

REMARKS

By Elder JOSEPH F. SMITH, delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, October 9th, 1867.

REPORTED BY D. W. EVANS.

It is a great pleasure to me to have the privilege of meeting with the Saints. I delight to listen to the counsels and teachings of the servants of God in relation to those things which pertain to our salvation. I have enjoyed the instructions that have been given during this Conference, and I can bear my testimony that they have all been good, and we will be blessed if we treasure them in our hearts and practice them in our lives. We are a blessed people, and we can be more so if we are more diligent and faithful, for God will mete out His rewards and blessings as we merit them. If we desire blessings we must seek after them; if we desire advancement we must seek to advance ourselves by being energetic and faithful. For, although we compose the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it requires the strength of the multitude to perform any great work, such as the gathering of the poor, the rearing of temples, or the building of a tabernacle like this, yet every man should perform his part however small that may be. We must do our individual work, be faithful for ourselves, and build upon our own foundation.

I was particularly interested just now in listening to the remarks of Bro. Van Cott, and I thought while he was speaking that a part of his remarks came very near hitting me. I have had some little experience with our Danish brethren and sisters in the Endowment House, and have felt sometimes, perhaps, when a little impatient, that it was but little use for them to come to get their endowments when they did not understand more than half a dozen words in the English language, and consequently were unable to make their wants known; but I am willing to accept the explanation given by Bro. Van Cott, and I think, that in the future I shall be more cautious in saying that it is useless for those who do not understand the English language to partake of the ordinances of the House of the Lord. Still I think it is highly desirable for our foreign brethren and sisters to learn the English language so far as to be able to understand the counsels of the servants of God; for though the gift of interpretation may occasionally be given, as in the case referred to by Bro. Van Cott, yet I think it is by no means a common occurrence. I have no doubt that English is very difficult to be learned by those who are advanced in years, for its construction, sounds and accents are very different from almost any other language; still it is quite possible for nearly all to learn it so that they can understand it when they hear it spoken if they cannot learn to speak it. I believe this to be true, for I remember, on the Sandwich Islands, missionaries of the American Board who had labored for upwards of thirty years in the study of the Hawaiian language, who were scarcely able to speak a sentence intelligibly, but they could very well understand everything that was said. I infer from this that our foreign brethren may learn English so as to understand it, though they may not be able to speak it. And as the Lord has seen fit to reveal the gospel and its ordinances in the English language, it is a duty devolving upon us all to perfect ourselves therein, so that we may comprehend the teachings of the servants of God. In connection with this I would say, if I may be permitted to do so, that it would be well for all foreign Saints who cannot talk the English language, who come to receive their endowments, to have their genealogies written before coming, in good, plain writing, by an interpreter, so that their genealogies may be correctly recorded. At present this is an exceedingly difficult matter, for it is seldom that there are those present who can act as interpreters, and consequently it is impossible to keep our records as correctly as they ought to be kept. When people can talk and make themselves understood, all that is necessary is to post their minds in relation to those particulars that will be required of them, which they can easily learn from their bishops or from some one who has had his endowments, and so be able to answer the questions that may be asked of them.

I feel thankful that I am associated with the Saints. I have felt grateful to the Lord for the instructions and counsels that have been given during this Conference. Every discourse seemed to possess more than ordinary interest. They have been full of light, truth and wisdom, and of consolation to the Saints. We have a great labor to perform, a great mission to fill, and it is necessary that

we should be faithful and diligent, humble and submissive in all things required of us. If we are called to go on a mission let us be on hand to go, no matter whether to preach or build up Zion, with our hands. This is the express business of every man and woman who has a standing in the Church and Kingdom of God. If any of us have not yet learned this, it is certainly time we had. This is a lesson we have to learn, and the Lord will teach it to us sooner or later, whether we want to learn it or not, unless we turn away from the truth. We must be willing to hearken and be obedient to all the counsels of the servants of God or we cannot retain our standing and fellowship in the midst of the Saints.

Then let us go to, and adopt the counsels given to us. Let us make our own clothing and hats and bonnets; gather the poor from the nations, haul the rock from the cañons to build the temple, and let the young men who have been called to go south take wives along with them. Let us contribute our mite as far as the Lord requires of us that we may do something towards the building up of His Kingdom. This is the way I feel. I have ever felt that my interests were identified with the Kingdom of God, in other words that I had no interest apart from the Kingdom of God, no friends aside from the Saints of the Most High.

