

REMARKS

BY

PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG,

At the Opening of the Adjourned General Conference, held in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, May 7th, 1874.

I do not expect to be able to speak much during this Conference, but I make a request of my brethren who may speak, to give us their instructions and views for or against this general co-operative system, which we, with propriety, may call the United Order. If any choose to give it any other name that will be applicable to the nature of it they can do so. A system of oneness among any people, whether former-day Saints, middle-day Saints, eleventh-hour of the day Saints, last-hour of the day Saints, or no Saints at all, is beneficial; but I wish the brethren to give us their views for and against union in a family, whether that family consists of the parents and ten children, or the parents, ten children, fifty grandchildren, or a hundred and fifty great-grandchildren, and so on until you get to a nation. I ask of my brethren who may address the congregations to give us their views for and against union, peace, good order; laboring for the benefit of ourselves, and in connection with each other for the welfare and happiness of all, whether in the capacity of a family, neighborhood, city, state, nation, or the world.

We see the inhabitants of the earth, as individuals and nations, struggling, striving, laboring and toiling, every one for himself and nobody else: all are anxious to bless their own dear selves. If you will permit me I will quote an anecdote in illustration of this trait of character among the human family. A man, in asking a blessing upon his food, prayed, "O Lord, bless me and my wife, my son John and my wife, we four, and no more; amen." If we have generosity of feeling sufficient to pray for blessings upon a fifth person, or upon a whole family, neighborhood or community, all the better.

We are not entering into any new system, order or doctrine. There are numbers of organizations of a similar character, as far as they go, in our own country and in other countries. Our object is to labor for the benefit of the whole, to retrench in our expenditures; to be prudent and economical; to study well the necessities of the community and to pass by its many useless wants; to study to secure life, health, wealth, and union, which is power and influence to any community; and I ask my brethren, while addressing the people during this Conference, to take up these items of every-day life. It seems to be objectionable to some, for the Latter-day Saints to enter into a self-sustaining system, and the probability of our doing so causes a great deal of talk. If we were infidels, any other sect of Christians, or neither Christians nor infidels, but mere worldlings, seeking only to amass the wealth of this world, nothing would be thought or said against it. But for the Latter-day Saints to make a move to the right or to the left, to the front or to the rear, a suspicion arises directly in the minds of the people. I will say to the inhabitants of the whole earth, that the Latter-day Saints are going to work to sustain themselves, to do good to themselves, to their neighbors and to the whole human family; they are going to labor to establish peace and good order on the earth, just as far and as fast as they can, and to prepare them for a happier world than this.

Talk about it, cry about it, deride it, point the finger of scorn at it, we care not, we are the servants and handmaids of the Lord, and our business is to build up his kingdom upon the earth, and let all the world say what they please, it matters not to us. It is for us to do our duty.

Now let me present one little matter. Here are brethren from all parts of the Territory, to represent the different branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We find our brethren in various parts of the Territory are in possession of a little land; take a man, for instance, who has got a five acre lot. He wants his team, he must have his horses, harness, wagon, plow, harrow and farming utensils to cultivate that five acres just as though he was farming a

hundred acres. And when harvest comes, he is not accommodated by his neighbors with a reaping machine, and he says—"Another year, I will buy one," and this to harvest five acres of grain. Take the article of wagons among this people, we have five where we should not have more than two; and the money that is spent needlessly by our people for wagons would make a small community rich. Again, take mowing and reaping machines, and we have probably twice or three times as many in this Territory as the people need. They stand in the sun and they dry up and spoil, and this entails a heavy waste of property. We may take also the article of harness for horses. If this community would be united and work cattle instead of horses they might save themselves from two to five hundred thousand dollars yearly. Is this economy or wisdom? A few years ago we raised our own sweet; but when the railroad came it brought sugar to us very cheap, and where is our sorghum now? There is hardly any raised in the whole Territory. The people say—"The sugar is so cheap." Suppose sugar was only one penny a pound, and you had not that penny and could not get it, what good would it do you? None at all. If cotton cloth can be bought for fifteen, ten or six cents a yard, what does it profit a people if they have not the money to buy it? It does them no good. When they have the ground to raise the cotton, and the machinery to work this cotton up and make the fabrics they need, they can do it, money or no money. And so we go on from one thing to another, and we would be glad if our brethren, in their remarks, will give us their views and instructions on these points, and the bearing they have had upon the people in the past, and how they will affect them in connection with the United Order which we are now seeking to introduce.

