

REMARKS

By President Brigham Young, Bowery, Tuesday, Morning, October, 6, 1857.

REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.

Quite a goodly number have assembled to our conference, to transact business in a church capacity. We shall first present and attend to the business, and then to such instructions, teachings, exhortations, &c., as may come before the conference.

I think there are quite a number of brethren present who have lately returned from their fields of labor; we would like to have them come to the stand, and we will give them the privilege of occupying a portion of the time. I think br. Jacob Hoffbeins has not been on the stand since his return, and I see several others who have not.

We shall first present the authorities of the church to the conference this morning, though such has not been our general practice. I believe the brethren are pretty much in readiness, and have all got their guns ready for shooting. We will first attend to the business, so that if it is necessary to repair to the kanyons we can do so.

I do not know how long we shall hold this conference, and therefore no one need to ask me.—There is a time for all things, and I never saw a better time than now to secure potatoes and other crops, and thus do our preaching in the season thereof and digging potatoes in the season thereof. And I could almost wish that our conference would be dismissed this morning, and all hands go and secure the potatoes, squashes, corn, &c.

We have heretofore spent a great deal of time in conferences unmolested, and we shall again have a great deal of time to spend in this capacity undisturbed. We must have what is good for us, that which puts us in mind and brings to us principles that are free. Should we live in peace year after year, how long would it be before we would be glued to the world? Our affections would be so fastened to the things of the world that it would be hard for us to spend a little time in conference, it would be hard to go on missions, it would be contrary to our feelings to attend to anything but our own individual concerns to make ourselves rich.

It seems to be necessary for the Lord to bring this people into circumstances to show them that the things of this world are mere nothingness in their present state—are but a shadow. They are to-day, and to-morrow they are not. This shows to us that all things pertaining to this world are subject to change, and such changes as we cannot control. We find that kings are raised up and emperors placed in power, and then they are hurled down. We see men who are popular, wealthy and rich become poor. History and our own experience proves all this, and that riches take the wings of the morning and fly away. To-day we are rich, to-morrow we are poor. Next week we may be rich, and the week after poor again. It is the Lord that gives and the Lord that takes away, and it is a blessing that we have the privilege of this experience in our present condition.

Look at ourselves—run over our own experience and we will discover that ourselves, our neighbors, our friends, our acquaintances and all people do not always know when they are happy, in other words, if you could crowd an individual or a community into heaven without experience, it would be no enjoyment to them. They must know the opposite, they must know how to contrast, in order to prize and appreciate the comfort and happiness, the joy and the bliss they are actually in possession of. Can you realize this? How many there are who will exclaim, 'if I had but have known it, I was happy in such a situation; how happy I might have been, if I had only known that I was happy.'

You will see individuals who are easy and comfortable, that would like to change their situations; and when they change they find that they have changed for the worse. They then turn round and say, 'how happy I could have been, if I had known how to appreciate my own happiness; I had nothing to annoy me, I was in comfortable circumstances, I enjoyed good health, I had all that I could ask for to make life desirable, but I did not know at the time that I enjoyed one of the comforts of life.'

Is that the experience of any of you? I know that it is of a great many of you. Then learn to be happy when you have the privilege. For many years we have had the privilege of living in peace and making ourselves comfortable in these valleys of the mountains, and do you recollect that but a short time ago it seemed as though almost every one had wandered his own way? The people had almost forgotten and lost sight of the principles of truth and righteousness, of the religion that we have embraced and the whole plan of salvation. They had almost lost sight of the redemption of the nations of the earth, and each one had turned to his own way. Can you recollect that situation of the people?

We have reason to be thankful that we have forsaken backslidings and returned to the Lord in a great measure, but we are still far from being as we should be, taking every individual, though the great majority of the people are doing the best or about as well as they know how. This I believe, with all my heart, and they feel very anxious to live so that they can enjoy more and more of the knowledge of God; they are very anxious to know how to obtain more of the revelations of Jesus Christ, and some are fearful that the people are not doing right, and that they do not live up to their privileges.

