

REMARKS

By Elder Wilford Woodruff, Tabernacle, Sunday Morning, March 21, 1886.

[REPORTED BY J. V. LONG.]

There are times when I feel a desire to speak to the Saints, and I feel like it this morning, but whether I shall be able to say what I have in my heart or not I do not know, but I feel as though there is a necessity for us not only to feel like teaching, but to feel like practicing.

I have reflected a good deal of late upon our situation and the situation of this people generally in days that are past and gone, and I hope that the Lord will give me a portion of his Holy Spirit that I may express my meditations and the thoughts of my heart. The time has come when, if ever there was any necessity for this people to be awake and to enjoy the light and power of the Holy Ghost—it is to-day. If ever there was a time when the Quorums who bear the Holy Priesthood should feel the necessity of bearing a portion of the burden of the Church and kingdom of God it is to-day. I know that the care and labor of trying to save this people rests upon the shoulders of the Presidency of this Church, and I know also they carry a greater load in the midst of this people than they ought to carry. Why is this so? It is because the body of the Church, and we as Elders of Israel are not sufficiently awake to our duties; it is because we do not walk sufficiently in the light of our God, nor live under the influence of the Holy Spirit as we should.

I have reflected a good deal upon this matter, and have had many peculiar feelings about it and I do know that the Elders of this Church and kingdom allow the Presidency to bear a much heavier burden than ought to be laid upon them. I know that we in our several quorums of the Church do not feel the responsibility of our callings as we should do. I will tell you, Latter Day Saints, we have no business to be walking in darkness in this important day, but we ought to be under the influence and dominion of the Spirit of God. It is true we look to the Presidency of this Church to point out the road for us to walk in, and when they point it out we should be ready to walk into it, when they give counsel we should be ready to obey. We have lived a long time in this church and kingdom, and it is a shame and a disgrace, I will say it concerning myself, I will apply it to you and to the whole Church and kingdom of God upon the earth, it is a disgrace before High Heaven and before each other that we should walk in the dark, and not enjoy the light of the Holy Spirit.

I will now for a moment refer to days that are past. Look for instance at the days of Nauvoo when there was trouble and the sword of the enemy hung over the Saints, what was the feeling that prevailed over our minds at the time? When the Prophets of God attempted to save themselves, the feeling of the people, was, 'O, do not go away, for if you go away our farms won't be worth anything and all our property will fall in value.' Well, I say damn the principle that would rather sacrifice men's lives than property, it has existed long enough. What do I care about our city, our houses and lands, about gold or silver? If I have the Spirit of God and see the kingdom as I should see it, these things are but of little consequence; the burning of our houses, the cutting down of our orchards are both small matters when compared with sustaining the Church and kingdom of God.

Our leaders have been oppressed in spirit all the day long with this very principle, and the people, although they have done much better of late, still I want to know if we have followed their counsel? We have not in a great measure. How long have the Presidency of this Church called upon us to lay up grain? For years they have made this call, a great portion of the time since we have been in these valleys, but have we obeyed that counsel? Have we laid that to heart as we should? I say we have not. Wheat, the staff of life, bread to sustain the mortal body has been a perfect drudge upon us, except perhaps the few months that we were pinched during the famine. We have had this cry sounded in our ears and we have been called upon by the Presidency to go to work and prepare ourselves for that which is to come. I heard bro. Kimball say a few days ago we may preach till dooms day to this people, but except we set the example they will never make a move. And I feel that this is true, and it is a shame upon us. If we want Presidents Young, Kimball and Wells to lead us aright we must follow their instructions and example, and unless we do this they may wear their lungs out preaching and the people will not be saved. They have got the care of their families, and the care of this whole people upon them, and it is indeed a shame that men who bear the Holy Priesthood should be walking in darkness and committing sin in this late day. We have all committed sins enough to make us inherit sorrow and misery because of our transgressions. I feel that when these men point out the way we should be ready to walk therein, and we ought to have the Spirit of God about us enough to block up the wheels, instead of them having to carry us. How long shall these things be? How long will we lie and swear and commit sin when those men whom God has laid the responsibility upon are constantly calling upon us to awake and do our duties? I do want to see such a day as we have seen. If the people are afraid that our leaders will hide themselves it is time they were swept away, and I hope if ever there is another war that they will be the first men who will hide themselves. Who wants to live and have them die? They have suffered enough, and I do not want to see them borne down with trouble any longer, neither do I want them to take us by the nap of the neck and drag us forward, I would much rather see them have to hold us back. It is as hard again to have to drag a sheep along as it is to have to rap him over the nose and stop him.

