

REMARKS

By Elder E. T. Benson, delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, April 7, 1867.

[REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.]

I do not know that I have ever seen a better time to preach the gospel than the present, since I have been in this Church. I have not come to this Conference to preach, particularly, but to hear and learn; yet as I have the privilege given me to speak, I am very thankful to bear my testimony to the truth, as it has been revealed from the heavens. I have had many reflections since attending Conference, upon the text given to the Elders of Israel to preach from. It is before me all the time. It is a common custom with some to criticize the remarks made by the brethren while speaking. Some will think a speaker has been interesting, while others will consider that his remarks were well enough, but without point. I am happy to say that the "point" is already made so far as I am concerned. It is "to be one," in everything that pertains to the building up of the Kingdom of God. And if we are to believe what we have heard during this Conference it is to be one in keeping the Word of Wisdom, and in living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Almighty through His servants. It is true that we have heard this for years, and it will have to be sounded in our ears until we are one in Christ as He is one with the Father.

We have been taught during this Conference to dispense with everything in eating, drinking and wearing that is not in accordance with the will of God; and I do not know what greater things could be taught to the Latter-day Saints. We all know that there are a great many things that we now eat, drink and wear, with which we could dispense to our own advantage; but because one has a thing, another must have it too, and there is no peace until all these wants are supplied.

Talking about happiness, I told a lady to-day at noon, that we, generally, are very ignorant of it. We think that a good bonnet, hat, a fine coat, a good cup of tea, or a pipe of tobacco to smoke will make us happy; but it is a mistaken notion. God never ordained such things for that purpose. We can be happy only in keeping the commandments of God and in being wholly devoted to the things of His Kingdom. Some of our Elders think if they were sent on a mission it would make them happy; but I have been told that there is no better field for missionary labor than here in the mountains; and every man here, bearing the Priesthood, has got a mission to preach the gospel at home, where his labors are most needed and where he can do the most good. At this Conference every presiding officer, Bishop, Elder, Priest, Teacher, Deacon and member of the Church has got a text to preach from in his future ministrations; to bring this people to a oneness in all things, is henceforth the object of our labors. We are already united on many points; for instance, we are one here to-day in partaking of the Sacrament in remembrance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But there are other things that require our attention. We should be one in all our movements, in sustaining ourselves.

This is a portion of the text that has been given to us, and I felt that much good will result from the counsel we have had on this subject, and I intend to lay hold of it with all my might. And let us all endeavor by the help of God, to leave off our tea, coffee, liquor and other things that are neither good for the body nor for the belly. We can overcome, for God will not require more of us than we can do. He has borne with us these many years; but if I can discern the signs of the times He is now going to require these things at our hands. Supposing He had given the Word of Wisdom as a command, how many of us would have been here? I do not know; but he gave this without command or restraint, observing that it would be pleasing in his sight for His people to obey its precepts. Ought we not to try to please our Heavenly Father, and to please His servants who are paving the way for us into the Kingdom of God? Can we get there without them? No, we cannot, and we need not try. God has appointed these prophets and apostles to lead and guide us into His Kingdom, and I do not expect to get there without them, and I am not going to try. If I can get there with them I shall be very thankful. How many blessings have you received in

this kingdom without them? I do not know of any. If we have blessings we have received them through their counsel and guidance.

I am thankful that we, to-day, have the privilege of beholding the faces of our brethren who have borne the burden and heat of the day, and who are still ready and willing to administer for our benefit. I think that we above all people ought to be willing to retrace our steps in a great many things, that we may obtain the blessings we are seeking, and not be cut short. I tell you the kingdom is rolling; and as for the nations of the earth, we need not be troubled about them, the Lord and the devil will take care of them. They are wasting away, and they will go to their own place, and Israel will be gathered out, and the faithful will be saved in the Kingdom of God. This is my testimony. You need not have any doubts or fears from this time forth; if you are faithful and live your religion, you are safe and you will land safe in the Kingdom of God. I have no dubiety on my mind with regard to these things, and it is my study to know how to live so that I may enjoy the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of this gospel; and it cheers and comforts my heart when I hear the elders talking about the good things of the Kingdom of God.