If any man, merchant, businessman, or anybody else has anything to bring forward, to show, as they think, that the United Order will militate against the interests of the community, we invite them to speak it freely, and give us both sides of the question. We are for the best, we are for the right, for that which will accomplish the greatest good to the greatest number. I shall now give place for others to speak.

DISCOURSE

BY

ELDER ERASTUS SNOW,

DELIVERED

At the adjourned General Conference, in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday Morning, May 8th, 1874.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

THE United Order of Zion, proposed for our consideration, as will be seen from the remarks that have been made by former speakers, and from the articles which were read yesterday afternoon, is a grand, comprehensive, co-operative system, designed to improve us who enter into it, financially, socially, morally and religiously; it will aid us, as Latter-day Saints, in living our religion, and in building up Zion, and help us, by a combined effort, to cultivate every virtue, to put from us every vice, to conduct ourselves and our children sensibly, and to dispense with childish follies; it will enable us to adopt sensible and discreet fashions and habits of life and styles of dress and manners; all of which can be effected by combined efforts, but not easily in our individual capacities. For what man, however good be his desires, can control himself and his family in their habits and manners of life and fashions, without the aid of the surrounding community? What sensible man can hold me or my brethren responsible, in all respects, either for ourselves or our households, unaided by the community, and while the community are all working against us? But when the community learn to work together, and are agreed in a common purpose, what is it that they can not accomplish? Union is strength, and a combination of labor and capital will give us power at home and abroad. Our former co-

operative systems in this Territory have accomplished very great good for us, but they have been only combinations of capital; the proposed system embraces labor as well as capital, and it designs to make the interests of capital and labor identical. True, there is one feature in the articles read yesterday which may require a little modification; it is at least a good subject for mature reflection and consideration before their final adoption; and these articles are presented before the people for this purpose.

The combination of labor and capital in this order will enable us to promote all branches of industry which shall appear, in the judgment of the common Order, to be for the general good. At present, capitalists are loth to engage in any enterprise which does not vouchsafe to them profitable returns. It has been said by some among us that the best argument in favor of co-operation, was large dividends; but this is an argument that appeals only to cupidity and avarice, and is especially acceptable to the man who sees nothing but the god of this world to worship. Large dividends corrupt the morals of a community, just as large speculations and the profit resulting therefrom, for however desirable in a financial point of view to those engaged in them, their tendency is always to intoxicate the brain, and lead those engaged therein to further follies, until they overreach and ruin themselves. Moderation is as valuable in financial affairs as in social ethics, moderation in all speculation and in all business, fair profits for labor, fair dividends for capital, and the use of that capital and labor to promote the greatest good of the greatest number, and not for my own dear self. The selfishness that is limited to our own persons savors of the lower instincts of our natures, and comes not from above.

Objections arise in the minds of some. "Shall we not by entering into this order, surrender our manhood, our personal liberty, and those rights so dear to every human being?" I answer, no, not in the least. We do no more than what all people do in the formation of government, of every kind, or associations for any purpose, whether charitable, religious or social. All organizations, corporations, and business firms agree to surrender certain personal privileges in order to secure mutual advantages. All governments, societies, corporations and firms are founded upon the principle of mutual concessions to secure mutual advantages. Without this there could be no government, no power to arrest and punish criminals and protect the rights of the citizen and the sanctity of home.

