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## REMARKS

By Elder JOHN TAYLOR. Tabernacle, Saturday Afternoon, April 6, 1861.

[REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.]

We have now got through presenting the various Quorums comprising the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It has seemed to be a little difficult to get some of the names right, and also to get them in their proper places, but we have now got them straight, and I believe there has been a unanimous feeling to sustain all those officers presented, in their respective positions.

The question very naturally occurs to me, would there be the same unanimity of feeling, in sustaining the same number of officers anywhere else in the world? I do not think there would, in fact I know there would not. There is a principle of union with us, at least in outside show we are united, and in our actions to a certain extent, far more so than any other people, for other communities cannot even be persuaded to vote alike. If there are those among us that feel a little cross ways, thinking that some other way might be better; yet there is so much of the feeling to the contrary that the opposition is readily brought to acquiesce in the popular vote whether they really feel so or not, but they generally feel like it. But still there is a lesson that we have been learning that none of us are perfect in; our judgment is not perfect, and as we are not perfect in our sphere, we need not expect to find others perfect in theirs; and as we are not perfect ourselves, we may have need to come to the throne of mercy and ask for wisdom and support, and we can come to the Lord with faith and full assurance. If we have need to come to the Lord so have you; be careful then how you judge. We can say to all, with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

In regard to our criticism on the acts of public men, whatever we may feel in regard to their acts, it is best to let it be laid aside for the general good of all; or in other words we do not think, or should not think we are the smartest men in the world. It appears natural to us to think that we are as competent to judge as anybody else, and yet we think that those who dictate matters ought to have the spirit of the Lord to guide them, and consequently yield our judgment to theirs, and we strive to carry out the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our actions. We do it to a great extent, but not so fully as we might do. It is all voluntary on the part of the people, but generally out of respect to the superior intelligence of those that are associated with the dictation of affairs, we act with them. Although we may feel an uncertainty in regard to the views of some, yet with those feelings we act in unison to a certain extent, and we yield to the judgment of the majority, and to that of those whose right it is to nominate and dictate in the kingdom of God.

So far then as we have made progress in those things, so far have we advanced in the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, and so far have we become strong and powerful as a people upon the earth.

There is a little difference between our principles, or I should say the principles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and what are called democratic principles.—Democracy governs by the people alone, and as was stated this morning, where the people are pure and living under the influence of correct principles, and are seeking to do right, it is one of the best governments on the earth. But where the people are wicked and corrupt that alters the case very materially. It is not with us as it is with democracy. We do not believe that any people are capable of governing themselves. There is no need of entering into an argument upon the matter before this congregation, but it is my opinion, that there are no people under the heavens that now exist—nor are there any that ever did exist—that are capable of governing themselves.

There have been a variety of governments on the earth and very powerful ones too have existed in different ages of the world, those governments have generally been established and maintained by force of arms, by power, thus many submit to the few, and the majority have had very little to say in the matter. We have generally been in the habit of supposing that our republican institutions are the most perfect of anything that can exist among men, the *ne plus ultra* of human government, and hence we have had a very favorite motto ready always upon our tongues *vox populi vox dei*. I do not believe that the voice of the people is the voice of God, but would ask is it the northern or southern States that are governed by the Almighty? We have one of the best human governments upon the earth governed by the voice of the people, and yet we are divided, torn asunder, and confused,

and appear to be on the eve of having two governments, and both republican in their form; but which of them is governed by God? Neither of them have anything to do with the Lord. They are not under his guidance or direction, and without his dictation it is impossible to govern correctly. The principle of human government, as now practiced, is wrong, for what man knows the things of God? What human wisdom can dictate to the inhabitants of a world? Human governments have always been fluctuating and changeable. They have their rise, their progress, and fall, and have always contained within themselves the elements of their own destruction. The proper mode of government is this, God first speaks and then the people have their action. It is for them to say whether they will have his dictation or not. They are free; they are independent under God. The government of God is not a species of priestcraft, after the order of the Church of Rome where one man dictates and everybody obeys without having a voice in it. We have our voice and agency, and act with the most perfect freedom; still we believe there is a correct order, some wisdom and knowledge somewhere that is superior to ours, that wisdom and knowledge proceeds from God through the medium of the Holy Priesthood. We believe that no man or set of men of their own wisdom and by their own talents, are capable of governing the human family aright.