I have come nearly a hundred miles through the mud and snow to visit and hear the voices of my brethren and to listen to their counsels. Not but what we have some good folks where I live; at any rate we have some good preachers among us occasionally. Only a few days ago we had bro's. Musser and Stenhouse. They preached good things to us, and cheered and comforted our hearts. Some of the brethren remarked to me that "they preached splendidly and really enjoyed the spirit of the gospel." Said I, "of course they did; they are from the fountain head, from the droppings of the sanctuary, and they possess the spirit of our President and Prophet, and of the Apostles with whom they associate." It is to be expected that men who come from the head here will have something new to tell to cheer the hearts of those who live isolated and far away. It proved to me, however, that we in Cache possess a little of the spirit enjoyed here, or we should not have received and been comforted by the teachings of our brethren. And we have come down to partake of the feeling and to share in the blessings of this great annual Conference, held by the Latter-day Saints in the tops of the mountains, in peace and with none to molest or to make us afraid.

There is a little grumbling sometimes on the outside, a little showing of the teeth; but no biting and no harm done. The Saints are still living their religion, persevering, going ahead, striving to do the will of God, that they may eventually take the Kingdom. Not the kingdoms of this world, for we do not want them. A great many men in the world are afraid that we are striving to take their kingdoms. We are not after the kingdoms of the world; but it is the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of life and peace that the Latter-day Saints are after, and we expect to have it.

Short sermons are the order of the day, and I do not wish to occupy the time. I am thankful to my brethren for the opportunity of bearing my testimony to the truth. I have all the preaching I can attend to when I am at home, which is wherever I am called to labor. I feel free and easy in talking anywhere, where I am required so to do. I feel free in the spirit of the gospel and in the midst of my brethren. This is the place I like to visit, and I would spend all my time here if duty did not call me elsewhere. Here in the mountains is our field of labor, and nowhere else, unless we are sent. If we receive a mission to the various nations of the earth, let us go and do the best we can. Until then, let us take a course to be one: one in dollars and cents, one in obtaining woolen factories and machinery, one in keeping the Word of Wisdom and in everything else that will tend to bring about good results and increase good feelings in the minds of the Saints. Unless we keep the commands of God we cannot attain to this. It is no use for anybody to say "I shall be happy if I can have everything to gratify my taste." It is perfect nonsense, and the individual who entertains such a notion is deceiving himself. Nothing short of the bread of life, that comes down from God out of Heaven, can supply the wants

and satisfy the feelings of the Latter-day Saints and those who love truth.

May God bless us, brethren and sisters, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Correspondence.

53, Vine St. LIVERPOOL,
February 11th, 1867.

HEBER C. and VILATE KIMBALL:

MY DEAR PARENTS:—From the heading of this letter you will readily perceive that I am absent from my appointed field of labor, and perhaps this may excite in your minds some little wonder as to the whys and wherefores of this wandering. My story will be a long one, but I trust you will be patient.

During the latter part of December, 1866, I was proceeding through my conference in the usual manner, fulfilling written appointments in the various branches. On one occasion, having preached at a distant village, I was returning, on foot, to a place of lodging when a heavy shower came on. I gave my umbrella to some of the Saints who were with me as a choir, and the consequences of course was a rare soaking for poor me. The night was well nigh spent, and on reaching my temporary place of abode, being too wearied for partaking of food or drink, I marched up stairs, changed my clothing, replacing a warm pair of knit garments for a miserable old pair of calico ones, which had become wretchedly damp from the surrounding walls. This act of indiscretion performed, I jumped into bed; and what was my dismay the following morning when prostrated by a most racking rheumatism and inflammation of the lungs. Br. N. Groesbeck, my co-laborer, salleyed forth at an early hour, and filled the remaining five appointments, while I remained to receive necessary attention for the removal of diseases. Excellent treatment was bestowed upon me at the house of an honest and kind hearted family, by name of Hanford. By judicious doctoring for two or three days, all rheumatism fled, and its fervent grasp was of shorter duration than we anticipated.

Feeling somewhat restless to reach Nottingham, (after an illness of one week,) I took train, and landed safely at the conference house, where I was snugly stowed away in my bedroom. Here I lay for some hours with no other companion than a raging fever. Finally I was aroused by the melodious squalls of what appeared to be an infant in the adjoining room; sure enough it proved a New Year's gift for our landlady in the shape of a fine boy. This circumstance, unhappily threw me minus a nurse, and I was left to battle as best I could with a determined disease. Four long days elapsed ere help came, and during the whole time I was solely depending upon the tardy movements of a small and silly girl, who brought from time to time a dish of fat pork, boiled potatoes, bowl of cold coffee, &c., to tempt my very obstinate appetite.