I seek no friendship and desire no familiarity or associations but with those who have embraced the gospel of the Son of God. This has ever been my feeling, so much so that I could no more associate or mingle with those who are not Saints than I could be persuaded to cut off my right arm. I can not do it. Such associations are repugnant to my feelings, and I have never yet been able to overcome that repugnance. I have been placed in circumstances where I have tried to be sociable and friendly; but it was all I could do to be courteous and pleasant, and I am of opinion that it was all that was necessary. I desire to be numbered with the Saints, to dwell with them in time and eternity. My interests are with the Kingdom and I desire to labor to build it up, and for the establishment of the gospel in the earth; that wickedness may cease and righteousness predominate; that the wisdom of the Lord may prevail and take possession of our minds; that we may know the truth, understand God and His ways, work righteousness, be faithful, pure, holy and upright in all our thoughts and straightforward in all our dealings one with another. This is our mission as Saints. We see sin and folly all around us, ignorance and superstition everywhere; we see that the adversary of souls has great power over the minds of the children of men. We see that the world is prone to folly; right in the midst of Israel we see this. The rising generation is given to vanity and foolishness; they seek after and follow the fashions of the world. It is a part of the mission of the Latter-day Saints to overcome these things, to put them under our feet and to make all subservient to the accomplishment of the purposes of the Almighty. Let the gospel of Jesus Christ be the ruling passion of our minds; our guide all the day long, and let all other things be secondary, then we will not be led away and become subject to the world.

When we begin to follow after the fashions and follies of the world we are like the sow that was washed returning again to her wallowing in the mire, or the dog to his vomit, we are returning to the pit whence we were dug; we are bringing ourselves into bondage to those things that are forbidden. We are acting foolishly in the sight of God, for we are commanded to abstain from these things. You can easily tell the young men or women whose minds are solely occupied with dress, with their external appearance or with the desire for admiration.—You may tell by their walk and actions what occupies their minds. Young men you may easily tell whether a young woman will make you a useful wife—a help meet, or not, by observing her actions, her walk and conversation. I advise young men and young women to be careful. We all have experience to gain. Experience is a dear school-master, and we are such dull scholars that we oftener learn by buying our experience than by being taught. We are slow to believe, to listen and receive instruction and admonition from those who have had experience, and we too often go blindly along until we learn by the things we suffer. Look well, be wise, make a wise choice of your company, your principles; speak wisely and kindly. Seek wisdom at the hand of God; ask the Lord to teach you the way to walk that you may keep in the path of truth, and prosper. If we take our own course we are sure to fall.

I believe I have occupied my allotted

time. I am thankful to be with you here, and I pray that the Lord will bless us individually and collectively, that we may enjoy his spirit, increase in wisdom, faithfulness and all good works, which may God grant for Christ's sake, amen.

Correspondence.

Provo, Feb. 7, 1868.

Editor Deseret News:—At half-past seven o'clock this morning, President Brigham Young, accompanied by Elders Wilford Woodruff, Joseph A. Young, Brigham Young, Jun., John W. Young, A. O. Smoot, A. M. Musser, John Squires, George D. Watt, Orson Arnold and William Longstroth, left Salt Lake City to hold a two days' meeting in the City of Provo. B. B. Bitner joined the company at Big Cottonwood.

We arrived at American Fork about noon, where we found Elders Geo. A. Smith, and Joseph W. Young, who had left the city on the 6th, and staid for the night at Milo Andrus station. In an hour after our arrival at American Fork, several more carriages arrived, bringing Pres. Heber C. Kimball, Joseph F. Smith, E. F. Sheets, William Calder, Albert Dewey, Henry Lawrence, Lorin Farr, David Day, and Porter Rockwell. After a not unpleasant drive, though the road was somewhat wet, we entered Provo City between four and five p.m. We were met at Provo river by citizens on horse back, in sleighs and in other conveyances, among whom I observed the pleasant countenance of Bishop Miller, who heartily bade the President and his friends welcome. The company were distributed among the citizens, a great part of it being entertained at the Bishop's house.

Saturday 8th, 10 a.m.

Meeting was called to order by Bishop Miller, when the choir sung. In the meeting I observed other citizens of Salt Lake City besides those named, who came to Provo in advance of the President's company. The Saints flocked in from the neighboring cities to attend the two days' meeting. Prayer by Elder Woodruff.

Elder Geo. A. Smith discoursed upon oneness. Pres. B. Young next spoke in a fatherly and interesting manner upon the necessity of the Latter-day Saints conforming to the counsels of the Spirit, relating to their natural lives.

Elder John Taylor has just now entered the congregation.

