

## REMARKS

By Pres. BRIGHAM YOUNG, at the Dedication of the Co-operative Store, and Female Relief Department of the Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake City, delivered August 5, 1869.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I hardly know what to say with regard to the Female Relief Society of this Ward. We met and talked with its members sometime last winter, before this building was finished. I do not know whether the suggestions then made have been adopted, either wholly or in part, as I have had no report from them, I am consequently in ignorance of the present condition of the Society.

[Mrs. Sarah M. Kimball, President of the Society, explained that the suggestions of President Young, at the meeting referred to, had been carried out as far as the means of the Society had permitted, and that the present meeting was designed only for the dedication of the building.]

President Young continued, I apprehended that this meeting was designed for the dedication of the building, but whether the sisters wanted any instructions or not I did not know. But we are here and the brethren have talked a little; and a great deal might be said to instruct the female portion of our community. Bro. Geo. Q. Cannon has observed that the ladies have great influence on the earth; this is indisputable. It is well known that when one nation goes to war with another, the government has no difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of soldiers, if it can inspire the hearts of the mothers with the belief that its cause is just. This shows how great an influence mothers wield. We have an instance of this, too, right here, which has been referred to by Bro. D. H. Wells, I mean, in the sons of Joseph Smith. Those who knew Joseph's family in former days and who know it now, can readily see what an irresistible influence mothers possess. A mother of talent has great influence in shaping the after life of her child; she guides and directs it and instills into its mind principles which it is almost impossible for it to overthrow, even if inclined to do so; the principles and prejudices imbibed in infancy and early life are held with the tenacity of life itself.

There is no objection to the ladies exercising this influence, but we wish it to be used in the right direction, we wish it to be used only for good. That is our only object. There is an immense amount of talent, and I may say of real sound statesmanship within a community of ladies; and if they would only train their minds, and exercise the rights and privileges that are legitimately theirs, and would contemplate subjects that they now pass over and never think about, they would find that they have an immense amount of influence in guiding, directing and controlling human affairs; not, perhaps, the same amount as men, yet their qualifications, if developed and matured, are of a far higher order than it has been customary to accord to them. We wish to develop the powers of the ladies to the fullest extent, and to control them for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

There is a great labor devolving upon those who have entered into, and have undertaken to establish the Kingdom of God and its laws upon the earth; there is an immense labor to be performed if we could realize it, and all the talent and assistance that can be brought to bear will certainly be required in establishing the Zion of God upon the earth. I would not be understood by this that there is the least danger. The Lord can build up His Kingdom, and He can do it with very few; He is not confined to numbers or to territory, for the whole earth is His and He does His pleasure upon it; and whenever He issues His mandates or edicts, the nations of the earth are obliged to obey Him; if mercy does not control, judgments will; there is no failure when He desires to accomplish anything.

Yet the more good we can do the better we are satisfied; if we can do great good in the midst of the people, then, of course, our works are justified, for every person will be judged according to his works. The earth has to be revolutionized, and it and all its inhabitants redeemed from the fall, and, of course, there is an immense labor to be performed, and all the means, talent and assistance that can be procured will be required. The assistance of the ladies is as requisite as that of the men, and I am happy to say that our ladies are making a start in the right direction. One man in a Ward cannot see to all things pertaining to it; he cannot understand the wants and necessities of

the poor, and whether every member of his Ward is living in accordance with the precepts of the gospel; and if he has two teachers to each block to assist him they, unitedly, cannot see to it all, and understand the condition of every family, and of every person as well as the sisters can. Our Relief Societies are for the benefit of the poor and for the benefit of the rich; they are for the benefit of every condition and for the benefit of the whole of the community of the Latter-day Saints; and in their sphere they can be equally as useful as the brethren in theirs; in fact, the sisters can accomplish more than we can. I may preach to the female portion of this community until I am as old as Methuselah, but they still want all the ribbons and artificials that are brought into the Territory; but when they, the sisters, themselves, take hold to reform they will wield an influence that will be successful, and will save many thousands of dollars yearly to the community. It is utterly vain for me to try to exert such an influence.

I have been looking over the members of this Society to see how many are wearing home-made bonnets and hats; I can see more now that I am standing up than I could sitting down; but still they are not very numerous. Who amongst you make your artificials of taw, the most beautiful material for that purpose in the world? You may make all the flowers and feathers you can get, and for richness, beauty, native simplicity and delicacy they cannot compare with ornaments made of straw.