Finally the news of my sickness spread among the Saints, and two aged women soon arrived at my bedside with no end of wonderful prescriptions. For the want of wisdom in these good natured ladies I was doomed to an illness of one long month. Twenty-one successive nights the perspiration dripped from my body like rain, and I was melting away under it, as the snow before a noon-day sun. You ask, did my spirits faint? I did ponder for some moments upon the seemingly melancholy fate of Jesse Y. Cherry, but my thoughts soon reverted to more pleasant subjects; and indeed one momentary reflection upon the blessings predicted by God's servants, and confirmed by my father and mother upon my head, banished all unpleasant imaginations, and I would feel buoyed up on the wings of faith that health and a happy greeting with the loved ones at home, awaited my unpleasant and trying affliction.

Br. Gibson came to my rescue on the third week of my illness, and he cast aside doctors, nurses and their medicines, with prescriptions, &c. I say "rescue," because I was swimming for life, and when he removed the barriers that obstructed my progress toward the shores of health, I began to make headway immediately. Debility was now the enemy to be conquered, after an appetite could be obtained. When able to quit my room, which was on the first of this month, brother John W. Young, who arrived the previous day

from London, conveyed me through the fresh air in a light vehicle, and the "out" proved very beneficial. This was repeated on the day following, and I was so revived as to be able, on the 3d inst., to attend two of our Nottingham conference meetings, at which br. O. Pratt and others of Zion's Elders were present, and a good time we had throughout the whole Sabbath. Numbers who were not of Saint-ish persuasion called on me with fruits, wines, "nick-nacks," and money. Great interest was shown me, and the Lord, I felt assured, had not forgotten His promise that, "friends should be raised up on the right hand and on the left to administer to my wants, &c." Many were actuated by deep sympathy to acts of benevolence.

Bro's. O. Pratt and John W. Young thought it advisable for me to accompany them to Liverpool, in order to recuperate. And accordingly, on the 6th inst. we took train from Nottingham for Liverpool. The journey was rather fatiguing for me, but the change proved very beneficial, and I felt somewhat stronger the next day. I am residing at the house of br. Brigham Young, junr., and the food which is prepared three and four times a day seems the proper medicine for me. Br. John W. is my doctor, and a capital one he is. We have a comfortably furnished room on the second floor and all seems to go off as smooth "as a marriage bell." Sister Young and little ones are quite well.

With the exception of a slight cough and general weakness I am in a well condition. I am gaining strength and flesh in a marvelous manner. "Doctor" Young has provided me with bitters, but I am so ravenous that he deems it wisdom to debar me of this appetite creator. I am prospering admirably and will soon reach the high standard of perfect health, with God's blessings.

February 13th. I will try and finish my pamphlet this evening. The letters of mother, E. R. Snow, Sis. Lucy and Bell reached my address by due course of mail, and they were perused with no little satisfaction by Isaac and myself. I am sincerely rejoiced to learn that mother's health is so excellent, and that she is in such buoyant spirits. You think I have not written monthly, but indeed, with the exception of last January, I have not failed in the promise made some months ago, but have been punctual. The last letter I wrote was enclosed in br. Groesbeck's to his wife. The letter inclosing Marion's and Bell's pictures came safely to hand. I shall take great pleasure in replying to sister Snow's very interesting favor at some future period when time will permit; and will likewise endeavor to make good my promise with sister Lucy, who has expressed sentiments of high regard for my welfare and prosperity.

Br. Edwin Walker and Robert N. Russell spent the day with me on the 11th instant. Both were quite well, and in first class spirits.

All seem anxiously awaiting the arrival of Pres. Young, junr., in this country, as our destiny for the present year apparently rests with him. None as yet have received changes or appointments. I anticipate an early release from my labors in this land to return home, and will, perhaps, set sail for America sometime during the latter part of the month of March or first of April.

Father, please advise me, in answering this letter, how you would have me cross the plains. I do not care to cross in the stage, but would far rather command the money and place it to good account in the shape of a share in a wagon and span of mules. Bros. B. Y., junr., and John W. talk of purchasing a good wagon or two between them, with the money or expenses which a stage trip would cost.

Time after time I have had pressing invitations from the relatives of father and mother, to pay them a visit at their various homes, in the United States, when I land in America. If it meets your mind for me to call on these good people, please make it known by the time I reach the great metropolis of America, and be kind enough to state about the length of time you would have me spend among them.

Br. John W. has just come in from 42, Islington, and he says that Bishop Wm. Smith is released from his labors in the Manchester Conference to accompany me across the Atlantic, and that we are to prepare to sail on the 27th inst. Br. Smith, like myself, is an invalid, yet he is tolerably strong in body, not having been bed-ridden for any length of time.