Some of the brethren were conversing in my office the other day, and I discovered that a part of them had a great anxiety for us to know more of godliness, and had a feeling that this people must do better, must more strictly refrain from evil and walk more humbly before their God.—I said to them, brethren, I will take you for an example, with myself, and I tell you, for one, that I do not know how to do any better than I

do, and if the Lord wants me to do any better he must let me know it, for I cannot do any better of myself; can you say the same? They said they could. So it is with the people; the most of them are doing the best they know how. There are a few who sin, and a few will do wrong—do things that they ought to be ashamed of. They are scarce, but there is once in a while one of that class in this community, and we expect that there will be, just so long as the wheat and the tares grow together. There is once in a while one that we would like to be rid of, would love to have leave us and this community.

It is astonishing that any should prefer to act wickedly, and yet there is a reason for all this, we expect it, at least I do, I look for it. I do not look for anything else, but that there will be tares in the field, until the time of burning. I will just say, for your consolation and mine, that I think the field is now pretty well weeded out, though the roots are here and they will spring up occasionally and once in a while things are done that are disgraceful. Some will do things that the devil would be ashamed of and would not think of doing, but I am thankful that there are but few of that class here, and I pray that the evils may be lessened and that the people may be purified before the Lord.

It is truth, it is God's truth, it is eternal truth, if people did but know it, that it is much better to be honest, to live here uprightly and forsake and shun evil, than it is to be dishonest. It is the easiest path in the world to be honest, to be upright before God and when people learn this they will practise it. If they could only believe this, it does appear to me that they will forsake every evil practice, every evil thought, and banish them from their minds and try to practise virtue and truth and to live in that way that they will overcome every evil disposition, and live so that they can control their reflections, and that their reflections will tend to virtue, truth and holiness, for this is our privilege, until we become pure in our hearts and find that the principles of righteousness dwell within us. Then, as it was said by Savior to his disciples, He will be in us a fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life.

That is the principle, the fountain that Jesus our elder brother dwells in and we can have the same privilege of overcoming sin in ourselves, until we have no desire to do anything but right; no desire only to build up His kingdom upon the earth and have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to be in us a fountain of living water. Let us do so, and thereby be prepared for every emergency that shall come upon us.

Let us secure our crops. I feel to exhort the brethren to secure their crops so as to be ready, if our enemies come upon us, to defend ourselves. Let us obey our officers, not loving the world nor the things of the world above our duties. The Lord will prepare the way and provide all things necessary for us, and if we suffer a little it is good for us. If we suffer for food, for raiment, it gives us an experience that we will know how to appreciate the comforts of life when we have them in our possession.

We will attend to the business of the conference first, and then dismiss until afternoon.

[After putting the motion for himself to be sustained as 'Prophet, Seer and Revelator,' the President remarked:—]

I will say that I never dictated the latter part of that sentence. I make this remark because those words in that connection always made me feel as though I am called more than I am deserving of. I am Brigham Young, an Apostle of Joseph Smith, and also of Jesus Christ. If I have been profitable to this people, I am glad of it. The brethren call me so, and if it be so I am glad.

REMARKS

By Elder Charles C. Rich, Bowery, Wednesday Afternoon, Oct. 7, 1857.

REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.

Brethren and sisters, I can truly say, as others have said, that I have been edified during the Conference and greatly benefited by the spirit that has been made manifest and the testimony that has been borne by the brethren. It has cheered my heart and I have not had a better time for years.

We have great reason to rejoice, notwithstanding some people might think that we have reason to mourn, but I do not think so, neither do I think that you feel so. I think there is but one feeling and that is peace and joy. Notwithstanding all the appearances that are around us, we have abundant reason to rejoice, for we have something to rejoice about and in, if we comprehend our position, which I have no doubt the great majority do.

We have had the privilege of embracing the gospel of salvation, and inasmuch as we have embraced it with honest hearts, it has been salvation to us, and what is there besides this that we should rejoice in or that should make us rejoice? For my part, I feel, as has been expressed by some of the brethren who have spoken from this stand, that this gospel contains all that I desire, consequently I have no feelings nor desires to go outside of it, simply because it bestows upon you and me everything that will do us good and that will save us. All that is outside of it will damn us in time and in eternity, consequently we have no need of that which is outside of this kingdom.

If we understand the principles of truth as we should, we shall have no desires to go after anything but what is right, simply because it would do us an injury, therefore it will be well for us to examine ourselves and know whether the principles that are in our bosoms are of God. If they are, they will bless us in time and exalt us in all eternity. If they are not, they will be an evil to us in time and as long as we have them in our bosoms, consequently it would be well for us to know something about ourselves and what we

have in our bosoms and the principles that we practise from day to day continually.

