

Written for this Paper

WHO FAVORS REFORM?

It is sometimes an advantage to look back for a time, and it is better to see and acknowledge the starting point of error and failure, than to ignore either that or the results which have followed. There may be times indeed when the discovery that we have been led or misled by personal interest or profit would be a lesson almost beyond price.

The present time is one which has taxed the query of and suggested things practical and impractical to every thoughtful man at least, particularly as a Latter-day Saint who originally gathered to this locality for a revision and reversion of a thousand things familiar to the Gentile world.

The indefatigable preaching of the Gospel included the gathering, at least in spirit; gathering implied here in the desert the promise of labor, the certainty of a home, redemption from poverty, and the opportunity of rearing a family in peace and righteousness. This was grand in theory, and in some directions it was grandly carried out; in others we began well but gradually receded, and almost deuter principles taught authoritatively for temporal salvation; and today that man would be bold indeed who would publicly revert to and enforce ideas which were of immense value to the mighty dead.

Need we apologize for alluding to mercantile co-operation, to its intent, to its success in part? Shall we tell how its genius has been derided, how it has been denounced, derided and overthrown? If the record of settlement after settlement were enrolled, would it not be found that prominent men have been its bitter enemies, that they have fought it, worked against it, withdrawn their patronage from its representative house, unconscious all the time apparently of the blessing it has been—that it has conserved almost everywhere the financial interests of their local trade?

Do we not know that this great institution is still officered by our revered leaders as in the days of President Young, and that its directors and others are appointed, sustained of that authority? And while little or nothing of this may be said in public, can it not be easily seen that in proportion as private and public defection has grown, unity, cohesion and mutual interest have declined? We are reminded of a certain report made by a prominent northern citizen in the city hall here, when the advocacy of co-operative merchandise was general and ere any organization was formed. President Young, presiding at that meeting, asked the gentleman referred to what the prospect was in Weber Stake. The reply was, "Very poor." "Why, why?" said the President. "Because every man's interest was the other way." All the missionaries about had been (perhaps unconsciously) selected from those engaged in business for themselves or others. Such advocacy was of course as heartless and as unsuccessful as the preaching of the Gospel would be, if confined to the followers of Wesley or members of any opposing church.

The original intent was to have one or more buy for the people of this Territory, or at least for those called

Latter-day Saints; to have one central distributing point, or more as change might determine; to have one or more auxiliary branches in every settlement owned by the people of that place; for none of these to sell for exorbitant profit as had been done, or for the special advantage of any individual; and that while the main purchasing was to be regulated by home supplies, every distributing outpost or store was also to foster local industry by creating a reserve from the annual profits of their store to be used for home manufacture.

If this program had been fully carried out, the hum of business activity would today have been general. Concentration would have been a colossal force. The multiplication of stores, drummers, indebtedness, failure and bankruptcy would have been averted. There would have been more mercantile honor and less of unfair competition; more confidence and concentration. Men would not have sold themselves for an offered quarter of a cent per yard, or ten cents on a dozen of anything; nor would they have been despoiled of dollars in the cunning endeavor to save a paltry cent.

Probably the best ability now in business here and there would have constituted an advisory board, and instead of trading as now on their own account from New York to San Francisco, in an indiscriminate and disintegrating way, they could and might have been the creators and supporters of a business phalanx invincible against all competition, and really the undisputed financial and commercial backbone of an unrivalled state.

We may not be familiar as yet with all the details of the Divine program, but it is not unlikely that time will demonstrate that religious unity is but as the mirage of the desert, unless commercial, financial, social, industrial and political unity and consolidation come as an inevitable result. If the present is the outcome of the Gospel spirit, alas for the labor, sacrifice, counsel and example of the trying years gone by!

A small modicum of reflection will bring repudiation of this thought, even when observation marks the continued reproduction on a small but increasing scale, of the manners, methods and spirit of the world at large. The love of self, the love of wealth, the love of position, constitute a trinity of power which needs the correction of a Father's hand, the imperious force of panic and hard times, to wake to a better and a grander thought.

The now reading of a famous and often quoted passage is this: "Therefore not leaving the first principles, * * * let us go on unto perfection." Interference by education is one of the cardinal principles of the Church. Men have to be corrected, advised, restrained, encouraged, and disciplined; but this is difficult, save as the teacher embodies within himself obedience to that which he luculater; it is hard for a man to preach that which he fails to practice, whether this be titling, honesty, Sabbath-breaking, the Word of Wisdom or co-operation; and not a few are powerless because they have not been loyal to what they have received in spirit or letter.

Probably even the most successful

phases of business success have aroused the cupidity of those who had means. Every disgruntled stockholder could always find a purchaser, and few took that advice, given by President Young, who, when dark days fell upon Z. C. M. I., telegraphed from St. George, "Brethren, do not sell your stock." Some rejoice today because they listened to his voice. Others are just as full of sorrow and regret because in a moment of fear and depression, they sold. Locally, far too often have investors been urged to sell rather than to retain.

Instances are quite rare where the first great idea was allowed or encouraged to full development, and of those, final failure should have but suggested correction of a known evil, and rectification of unbusiness like method.

One thing is well known in business circles, that is that many stores are now flourishing because of their fealty to and aid given by Z. C. M. I., and others are conspicuous failures because they ignored every sentiment of business gratitude. New men perchance averted from their allegiance, or old ones, crazed by competitive hunters for patronage, divided what little trade they had, paid the new creditors with money due the old, and sadly betrayed their best interests to those who, not for sympathy, but from anxiety for trade, threw out one bait after another to secure it.

President Young urged the people to trade at least "with their friends." Modern methods claim as friends "from Dan to Beersheba" those who give them that credit which they have forgotten at home; and it can be said without contradiction that very few dealers now in business would have been so had they treated firms in Omaha, St. Louis, Chicago and San Francisco as they have treated that institution which, whatever its defects, is under the control of men whom we shall sustain with uplifted hand at the coming Conference, as we have done in years gone by.

"Speech is silver, and silence," it said, "is golden." In these days of degeneracy we seem to prefer the "golden," though all our interests (or many of them) are bound up with the other metal. It may be our tongues will be loosened soon, and a better appreciation of that which for twenty-five years has had the endorsement of at least our leaders, may again have the endorsement of "priest and people" everywhere in Utah.

WITH THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah,

March 6, 1895.

Leaving Maricopa Stake on the 6th of February, at 9 o'clock p. m., Brother Maesser and myself left for Bowie, 236 miles, thence per the Gila Valley Globe & Northern railway for Thatcher, St. Joseph Stake, fifty miles from Bowie. This line of railway has been built since our last visit.

February 7th we were the favored guests of our old friend President Christopher Layton. The Stake academy was first visited, after which a meeting with the board of education was held.

By previous arrangement, Friday,