I do not know what the sisters in this and other Wards are doing; I know they are capable of doing an immense amount of good. They can stop a great deal of our expenses if they will. We hear a great outcry about hard times now. Do you do much business in this store now? No; times are dull. Would you, if there was the means? O, yes. Have you ever done much? Yes. What have you done with the means? Sent it to the four winds,—to California, to the States and to Europe. What for? To buy needless articles. I ask the men in this Ward, Have you got your money to enter a quarter section of land? "No," says one, "I have not got it. I think it would be easier times if we could get our pay from the railway company." If the amount due to this community by the railway companies were paid to-day, it would, no doubt, relieve our business men and the people generally; but if spent as recklessly as the people have spent their means formerly, it would not be more than six months before they would be in precisely the same position that they are in to-day. The women would want better dresses, or something more in their houses, and soon this means would be wasted and gone. If spent judiciously the thirteen hundred thousand dollars now due the people of Utah from the Railway Companies would secure a great many homes for the people; but instead of being applied to this and other useful purposes, the great probability is that much of it would be spent foolishly, and would yield no permanent benefit to its possessors.

This is a matter that all the men in Israel cannot control like the women can; they have not the influence, and there are reasons for this. We, that is the men, could sit down and say to the women "thus far shall you go, and no further;" but then there would be so much crying that we should yield the point, and say, "yes, get you what you wish." What for? Just that we may get a smile from you. We are so foolish as to do all this, and I expect always shall be; for it seems to be the natural condition of man. I say, again, that in matters of this kind we have not the influence that the sisters have. What could this Ward do if disposed? They could say at once "we will cease wearing foreign goods." Can you get anything to wear manufactured at home? Yes, all you need to make you comfortable. It is true that, just at present, we cannot make fine lawns and silks here, but we shall soon be able to do so if we are disposed. We have every facility we can ask for to make all the silk we want to wear, and can do it with our own hands if we are so disposed.

I know it is frequently said that we are an industrious community; and that is true. But I ask, do the generalities of the females of our people work like females among the laboring portion of other communities? So far as I am acquainted they certainly do not. In other communities you will see the few rich and noble riding in their carriages, and spending thousands yearly, while there are tens of thousands on every hand, very, very many of whom though working incessantly, or willing

to do so, can only just live, and hundreds of them have to beg for a morsel of bread. It is not so here; none are what can be termed rich, neither can we find, in any portion of the Territory, anything at all resembling the wretchedness and squalid poverty that abound in every other community. Still our sisters are busy and industrious, and if they faithfully discharge the duties devolving upon them, they have not much spare time. Their influence, however, is fully commensurate with their responsibilities, and they can do much more towards moulding and controlling the habits and fashions of our community than the men can.

It is pretty generally acknowledged that I possess great influence with the Latter-day Saints; but I cannot say to the sisters you must wear so and so and nothing else. I cannot say even to my brethren you must wear home-made; though I can say it to them, and be obeyed a thousand times quicker than by the sisters. Perhaps that comparison is a little extravagant, but I can say to the brethren do this or do that, and they will do it; but the ladies wish to have their own way in everything. If we can succeed in guiding their ideas correctly it will be an advantage to the whole community.

I want to say to this people, begin to take measures to preserve yourselves. We have had every opportunity of witnessing the feelings of the people from the day the first merchant came here until the present time; and when told the results of trading with their enemies, hundreds and thousands of them have felt like the lady referred to by Brother Geo. Q. Cannon, who said if she knew "Mormonism" was true, she would not believe it. Many of the people still feel like this lady did about the gospel; but about purchasing merchandise the majority of them are beginning to understand the facts as they are. Now it is part of the mission of the Female Relief Societies to extend this until a complete revolution is effected. And I will say to the sisters if you will go quietly along and will revolutionize your feelings and your ways, and will use all the Lord bestows upon you for your own preservation, there will be no fear but that the men will follow you.

What the ladies of the Relief Society in this ward or in other wards are doing I do not know; I have no time to pay attention to it. I think when I addressed your society before I recommended you to procure some knitting machines and sewing machines and have a tailors' shop for the manufacture of clothing; also to have a good school established, where young ladies, who have a taste for such things, might study and become proficient accountants and mathematicians, for I am perfectly satisfied that many ladies are equally as well qualified for the acquisition of such branches of knowledge as men are. All that is necessary is for them to develop the powers which God has given them. Too many of them, however, are too busily engaged looking after frills and gewgaws to pay attention to such things. Many of you know I am telling the truth.

