

REMARKS

By President JOHN YOUNG, at the funeral of his sister Fanny Young, June 12, 1859.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

I will make a few remarks on the occasion which has called us together to pay our last respects to our sister.

There is something solemn in these duties. I feel willing to acknowledge the hand of God in this as I do in all other providences. Death is said to be the king of terrors, and I believe that most of the human family feel a terror of death. We part with our friends, see them struggle in the last pangs of nature, and yet in such scenes there is something which gives joy, consolation, and satisfaction to our hearts.

The gospel of salvation revealed by the ministry of angels to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the last days, which we have become acquainted with, has measurably taken away the sting of death, and allayed the fears so disagreeable to the great majority of the human family. Our sister has paid the last demands of the penalty, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou must return." This lot awaits us all, and ere long we must pay the debt.

Do I feel to mourn? Yes, I feel to mourn on this occasion, as I have done on many other like occasions in the course of my life. Forty four years ago to-day I mourned the loss of our mother, when we laid her in the silent tomb. Since that time the head of the family has departed from this life, and now our sister Fanny has gone to the spirit world.

The greatest thing I have on my mind is to so order my life and apply my heart unto wisdom in honoring the holy Priesthood, and the religion of Jesus Christ, that I may be prepared, as our sister was, to meet my last moments. My heart is comforted, when I realize the blessing of the everlasting gospel, that we have a hope full of immortality and eternal life. We do not mourn as those who have no hope, but we rejoice and contemplate the time as not being far distant when we shall again embrace our friends in that land where death, sickness, and sorrow will have no dominion over us. My prayer, from day to day, is that I may be constantly prepared to rest in those mansions which are prepared for the faithful children of God.

In the world we have tribulations, and we rejoice in them, for they prepare us for a glorious resurrection. We must go, one after another; and I sometimes think that it would be rather more pleasant if a number of the Saints could go together, but this does not seem to be the order of heaven. I rejoice when I contemplate that in the morning of the resurrection I am to meet my kindred spirits, my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and the Saints of the Most High, to part no more.

My exhortation to my brethren and sisters is to live our religion, that we may be prepared for the society of the blessed; that we may have the testimony of Christ within us continually, and know that we are born of God and are heirs of salvation according to the promise made to the faithful. When we have this testimony, we have a great boon of heaven. My prayer is that we may all so live as to keep the testimony of Jesus within us, for we know not the day, hour, nor minute when we may be called upon to pass the veil and enter into another stage of action which is now unknown to us. Many of our brethren and friends are taken, as it were, in a moment, and it behooves us to be ready to be looking for the coming of the Son of Man, who is to appear unto his Saints without sin unto salvation—that we may be prepared to meet him.

I rejoice exceedingly before God that the gospel of salvation has been revealed in these last days, and for the principles of the kingdom of God which have been revealed by his servants from time to time, that we can know as the ancient Saints knew, and come to an understanding of the principles of salvation. I do not feel in regard to the things of this world, nor that which is to come, as I used to before I became acquainted with the principles of salvation. I feel solemn, and yet I feel to rejoice. These providences call upon me, upon you, to do our work right as we pass along, and to reckon with ourselves—understand what we are about, and how things are between us and our God. Let us do right all the time, for if we do a wrong, we must make it right, or make restitution. Let us have the perfection of righteousness within us continually. This gives us comfort, joy, and consolation, and we are prepared at all times for anything and everything that awaits us here in this vale of tears.

I have been called upon to part with my father, mother, five sisters, and three daughters. All my brothers are still alive. I never could weep at the loss of my friends, but does this prove that I do not feel? Not at all. I do not think that a man or woman that can weep on such occasions feels as keenly as those who cannot. When my father died in Quincy, Illinois, I was some seven or eight hundred miles from that place. Though so far from me, he had been company for me every day; and when I heard of his death I felt lonesome for a whole year, yet I could not weep; and I have been affected in like manner at the death of all my friends who have died. I have felt lonesome because I was deprived of their society, and of their words of consolation and counsel which used to cheer me.

We feel the loss of our friends—we cannot again mingle in their society here until after the resurrection. They have fallen asleep—have passed the vale of death—and we feel it. Yet we feel to rejoice when one of our friends is called to lay down the body. Though it was but yesterday since we saw our sister struggle with the last pangs of nature, I have realized to-day that she is exulting in the society of the blessed—of our beloved Prophet and kindred spirits who have gone before in exploring the fields of paradise. Multitudes of worlds like this would be no temptation to sister Fanny to come back here and

suffer the struggles of another mortal life, nor to any other person that makes their escape from here. I rejoice in this, and the time is not far distant when we must depart, but, thank the Lord, we shall be together there; and the time will come when we shall again be together on this planet, for I believe that this will be the home of the Saints when it is celestialized, and all things are fulfilled which have been promised.

