

REMARKS

By President BRIGHAM YOUNG, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Oct. 8th, 1869.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

For one I shall take the rebuke of Bro. Snow; I really think it belongs to us, and the coat fits so perfectly that I cannot help wearing it. I will appeal to my brethren and sisters to see if it will fit them. I do not wish to cast any reflections on any one, but if my beloved brother from St. George will stand up beside me, you will be able to see who is the best dressed, and who has the most foreign goods on; if he does not wear as much as I do I am mistaken. I generally wear cloth of my own make, but I am not doing so to-day, I have on a coat that was given me. But I must say that the rebuke is just; it comes in good time. Let us receive and profit by it. There is a great deal in it, as you will see, if you reflect. Bro. Snow says he is one of the two first men that set their feet in this valley; and he has a right to rebuke, guide, direct and teach us, and to give that instruction which is necessary to make the people of this and the other valleys acceptable to the Lord. I am happy to hear from him and the rest of my brethren that their whole hearts are engaged, and, I may say, their hands too, for his are in trying to sanctify and purify the people and make them in reality what they profess to be,—namely, Saints of the Most High, and to make them one in building up Zion and in bringing forth salvation and deliverance to all the inhabitants of the earth.

This is a matter of reflection with a great many. Brother Snow talks about our enemies and about the wicked we have in our midst; also about our friends, neighbors and relatives. I can say that if our friends and our enemies and the world of mankind knew what we are actually doing, in the Lord, they never would raise their hands or voices against us while they lived; no, never! It is hidden from them; they do not see it. They cannot see it, unless the Spirit of the Lord reveals it to them. We are laboring for the redemption of the human family. Let anybody look at it, even our most bitter enemies, and all who have any hope of eternity or eternal life, or even a desire for life everlasting; let them examine for themselves and learn what the Latter-day Saints are doing.

We say, the ancients said, and the whole Christian world say, that Christ died for the sins of the world. All who believe in the New Testament believe that Jesus will do what His apostles said He would and what He himself promised—that is, to save all the children of men in a kingdom of glory, light, purity, happiness, peace, delight and comfort. Whom will He save? Every son and daughter of Adam and Eve, except those who sin against the Holy Ghost; they will become angels of the devil. This is the promise of the Savior; and this is the work we are engaged in if we are what we profess, believe and think we are,—namely the people that God has called upon to come out from Babylon and separate ourselves from sinners and from sin. We are laboring with the Savior to accomplish the work of redemption for the human family, and to bring them into glory, or else we are doing nothing. Do the people of the world see this? Can they see it? No; not unless they have eyes,—eyes to see, and then see.

Although the Latter-day Saints are called to such a high and important mission, we have many foolish customs and habits existing amongst us. While beholding this, we, on the other hand, can also behold the sincerity of the people. Look at their sacrifices! Is it not a spectacle to behold the Latter-day Saints gathering from all parts of the earth—for we have them here from almost every nation under heaven—for the sake of being with those who are building up Zion? Yet if we view ourselves as in a glass, we find that many of us indulge in foolish fashions and customs, and in feelings which are worse than the cut of a coat or the shape of a bonnet. I do not consider that the coat makes any difference in reality. I do not consider that it makes any difference with regard to the love of truth in the heart of a lady, whether she has three straws and a ribbon on her head or whether she has a corn-fan as we used to call the old fashioned bonnets. But, still, when the heart clings to these things that are so perishable

and unnecessary, and follows after the fashions of the world, so wanting in comfort, I consider that we are very foolish and unwise.

This people are required to come out from Babylon and from the wicked. They may say:

"Have we not done so? We have left our fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, our uncles and aunts, our homes and comforts, or our poverty, and have gathered with the Saints to build up Zion."

This is all true; but still we are by no means free from the traditions and customs of Babylon. We hear a sister say:

"I want to send to New York to get the fashions;" or, "I want a dress or a bonnet made;" or, "I want to get a dress from New York or Paris or London, and I want to see the fashions."

"Sister, do you take the fashion magazines?"

"Yes, I take them, for I want to see how to have a skirt cut, or the waist of my dress cut, or how to have this overgarment cut, made and trimmed."

Now, instead of being influenced and controlled by the follies and fashions of the world, a sensible lady would say:

"Who cares what other folks wear? I have just as good judgment and taste as any lady who lives in New York, London or Paris. My taste suits me, my judgment will answer for me and I will have a fashion to suit myself, and I will cut and make my garment for my comfort, beauty, and excellence, and I will dress according to my own taste; I care nothing about the fashions of the world."