The Order proposed before us affords the utmost freedom and liberty. All things shall be done by common consent, and all the branches of the Order, throughout all the land, are to be organized by the selection of the wisest, best and most experienced persons in their midst, to form their councils, and to direct their business affairs and the labors of the community, for the best possible good of the whole, and not to the individual advantage of a few, who may be schemers or who may have acquired an education by which they are enabled to over-reach their fellow men financially.

The grand principle upon which the gospel of life and salvation is founded and on which Zion is to be built, is brotherly love and good will to man. This was the theme of the angels of God in announcing the birth of the Savior. Hitherto, under our old systems, it has been "every man for himself, and the devil for us all;" but the principle which the Lord proposes is that we should square our lives by a higher and holier one, namely, every one for the whole and God for us all.

Will this Order benefit the rich? Yes, it will afford security for themselves and families and their capital. It is a mutual insurance institution. Will it afford security and protection to the poor and the honest laborer? Yes, it will lay a foundation for wealth and comfort for them, and their families after them. Is it a free school system? It is a mutual education system. Free? Not to the lazy, vicious and wicked, but it is a mutual education system for the good and industrious, who abide in the Order and fulfil the obligations thereof. Who shall be heirs of the common property? Every child who is born in the Order. Heirs to the whole of

it. No, nobody will be heir to the whole of it. To what portion of it will they be heirs? Just what they need. Who shall be the judges? Themselves, if they judge correctly; and if they do not, somebody will judge more correctly for them. "Well, shall I surrender my judgment to anybody else?" Of course, you will; we all agree to that, if it must needs be. But he who judges for himself correctly shall not be judged, but he who is unable to judge himself, but covets everything that he sees, and wishes to scatter and destroy what others are seeking to accumulate and preserve, must have a bit put in his mouth and some, who are more sensible, must handle the reins. This is no agrarian doctrine, to level those who are exalted, down to the mean level of those who are in the mire, but it is the Godlike doctrine of raising those who are of low estate and placing them in a better condition, by teaching them economy, and prudence; it is for the strong to foster and bear the infirmities of the weak, for those who possess skill and ability to accumulate and preserve this world's goods, to use them for the common good, and not merely for their own persons, children and relatives, so as to exalt themselves in pride and vanity over their fellowmen, and sink themselves to ruin by worshipping the God of this world. This is beneath the character of those who profess to be the people of God. We have done that long enough, but the word of God to us is to change our front, and to learn to love our neighbor as ourselves and so cultivate the spirit of the Gospel.

As to the minutiae of the workings of the various branches of this Order, the details of the business and the relations of life, one meeting of this kind would not suffice to tell, nor could the people comprehend it if we were able to tell it; but it will be revealed to us as we pass along, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, and everything necessary will appear in its time and place, and none need be ever anxious to pass over the bridge before they reach it. God does not reveal to us everything at once, for our minds are not prepared to comprehend it. Like children we must have experience as we pass along. One thing is sufficient for us to understand, and that is that this Order has made all nations and peoples who have entered into and practised it prosperous.

If any one doubts for a moment the success and final triumph of these principles, that doubt is founded only in his own weakness, and in the weaknesses of his fellowmen around him, and the selfishness that is in our natures. If we are determined to make it a success there is no power beneath the heavens that can make it a failure. If we engage in it with full purpose of heart, with faith towards God, and seeking to cultivate confidence towards one another, and are outspoken and frank in all our business relations and intercourse with each other, and do all things by common consent, with a just and honest purpose of soul, there is no power that can hinder our succeeding in our undertaking. But if we are determined to be selfish, and seek to build ourselves up on the weaknesses of our fellows, instead of building up the Kingdom of our God, we ought to go down, and the sooner the better. For the last dozen years many of this people have been going on in the way that our fathers and the world generally walk in; and instead of building up Zion, have been after their personal and individual interests. Forty years have passed over us as a people during which we have been trying a little to carry on the work of God; but we have been like the wary trout in the stream, we have been nibbling around the hook, but we have never swallowed the bait. Now the hook is placed before us naked, and we are simply asked the question, "Will you take it or not?" "What are we going to be caught?" Yes, this is the fear—"We are going to be caught by the wily fisherman—we are going to be enslaved. Has not somebody got an eye on our property? Does not somebody wish to have our horses and carriages, our fine houses, our substance, and the property we have gathered together?" Yes, the Lord has an eye on all this, for it belongs to him. Which of us has anything that does not belong to him? Where have we got that which we possess? Who has given us ability to accumulate and preserve? To whom are we accountable for our