Let us strive to make our escape as our beloved sister has, and like her live a life of righteousness. She sought earnestly to be prepared for the day when her spirit should be separated from the mortal tabernacle. I know that she fought a good fight and finished her course with joy. I know that she has kept the faith and, so far as the deeds done in the body are concerned, is prepared to enter into the rest that remains for all who are faithful.

My prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, is that we may be prepared to follow her, and like her fall asleep in the arms of our Savior to meet and associate in the blessed world where death has no dominion over us. Amen.

REMARKS

By President Joseph Young, at the funeral of his sister Fanny Young, June 12, 1859.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

This may be a good occasion to suggest a few hints, and I cheerfully accept the invitation to make a few remarks.

It is kind to pay that respect to our kindred which is customary among our neighbors and brethren. It is a custom and a tradition almost as sacred as religion, to attend on the occasion of the funeral of a friend and hear a sermon and prayers. I like this custom, for upon such occasions truth is apt to settle down in the heart.

I am well acquainted with the history of sister Fanny, for it fell to my lot to be much of the time in the neighborhood where she dwelt. We could see each other once a week and, often, once a day, and mutually interest each other in reading and conversation. She was a good reader, and of a devotional turn of mind. She had fine sympathies and keen sensibilities, yea, I may say that she was overcharged with them, as much so as, in this rude world, to cause her much unhappiness through taking the cares of this life to heart. I am sometimes glad that I have no finer feelings than I am now in the possession of, while tabernacled in this body.

I always took pains to gratify sister Fanny's feelings, and I feel happy and much satisfied to-day that I took that course and helped, in some respects, to smooth her path through life by trying to please and comfort her when I saw her in afflictions. Her other brothers, her sisters, and friends have done the same, for she naturally enlisted the sympathies of all with whom she associated. And yet she suffered much on account of her fine toned temperament and her poor bodily health.

Since her arrival in the valley she has been nearly all the time in brother Brigham's family, not because of any lack of brotherly feeling for her on the part of her other brothers, but because he had better accommodations and more facilities for making her comfortable. For some eight or ten weeks before her death it pleased her to share the hospitality of br. James McKnight, whose wife, sister Fanny's niece, took every pains to make her aunt comfortable, as also did br. James, for which they have my warmest feelings and thanks. I say this to gratify my own feelings. They have done well, and I bless them all the time. Sister McKnight manifested toward her aunt the sympathy and feeling of a daughter to her mother. And sister Eliza Young, the wife of our nephew William G. Young, acted nobly toward her aunt Fanny during her last illness. I do not know that she slept at any time when she knew or felt that her aunt wanted anything.

I do not wish to make a lengthy discourse.—This appears to be a day consecrated, and there is a consecrated spirit here, and a holy, sacred feeling.

Sister Fanny was a Saint, and she waits in Paradise for the quickening of her body. That is the fate of all—we all must pass that ordeal and to me it is a joyful thought. Since we have become acquainted with the gospel and its holy principles, occasions like the present are not so grave as they used to be before we heard a Prophet's voice revealing the glorious hope of the gospel of peace, reaching and taking hold of things within the veil. When I contemplate these things they absorb every thought, every anticipation, and every feeling from mortal pursuits. The subject is lofty and soul-stirring, destroying the love of this world, and drawing out the affections after that which is eternal.

What a glorious thought, that we shall again enjoy the society of our friends, of our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, and the Saints of God; that they will rise triumphant over death and the grave. There the fine sensibilities I alluded to will be most perfectly satisfied. Such considerations fill my heart with joy. My hope is full of immortality and eternal life, and my heart is as buoyant as a roe on the mountains.

I pray God, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless the brethren and sisters, that we may live our religion continually, not only by the hour, and by the day, but by the minute; and that every breath we draw we may feel our dependence upon God and never let sin step in between us and the shining countenance of our Father in heaven, to bring us under the shades of condemnation, but that we may walk in the light as He is in the light, that we may have fellowship one with another and be prepared to dwell with Him and with his Son Jesus Christ eternally in the heavens. Amen.

ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

Sister, thou wast mild and lovely,
Gentle as the summer breeze,
Pleasant as the air of evening,
As it floats among the trees.

REMARKS

By President Brigham Young, at the funeral of his sister Fanny Young, June 12, 1859.

[REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.]

