

There is one thing I have sometimes been led to speak upon to the Saints, and that is in relation to family prayers. In many families that I have been acquainted with, no one was ever asked to pray; the father did all the praying himself. He never asked the wife, nor the son, nor the daughter, to be mouth in family prayer, and I have seen in cases of that kind that the boys, instead of desiring to attend family worship, would generally get off, because it became wearisome to them. There is a story told—I do not know how much truth there is in it, but it is not improbable—that a crowd of boys were together one evening around a house, and one of the boys was in a position where he could hear what was going on in the family. The family were at prayer, and the son of the family asked the boy that was in a position to hear, what he was praying for now (speaking of his father.) "Well, he is praying now about Jerusalem." "Oh, well," says the son, "we can go off for some time yet." He knew the prayer so well and the routine that when his father had got to praying about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem there was a good deal to pray for yet. I do not vouch for the accuracy of this story, but I have heard just such prayers myself; and where this is the case, and boys hear this day after day, day after day, long-winded prayers, praying as though it was the only chance they had had for a month to pray and it would be the last chance they would have for another month, making them so long and dreary, I do not wonder that boys get tired, and their knees ache, and they feel as though it was tiresome. Religion is made repulsive to some by such things. We ought to make our religion attractive to our children, and one way to do that is to have every member of the family pray. Some men seem to think that their prayers alone are heard; that the prayers of their wives or their children are not listened to. If any entertain this idea, they are much mistaken, because the Lord hears the prayers of women just as much as he does of men, and He hears the prayers of children just as much as he does of grown people. Every child should be taught to pray in the family circle. As soon as he can lisp or talk, or taught to frame a prayer, he should be asked to pray in the family circle; and the Lord hears the prayers of these little children, and they take interest then in family worship, because it is a part of their service as well as their parents. And when a child can ask a blessing, if he or she can only say, "O Lord, bless this food, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen," it is better to let them commence even with these few words than not to have them pray. It is pleasing to see the interest children take in asking blessings. They feel as though they were honored, and they take pleasure in it. So in prayer. And it is not the multitude of words that the Lord pays attention to. He does not listen to our fine, flowery sermons and our fine, flowery prayers; He looks at our hearts and the sincerity of our desires. It is not telling Him how great a being He is that draws His attention. You hear some of these sectarian preachers, and they will commence and extol the Lord and tell Him what a great being He is, going on in a way—what is it? To tickle the ears of their hearers; and if they thought, the Lord had ears to hear, to tickle His ears by telling

Him what a fine fellow He is. Now, this is all ridiculous. This is not the way the Lord ought to be worshipped. We ought to worship Him with our hearts, and not with these long, flowery sentences. Another thing: If we pray in secret, we will not want to make such long prayers in public as some do, because we shall have relieved our hearts in our secret prayers to a very great extent. We can pray by ourselves and we can take as long time as we wish to, and we do not wear anybody out unless it is ourselves. It is not probable that those who listen to us are wearied by our devotion. But when others are kneeling down with us, we ought in our prayers to be direct and brief, and not pray about everything there is on the earth, and imagine that we must mention everything in detail or the Lord won't know about it. He does know, and we do not need to mention everything as though He had forgotten and would not take notice unless we mentioned it. If we pay attention to the Lord's prayer that He taught His disciples, we will see the beauty of that, how simple it was and direct; contained no superfluous words, but it was to the point, asking for that which they needed. Now, you will hear the sectarians uttering that prayer. Some people teach their children that prayer. Well, that prayer is not appropriate for many of us. "Give us this day our daily bread." We have got our daily bread. That prayer was given to the Apostles. They were taught it because they needed daily bread. If you will notice in the Book of Mormon the Lord taught the multitude and He also taught His disciples. He gave instructions to the latter which were adapted to them, and were not for the multitude. This distinction, which is so plain in His teachings as recorded in the Book of Mormon, is not made in King James's translation of the New Testament, and hence many of the sectarians stumble over the teachings of the Savior, not knowing how they could be made applicable to ordinary life. They were applicable to the disciples who were preaching without purse and scrip, and who were living different lives to the ordinary multitude. If you will read them properly as they are translated in the Book of Mormon, you will see how different they are, and how clear these matters are when you understand the people to whom they were addressed.

It is a good thing to know how to pray; and we are not heard for our much speaking in prayer. It seems to me we should be full of the spirit of prayer, and we should pray in our hearts as well as with our lips and on our knees, and cultivate the habit of praying in our hearts. We cannot stop always to get down on our knees to ask for that which we need; but we can ask the Lord in our hearts, no matter what we are engaged in. We may be going to meet somebody that is of importance, and have not time to stop to pray, but we can ask God to give us wisdom. If we are going to transact some business, we can ask God to be with us in the transaction, to give us His Holy Spirit to enlighten us, and enable us to do the right thing. I do not know how I would have got along in life if I had not done this, because there are many times we are thrown in circumstances where the wisdom of heaven is needed, and it is a good thing to cultivate the habit of ask-

ing the Lord for that. I believe if I was going to break a horse, or do some work in my field as a farmer, or anything of this character, I would want to ask the Lord's blessing upon it. It would not probably be convenient to kneel down and ask Him right then for that special occasion; but I would ask Him in my heart. Of course, in our family and secret prayers we ask the Lord to be with us in all matters; still it is a good thing to ask the Lord for these special things. You are called on to speak suddenly, or to do something suddenly; it is a good thing to ask the Lord to be with you when you are doing that, to guide you. When we have a decision to make, we should ask the Lord to enlighten our minds, that we decide aright and come to a correct conclusion. A mother going to have an interview with a child that is unruly, should ask the Lord to give her His Spirit to talk to the child, and to pour out His Spirit upon the child that it may be softened. When I have anything disagreeable to do, I always feel to do this; to pray that the Lord will soften the hearts of those with whom I am brought in contact, give their hearts the right feeling, and give me the right feeling. I believe a great deal of the success of my life has been due to the Lord hearing this kind of prayer; for I know he does hear such prayers.

In all these matters we should constantly remember that we are the people of God, and not take any step hastily, but do it prayerfully. Then we will not say things that we ought not to say, at least, we will not be likely to do it. We will not do things that we ought not to do. We will not come to wrong conclusions. We will not say improper things of our brethren and sisters, and we will control our tempers, because the Lord will give us strength and give us His Holy Spirit to enable us to do it. And if any of us are not happy, depend upon it there is something wrong, because it is the Lord's design to make every soul happy. If there is any spirit and feeling about us that does not contribute to happiness, we should ask the Lord to remove it. We should stop and see what is the cause of this. "Why am I disturbed? Why is this feeling of unhappiness and unrest in my heart?" Because whenever it is there, there is something wrong; we have done something, or said something, or thought something that has disturbed the Spirit of God. Our minds should be like a placid lake, undisturbed by every influence, as smooth as glass, so to speak, and without ripples upon it, and everything clear. This is the condition we should be in, and then the Lord, by His Spirit, can operate upon our minds, and He will reveal himself to us, and teach us, and give us revelation and knowledge, and increase His power and His gifts upon us. We should start out in the morning with this feeling; not leave our bedroom still we feel that we are leaving right. "But," one says, "I am so crowded I have got to do it; I cannot stop to pray even." Well, better to neglect the business, whatever it may be, than to neglect prayer, than to neglect getting the right spirit before we commence our work. I have been a busy man all my life; but I have noticed this: that when I have started out with the right feeling, everything has worked along easily and smoothly, and I have accomplished far more than I would have