This would be in accordance with the dictates of good sense and consistent with the instincts of a true lady. I do not mean those female loafers Brother Snow has been talking about, who are so useless; who think of nothing but riding, or patrolling the streets, for the sake of displaying their dresses or their fine bonnets, while their children, if they have any, are perhaps at home in the dirt, uncared for, unwashed in the morning, and running the streets, with nobody to teach them their letters. I do not call such characters ladies. A real lady should possess all the refinement and good behavior necessary in good society; she should possess all the knowledge of things pertaining to the cares of life devolving upon her in her sphere as a woman:—how to take care of her children, to keep her house clean and like a little palace, how to make beds, make bread, cook, cleanse the cooking utensils,—and in addition to all this she should be virtuous, and should strive continually to serve and obtain a knowledge of God. All these qualifications are necessary for a lady, but such things are disregarded to a very great extent now-a-days, especially in fashionable life, among those who are styled ladies.

A young man thinks he would like to get married, and having selected a young lady whom he thinks he would like for a partner, he says:

"I have some idea of entering the matrimonial state, and, having observed you for some time, I think I would like to make a proposition to you with that end in view. Can you milk a cow?"

"Oh, no, I never milked in my life."

"Can you make bread?"

"Oh, no, my mother or the hired girl does that."

"Can you make your bed?"

"I never made a bed in my life."

"Can you wash dishes?"

"Well, really, my hands don't look as though they had been in the dish water."

The young man is discouraged; he looks forward to life. Says he:

"We have to eat and drink; we want a good bed to sleep on, a good house to live in, good food for our bodies and I am looking forward to know how to obtain these articles, and I say to this young lady can you do these things and help me to gain a livelihood, and gain knowledge for ourselves, bring up a family of children and give them a good education?"

When a young gentleman finds there is no prospect for these things he leaves in disgust. This is the condition of the world to-day—with a few exceptions, in the higher ranks who have means—everybody, especially the female portion of society, seems to be anxious to obtain means to spend without labor.

The Latter-day Saints are called to something else; they are called to build up the Kingdom of God, and every person who has read the Old and New Testaments, and believes them, can easily understand that the performance of that work involves a great amount of labor. Is Zion to be built up on this earth?

Yes, every person who believes the Bible acknowledges that. Well, is God coming here to build our houses and temples, to make our streets, or set out our orchards and vineyards? O, no, we do not expect that. Is He going to send His angels here to perform this labor? No, I rather think not. I have not yet learned any such thing. Then how will He build up Zion? He will build up His Zion by gathering His people together. Suppose the people believe the gospel, and, when they gather together, bring Babylon with them, are they gathered from Babylon? No, they are not; they are only gathered from one part of it to another.

There is a great work to be done in building up Zion on the earth in the latter days. I know very well that our enemies do not believe that we are building up Zion. I am really glad of it. Why? Because they are helping to establish this Zion. Shall I say they are doing all they can? No; they are doing a little, but they do not know it; they are fulfilling the prophecies, but they do not understand it. Do you suppose the enemies of God's kingdom would fulfill the prophecies if they knew they were fulfilling them? No, I think not. I know they say they are not the enemies of God or righteousness; but, if they are not, why do they not practice righteousness? If they are not the enemies of God, why not obey His commands? If they are not the enemies of truth and peace, and to all the blessings that pertain to the holy gospel, which make men and women pure in heart and pure in their lives, why do they not practice the principles of that gospel? Do we not know men by their works and deeds? Is not a tree known by the fruit it bears? They say they delight in righteousness and feel to promote it, but they never do it. They say they bear beautiful fruit, but when it is plucked it is sour and bitter to the taste. All people will be judged by their works and the fruits thereof. I think that is the way that the Lord has said He will judge the people of the nations of the earth.

The Lord has spoken to the whole world of mankind through His servant Joseph Smith, the Prophet; He has sent forth the words of eternal life to the whole world so far as they would receive them. If there is a few who have hearkened to the still small voice, a few who have lent a listening ear to the whisperings of the Spirit of God, and have gathered out from the wicked, they do not want Babylon in their midst. The question may arise,

How do you know you do not; have you tried it? Yes we have, and to our sorrow. We have promoted the interests of the wicked in our midst; we have fed and clothed them; we have made ourselves poor by giving them our money, and they have used that means to destroy us. Would they do it again? Yes, they would do it again and again, if we would permit them. But, saying nothing of the past, the time has now come for us to say we will build up the kingdom of God, and build up the kingdoms of this world no more. Is there any treason in this? No. Anything contrary to the Constitution of our Government? No. Is it contrary to any of the laws of our country? No; it is not. I can go and trade with James, my friend, just as well as to go to Mr. Jones' store. I say,

"Friend James, I wish to do my trading with you, and I shall send my orders to your store."

