

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 2.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, JUNE 29, 1895.

Vol. LI.

DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday, April 5th, 1895, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I have listened with a great deal of pleasure, and I hope profit, to the excellent instructions that have been delivered from this stand, and I cannot help but think what an excellent people we should be if we would carry out the counsels of the Almighty. I frequently say that we should learn to be kind to ourselves, and if anybody is going to be benefited by keeping the commandments of God it is the individual that keeps them. There is one principle patent before us all the time, and that is that individually we have a character and a reputation. The reputation is what we seem to be, as others sit in judgment upon us; but the character is known to the angel of our presence and to the invisible intelligences by which we are surrounded. When we pass away we take our character with us. We do not take the gold and silver and the perishable things of this world; but we take our own dear selves. So I do not know that we need be so troubled about anybody else. I saw a scurrilous piece that was written in one of the papers, and that was furnished us in Mexico by the Salt Lake Herald, attacking one of the authorities of the Church. It made me think of the saying in Hamlet: "Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." Did you ever know a servant of God that ever did? What did they say of our grand Master, the Lord Jesus Christ? What kind of a reputation did He have? How was it with the Prophet Joseph Smith? Everybody that knew the man loved him. He was one of those men that improved upon acquaintance; the more you knew him the better you loved him. So it was with the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, was that their reputation? No; but it was their glorious character. What is the use of us thinking we can deceive the Almighty? We talk about tithes and offerings. What does the Lord want with tithes and offerings? Do we pay to Him or do we pay to the Bishop? If I understand tithes and offerings, they are an offering unto the Lord. Jacob of old made a covenant with the Lord, and said, "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." How do we pay our tithing—to the Bishop? I do not pay my tithing to the Bishop. I pay

it to the Lord. He knows whether I pay it. He knows whether my heart is right with Him or whether it is not. He knows whether I am deceiving Him. He has only asked for one little gift from any of us. What can we give to Him when we are dependent upon Him for everything that we have—for food, for raiment, for habitation, for all the means that comes into our hands? We may be so ignorant that we do not acknowledge this; nevertheless it is true. Yet there is something that we have which He prizes. What is it? "My son, give me thine heart." "My daughter, give me thine heart." What do I understand by this? I understand my affection; that I acknowledge His hand in all things, and that I have nothing that is dearer to me than my affection for Him. We love our wives and children. But the call comes to go on a mission. We take our lives in our hands, and we preach the Gospel to a people that do not seem to care much about it, and we ask them to come and enjoy the happiness that we have in the Church of God. Why do we do it? Because we have a greater affection for God than we have for wives and children, houses and lands, or anything else. I hope my affection will always be centered on the Almighty. I want to be redeemed back into His presence; and if I fail, there is an end to my happiness. When I go into my secret chamber and appeal to my Heavenly Father for something that I need, I go there simply because I want it. When gathered around the family altar, we tender our praises and thanksgivings to God for His protecting care; it is because we feel it. We want the fellowship of the Holy Ghost; there is no one else who can give it, and so we naturally ask Him. If we are in any trouble, we naturally go to our unseen Friend, the Father of our spirits, and we plead with Him, in the name of Jesus Christ, for just such things as we need. Do we not in this way manifest by our works that we have confidence in Him? Do we not manifest that we believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him? You see men and women that never do this. It is simply that they are too ignorant. They do not know the source from whence they are fed and clothed. They think it is their own smartness. They are so self-sufficient and so independent that they think it is all nonsense to ask the Lord for anything. Well, I know different. How do I know it? In my experience I know that the Lord God has been my friend; I know that He has guided and directed me. I never think of going on a journey, I never think of taking any step, without looking unto Him for counsel and advice. Otherwise what would we do, scattered as we

are in the nations of the earth, and men and women coming unto us for advice? Do they come to us because of our superior ability or because of our scholastic attainments? No, they do not. Why do they come? Because we represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and they have faith in Him and in His Church, and they come to seek counsel at the fountain head. They have perhaps been impressed themselves and they want to know if that impression is right, and when they receive something that comes exactly as they understand it, it is a source of satisfaction to them. The Sunday school girl who is sick in bed sends for her teacher, because she knows he is a good man. She wants to be anointed with oil and have the prayer of faith, and she knows her teacher has faith, because he has taught her. Can not you see from this that that child has faith, that she has some confidence in God and in the ordinances of His house? It is manifested by her works. When people are sick and the first thing they do is to send for a doctor, they manifest by their works that they have no faith in the anointing of oil and the prayer of faith, but they have faith in something else. It is a simple proposition to me that men and women are going to be rewarded according to their works. We manifest our faith by our works. The Lord has given His saints the cue: "Whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food, and that not by the hand of an enemy. And the Elders of the Church, two or more, shall be called and shall pray for and lay their hands upon them in my name; and if they die they shall die unto me, and if they live they shall live unto me."

We talk about the progression of the Church in scholastic attainments. I would not give a fig for all your scholastic attainments if you have no faith. What better are you than the Gentile nations? They have the highest education that is possible to give, but they have little faith. They do not believe in God; they do not believe in the ordinances of His house; they are infidel to those precious principles that exalt men. Show me men and women who are advancing in faith and in righteousness, in meekness and in virtue, and I will show you a people that love the Lord God of Israel. Show me a people that are advancing in the iniquities of the world, and I will show you a people who despise the Almighty and are more in favor of the establishment of the kingdom of the adversary. We show it by our works. It does not matter much what our reputation is, we manifest what we really are by our works. We prove that