These are our opinions. We believe that it requires the same wisdom that governs the planetary system, that produces seed time and harvest, day and night, that organized our system, and that implanted intelligence in finite man; that it needs the same intelligence to govern men and promote their happiness upon the earth, that it does to control and keep in order the heavenly bodies, and we believe that that cannot be found with man independently. It is a principle that exists with God, and he will not confer it upon the wicked and ungodly, neither will he sustain those that trample under foot his authority and his laws; hence he has organized his kingdom with the express intention of governing his children himself according to the wisdom that dwells with him, through the medium that he has appointed. And hence having appointed a medium he brings it before the people that they may have an opportunity of expressing their sentiments. Then if they do not like the method which he has adopted, or any plans that he may introduce, if they do not like his officers, they have a voice in it and can say so. There is no man nor government under the heavens that have so strict a scrutiny as we have in the Church of Jesus Christ. All the authorities of this Church have to be acted for twice a year by all the Saints throughout all the world. This is very rigid sentry, more searching than that of our democratic rulers, but these men with whom we associate in the kingdom of God do not take it upon themselves alone to dictate and regulate these important matters pertaining to the kingdom of God and the salvation of man, because they do not consider they have got the intelligence. Hence my remarks so far, and hence the course of procedure pursued to-day in the presentation of the authorities of the Church in bringing all leading matters before the people.

We can acquiesce generally in the guidance of the Lord, and with pleasure obey the dictation of his servants. Have we by doing this progressed in a knowledge of the law of God, and the rule and government of His kingdom upon the earth? If we have any intelligence we shall show that we have learned a great and important lesson, one that we might have learned some time ago. But I will tell you what it is, when God dictates through the channel that he has placed upon the earth, he directs through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and in this way manifests his will to those whose right it is to know it. In this way he makes known the things of his kingdom and the principles that are necessary to the salvation of the people. Then all the congregation lift up their hands as a token before God that they sanction what is presented, and then the voice of the people is the voice of God. He first dictates and then we sustain his nomination. Thus we have the wisdom of God associated with the concurrence of man, and God being governed by the spirit of truth and the Saints possessing and being guided by the gift of the Holy Ghost, it is the voice of God and the voice of his people under his direction, and God and his people are one, as Jesus said, "I in them and they in me that we all may be one." This is the way we look at things, and by pursuing this course we have made great progress in the principles of eternal life and in all those things that devolve upon us to attend to.

What is it that we are after? Is it to revolutionize these States of America by force, by physical power, by the sword, and by treading underfoot their rights? No. Are we striving to overthrow the nations and to put

our feet upon the necks of men? No; we care but very little about them or their concerns. But is their not a kingdom that God should set up? Yes. Is not this the stone hewn out of the mountain without hands that is to grow into a great kingdom and fill the whole earth? It is; then how are you going to accomplish this great work? We answer, precisely as the Lord tells us. We have existed for thirty years, and we have used a great deal of our time and labor for the promotion of this kingdom. But have we at any time interfered with the rights of others? We have been outraged and abused in Ohio, Missouri and Illinois, but who have we interfered with? We are at the defiance of the world to point out a single instance. Have we attempted to overrun Texas or New Mexico; to trample underfoot the people of Nebraska and Kansas, and made everybody tremble and succumb by the power of the sword? Have we interfered with California, Oregon, or Washington Territory? No, we have not.

Then what have we done to cause people to be so jealous of us? Why we have just let everybody else alone; we have preached peace and salvation, built up Zion and proclaimed the kingdom of God. They would not, however, let us alone, but we could not help that. The very move that they have made, and all the steps that we have taken have brought us before the nations, and manifested the power of God in a way that never could have been done otherwise. They may say what they will, but this is the result of it. We did not kill them when we had a chance; they came upon us and sought to destroy us, and why did they do this? It was because the Lord was with us. We could not help them doing as they did, and I suppose they could not resist the power that prompted them to do as they have done. However, it is all right; the hand of God is in it and has been from the beginning. Do we rejoice at the present time over the difficulties of our enemies in the States? No; we would be glad to do them good, if they would only let us, but they are unwilling to receive the truth.

Have we forsaken our covenants, or have they violated the law in their treatment of us? It was shown very clearly this morning, by Prest. Wells, that they hunted us like the wolves in the desert; they came with their armies fully bent on our destruction, but a barrier stood in the way. The Lord said, "Thus far shall you go and no farther! You can now stop; you can shiver and shake out there in the mountains, during the cold, chilling blasts of a dreary winter, but touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm." They have now got the difficulties at home which they intended to create among us. We have not injured them; we have not hurt a hair of their heads, and we still feel willing to assist them; we feel willing to help to preserve the nation, and our Elders have traveled thousands of miles to bless the people; yes, we feel to bless everybody, and what will we not do to benefit our fellow beings? Brethren, let us try to conquer ourselves; let us try to understand our own position, to magnify our calling that we may be prepared to act in that sphere in which God may call us to operate. The Lord has chosen his servants; he has lifted up his standard in Zion; he has proclaimed peace and happiness on earth; he has taught us how to live and how to die; the way is pointed out whereby we can obtain salvation in his kingdom. He has made manifest unto us his will, and we feel glad; we rejoice and sing hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Brethren and sisters, we have a great mission to perform; we have to try to govern ourselves, according to the laws of the kingdom of God, and we find it one of the most difficult tasks we ever undertook to learn to govern ourselves, our appetites, our dispositions, our habits, our feelings, our lives, our spirits, our judgment, and to bring all our desires into subjection to the law of the kingdom of God, and to the spirit of truth. It is a very critical thing to be engaged in the "building of the kingdom of God—a nucleus of which we have here.

