

Murmuring Against Divine Authority—Faith in Prayer—Unity of Spirit

A Discourse by Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, Sunday morning, October 4, 1857.

Brethren and Sisters—I feel to occupy a portion of the time allotted to us this morning, in calling your attention to some matters which I hope and trust may be for our benefit, for our security, and for our prosperity.

We are all aware, or should be, of the condition that we are in and the circumstances by which we are surrounded. We have duly considered them, for we have had time for reflection: we have had time to weigh the matter in our own minds; and it is now for us to be fixed and firm in our purpose, that we deviate not in our actions, neither in our feelings from the path that is marked out for us, but cheerfully, resolutely, and patiently pursue that track. There is no doubt at all but that we shall have trials to pass through—all, perhaps, that we are able to bear; for all strength that is given to us will be tested, and will be tried, and will be proven.

It is now for us to avoid one fatal rock, I may say, upon which the Israelites of old wrecked to a certain extent; and that is, that when they were gloriously delivered by the hand of our God and brought into the wilderness by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm, they murmured against Moses and they murmured against God because they could not enjoy the luxuries—the good things of Egypt, such as they were wont to enjoy while in bondage.

How soon did they forget the mighty miracles that were wrought for their deliverance! There was a time that the Israelites could do nothing. They had come to the shores of the Red Sea: they could not advance; their enemies were in their rear, and they could not advance. When they looked forward, it seemed impossible for them to pass onward; and when they looked back, destruction awaited them; and in the midst of this they exclaimed, perhaps, “What shall we do?”

It appears that there was nothing to be done, and hence the word was to them to stand still and see the salvation of God. In due time Moses was directed to smite the waters of the Red Sea: the waters were divided and Israel bade to go forward.

It appears that the Lord will open the way wherever he requires his Saints to go, however dark and hedged up it may seem. Yet, when the time comes for us to take one step, the way will open; and it is not likely that we can see the final issue or the result of our journey at first. If we could see the end, there would be no trial of our faith; but all the time we must walk by faith, and not by sight.

It is a good deal in this respect as it was with the disciples of old: it was required that they should take no thought what they should eat, what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed.

It was also required that they should take no thought what they should say, for they were told it should be given unto them in the very hour what they should speak; and so it will be given to the faithful and pure before the Lord in this age of the world in the very hour that it is required and in the very time that it is needed.

They will see how to take one step and where to place one foot; and if they cannot see where to put the second, they must wait till they *can* see where to put it.

This was the case with the children of Israel when they were bade to go through the Red Sea; for whether they could see the track open all the way across is very questionable with me; but as they saw where to take one step, so they were required to advance all the way through that mighty deep, and they went through dry-shod; and the very means ordained for their salvation were the very means for the destruction of their enemies.

But after the children of Israel had such a glorious triumph and sang the songs of deliverance, how soon they murmured against the authority of God and the Holy One who was appointed to lead them. They wanted the flesh, the leeks, and onions of Egypt; and the Lord was forced to come out of his hiding place and cut them off from the

face of the earth; and there fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand. This is written for our example, that we through faith and patience of the Scriptures might have comfort.

It is written, "A prophet shall the Lord our God raise up like unto me:" that is Moses speaking: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people." I am not going to say who that Prophet is; but I am going to present some few things for your consideration, and you may draw your own conclusions. Did Jesus Christ ever lead forth the people of God like unto Moses? Did he not say, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not?" Did he lead them with an outstretched arm? He wrought miracles and did all the good he could; but I cannot see that Jesus ever led the people as did Moses. He performed his work and fulfilled his mission: but a Prophet was to be raised up like unto Moses; and hence I draw the conclusion that this is the only Prophet or the only dynasty of Prophets through whom the Lord would speak.

I know that some think the Lord is going to establish his kingdom through other prophets than those amongst us. Well, if the law is to be given through others, why is the responsibility placed upon us to go and preach the Gospel to all nations? If it is not to proceed from this Priesthood wholly, why should the Twelve Apostles be required to open the Gospel to all the nations of the earth, if there were other channels through which the Gospel might be preached? By this I come to the conclusion that whosoever will not hear this Prophet will be destroyed from among the people.

This is the only people who profess to have Prophets of this character, even like unto Moses; and the word is that whosoever will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. A Prophet shall be at the head to lead, as it was with Israel when Moses led them. Did he not say, "I will take and lead you as in days of old?" Well, then, the ministration and signs of Moses are to be enacted again. Joel shows us how they are to be. Read the 2nd chapter of Joel all the way through, and that will show you how things are to be.