We have had preaching enough to save a whole nation if they would only carry out what has been taught. I want to exhort the Latter Day Saints that when we have counsel given us we go to work and fulfill it. We have no business to do wrong under any circumstances nor to walk in darkness, many of us have had a veil over our eyes that we have not seen the necessity of doing our duties.

I do not say that it is our business to lead, for it is not, that belongs to those who are set at our head, but it is not required of them to drag us into our duties. I feel that we have had warning enough, and light enough to enable us to comprehend our duties, and I do not feel in my mind that it is right for us to stand still, nor be backward in any duties that lie before us, neither do I feel that we should need all the time stirring up, nor waking out of our sleep, but we should walk in the light of the Holy Ghost, for God requires it at our hands, and we are all old enough to know our duties as Apostles and Elders, and as the Lord's anointed, and we should labor until we get light and the understanding to know what our duties are before the Lord our God. I tell you in the name of the Lord that our salvation depends upon the course we pursue here.

How often have we been told by those men who lead us that if we would live so as to see eye to eye, we should never be moved out of our inheritances. If this people had the light of Christ in them, and could see and understand, I know there could be faith enough to hold that army at bay. Just as long as our hearts are on our gold and silver, our farms and our possessions, just so long will the Lord Almighty scourge us, until we learn the important lesson that our religion is supreme over all other things. I know this people should be on hand to back up their leaders, and observe the commandments that are given and constantly enjoy the spirit of the work, and then they would see the difference between those who pursue the course of obedience and those who pursue it not.

What is the value of our houses and lands compared to the Holy Priesthood and the gospel of Jesus Christ? We are placed here to maintain and establish the Kingdom of God, and with us it is that kingdom or nothing. This is the way I feel this morning. I consider that our property is of little consequence, for if God requires of this people, to whom he has committed this great and glorious work, to sacrifice all for the gospel's sake, we should ever be on hand to do it. We must learn to see eye to eye, for how can we expect to have the same light as our leaders except we enjoy the same Spirit.

I feel, brethren and sisters, that I do not want to occupy much of your time, but I want you to search your own hearts, and see that you have the same Spirit as those who lead you. If we have not that Spirit we shall be under condemnation. I know it is our right and privilege to have the same Spirit that they have, and it will point to the paths that we are called upon to walk in.

I know that there is wisdom manifested by our leaders in pointing out the way of salvation for us, and in pointing out the way to victory and the necessary preparations for final redemption. If we have to live here ten thousand years before we become one, the Lord Almighty will never redeem Zion till we are united and prepared for it.

Then how long O Israel! shall we remain in our present condition, and how long before we will hearken to the cry of the Prophets in the day in which we live? How long before we shall realize our position and our duty? How long shall our leaders call upon the Twelve, upon the Seventies and the High Priests before we will understand our duties? How long shall they call upon us to lay up our wheat, our flour and provisions before we shall understand them? I do not know, but it will certainly be until we wake up and understand the value of those things. My prayer is that we might have the Spirit of the Lord, and be of one heart and of one mind, and that every quorum of the Church, instead of being a burden to those who preside over them, endeavor to strengthen their hands, and be ready to stand between them and trouble, instead of them having to stand between us and trouble.

My prayer is that we may listen to those things that are taught us and be ready to carry them out, and when we do this the rod of affliction and the chastening hand of the Almighty will be turned from us. But so long as we do not perceive our duties and do them, so long shall we have to pass through the same school of experience.

My prayer is that we may prize the blessings of the kingdom of God that are put into our hands, and that we may be valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ—overcome the flesh and the devil, and our hearts be where they should be: I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.

From the Olive Branch.

Why the Wife Stays at Home.

BY KATIE KAITE-DID.

"I am afraid your wife will be jealous, Mr. Marvin," playfully remarked Miss Fuller, as she prepared to accompany him to a fashionable concert."

"Oh, no! not at all, my wife is too sensible a woman for that. Indeed, I think I have the most cause for jealousy; for, since Master Arthur Marvin made his appearance in this terrestrial sphere, all the time and attention that was formerly bestowed on me, is unceremoniously transferred to him. It is more real pleasure for her to sit and watch his interesting features when asleep, than to go and hear the most exquisite music."