Were we to conform to the traditions of our fathers, the brothers of sister Fanny would not be permitted to speak on this occasion. But is it wrong for a father to preach the funeral sermon of his child?—or for a husband to preach the funeral sermon of his wife?—or for a brother to officiate in like manner for a sister? If so, wherein is it wrong or sinful? Four of sister Fanny's five brothers are here to-day, and I wish them to do all the preaching to be done on this occasion.

Our father long since departed to the spirit world—he is not here to give counsel to his children. Brother Phineas resides in this city, but he is not here; and we, the four brothers who are present, have designed to say what is to be said, and to perform the funeral ceremonies of our sister, in this respect.

It would gratify me to spend an hour or two to express in part the numerous principles, ideas, inductions, and connections between the spirit world and our present condition, that frequently fill my mind on such occasions as this. Many of you know that I especially delight to dwell upon such subjects, but I do not wish to occupy so much time now. We will make our exercises short, and to the point, while we perform the last act of kindness that can be bestowed upon mortals.

It is customary to pay great respect to the dead; this I do, but how do I pay it? It is very fashionable and customary to mourn deeply for the dead; and it is customary in some countries to hire mourners and observe much ceremony upon the death and interment of relatives and friends. I wish to pay, in a strictly fitting and decent manner, the respect due to the remains of my sister Fanny, due in reference to the resurrection of the very dust that will moulder in the coffin before us.

If I am faithful to my religion, I shall see the component parts that organized the body gathered together. When these parts are gathered together from the elements, they will appear as sister Fanny, not in mortal flesh, but in an immortal state. When I meet her in the morning of the resurrection, she will hail me as one who has acted the part of a brother, son, and protector; she will hail me as her benefactor, and I now wish to pay respect to her departure from this sphere of action. We have made her as comfortable as we could through life; we will honor her in death, and hope to be present when she is resurrected. Now her body is subject to decomposition, and will return to its mother earth to remain until it shall be called forth again.

The organization of the human tabernacle is a great mystery, but it would not be if we could see and understand. Could the veil between us and the spiritual existence be rent, we should behold a greater mystery in the organization of the spirit.

As has been observed here, touching the ideas that men have of the principles of eternal life, mankind have been veiled in utter darkness, in which the great majority remain at this day. The wicked world inquire for the man who can inform them how and by what means the mortal body and the immortal spirit are so intimately united. To say nothing of their organization, the wisest and greatest physiologists have failed to supply the information so earnestly sought upon this subject. We see life spring into existence all around us. Where is its fountain, and how is it originated? It exists for a day, a night, a year, or an age, and it is gone, and who can say where?

Who can tell what has become of the life that dwelt in that tabernacle, causing it to think?—that lit up the eye with living fire, and caused the mouth to utter forth wisdom? Can mortal man tell? Not unless he is inspired by the Almighty and understands eternal things. The origin of all things is in eternity. Like a cloud passing across a clear sky, like a bird that suddenly flits across our path, like a pure gushing stream from a hidden fountain that soon sinks in some mountain chasm, so, apparently, life flashes into this mortal existence and passes away.

I do not mourn for sister Fanny; I rejoice. She has lived upwards of three score years and ten, and exhibited the retention of sound sense to her last days with us here. She said to her sister Nancy, a short time ago, "If you hear of my being dead before you come to see me again, let the first thing you say be 'hallelujah.'" That remark, to me, evidences the retention of sound judgment. It also appears to me that very many of the Latter Day Saints are as far from good wholesome ideas and principles, touching their heavenly privileges, as the east is from the west. They covet the riches of this world, craving to serve themselves—to satisfy the sordid disposition within them. Had they the sense of an angel and were they in possession of mountains of gold heaped up higher and deeper, broader and longer than these mountains on the east and west of us, they would say, "that vast amount of gold is as nothing when compared with the privilege of even living in this day and age of the world when the gospel is preached."

And when the Lord has committed his holy Priesthood to men on earth, without which no mortal being can be prepared to enter into the celestial kingdom of God, how do many of the Elders treat it? That question I do not wish to answer, but I really wish that such persons would learn a little good sense. Generations have come and gone without the privilege of hearing the sound of the gospel which has come to you through Joseph Smith—that was revealed to him from heaven by angels and visions. We have the gospel and the keys of the holy Priesthood.

Sister Fanny has been faithful; her spirit is now in the spirit world. Where do you suppose that world is? We used to think and talk a great deal about this subject, inquiring where heaven

is, and where is the heaven of heavens. Let me tell you that sister Fanny cannot dwell there until she obtains her resurrection, neither can any other being. The spirit world I now refer to pertains to this earth, so far as spirits who have tabernacled, or may hereafter tabernacle here, are concerned.