President Heber C. Kimball discoursed upon humanity, showing the blessings that will flow to those who are humble, faithful, and true before the Lord. A mass meeting of the citizens of Provo was notified to convene at one o'clock. Meeting dismissed by Elder Geo. A. Smith.

1 p.m.

Meeting called to order by Bishop Miller. Singing by the choir. Prayer by Bishop A. O. Smoot.

Bishop Miller then stated that they had met together for the purpose of nominating those whom the people wished for City Council, and to give an opportunity for any of the citizens to express their views. He said further, that there lived in Provo as good a people as in any ward or city in the Territory, and he was satisfied they would do right in all things.

[The ticket published in our local columns yesterday was then presented, and the gentlemen named were nominated.—Ed.]

Sunday, 10 a.m.

Meeting called to order by Pres. B. Young; singing; and prayer by Elder Brigham Young, Jun. Elder Joseph F. Smith said, all mankind are on missions, but only the Latter-day Saints have entered into the spirit and labor of the mission allotted to man on the earth. All men should be as much interested in the work of the last days as we, and we should be more interested in it than we are. We are engaged in a great and glorious work; it should be first in our affections, and there should be within us an ever-abiding willingness to carry out the counsel of the Most High. We should not only build up cities and reclaim countries, but build up Zion in our own hearts, which is the greatest work, and establish the truth within us, and overcome the weakness and allurements of the flesh. What advantage will it be to us if we gain the whole world and neglect to cultivate honesty, integrity, uprightness and the sanctification of ourselves before the Lord. To establish the principles of the gospel is our work, and in this alone can we be blessed and prospered temporally and spiritually. We should be a light set upon a hill, and our example should be worthy the imitation of all. Sin of every kind should be frowned down among us, and we should be exemplary in all righteousness. We should be wise, and as good and united as it is possible for men to be in the flesh, that we may be able to perform our labors in the Lord successfully.

Bishop Elijah F. Sheets said, we should never forget our prayers, and we should never forget our God, who brought us from the different countries and nations of the earth. All that we have is the Lord's, and when He wishes it to gather the poor from the nations, or perform any work to build up the kingdom of God, it should be on hand. The man who raises a bushel of wheat more than he needs for his own consumption, has done so much for the general good. He must be a slothful servant who produces nothing more than he consumes. The Saints are well fed, well clad and well housed, and they are greatly blessed in the valleys of these mountains, and should be united. Our blessings will be increased more and more if we make a good use of that which we have. The meeting was dismissed by Bishop Sheets.

After an hour's intermission, the meeting was called to order by President Brigham Young, Jun. Prayer by Pres. Heber C. Kimball.

Elder Geo. G. Bywater occupied some time, and was followed by Elder Wilford Woodruff, who said: We are in a great school, and the principles which we may learn are as numerous as they are important. As a people, we should prize our liberty, our privileges, the gospel of life and salvation, the holy priesthood, the living oracles, the written word, and the promise of eternal life. We have time upon time, counsel after counsel, a continuation of daily guidance by the Holy Spirit through His servant Brigham and his brethren. We have been tried and have not yet got through; the devil is not yet dead, and our trials will continue; the warfare will last as long as we live, and while we live we should labor to do good and build up the kingdom of God, until we have overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. The more a man has of the Spirit of God, the more he is like Him in his operations to save mankind. He has a desire to live so himself, and to see his brethren live so that confidence may be restored and oneness established. We are under obligation before the Lord to live so as to possess enough of the Holy Spirit to keep His commands and the counsels given to us by His servants. The more of the Spirit of the Lord we possess, the more kind we shall be to all with whom we have to do, and the greater will be the salvation we shall be able to accomplish in our administrations during our life time.

President H. C. Kimball said:—We ought to be full of light and knowledge, that they may be in us like a well of water. When the seed of the word falls to produce righteousness, it is because it is not received and nourished by the people. The Book of Mormon should be read by the Saints, and they should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, for His Spirit, that they may understand its contents; and before they get through reading it they will be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. Again, here is the book of revelations given to us. What do the Saints know about them? When they read them, they should read slowly and with a contemplative mind, praying to the Father in the name of Jesus for the Spirit of revelation. It is written in the book of revelations, that the people in Jackson County were under condemnation because they neglected the new and everlasting covenant, even the Book of Mormon, and the former revelations. Shall we be excused if we neglect reading the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants? These books should be read that we may be able to give a reason of the hope that is within us. Not a single word of any of the revelations which have been given to us in these last days, will fall to any man who lives them; and every woman who will do the same, will be blessed with all the blessings of the holy women that have lived in days of old. That which we sow we must reap, and that which we measure to others will be measured to us again.

