genius of the Gospel gives the key to life. It reveals the purpose and intent thereof, whether past, present or future. It asks of man that he sanctify himself, "crucifying the world with its affections and lusts," and consecrating (as thousands do in their prayers) all that they have and are to the welfare of humanity; redeeming the poverty-stricken, taking thought for the untrained, enlightening the ignorant; being eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf, a staff to the weary, a friend to the helpless, a savior to the lost. The word of Divine authority is that "he who seeks to save his life shall lose it, but he who seeks to lose his life shall find it." This is not the promise of society, of human government, of fleeting fashion, or of unregenerate human nature in any department of its workings, political, civil or ecclesiastical.

With all the admirable traits of character possessed by the Latter-day Saints, with all their toil and sacrifice, as it were, with still their preaching and exhorting, there is still room for vast advancement, for grander lessons, for Godlike development. Mayhap (considering all things) they have done well. At all events it is no man's prerogative to measure, only as he in his own experience, realizes "the affliction whence he was taken, or the rock from which he was hewn," and then feels conscious how far his best efforts and highest thoughts are below the grand ideal enshrined in the Gospel, and revealed according to receptive capacity and faith in the as yet unseen.

This spirit is not to be bounded by days or seasons. It is not fitful or spasmodic; not confined to Christmas, fast days, or seasons of sorrow and humiliation. It needs to be "an every-day affair," in social and common life, in business and religion, in all the multiplied channels of good, that brotherhood may supersede selfishness, right the principle of expediency, and rule in an overruling Providence, the treifful, despondent anticipation of a future which may never come, or if it does may be only a father's blessing in unattractive guise!

### A NEW WITNESS.

The latest published volume from the pen of Elder B. H. Roberts is a handsome book, octavo size and printed in clear type, of 510 pages, entitled "A New Witness for God." The work is intended for general circulation, as well as being adapted