Brother Wells was speaking about plurality of wives, and said that if this principle were put to the vote among the ladies of Utah he did not believe they would vote it down. So far as my feelings are concerned I do not care whether they would or not. I never should have embraced it had it not been a command from the Almighty. While speaking on this subject to a gentleman a week last Sunday, said he, "I do not understand it; when I think about a man having more than one wife it confuses my whole brain; I have only one wife and I cannot manage her." I said to him "I could manage a dozen such wives as yours if they only had the spirit of the gospel." He replied again, "but our Government does not like it, and you know they are after you." "Yes," said I, "I know that; but I care nothing about it. They have been after us these forty years, and the race is not over yet, and you know who has won thus far." I said again, "You talk a great deal about the Mormons' taking more women than one and making them wives, and supporting them and their children honorably; but nothing is said about the thousands who are destroyed in the Christian world and sent down to early and dishonored graves. Why, according to their own published statistics, from eleven to fourteen thousand women, from sixteen to twenty-two years of age, perish annually in the streets of New York City only; yet if a 'Mormon' were to destroy one woman, all hell would be on the move after him." This is not the exact language I used, but it is the idea,

and it is the truth, too. If it became known that a Mormon in these valleys had seduced, abandoned and had been the means of bringing one woman to destruction, what an outcry would be raised. That would be a pretext to blot out and obliterate the priesthood from the earth that they would be loth to let pass by. But we are not at all concerned.

Talk about apostatizing, why there are lots of people here who ought to have apostatized years ago! By and by something will come along and they will stumble over and go to hell. I do not care who comes or who goes. Our duty is to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth and gather up the pure in heart and all who have a mind to come with them; for this net gathers of all kinds. Whether the females of our community would vote to continue Celestial Marriage or not I neither know nor care. I know the work of God has commenced; I know I am His servant, and that I am called to labor in this gospel and work, and I reckon that He is able to take care of it. If He is not, I am sure I am not. I shall try to do what He bids me, and shall not fret. As for anybody coming here and leading away any but those who ought to go there is no fear of that; and as I said last Sunday evening at the 14th Ward meeting house, there is no more probability of a pure minded man or woman apostatizing from this church and being led away by the enemies of this work than there is of one of those enemies putting one of our meeting houses into his jacket pocket and carrying it to the States; there is not the least danger of any such thing. But in reference to polygamy, the sisters may do just as they please, whether they vote it down or not. While Bro. Wells was speaking I said to him suppose you take a vote on the subject; but he did not do it. We will do it now. All of you in favor of celestial marriage raise your right hand; now all of you who are against it manifest it by the same sign. I want all of you to vote. [The vote in its favor was unanimous.] You see we can not get a vote against it. You might ask all the ladies in this church and the result would be the same. It may be hard and trying to the ladies; but if it is any harder for the women than for the men God pity them. Why, a man with several wives must respond to every beck and call, and be a perfect slave! I tell you how it is with me. And it is good for me; it teaches me to curb my temper and to train myself and keep myself perfect before the Lord. I have to walk as carefully as if I were walking between bayonets as sharp as needles, and could not swerve one quarter of an inch on either side without feeling them against my sides. I do not know how it is with others, but I know that is the way it is with me.

Many ladies in polygamy seem to think that all a man is made for is to toil continually to gratify their extravagance and pride. I very often think when I see women wasting this and that through their extravagance and carelessness, "will they ever suffer for a morsel of bread? O Lord, save them from suffering." Many of them conduct themselves with seemingly as little idea of the care and anxiety their husbands endure as a babe three days old in its mother's lap. This may be strong talk, but I know all about it.

Yet, for all this, the sisters can do an immense deal for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. They can stop idleness; they can teach each other to stop their running and gadding about, and to spend their time profitably. There is no need for any of our females to cry "I have nothing to do," or, "I have no where to go, I am unhappy." What on earth makes them unhappy? Because they do not make life's cares, comforts; they have no care for anything beyond the gratification of their own whims and desires. Let women care to see every poor person in their neighborhood, old or young, comfortably clothed, and provided with good shoes and stockings, and they would find happiness in doing good; and the person who is happy while doing anything else I have not seen. The greatest happiness is the power to do all the good we can to our fellow-beings. Let us do that, and save every person that we can save, then we have continual joy. We should spend every day so that when we lie down at night we can say I do not know how I could have bettered word, thought or deed through this day. If we live thus, I reckon we shall be happy.

Well, sisters, we have talked to you a little here to-day; and every one that is acquainted with humanity, and with things as they are here on the earth