Bishop A. O. Smoot briefly reviewed the history of the settling of this country. Meeting was dismissed by Elder W. Woodruff.

American Fork, Monday 10th, 1868.

I visited the Court House in Provo this morning, and found a crowd of citizens casting their votes for city officers; all seemed interested and eager to enjoy their privilege of letting their choice be known at the polls.

The President and company left Provo about 2 p.m., and arrived in American Fork about 4 o'clock. At 6 o'clock we met with the Saints in this place, who crowded their meeting house to its utmost capacity. Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Elders John Taylor, Joseph A. Young, Brigham Young, Jun., John W. Young, L. Farr and H. W. Lawrence were on the stand. Mayor Smoot, Elders W. Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, with several more of the company, will not leave Provo until to-morrow.

The meeting was called to order by Bishop L. E. Harrington; excellent singing; prayer by Elder John W. Young.

Elder Joseph A. Young said:—We are here to reflect and gain intelligence for the upbuilding of the kingdom of our God. When a man stands before the people filled with the Spirit of God, although he may say nothing new, the people will gain fresh strength, a brightening of ideas, and fresh vigor in their religion. It seems to me that the Lord is calling upon us to be more faithful, more intelligent, and to do a little more for the upbuilding of His kingdom; and we have plenty to perform, hurry as we may. We are gathered out here that we may grow and increase and live by the law which proceeds from the Lord Almighty. The Lord is telling us to remember our brethren and sisters among the nations, to give of our substance to gather those whom the gospel has brought to the knowledge of God and His ways.

Elder Brigham Young, Jun. said:—The principles of truth have a greater hold upon the minds of the Saints to-day than at any former period of the history of this kingdom. The faith that was once delivered to the Saints is growing among the people. The speaker referred to incidents in the history of the travels of this people, to prove by comparison that the faith and union of the people to-day are greater than at any previous time. If we live the principles which we have embraced, we have an assurance that God is our friend, and all things are His.

Elder John W. Young remarked, that we live in an important age. He regarded the present time as the most important to the people of these mountains of any former period. Referring to the present visit to Provo, he said that he believed the people there would feel better for it. After two or three days instruction from the servants of God, the people always get warmed up, and the light of the Spirit begins to show them the great things of the kingdom of God. We are willing to go to the nations of the earth when called upon, yet often some little duty seems harder for us to perform than to take a long foreign mission. We should feel that God is at the helm; and we should know that His servants are instructed in what is for our best good. All we have comes from Him, and He has power to take from us all that is dear in life. The Word of Wisdom, the speaker viewed as a commandment which contains some of the greatest promises that God ever made to man, and which will be ours if we obey it. We owe obedience to these inspired words, not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of our children.

Pres. Heber C. Kimball said:—with all the preaching they have previously had at Provo, the people there have not before felt so much of the power of the Holy Ghost as they have at the meeting at our recent visit. The Lord says that He will gather out a people from among this people who will serve Him. It will not answer for this people to steal, to lie, to speak evil of one another, to bear false witness against their neighbors. By keeping your covenants, there is a promise for you and your children after you, from generation to generation. So will the curse of God be upon the wicked from generation to generation. Abraham withheld nothing from the Lord, neither should we, if we, as the children of Abraham, would enjoy the blessings of Abraham. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." We of all people, should be the most faithful; and the man who does not pray daily and devote himself to God cannot stand. When a man of God is injured in his feelings, he goes and prays that the Spirit of his Father may touch him, and he can then come out of his closet and bless the man who has injured him. We have next to watch and pray, for there are thousands of wicked spirits striving to lead us away from God. The Gospel in this day is, as it was in former days, like a net cast into the sea, which gathers good and bad; and God will choose from among this people those who will serve Him. Turn unto the Lord, O ye Latter-day Saints, for the time is past that we shall be permitted to sin with impunity. We are depending upon doctors to heal our sick, and our children are dying all around us. We should have faith before God, that our sick may be healed by the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, in the name of the Lord. We have power to rebuke diseases in ourselves and in our families, and it is given to us of God, not only for ourselves and families but for this people.

President B. Young spoke at some length, and the meeting was dismissed by Elder John Taylor.

Tuesday, Feb. 11.

This morning the President and that portion of the company who left Provo with him yesterday, started from American Fork between nine and ten o'clock, and arrived in the city at a quarter to two p.m.

This visit has been fraught with much good to the people of Provo, and I think I never felt a