We profess to be Saints, to have received the gospel of salvation, and if we have embraced it with pure motives, it is salvation to us, and that, too, at the present time. When we look at the world we find them talking about being saved, but all the salvation they are looking for is a long way from this, which I think will be the case. But we receive the gospel for the purpose of being saved. It proposes salvation to us on the onset, at the commencement and from that day to all eternity.

If we do not embrace the principles of life and live by them, we do not partake of the principles of salvation at the time we received them, but if we live by them they continue to save us from that time onward.

For instance, when we heard the sound of the gospel, it proposed to us that we should have the same Spirit that was poured out upon his ancient Saints, upon his disciples. This was the doctrine that his servants declared to us; when we received their testimony we went forward and were baptized for the remission of sins, and what followed? I will tell you what followed; we were enabled to bear testimony that we had received the truth and we obtained thereby a knowledge that our Father in heaven lived, that his Son Jesus Christ had been crucified for the sins of the world.

But did we not discover that we were saved, saved from ignorance that had beclouded our minds? We had received something that we did not before know. We could then rejoice in the truth when the whole world were in darkness on this subject, and what further? Why, there was one truth after another made manifest to us, one truth after another revealed. Well, if we have embraced those truths that have been made manifest, we have received the blessings that are given from time to time, yes, from the time that we embraced them up to the present, and they have saved us.

The gospel requires us to be honest to our God, to ourselves, to our brethren. We should not steal, we should not commit adultery, and there are a great many things that we should not do and that the principles of eternal truth would forbid. If we had not among us any who commit any of these sins, those evils would not be in our midst. If the principles that dwell in the bosom of our God were in us, we will do nothing under any circumstances that we know to be wrong.

When some men's evil deeds are discovered, they will say that they did not do the evil with which they are charged, they will deny it. This is a mark of the greatest degradation and infamy.

Evils are of two classes and what are they? First, people do wrong because they do not know how to do right; second, they do wrong because they are disposed to do wrong, and do you not see that in either case they are wrong? We are not half as well saved as we should be, consequently to be saved we want to learn to know what right is. If we are dishonest and want to do wrong, we are wicked, nevertheless it is wrong both ways, and we are not saved by pursuing such a course.

You know it is said that in the last days the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep. We can bear testimony that the Spirit of God is poured out upon his Saints. We see it day by day and from time to time, and we are increasing in the knowledge of the truth.

Inasmuch as we are trying to be saved, we are all the time increasing in the principles of truth, we are continually treasuring them up and we can use them for our benefit.

We may easily discover that a person cannot use that which he has not got; he must first learn a principle before he can act upon it. Well, if we do not know the truth, the best way is to get somebody that does know to lead us, and perhaps, by diligence, we may arrive at the knowledge thereof. This has been a course of safety pointed out to the Saints from the beginning, and it is the same now.

When we have learned one truth we are prepared to learn another, for every truth seems to unfold some other truth. When a matter is presented to a person who has a knowledge of a great many truths, let him compare it with the many truths that he knows and they will agree, for all truth will agree; if it is not truth it will come in contact, therefore the more truths we are in possession of, the more keys we have to test other truths by, and the longer we live in this way the more we know of our Father and the principles that pertain to his kingdom, and the less disposition we will have to do wrong; we will be more inclined to do right and to carry out the principles of his government. We will do this because it is the safest and best course to pursue, hence if we have a disposition to be blest and saved we shall be disposed to take this course.

I feel rejoiced in one principle that I see manifest among the Saints in these days, and that is the principle of union. Of course we have, as a community, always been more united than any other people, but we still come short of that fullness of union which should exist among us; but I consider that we have done first rate.

It is an easy matter to do right if we only pursue the right course, at least I have always found it so. I never had any difficulty to be agreed with those I was associated with. The way that I am united with my brethren is simply this: I calculate to adopt the same policy that the Lord manifests through his servants that have a right to dictate me. I do not calculate to have anything in my heart that is not right, then you see there will be no difficulty, if I pursue this course, to be united with my brethren that preside over me.

I have been a member of the church over 25 years, and I have been preaching all the time, at least I have been a preacher, whether I have been preaching all the time or not. I have never seen

the time but I have always found those who were leading me to be right, and I have never seen the time but I could bear testimony that they were right, for I knew it by the Spirit of God that was in me. I knew it was the privilege of every Saint to have this knowledge.