"Why," says the Lord, "I sent my angel before my people hitherto; but I have said that in the last days I will go myself before my people." He has declared that he will utter his voice before his army, for his camp is very great.

We shall be led into straitened places—into tried places; and now it is for us to prepare ourselves, to fortify our hearts, to fortify our spirits, that we never murmur against God nor against the Moses that he has given us; for I tell you that the man that God has raised up is no more responsible than we are; and I have thought not so much.

Can he make one erroneous move? If our prayers are offered up to the Lord in his behalf—if our hearts are set upon doing that which we know to be right, then we are right; but if not, we are wrong. If he is wrong, our prayers are not heard.

Well, then, you see, the weight of responsibility reaches back upon our shoulders; and we are the ones to take that responsibility and to have faith in the words and in the prayers which we utter before the Lord.

Brethren and sisters, be agreed in this respect, and be sure that when you ask for a thing you do not doubt it; but hold on to it and believe that you receive the things you ask for, and you shall have them. What mind of spirit is it that comes and says, "Now, I will go and ask for this or that; I do not know whether I will get it; it is a question whether my prayers are heard; but I will pray because it is my duty?"

Now, a double-minded man is not a man of faith. We should consider what we want and what is the mind and will of God to grant us. Say, "So and so is the mind of God," and satisfy yourself that the prayer you are about to offer is really the mind and will of your Father in heaven; then bow down and ask for that thing or for those very things. And when we have asked for any blessing, never let a doubt arise in our minds as to whether we shall receive the blessing, but believe that our prayers are heard, and then they will be answered.

Let me say, brethren and sisters, do not pray for too many things at once. What would you think if your son were to come and say, "Father, I want a yoke of oxen, I want a cow, I want a horse, I want some money, I want this, and I want that?"

"Why," says the father, "you ask for so many things that I cannot give you anything at all." That son is covetous; he reaches for everything, and I cannot give them to him; and hence the father concludes that he won't give him anything; when, if the son had come and said, "Father, if you can let me have a cow, I shall be glad," and then stop at that, the father would say, "Yes, I will give you a cow;" and he is pleased to do it. The son takes care of her, and by-and-by he comes and says, "Father, won't you give me a horse?" "Yes," says the father. And so, you see, he gets all that he wants, but not all at once.

Our Father in heaven says, "Where two or three of you agree as touching one thing, and ask in the name of the Son, it shall be given. "Our Savior had his eye upon this when he said, "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thy eye be evil (some say double), thy whole body shall be full of darkness."

If your affections are divided, can you love two individuals or two objects alike? Water, when its power is concentrated, turns machinery; but when you divide it and apply its force upon many wheels at the same time, it accomplishes little; whereas its condensed force upon one wheel will effect the desired object.

This is true in relation to prayer; but is it true in relation to the plurality of wives? Can a man really love more than one wife at the same time? I may answer this question in the negative or in the affirmative, and either may be considered correct according to circumstances.

It was the prayer of Christ that his disciples, though many, might be one—that is, to have no mind or will of their own, but all partake of his spirit and his mind; and thus, they being one in him, he could easily love them all. But if one set up a will of his own—rebelled in his feelings against a union with each other and with his legitimate head also, he might pity the folly of that rebellious one, but could not love him as those who rebelled not.

If a man have forty wives, and they all receive his mind and spirit, and are thus one in him, he can as easily love them all (because they are one), as a father can love a half-score of children who copy his mind and spirit. But if a woman rebel in her feelings against a good man, and yield to the temptations of the Devil, she may know that her husband may pity, but cannot love her, because she has ceased to be one with him and to partake of his mind and spirit. If, therefore, your husband be a good man, and you copy his mind and his spirit, he cannot help loving you, though he have forty other wives in the same situation.

Now, you wives, partake of the spirit of your husbands, and you will be loved; but you set up a standard and a spirit aside from his, and he never will love you; no, he never will. I speak to the knowledge and experience of some: yes, too many know that this is true.

And ye husbands, drink into the Spirit of your God and of your superiors in the Priesthood on earth; and if your wives are good women, they will love you; but if you do not, they will not love you; they won't have confidence in you.

You husbands, go to work by your own spirit and set up a standard independent of the Holy Ghost, and will God love you? No, he won't. If you do not drink into the spirit of your superiors, will they love you? Will they have confidence in you? No, they won't.

Well, you see it is all flowing in our legitimate channel. If God has ten thousand children, or a million, or ten millions, and all partake of one spirit, and they are one, does he not love them all? Yes, he does. But if one steps aside from the path marked out, will he love him? No, he won't. But if the ignorant sin and go astray, he may send a messenger after them and get them back. He may rejoice over them and pity them when they are away, and rejoice over them when they come back.

