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PROPER REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

Discourse delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday, April 6, 1894, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I have enjoyed the remarks that were made this morning by President Woodruff and the other brethren who have spoken to us, as well as the remarks that have been made this afternoon by Brothers Grant and Teasdale. There is certainly no lack so far as the teaching of the Saints in a knowledge of the principles of the Gospel is concerned. From the days that the heavens were opened in this dispensation until the present time there has been one continuous stream of light and knowledge, through the various channels that our Father in heaven has selected, coming to the Latter-day Saints. There is no condition of our lives, whether we regard it in the light of our temporal or spiritual well-being, that in His mercy He has not sought to impress upon our minds the sacredness of the obligations which rest upon us in this day and time. It is true that we have not always been as ready to obey the promptings of the Spirit and fulfil the obligations which rest upon us as we might have done; but my observation has convinced me that the great mass of Latter-day Saints are desirous of having the companionship of the Spirit, of following its lead, and of enjoying the results that flow from obedience to the wishes of our Father expressed in the revelations that were given in the early days of the Church and that have come to us in these latter times. We, like our children—for we are but children of a larger growth—become forgetful of the responsibilities that rest upon us; but when we are confronted with the truths contained in the Gospel, and they are expounded in our hearing, I have yet to find among the branches of the Church men and women so far unmindful of the character of the obligations into which they entered, when the witness of the spirit of truth was given to them, and the ordinances of the Lord's house were administered unto them, that they do not call up in remembrance those teachings, and their hearts are gladdened and they are awakened to the character of the responsibilities that rest upon them.

There are, however, evils in our midst, and warnings are necessary to be given to us from time to time. Some of our spirits are cold and do not receive the impress as they should do upon some occasions;

while on other occasions the warnings that may be sounded in our ears find at once a place in our hearts, and we renew our covenants with our Father in prayer, signifying our determination to be more faithful, more fruitful in good works, more earnest in a desire to be proper in our own lives and to encourage those with whom we mingle in exhibiting more fidelity and more faith, and in general striving to advance the cause of our heavenly Father.

Among the evils, in my judgment, which need correction among the Latter-day Saints is one that arises frequently in wards and neighborhoods from not complying with the conditions prescribed in the Gospel in regard to our course of conduct. The Bishop of a ward with his Counselors may possibly call in question some member of the ward. This member may have been, perchance, a sabbath-breaker, or he may have failed in the payment of his tithes and offerings to the Church. It may be that he has forgotten himself in the midst of anger and been guilty of using profane language. This individual who is called in question, instead of desiring to conform to the requirements that may be placed upon him, commences an agitation in the neighborhood where he resides, directing the efforts of this agitation against his presiding officers; and our brethren and sisters, instead of assuming the position that they should, commence to sympathize with the individual. We have discovered, in mingling among the Saints, and in seeking to adjust among them troubles that are continually arising, that it frequently happens that wards, or branches, or districts become divided in sentiment in regard to the character of the treatment that the Bishop and his associates, or the Presidency of the Stake and the High Council, may have prescribed in the case of some individual, and, as a result of this continued agitation and gossip an effort is made to overturn the Church government in the ward or stake and belittle the officers, who should be respected and esteemed in the positions that they occupy. Recognizing the fact that in the Church of Christ it was the design of Providence to guard sacredly the rights and liberties of every man, woman and child, He placed upon us the responsibility of seeking, so far as lay in our power, first to adjust our own troubles. If we have wronged one of our neighbors, or if, perchance, we may imagine that our neighbor has wronged us, the obligation rests upon us to seek to adjust those matters and preserve our individuality intact. If we fail in the accomplishment of that reconciliation, then we may call in any of our brethren who act as teachers, who will exercise

a spirit to modify our feeling and to bring us into that condition where we would desire to act justly and fairly to our brother or our sister. Failing in the accomplishment of this, under the rule that exists in the Church, we go before the judges of the Church in the form of an organized Bishopric. They pass their judgment upon us, after having sought, by persuasion, to modify the conditions. They make that judgment from the best light and knowledge they can obtain.

If we are not satisfied with the decisions made by our brethren, then an appeal lies to the Presidency of the Stake and the High Council; and as elders of the Church we should learn that it is a violation of the obligations resting upon us to create dissension and to try to belittle the men whom the Lord has chosen to be our counselors and advisers. Instead of working up an agitation against them we should seek to guard their reputation and their honor, as well as the principles that the Almighty has established. When judgment has been given we should conform to the requirements of that judgment as near as it is possible for us to do. But there is an increasing tendency, in my judgment, in a wrong direction, in that the Bishops, High Councils and Presi-

ents of Stakes are being assailed from time to time by men and women in the Church of Christ, who should know better their duties and responsibilities, and who should fulfil their obligations in the form our Father has prescribed, instead of working up agitations and exciting their wives and children, and causing neighborhood troubles which result in confusion, disorganization and the hurting of men as innocent of a desire to do wrong to their fellows as men can possibly be. I trust, in the spread of the good work, in the understanding of the principles of life and salvation that our Father has given to us and in the love that we bear to our kind, exercising judiciously and prudently our rights with each other, that none of us will make the effort to destroy and overturn the influence of our brethren. I believe that men in this Church should be handled for their fellowship who become agitators in the wards and branches where they live, looking to the disunion and destruction of the organization that our Father has created. Having the way pointed out before them by which their grievances can be adjusted and failing to receive satisfaction from the organizations of the Stakes of Zion, there lies a door open to the presiding quorum of the whole Church. I trust, therefore, that the spirit which has grown up in some neighborhoods to agitate, to create confusion and dissension and to cause strife shall be met and rebuked wher-