When we are agreed and live our religion, we are prepared to receive the blessings that are poured out upon us. We cannot claim the blessings that are in store for us except we pursue a course that will put away all our sins and iniquities far from us.

I do not say that I am perfect, but I can say this thing, that I never intended to do a wrong thing. I have done the best I could. To be sure I have been away from this place most of the time, among the wicked, at least I term them wicked. They say they seek after God and every thing that pertains to godliness, but if ever I was glad to get home among the Saints, it was this summer.

I have thought that the spirit that is among this people and the quiet feeling that seems to prevail when difficulties are approaching was most heavenly, and I have sometimes felt and queried as to whether I did not feel too well. But when the brethren have been pouring out their feelings from this stand I have felt to rejoice. I feel that we have got further along than I thought we had before I came back here.

I had been looking for the time of deliverance, but I did not expect it so soon, but I know it cannot come too soon to meet with a hearty welcome. I have been through some of the difficulties, as some others have said, and can tell you in all that I have passed through from the beginning I have felt paid as I have gone along. I have always felt that the course to do right was the best and that there would be the most joy and happiness in doing right.

So far as our enemies are concerned, I feel about them precisely as our brethren have expressed themselves. I do not fear them, but I feel that the Lord will take care of his Saints and of his kingdom. All we have to do is to do as we are directed and all will be well.

A great number of the Elders have been on missions and we have been bearing testimony to the world of mankind that this is the kingdom of God, that God has set his hand to recover the house of Israel. We have been bearing testimony of this and we still continue to bear it, and the Spirit of God flows into our hearts when we testify to this. Have we any fears that the Lord is not able to deliver his Saints? We ought not to have any.

I will tell you how I feel; it is best for us to do right, and there will be more salvation flowing to us through doing right than pursuing any other course. This is the course of salvation. Whatever our heavenly Father dictates, that is the thing for us to do, whether it is to fight or let it alone. I have been in difficulties where there actually was fighting, where the Saints had to defend themselves against their enemies, but the time had not come for us to take the stand that we have now taken, but the Lord directed matters then, and he is directing matters now. We have seen difficulties from the beginning, from the time that the Lord established his kingdom upon the earth until the present time.

Every person that has a portion of the Spirit of God can see the manifestations of the power of God from the time that the kingdom was established until the present. We have no need to fear for the kingdom, but it is for us to do our duty and then all will be well with us.

I do not wish to occupy time that should be occupied by my brethren. I say that I feel well; I never felt better, nor never had less fears of our enemies than I have at the present time.

That we may live so as to be sanctified through the truth, that we may secure salvation in this world and in that which is to come, is my prayer in the name of Jesus: Amen.

REMARKS

By Pres. Joseph Young, Tabernacle, Sunday Afternoon, Oct. 11, 1857.

REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.

I do not allow myself to make any apologies when I get up to speak, because it is against my feelings, it is against my principle.

I have listened to what br. Lorenzo has said and I have felt well. It is my desire, if I suggest anything, to suggest that which is profitable, which will do good. Language is too frail to express the rich sentiments of the hearts of the Saints, tongue fails to utter the glory and the pleasures of the kingdom of God; it cannot do it, language fails. There is a display of the Holy Spirit in the understanding that surpasses all language, it cannot be told, it is past being told or described. This is right, it is as it should be, for language is poor, the best we know of is poor.

I am not precisely like some of our Elders who think that unless somebody is talking all the time that nobody can be edified. It is true that we come together to be edified by hearing each other speak, but when a body of people come together, that body should bring the agency of the Holy Spirit with them, and I drink of the fountain of intelligence whether anybody speaks or not.

We have prayed many years, we have sought many years for the blessings which we now begin to enjoy.

I feel to rejoice in these things, I feel to be glad at the prospects that are before us; I feel to be glad and whatever may be the result of the present crisis I am glad in my heart, I never felt so in my life, and it is not me alone, but it is the whole people of the Saints. I believe that in this thing we all feel pretty much in the same spirit. I know that as long as we dwell in mortality it is impossible for us to obtain that happiness which is in store for the sanctified. It is impossible for me, at the present, to obtain and retain the fullness of that pure spirit that I wish to obtain.

We dwell in impure elements, in an atmosphere that is and has been corroding from the begin-