James says to Joseph, "Joseph, if thou wilt do thy trading with me, I will do well by thee."

So they mutually agree, and Joseph trades with James, and buys all his goods at James' store, and there is no harm in it. He is not obliged to go to the store of a Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Universalist, or infidel, or anywhere else; but he can trade with James only, if he pleases, because he is his friend, and there is no sin nor harm in it whatever.

Is there any evil in the Latter-day Saints trading with one another? Oh, no, not the least; but "it is impolitic" some will cry; "it is not policy for you to shut yourselves up in this manner; you should not be so isolated and exclusive in your dealings." I say we should be strictly so; we have not been so in the past. We have made scores of merchants rich in this city who never dared tell the truth about us; but when lies came along they would sanction and foster them, and they do the same to-day. There are men here in our midst to-day who tell that which is as false as false can be with regard to the character of this people. They court contention and discord and alienation of feeling. Is this righteous?

We do not want Babylon in our midst, do we? If we are the people that we say and believe we are, we never should do another deed to foster Babylon in our midst. Is there any harm in this?—I can not see that there is? I have the liberty of trading, dealing and doing just as and where I please, as far as I can, if I transgress no law and do not infringe upon the rights of any of my fellowbeings. This is the law of liberty. All things, says the Apostle, are yours: height, length, depth and breadth; every glory and every blessing and privilege; every power that you can imagine is yours, provided you do not infringe upon the rights of others. This is the liberty of the gospel. Is there any harm in living thus? There would be no harm that I can see if my sisters were called upon here to form themselves into a society and make a covenant to make their head dresses of material that grows in the country. In the fair that has just been held I saw some hats and bonnets made of straw throughout; there was no foreign or imported material used in them, and they were the handsomest and most lovely and delicate I saw there. I can recollect when straw trimming first came into fashion. They sent from England to Massachusetts, and would pay four prices for bonnets that were trimmed with straw alone. Why not wear such bonnets now? Has it become less beautiful, or has it less lustre than it had forty, fifty or sixty years ago? Then why is it not worn? It is not fashionable. That is a very silly word to say, very silly word indeed.

How short-sighted we are to say "it is not fashionable!" Why, the fashion is whatever we are disposed to make it; we can make the fashion just to please ourselves. If I am disposed to wear a hat with a brim two and a half inches wide, that is my fashion as long as I continue to wear it, and it is just as good as to call it after any other name. It is so with boots, hats, bonnets or dresses. If a dress is made, possessing some peculiarity, and is called after a queen or some fine lady, it is fashionable, and others must copy after it just on that account. What folly! Have we not minds? Has not God endowed us with all the qualifications to think and judge what is good for ourselves, as well as anybody else in the world? He has. All the attributes that we read of Him possessing are in mankind; we see them. They are developed more or less. Why not use these attributes, and think and say that our own fashions are as good as anybody else's?

Suppose we should ask our sisters if they will covenant and agree to make their own head dresses out of material produced here! We are raising silk, and if the ladies do not know how to make ribbons, our silkweavers do; the raw material is on hand in abundance, and they can go to work and weave silk ribbons enough for the ladies to cover themselves. We are capable of making any kind we please, and we can certainly make the straw. Suppose you ask the brethren if they will wear a good, substantial home-made straw hat in warm weather. Would there be any harm in it? No. How much would it save this community if the ladies and gentlemen were to wear home-made head-dresses for twelve months to come? Have you any idea what it would save? Do you think it would be a thousand dollars? If it were no more, a thousand dollars would bring out ten, twelve or fifteen poor Saints, with what they could do for themselves. Say we save a thousand dollars, that would help to emigrate some poor Saints. If we saved ten thousand, that would emigrate a hundred perhaps, with what they could do for themselves. If we do this, it would help to relieve suffering creatures who would lick the dust off our feet to have the privilege that we have to-day. Hundreds and thousands of them would crawl on their hands and knees to this house and lick the dust where we walked to enjoy the privilege we enjoy to-day. Do we esteem it? Do we realize where and who we are? Do we realize our position before God and angels? Think of these things! Now, brethren and sisters, suppose we say that we will make our own head dresses, and save a hundred thousand dollars annually, and with that amount feed the hungry, clothe the naked and put in the possession of those poor, ignorant ones who come here the knowledge how to live, teach them from good books, what the world is, what God is; would not this be infinitely better than to waste our means for the gratification of vanity and fashion?

I may ask again, are we obliged to import? Is it the law of the land that we shall purchase our goods here in this