Much you know about it, Mr. Marvin. It is really very strange, with your large perceptive faculties, that you cannot discern the true state

of things—or do you prove the old adage "that none are so blind as those who will not see?"—Do you mean to say that your wife, with her beautiful appreciation of music, prefers to stay at home rather than listen to the exquisite sounds in which her very soul delights, and in whose atmosphere she has been reared? No mother loves her darling babe better than she; but she knows as well as you, my wise and social gentleman, that it is perfectly unnecessary for her to remain at home, for, beside your venerable aunt, (who has chosen to make your house her home, much to the discomfort of your wife's amiable disposition) there is Biddy, who, she is well aware would guard the precious treasure, entrusted to her care, at the peril of her own safety, were it necessary. No, no, girl that will not do for an excuse, at least not for us; it may possibly for Miss Fuller, for, pure hearted as she is, she is thoughtless and pretty, and must have a beau; whether married or single is not of the least consequence to her, provided she can attend all the most fashionable places of amusement.

It never once enters her giddy brain, why the young wife remains at home, evening after evening, while her handsome husband is doing the agreeable to some young lady, as pretty and thoughtless as himself, who has condescended to accompany him to this or that place of amusement, because he loves company, and cannot bear to go alone, and his devoted wife will not leave her boy. Oh, no, Miss Fuller supposes that after ladies are married they do not care for anything beyond the confines of their nursery, or at the utmost, their own domicile; and probably for that very reason, has most wisely determined not to allow the matrimonial noose to be slipped over her head, at least while she is sure there is no danger of being called by that dreaded cognomen "an old maid." Little does she think that the expense which is incurred, is for a moment the reason of the far-sighted wife (in our sense) for refusing to accompany her husband.

How can that be? The price of admission to the most genteel amusement, is in general but one dollar; that is a mere nothing for a man in good business—it is perfectly absurd to think of that. But, my pleasure-seeking lady, just wait a few years, and we shall see if that will brighten your senses a little. Perhaps, after you have been fairly trapped by some handsome, agreeable personage, you may be able to perceive that one dollar is something even to a man in good business; especially when it is actually necessary to the departure of that dollar, that it should be accompanied by at least two or three more; for, of course, a gentleman possessing the amount of agreeable qualities, condensed in the handsome person of Mr. Marvin, would on no account suffer a lady to walk to the place of amusement, while a carriage could be obtained; and it certainly would be equally ungallant to allow a fair, sentimental, languishing maiden to return to her parents' domicile (how shall we write it?) in a starving condition. So, in honor bound, the carriage, with its shivering and impatient driver, is directed to wait until the epicurean appetites of the lovers of music are somewhat appeased, perhaps too much so, at 'Thompson's' or 'Taylor's' or some other fashionable saloon, where 'fools and their money are soon parted.'

It may be just possible, that, taking these little etceteras into account, one dollar will not so easily pay for one evening's amusement; and Mrs. Marvin, who not a very long time since, was a belle, has since her marriage, thought more of these trifles than do most young married ladies, and has made a very fair estimate of what it would cost her husband were she to accept his numerous invitations.

But why should she thus economize?—is not her husband doing a good business? Yes, good, for a young merchant who has just commenced for himself, but, 'Lords of creation,' perhaps in your leniency you will allow that we, your humble and devoted adorers, may sometimes be blessed with a very moderate amount of your wonderful foresight, even though it may be in regard to that which we should most religiously let alone, viz, business. Although, as is too often the case, 'Mrs. Marvin,' and many others, use but a small portion of their perceptive faculties, to foresee that, with extravagant habits, it must take more than a good business to support them, and deny themselves many pleasures, thinking it is so much less expensive for their husbands to go alone. Poor souls! who work so hard that they need some recreation, and it costs a mere trifle for a most respectable gentleman to visit a place of amusement alone, yes, a trifle, a mere nothing, when they go alone.

Adversity.

You who have never had the deep founts of your feelings stirred by the mute appeal of want, can never feel for or with the unfortunate. Adversity in some shape must come to all; the sick bed, the watching hours of grief and anguish, the coffin, the grave, the robes of mourning, these will shadow the happiest dwelling, sadden the lightest heart. But there is a trouble sorer than these in its wasting, lingering infliction; it is that of poverty coming to the sensitive like a 'strong man armed.' It is when the children weep for hunger and there is no bread to give them; when the full-fed landlord expects his rent next Monday morning and there is not a cent in the pinched portmanteau; when the winter cold is near and heaven only knows where wood and coal are to come from. And then sickness enters, perhaps, to keep poverty ghastly company.

The maiden married the man of her choice, bore him children and lived in happiness. Death thrust his sharp scythe between her and domestic bliss, levelling the father to the earth. Then commenced the bitter struggle. Those who had denied the wisdom of her choice looked in as they passed her door to say with their owl-like tongues, 'I told you so,' and left her to her misery.

