

of lights. When the prosecutions of those who had entered into plural marriage became very active, and those who were exposed to attack saw the position they were in and the danger there was of their being deprived of their property through fines and other expenses, there was a natural disposition exhibited to take such precautions as were proper to preserve that which they had for the benefit of their families. To carry out these precautions seemed to be only just to those dependent upon them, especially as many of the men scarcely knew what their fate would be and how far proceedings might be carried against them. In many instances, therefore, men divided their property among the different members of their families, thinking it far better for it to be disposed of in this manner than that it should be wrested from them through court proceedings. In many cases this arrangement of the property answered the purpose designed, and was satisfactory to all concerned. The heads of families were relieved from the fear that their families might be stripped and impoverished, and the families felt that proper measures had been taken to preserve to them their homes and some means of sustenance. In thus transferring property many things were done, under the pressure of then existing circumstances, which, under other conditions, would have been imprudent and unsatisfactory. In fact, there are many illustrations furnished, which have grown out of this action, that lead to the conclusion that it is not a wise proceeding for men under any and all circumstances to distribute their property among the members of their families and leave themselves without anything of their own. The only good reason assigned by many for having done this was the situation of affairs at the time and the apparent necessity for some action to secure shelter and support for the women and children. But there have been several cases that have come to my knowledge where men have taken this course, confiding entirely in the good feeling of their families, where they have had cause to regret it. In more than one instance families have yielded to improper influences and heads of households have found themselves almost thrust out of doors and from houses which they had built and from the enjoyment of property which they had through years of toil and self-sacrifice accumulated.

Thousands of years ago, the son of Sirach wrote some very pertinent instructions on this point (Ecclesiasticus 33: 19, 20 and 21—Apothrypha), which were doubtless based on the experience of that age and time. Observation had at that early day shown the manner in which human beings were affected by such action as I have attempted to describe. He says:

"Give not thy son and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee while thou livest, and give not thy goods to another; lest it repent thee, and thou entreat for the same again.

"As long as thou livest and hast breath in thee, give not thyself over to any.

"For better it is that thy children should seek to thee, than that thou shouldst stand to their courtesy."

Yet, notwithstanding all that this wise man says, and his advice is ex-

cellent, I thoroughly believe that it is a proper thing for men who have means to give a portion of it to their wives for them to use and dispose of as they please. Or, if they are not in a position to do this, such a portion of the earnings as may be necessary for the expenses of the household should be given them. Every wife and mother, if not utterly unworthy, is entitled to that much confidence and respect. She should have reason to feel that she has a full interest in her husband's and family's prosperity and well-being. In this way she can be taught good management and economy, and if she be the woman she ought to be, the means entrusted to her will be made to go as far as possible and she will, to show that she has capacity, take pride in saving something, if it be ever so little, out of that placed in her hands. Experience has convinced me that, generally speaking, this method of treating women is a good one. If they are inclined to be extravagant, appeals in this way can be made to their sense of honor, and she who cannot be reached by such an appeal is indeed in a bad condition. But the women of the Latter-day Saints have shown themselves worthy of great confidence, and they have never failed, when properly treated, to show a keen sense of honor and a willingness to rise to any height of sacrifice required of them. It will not answer to treat them, on the one hand, as inferiors, or, on the other hand, to pet them as children or dolls. Woman is the companion of man; she stands side by side with him. As one has justly remarked concerning her creation, she was not taken from man's head to rule over him, nor from his lower limbs to be beneath him; but as a rib from his side, that she might walk with him.

There are cases where extravagance prevails in households, and the heads of the families are constantly in debt, sometimes dodging creditors and resorting to various shifts to pinch along. It is frequently that men in this condition are easy-going, indulgent, or proud and sensitive. They do not confide in or appeal to their wives and children as they should. They conceal from them the true condition of their affairs; for it is scarcely possible that any right-feeling, loving wife would gratify her taste or whims at the expense of her husband's self-respect and honor among his brethren.

That is one extreme. Another extreme is for a wife to be compelled, on every occasion when she needs a little money, to ask her husband for it and perhaps be questioned as to what she did with the last money he gave her; or if she desires to make a donation to the Relief Society or for any other purpose, not be able to do so until she goes to her husband and asks him for the necessary amount. For a wife to be in such a position is humiliating, and a spirited woman must feel such a condition quite galling. If she were a hired girl in the house she would at least have her wages at her own control to do with as she pleased, and a wife ought certainly to be at least as independent in her sphere as her hired girl is in hers.

In cases of plural families, it seems

only ordinary justice that, if the circumstances of the husband permit, the wives should have their own homes deeded to them; but in doing this a man should not strip himself entirely of the control of his property. It is not a wise thing for men who stand at the head of families to make themselves dependents upon wives or children. To retain his proper influence in his family, a man should be the fountain from whence the principal material aid should flow. When he gives his means to others, he is not so likely to be looked up to and respected as he would be if he retained the power in his own hands; for means is power, and the possession of property carries with it influence and power, and that is felt in the family circle as it is in wider spheres. It is the Almighty's power to confer blessings upon those who approach Him which causes Him to be the object of our reverence and worship. Human beings, as a rule, place value upon and appreciate the power which can protect and bestow benefits. The sun, which is called the glorious orb of day, brings light and warmth, so much so that it has been an object of adoration among different peoples. Take from it the power to shed heat and light, and it would cease to call forth the admiration which it now excites.

Brother Lorenzo D. Young tells a good story illustrative of the principle upon which I am speaking. A farmer in the early days in Vermont—so long ago that the later practice of recording deeds had not come into the vogue and importance now attached to it—had a good farm and only one son. When the son grew to manhood he married. The father being a widower, the young couple naturally made their home with him. The son and his wife soon became very solicitous that the old gentleman should cease to labor and be relieved from the cares and burdens which rested upon him. They proposed to him, therefore, that he should deed his place to his son, who would see that he was taken care of for the rest of his life and have no occasion to work. The suggestion pleased him, and he deeded his farm to his son. But the old gentleman used tobacco and had been in the habit of spitting on the floor occasionally. While the title to the place was in himself, this practice had not been objected to; it was not long, however, after the deed had been made to the son before the young wife objected to this habit, saying it was a dirty practice. She requested him to spit in the fireplace. But one day, being out of temper, she expressed herself as being tired of his spitting around as he was in the habit of doing, and she desired him to stop his spitting in the fireplace. Her remarks wounded him very much, but he said nothing in reply. A few hours afterward he said to her: "Sally, it seems to me there is something wrong in that deed that I made for John. Will you let me look at it?" She willingly brought him the deed to examine, and, after looking it over very carefully, he stuck it under the front log and burned it up, and turning to her, said, "Now, Sally, I shall, hereafter, spit on my own floor whenever I like."

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