Now, brethren and sisters, consider these principles: weigh them well in your minds; for the greatest evil that I know of in this people is the little bickerings in families. I am happy to say that even this evil is diminishing; yet there should be none at all.

The spirits of men and women should ever be guided and tempered by the Holy Ghost; and I believe that the desire and intention of a large majority of the people are to keep the spirit of their superiors and of their God—to

drink it and live by it.

Would to God that all the women that are adopted into families would partake of the spirit of their husbands, if they are upright men. They have no right to an independent standard, anymore than I have a right to a standard independent of the Holy Ghost. I should have an independence to turn away from all sin; for that is the Spirit of God, and that is the right kind of independence, and that is the only kind that is justifiable.

I feel, brethren and sisters, that I should not go amiss—that I should not go astray from the path of duty, were I to call upon families to repent of their sins in this respect. I have laid before you, this morning, some of the greatest evils there are in families—an unwillingness of the members of those families to keep the spirit of their head. Some of them are unwilling to do it: it is too much the case. I only direct these remarks where they are applicable; and therefore those to whom they do not apply will not take them: and perhaps there will be some to whom they are applicable that will say, I do not believe that doctrine. To such I would say, You are the very one; you are the very character to repent and submit yourself to the proper government of God.

In relation to murmuring against God, brethren and sisters, do you not know that the Israelites were reprov'd and that they were slain because they murmured against their God? Well, now, in the same light do families stand who murmur against their head and partake not of the spirit of their head; for, say the Scriptures, "Whoso will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Remember that it is by patient continuance in well-doing that we seek for honor, happiness, and eternal life—by patient continuance all the time, and not when we come into trying places to turn aside; but to abide in the covenants and be patient, seeking for honor, immortality, and eternal life.

Well, now, you brethren, do not you go home and say that just suits me—that is my doctrine, and take liberty thereby to tyrannize over your families. If it just suits you, and if it is your doctrine, all right. But one thing let me tell you—Seek the spirit of your head; and if you will do that, you will never take advantage of the remarks of the servants of God to mistreat your women. But, at the same time, the principle must be laid open before you, so that you can understand it. No doubt you all know it and understand it perfectly well; but it is necessary once in a while to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." Do not murmur against God, against Moses, nor against your legitimate head: no, do not do it; for "Whoever will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."

Well, now, brethren and sisters, these are about the remarks that I wanted to make. There are a great many things in which we have improved; and in respect to the things of which I have spoken, there is no doubt but you have greatly improved; but I tell you there is room for a mighty stride of improvement in this respect. This is the way I feel about it.

I do not wish to divide your attention upon a thousand things, but I wish to call your attention to this thing and say, Repent of all your deviations from the path of duty; and I believe that you know this is a true doctrine—that you are satisfied that it is true. Cast away from you every feeling of rebellion and of murmuring that will lead you to oppose your legitimate head, and drink down the spirit of your superiors, and abide by it; and then you are one: and when you are one, God can love you all at the same time. Why, when I love a person, I not only love the head, but I love the face, the hands, the feet, and all the members of that body. Well, then, if we are all members of the body, does not God love us all? Certainly he does. Then away with the idea that a man cannot love but one object at a time: away with this, I say, and let us all be one. Then if any part of us is loved, we are all loved. I believe that I have said all that I wanted to say. May God bless you and save us all in his kingdom! Amen.

There is one word more that I want to say, and it is right in connection with what I have said. I won't turn your minds away from what has been spoken; but I want to tell you that brother Brigham, brother Heber, and brother Daniel's responsibilities laid upon them make them feel more than any other men can feel. They are enough to burst iron hearts, aside from their family responsibilities. Pray, therefore, that their strength may be equal to their day; and while you pray for them, work to your prayer. And if you ask, "How shall I work to it?" I will tell you. If you get some little difficulty on your mind, you Bishops, you Elders, you members, do not run to brother Brigham, to

brother Heber, nor to brother Daniel. You have prayed to God that their burdens may be lightened; then do not throw your troubles upon them, but pray to God to nerve their bodies and their spirits, and to give them power and strength sufficient for their day.

You would not say to the mule or jackass that is bending beneath his burden, "Oh! Poor animal!" And then jump on to him yourself: you would not do that. Then, when you see the Presidency of our Church—our leaders—when you see them bowed down, if you cannot go to do them any good, do not go to them with any of your petty troubles and difficulties. We want all these miserable petty cases put away or settled between parties and their Bishop, and mercifully relieve our head from unnecessary, petty, and vexatious troubles.

God bless us and enable us all to do so, through Jesus Christ! Amen.