

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 12.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, MARCH 9, 1895.

VOL. L.

## THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

*Delivered at the Oneida Stake Conference, Franklin, Idaho, Sunday Morning, January 20th, 1895, by*

ELDER FRANCIS M. LYMAN.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I feel it a pleasure, my brethren and sisters, to be with you in this conference. Conferences are very important gatherings for the Latter-day Saints, when the business of the Church is transacted, and we vote our confidence for our brethren who are called to preside over us and to be our ministers, and we renew our fellowship for each other. It seems necessary that we should meet often together to worship the Lord, to fellowship together, and to have our spiritual strength renewed. For by cultivation our spiritual as well as our physical strength is renewed. The more we labor in temporal affairs, the stronger we are in those things; and the more we labor in spiritual affairs the stronger we are spiritually. Only those are weak spiritually who give little attention to spiritual matters. It is very desirable that our spiritual natures should be developed and strengthened equally with our physical natures; in fact, our spiritual natures should have the preference. We should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We should seek first the spiritual part of man. This is necessary, for the reason that we are naturally of the world. We are in a fallen condition, and we have greater need to cultivate our spirituality than our temporality. Our hearts are naturally set upon the temporal things of the world. We seek after them. We desire them. We naturally give chief attention to those things. Hence the commandment of the Lord, that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We are more likely to neglect our spiritual duties than our temporal duties. There is a natural demand upon us to supply the wants of our physical natures. We get hungry; we get cold unless we are well clad. The cold admonishes us to clothe ourselves; the hunger demands of us food to keep up the physical structure. But men seem to be able to live a long time with but little spiritual culture. The introduction of the Gospel among men is in order to change the natural tendency of fallen man, and to lead us to the cultivation of the spiritual man. The spiritual man is eternal. The mortal man is not eternal. Mortality must be changed

to immortality before it becomes eternal. It is important that we should take care of the spiritual man, and keep it without blemish and free from corruption, because corruption and wickedness bring spiritual death, just as physical injury and blood poisoning bring death to the mortal tabernacle. We want our spiritual lives preserved. We also want our physical lives preserved, that we may make as extended and as good a use [of this state of being as we can. This is an important probation for us, and it is proper that we should lengthen out our days therein, and prove ourselves worthy of the favor and blessing of the Lord. It is necessary that we should have an experience in this probation in the cultivation and exercise of faith in God, under conditions where we are not permitted to be in His presence. There is a curtain now between us, and we know Him only by faith. It is not possible for us in our present condition to know God except by the principle of faith. By exercising faith in God we are brought to the spirit of repentance, and by the spirit of repentance and the principle of baptism we are relieved of our sins, and are brought back into a nearness to the Lord, that we may commune with Him, become acquainted with Him by His Spirit, and be led by degrees into His presence. That is the process by which mortal men are finding their way back into the presence of God, and coming to know Him and His works, and that they are His works. And there is no other way for us to obtain a knowledge of God. We are told in the Scriptures that no man can truly say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. No man can know that our Father in heaven lives, and that He is our Father, but by the Holy Ghost. The light and inspiration of the Holy Ghost bring that knowledge to man, and it is not brought in any other way. There is no other spirit that can bring that knowledge to man. Men may bear witness to each other; but to give knowledge to the soul of man that God actually lives, and that Jesus is the Christ, is something that can only be done by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

We have embraced the Gospel which has been revealed by our Heavenly Father through His Son Jesus Christ, and the responsibility that is upon us is enormous. I question whether we fairly appreciate the greatness of the responsibility that rests upon us. I hold that it is so great that we cannot be justified in doing a wrong thing, and that there is a measure of condemnation attaches to every Latter day Saint that allows himself to even entertain wrong thoughts and wrong impressions. I hold that we cannot be too careful, too exact and too

proper in our lives. Men may possibly be too exacting to their neighbors; but when we come to sit in judgment upon ourselves we cannot be too careful and exact in the requirements that we make upon ourselves. Of course, the responsibility seems to be graded according to our callings and the amount of intelligence and wisdom that is entrusted to us by the Lord. Some are called to very responsible positions, and of course the more prominently persons are brought before the Latter-day Saints and before the world, the greater is the responsibility upon them, because they are looked upon by a greater number of people. An example is expected from them toward a greater number because of the responsibility that is placed upon them. We find that a High Priest, in a ward like this, perhaps moves along quietly among his brethren. He bears the holy Melchisedek Priesthood, but he is not called to be particularly prominent. But if he is called to be a Bishop in the midst of the people, then all eyes are upon him. All Israel expects that Bishop to be an exemplary man in all things. And they are entitled to expect it. He is a representative of the Lord. He bears not only the High Priesthood, which is the greatest of all, but he is called to a prominent position. He is set upon an eminence, above everybody else in the ward. Hence they all look up to him. He is the head and centre of that ward, and the High Priests, the Seventies, the Elders, the Lesser Priesthood and all the associations and organizations of the people are entitled to have a good example from that Bishop. Not only so, but the whole Church, so far as he is known as a Bishop, is entitled to expect from him a proper example. And I say that the Bishop who does not set such an example is not entirely worthy of his position. So it is with every other officer of the Church. The president of a quorum of Seventies, or of Elders, or of the Lesser Priesthood, is also under obligation to set a correct example. It is quite just that the people should expect of him a good example. He should be proper in his conversation and in his associations with the people. For when a man is called to a prominent position, he is honored of the Lord. It is a direct preference expressed for that man. Not that he may be so very much better than the rest of his brethren with whom he is associated; but the Lord shows a preference for him, and puts a responsibility upon him above that of his brethren. Therefore, more is expected of him. When a man is called to be a Bishop he is called to one of the most responsible works that there is in the midst of the people. I do not know of any office in the Church that makes a man as much a ser-