'Deserted at her utmost need
By those her former bounty fed,'

the widow lifts her trembling hands and tearful eyes to the God who judges in mercy. Depression, indecision, grief, fear, all press upon her soul to weigh it to the earth. The memory of former blessings that her thoughtless hands took without thanks, the shadow of one new grave, the void at her hearth stone, the bitter tears of loneliness in the mid-hour of night, the absence of the fond word, the look of encouragement; the feeling that no friend on earth can be what the lost has been, take vitality from her exertions and make them but lifeless forms.

This is adversity in its darkest shape, as it comes oftenest to the gayest, the happiest; but through the cloud there is an eye serene that marks the change, there is a hand stretched out to help, if only the sufferer will look up.

Many who are reduced thus heavily, are wanting in the moral courage to let their needs be known. There are cases where poverty is a reproach when it is the result of a vicious life, but when a series of misfortunes following like the ever recurring hours, or the waves upon the sea shore, each perhaps larger and with a deeper surge and swell than the last, come rolling over the wrecked hopes; and circumstances mysteriously beyond control forbid the outstretched hand its efforts, then is poverty hallowed; then its griefs demand the utmost sympathy.

It is wrong, it is wicked to suffer while plenty is on every hand. 'I will die before I will ask for help,' says the poor man selfishly, and many a one does die, because he has not the strength to say, 'I am poor, aid me.'

There is another side to adversity as there was to the shield of which one man saw copper and swore it was all copper, the other saw silver and staked his life that it was all silver. There is a silver side to adversity.

It is said that only in his extremity man shows his ability, and this saying is often illustrated. Hounded by hungry creditors, pressed by extortioners who hunt for the dear life and caviar for the 'pound of flesh,' the soul sometimes bounds over its barriers and shows a might of invention, a power of resistance to calamity of which it knew not before and compared with which volcanic fires are tame. Then 'will' and 'shall' become the generals of fate, and, with resistless power bear all before them. New resources come to light like precious gems that have slumbered in ignominious cloths; thought takes the wings of the lightning and shatters the double wall of oppression till there is not 'one stone left upon another.' These are they who are armed with the power of endurance and who will either conquer or die; and heaven smiles upon them for they are oftener victorious. As the night gives brighter lustre to the stars, so sorrow gilds such natures with greater moral splendor.

Yet, another benefit accrues from this dreaded experience. It not only makes the good better, but changes the giddy, the vain, and the unreasoning. The thoughtless spendthrift becomes the friend of struggling genius through the terrible ministration of calamity. The trifling woman emerges from the shell of her frivolity, a ministering spirit winged with heaven's own light; the hardened man of wealth learns how truthful and how sad the simple annals of the poor; and deigns to weep perhaps over the little pine coffin of some tearful emigrant's child. The bold infidel with his God-defying eye, is brought to kneel more humbly than the affect outcast and own the 'Maker of his frame.'

Yes, the poet said well that

'Sweet are the uses of adversity.'

[Boston Olive Branch.

M. A. D.

EVIL REPORT.—The longer I live the more I feel the importance of adhering to the rules which I have laid down for myself in relation to such matters.

1. To hear as little as possible of what is to the prejudice of others.
2. To believe nothing of the kind until I am forced to it.
3. Never to drink into the spirit of one who circulates an ill report.
4. Always to moderate as far as I can, the unkindness which is expressed towards others.
5. Always to believe that if the other side were heard, a very different account would be given of the matter.

I consider love as wealth; and as I would resist a man who should come to rob my house, so would I a man who would weaken my regard for any human being. I consider, too, that persons are cast into different moulds, and that to ask myself what I should do in that person's situation, is not a just mode of judging. I must not expect a man that is naturally cold and reserved to act as one that is naturally warm and affectionate; and I think it a great evil that people do not make more allowance for each other in this particular. I think religious people are too little attentive to these considerations.

LYING IN BED WITH THE HEAD HIGH.—It is often a question among persons who are unacquainted with the anatomy and physiology of a man, whether lying with the head exalted, or even with the body, is the most wholesome?—Most persons consulting their own case on this point, argue in favor of that which they prefer. Now, though many delight in bolstering up their head at night, and sleep soundly without injury, yet we declare it to be a dangerous habit. The vessels through which the blood passes from the head to the heart, are always lessened in their cavities when the head is resting in bed higher than the body; therefore, in all diseases attended with fever, the head should be pretty nearly level with the body; and people ought to accustom themselves to sleep thus to avoid danger.—[Medical Journal.

He is the best accountant who can count up, correctly, the sum of his own errors.