

DISCOURSE

Delivered by Apostle F. M. Lyman, at Logan (Cache Stake Conference), Sunday Morning, August 4th, 1889.

[REPORTED BY A. WINTER.]

It is very gratifying to see so many of the Latter-day Saints of this Stake gathered together. Quite a variety of subjects have been spoken upon by the brethren in the meetings that have been held here during this conference. The topic upon which President Pitkin spoke to the Priesthood last evening—the bondage of debt, to which the Latter-day Saints are subject at the present time—is one that I have had occasion to speak upon, during the last three months, quite frequently in the southern part of the Territory, and I have felt that it could not receive too careful attention.

The course that our people have taken in relation to their business affairs, I think, is ruinous, and tends to keep them in poverty and in a state of dependence and of humiliation. The way that we have adopted of wearing out and eating up our substance before we have earned it or before we have grown our crops, puts us under obligations to somebody, and we do not feel free and comfortable, as Latter-day Saints ought to feel. We ought to be the freest of all people. I understand that the Gospel is the perfect law of liberty, so that one part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been properly observed by the Latter-day Saints or they would not be today in the bondage of debt that they are. Wrong ways and methods have been followed or we would not be in our present condition. It was shown to us last night by the brethren that we have been buying machinery extravagantly, and possibly wagons. Perhaps we have bought extravagantly of clothing, or we may have lived extravagantly; for we are likely to be extravagant where we purchase goods without paying down for them. I think we would be much more careful in purchasing if we paid down for our goods. But when we buy on time, merchants and machine men have time prices, and they charge from ten to thirty per cent more for goods when they sell on time than they do when they sell for cash down. They must do that, because when they sell on time they are running risks possibly of losing part of the principal or perhaps all of it. Then, in addition to the very high price that is charged for goods sold on time, they charge an extravagant interest. If you are under the necessity of borrowing money from the bank, and can give good security, you can obtain it for ten or twelve per cent per annum, and possibly for less than that if you borrow a large amount; but on machinery and wagons you will find the interest is generally one and a quarter and one and a half, and even two, per cent a month.

If the Latter-day Saints would only practice a little self-denial for

one or two years, or three years, if necessary, until they had some means ahead to pay for the goods that they need, they would obtain them for about one-third less than they have to pay for them now. But the way we are doing at present, we are always paying for dead horses, for clothing that is worn out, and for machinery and wagons that are useless. It is much more satisfactory, according to my experience, to pay for live horses, for new clothing, and for new machinery and wagons.

I have felt to plead with the Latter-day Saints throughout this Territory to change their course of business. I beg of merchants to quit trusting the people, and educate them to buy their goods and pay for them when they get them. And machine men, do the same. I would advise the Latter-day Saints in this region of country to use your old machinery and your old wagons, to use your old boots and shoes, and patch and mend them, and get along with them as best you can, until your increase of crops, of cattle and of money may be such that you may be able to pay for whatever you need. This is the way to success, to prosperity and to enable you to have means not only to make yourselves comfortable, but to have means with which to aid in the building up of the Kingdom of God. Men that will take this course will have no difficulty in paying their clothing, and it won't be necessary to take the whole crop as it is harvested to pay your obligations, and have to excuse yourselves from paying any tithing because you owe more than you have raised. You will have crops and you will owe nothing, and your wealth will be increasing, and you will be able to build better fences and better homes and put more comforts in the house, and to clothe your children better and live better yourselves, instead of living at the dying rate that a great many of us do at the present time.

I do not speak in this way because I have been free from obligations and have conducted my business successfully and rightly all my life. But the counsel I give to you is good for me, and will save and bless me as well as it will you, and I need it as well as you do. Up to my being forty-three years of age I never went into debt. I waited till I was that age before I contracted a debt, before I borrowed money or went under obligations to anyone. Previous to that time I was rather inclined to loan and to help others, instead of needing to be helped myself. And though I have been comparatively successful so far as I have borrowed and invested means, I must say that I have not felt so comfortable or so safe as when I have not been thus obligated, and I could not go before the Latter-day Saints and exhort them to follow my example. I believe that many have followed it, and to their discomfort. I believe that I have hurt my own kindred by the example that I have set in borrowing means, and I have decided to quit it. For the last three years I have been meeting my obli-

gations and paying them up; and I desire to be one among the brethren to lead out in this line and free myself from all my obligations, so that I shall be able to say that I owe no man a cent, and then live within my resources. I have never borrowed money to live upon; but, like a great many others, I have borrowed to invest in business and to accomplish something in that line. I have concluded, however, to change in that regard, and I recommend others to do the same.

I believe that the Lord requires us to establish industries and to provide employment, and the men who will step forward with the means that they have at their command and do something in this line, will receive the blessings of the Lord, and will receive the blessings of the poor in Zion, who desire employment. I believe also that it will be a good thing for the Latter-day Saints who have means to buy the surplus grain in this country, instead of allowing it to go away; to buy the wheat, the barley, the oats, the corn and all these grains that may be preserved from year to year. This will be a legitimate and proper investment. Whether a famine be near or far away I am not able to say; but I am satisfied that this will be a good measure to be adopted by the Latter-day Saints; and if there are men who have a few thousand dollars in their possession, it will pay them to provide elevators or granaries of some kind to preserve the wheat and to keep it in this country, because it will be needed. People are flocking in here rapidly, while the drouth is causing the crops to be short in many parts of the country. You will have, no doubt, a surplus in this Stake; but throughout the land grain may be comparatively scarce; and I say that for men who have means to speculate with it will be a legitimate investment for them to purchase the surplus grain and to keep it in this country, instead of sending it out. It will be needed here. But if it is necessary that it should go out of the country, let it go where it will bring the largest possible price and be of the greatest advantage to the people here. We would rather that our brethren obtain good prices for their grain. I think that the staff of life should demand a good figure here at home, and that the brethren who raise it should be well paid for their work.

The Lord requires us to give careful attention to the temporalities of life. He also requires us to give strict attention to the spiritualities of life. In speaking in regard to obligations that brethren take upon themselves, I have recommended that if brethren are determined to be under obligation for any purpose whatever, let it be for the education of their children. I would support brethren in going into debt more readily for the education of their children than for almost anything else. But I believe that if proper economy be adopted, the children of Zion may be as well educated as the people of the world are, without their fathers going into debt. Everything we buy must be paid for