talents and gifts, as well as our substance? The Lord has his eye upon all this. Is he anxious about our property? No. This anxiety is in our own breasts, and if we have any idols the sooner we put them away the better. The Lord cares nothing about our houses and lands, our goods and chattels, our gold, silver or raiment, for all upon the earth belongs to him, and at the best it is only something that perishes with the using. He requires us to be faithful in the use of it, for he has said, "He that is not faithful with the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to him the true riches?" True riches relate to eternity; the riches that relate to this life all perish with the using. Our houses, horses, carriages, clothing and our gold and silver perish with the using, together with our tabernacles. We look to a glorious resurrection, to a new and enduring earth, to riches that are immortal, to the habitation that shall not pass away, to a glory that is beyond the grave, as the only true riches, which the gospel enjoins us to look after. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things else shall be added unto you." They will be added in God's own way, and he wishes to show us a better way, and, in order to deal with us as a kind father does with his children, he proposes to enlighten and instruct us, and he will impart to all of his people who will obey his voice the wisdom that is necessary to make them the richest people of the earth. This is the purpose of the Lord concerning Zion and his people—they are to possess this world's goods in abundance, not to be foolish with them and to destroy themselves and their children, but that they may preserve themselves and their children from falling into the vices and follies of great Babylon. He will raise up in their midst wise counsellors to provide for the welfare of the whole.

Will our trading and trafficking with the outside world cease? Of course not. As long as we are in the world, gathering Saints, preaching to the nations and building up Zion, Zion will be as a city set on a hill, which can not be hid. But the Lord proposes to preserve his people as far as possible from the influences of Babylon, and the transactions outside of the Order will be carried on through the council of the Order; agents will be appointed by the voice of the Order, that what we bring from abroad may be bought from first hands and in the lowest market, that we may derive the benefits of it, instead of giving the profits to middlemen who are not of us, and what we have for sale we will sell in the best markets, and so enjoy the benefits of our labor, and not by interior competition and underbidding and underselling each other "scatter our ways to strangers," as we have done in times past. By this combined effort we shall be able to obtain the full market value of our products—the products of the farm, dairy, orchard, vineyard, the products of the woolen and cotton factory, of our shops, and every mechanical appliance, to enable us to procure labor-saving machinery, by our combined efforts, which men in their individual capacity are not able to do. We shall also be enabled to start new enterprises, and if they do not pay at first, they are bound to pay in the end, if they are necessary adjuncts to the prosperity of society. Our common fund will nourish these infant establishments, instead of individuals failing and breaking down in their vain efforts to build up new enterprises in a new country, as is often the case now. And if funds are needed from abroad to aid us in any general enterprise we shall have the combined property and credit of the community as a guarantee to capitalists abroad, instead of individuals mortgaging their inheritances to procure money to carry on individual "wild-cat" speculations by which thousands are ruined. If they were operating in a United Order and would submit their enterprises to the candid decision of that Order, many an enterprising man would be saved from foolish ventures and from ruin, and the wise and prudent would receive the necessary encouragement and financial aid, to make their undertakings a success for the benefit of the whole.

Will our merchants be worse off? No, our merchants, those who belong to this Order, will be just as well off as any of the rest of the Order. They will work where they