Sister Fanny was baptised for the remission of sins, and received the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. She lived according to the precepts and ordinances that God has revealed through his servant the Prophet, by which men can be saved and brought back into his presence. But is her spirit in the third heavens? No. Will it go there? Not until she again possesses her body. Can she see the Lord? Yes, if he unveils himself. Can she converse with angels? Yes, if they are sent to converse with her. Is she in paradise? Yes. Where do the spirits of the wicked go? To the same place or kingdom pertaining to this earth. They do not go to the depths of hell, neither can they until they become angels of devils.

Is a Saint subject to the power of the devil in the spirit world? No, because he has gained the victory through faith and can command Satan, and he must obey. How is it with the wicked? The devil has power over them to distress and afflict them; they are in hell. Can the angels of heaven administer to them? Yes, if they are sent to do so. What can be done for them? The spirit of sister Fanny, and the spirit of every man and woman, who has died in the faith of the gospel, since it has been restored, will have the power to teach those wicked spirits, and all who have gone to the spirit world without having heard the gospel in the flesh, and say to them, if you will now repent and believe, the Lord will even now provide the means that you may be officiated for on the earth, in those ordinances that must be attended to here. Sister Fanny can do good in her capacity and calling, as well as Joseph, the Prophet, can in his. He will hold the keys; he will rule, govern and control all things in the spiritual world, pertaining to this dispensation, until he has finished his work.

I do not wish to occupy much of the time, but when I am led to speak on these points I am much interested. How few there are who understand how hard it is for a man's eyes to be opened. How few of the Elders of this church prefer the interests of the kingdom of God to their worldly interests. With far too many it is, "My family; my farm is going to wreck; my store is neglected; my business must be attended to;" and let the kingdom of God take care of itself. Such men will remain in darkness.

To possess and retain the spirit of the gospel, gather Israel, redeem Zion, and save the world must be attended to first and foremost, and should be the prevailing desire in the hearts of the First Presidency, of the Elders of Israel, and of every officer in the church and kingdom of God.

The Lord commands, controls, and governs. A little more faith in the name of Jesus Christ, and I can say to my enemies, be thou rebuked and stay thou there. I then can say to the power of the devil, be thou rebuked; and to evil spirits, come not within these walls, and they could not enter. A little more faith and, by way of comparison, I can say to my wheat and corn, grow, and command the heavens to shed forth rain.

Suppose that the whole people could see things as they are, they would soon be able to control the elements by the power of their faith. This people, since we believe that they are in the kingdom of God, must so live as to gain power and faith to control, all things of a perishable nature, and thus prepare themselves to endure for ever and ever; while every other creature will, ere long, return to its native element.

I am very much obliged to my friends for calling to pay their respects to the living and the dead. We did not expect many here, for I have not a house large enough to hold all the relations of our sister Fanny. To convene them in a building we would have to go to the Tabernacle. She has many relatives, and I am increasing the number of mine every day, through inducing people to increase in faith. The spirit of the holy gospel is going to the east, the west, the north, and the south, and no power can hinder it; and the feelings of many are taking hold of the principles of eternal life, and there is no power that can hinder it. And all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts, and believe that Joseph Smith was sent of God, repent of their sins, are baptized for the remission of sins, and then live their religion, the same "is my father, my mother, my sister, my brother." In reality I have no other connections on the face of this earth. If my blood kin would not believe the gospel, I should be as much alienated from them, in my feelings, as I am from the people of the Chinese nation. There are thousands in the church now, and we are brethren and sisters.

I say, bless the people; God bless my brethren and sisters. I ask my Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless you every day. I am looking for the time when I shall say, be thou blessed, and we shall be blessed, and the powers of earth and hell will stand afar off and be rebuked at the command of the Priesthood.

How far we are beneath our privileged What! rejoice when a Saint dies? Yes. Mourn when a Saint dies? No. There is no feeling of mourning within me, though every living friend, wife, child, brother, sister, cousin, aunt, and uncle of mine were lying before us as sister Fanny does now. I would shout, hallelujah. "Would you not mourn?" No. The world is before me, and I can gather all the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives, children and friends that I wish around me. That is the way I feel; glory, hallelujah.

Sister Vilate Kimball knows that I felt so when I buried Miriam, my first wife. Heber C. and Vilate Kimball were as kind to me at that time, when I was a stranger and penniless, as I have been to sister Fanny. My heart said, hallelujah,