Whatever good feelings originate from the Spirit of the Lord, and from the light and intelligence that come from the gospel of Jesus Christ, for all we owe our oblation of thanksgiving to the great Giver of all Good.

We are assembled here from different nations, having a variety of prejudices, different kinds of education, having imbibed different feelings, notions and ideas, and we have now come together to learn to bend our minds, to yield our opinions, and not to follow our own notions, not to cling to our peculiar whims and caprices, but to bow to the holy priesthood, which is the rule of God upon the earth. You should understand that when you have been voting here to sustain the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Twelve Apostles, the High Council, the Bishops and other quorums, you have been voting to sustain the legitimate and au-

thorized officers of the church and kingdom of God, whose right it is to rule and govern whenever and wherever the Almighty has a people upon the earth.

Now then, brethren and sisters, do not go away from here, and run against those very parties whom you have covenanted to sustain, because the very moment you do, every sensible man will set you down as hypocrites. You have a free opportunity here of manifesting your choice, and I will here say that so far you have manifested good sense in being united in regard to those principles we have to carry out. Let the principles of union and faith be observed at your homes, and if you are men having families, let there be a daily incense arise from your family altar, and let your constant and daily prayer be, "God bless the Presidency of the Church; God bless the Twelve; the Bishops, and all the constituted authorities of the church, and the Lord give me wisdom to act according to their dictation; and the Lord bless all those that believe on their words." Then there will be a feeling of union in all our small districts, and instead of its being, "Tom wants to do this, and Jim wants to do the other," it will be, "I don't want my way, but I want the mind and will of God; I want to know what my duty is, and then I will pray God to give me grace and power to do it." This is the feeling of every good, intelligent, Latter Day Saint at the present time, who is seeking to do the will of God upon the earth. Never mind if somebody is trying to encroach; never mind about your independence and your rights.

I was talking to a man the other day, who said, "I must have my rights." I replied to him, I have no rights, only those that God gives me. "But I have been imposed upon," said the man. Well, what if you have; it is a great deal better than if you had imposed upon somebody else. Just say, why that man don't know any better, and if he can stand it I can.

These are our feelings in regard to rights. There was a time when I thought I had a great many rights of my own, but now I have got to understand that I have all the rights that God will give me, and I don't want to have any more. I want to live in the light of his countenance; to ask him to give me his spirit, and then I know I shall prosper. When you feel like talking about your rights, let me advise you to go into your closet, forget your imaginary rights, and ask the Lord to give you wisdom, to guide you aright, that you may act before him as children of the light, and not be the means of throwing a stumbling block in the way of others. By pursuing this course, you will get along much easier, and there will not be near so much of that spirit of grumbling and complaining.

It would be first rate for many Latter Day Saints to consider the following sentiment of the poet:

Were half our time in reasoning spent,  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Our cheerful songs would oftener be,  
Hear what the Lord has done for me.

I believe what he has done for me and for this people, to be saving in its nature and to be the best that could have been done for us. Let us all seek to do right, get the Spirit of the Lord, and allow that to govern and dictate us.

Suppose there are some who do not do exactly right in some places, what of that? there are many things that are not right. Never mind, everything that is wrong will in due time be righted. Permit me to bring a figure before you. A year ago last winter there was a very severe frost and it injured the fruit trees. Some who professed to be judges thought it best to cut down the peach trees, some thought that if left alone they would still grow, and therefore they left them alone to see how many would live. There was quite a difference of opinion upon the subject, and some adopted one plan and some another. The general impression was, I believe, that it would be best to cut off these limbs that were frost bitten, and that did not appear to have much sap in them.

Now, my doctrine is prune the trees, or in other words the branches of the great tree to which we are connected just at the time when it will do the least injury. It requires great wisdom however to prune and regulate the the church of Christ. There was a great many of our people got frost bitten, a kind of dead in their spirits, and some were for going right to work and pruning; but hold on said Jesus, "The wheat and tares must grow together until harvest." Perhaps you would pull up the wheat with the tares, if you were to do it when you think best. If there is nothing good in a man he will by and bye develop the evil that is in him, and then everybody will agree that the pruning ought to be done, and the branch ought to be cut off; but if the good preponderates, it would be wrong, because of prejudice or ignorance to destroy the good; it is best to leave it to the husbandman, and then all the congregation will say amen.