

Observe the Sabbath Day

Remarks by President Brigham Young, delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, June 2, 1872.

I have a request to make of the Bishops and Elders, of fathers and mothers, and of the brethren and sisters in general. There are a few points upon which I feel that I should like the people to receive a little counsel. One is, I would be very much pleased, and I do not think I would be any more satisfied than the Spirit of the Lord would, to have the Latter-day Saints pay a little more attention to the Sabbath day, instead of riding about, visiting, and going on excursions. There has been a great deal said upon this subject. We are continually teaching the people how to be saved, but they seem to forget the responsibilities that are upon them. I am as liberal in my feelings with regard to using the Sabbath for anything and everything, where duty demands it, as any person living, and believe that the Sabbath was made for man, instead of man for the Sabbath. But it is a day of rest. The Lord has directed his people to rest one-seventh part of the time, and we take the first day of the week, and call it our Sabbath. This is according to the order of the Christians. We should observe this for our own temporal good and spiritual welfare. When we see a farmer in such a hurry, that he has to attend to his harvest, and to haying, fence making, or to gathering his cattle on the Sabbath day, as far as I am concerned, I count him weak in the faith. He has lost the spirit of his religion, more or less. Six days are enough for us to work, and if we wish to play, play within the six days; if we wish to go on excursions, take one of those six days, but on the seventh day, come to the place of worship, attend to the Sacrament, confess your faults one to another and to our God, and pay attention to the ordinances of the house of God.

How many ears will hear this, and how many hearts will receive it and treasure it up? That is the question. Words go into the ear and are forgotten; but I say to you, Latter-day Saints, it is your duty and my duty to pay attention to the Sabbath day. When my brethren, my friends, and my family have business on hand, and manage to start it on a Sunday morning, I head them off if I possibly can, by throwing some obstacle or other in the way, or by persuasion get them to omit it on that day. As far as I can, I also persuade my own family to observe the hours of meeting. Not that I can say that my family is as fond of meeting as I am myself. I like to meet with the brethren, and I like to go to a place of worship; I like to hear, and learn and pay attention to the ordinances of the house of God. I teach my family in these respects, and I do not know that I have any more fault to find with my own family than others have with theirs; perhaps there may be some credit due to them. But I say to the brethren and sisters, in the name of the Lord, it is our duty and it is required of us by our father in heaven, by the spirit of our religion, by our covenants with God and each other, that we observe the ordinances of the house of God, and especially on the Sabbath day, to attend to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Then attend the Ward meetings and the quorum meetings.

Another thing: I do wish that parents would urge upon their children to cease playing in the streets as much as they do. There are sufficient places of resort in various parts of the city without the boys being compelled to play in the middle of the streets. Every time I travel through the streets I see children playing in them. And will they turn out of the way for a carriage? No, they will not, and some of them will sometimes even dare you to drive over them; and sometimes people have to stop their carriages to save the lives of children. We have been more fortunate, here, I presume than in any other city in Christendom where they drive as many carriages as we drive in our city, in having so few accidents; but this I attribute to the kind hand of Providence. But we see children in the street, daring teamsters to run over them, and whether they are in a carriage, wagon, buggy, or cart it is no matter, they will not give the road for a horse team. I will say this to all Israel, to every man that carries himself discreetly—as a gentleman, if one of my boys attempts to obstruct the highway, so that you cannot drive along and attend to your business, leave your carriage, take your whip and give him a good sound horsewhipping, and tell him you will do it every time you find him in the street trying to obstruct the highway. I will not complain of you, although I can say this, I think, of a truth, that a boy of mine never did this, never. I have no knowledge of it at least. Look upon a community like ours, see the conduct of the youth in this respect, it is a disgrace to civilization; it is a disgrace to any people that profess good morals. Well, I wish to say this to the Saints, keep your boys from the streets, and from playing ball there. There are plenty of grounds for them to play upon and use at their pleasure, without going into the streets; and when we are so numerous that we have no place of resort for our

boys to pitch quoits and play ball, there is plenty of ground on the earth, and we will thin out a little here and go where we can have a little more room. But we have plenty here at present.

Now, remember, my brethren, those who go skating, buggy riding or on excursions on the Sabbath day—and there is a great deal of this practiced—are weak in the faith. Gradually, little by little, little by little, the spirit of their religion leaks out of their hearts and their affections, and by and by they begin to see faults in their brethren, faults in the doctrines of the Church, faults in the organization, and at last they leave the kingdom of God and go to destruction. I really wish you would remember this, and tell it to your neighbors.

And furthermore, how many Latter-day Saints, who live in this city, and are perfectly able to go to meeting, are away today? We have people enough in this city to fill this small building to overflowing every Sabbath, if they liked to hear the words of life. In the morning, it is true, there are many in the Sunday school, and that we recommend; but in the afterpart of the day, where are these school children? Are they playing in the streets, or are they visiting? In going to Sunday school they have done their duty so far; but they ought to be here. In their youth they ought to learn the principles and doctrines of their faith, the arguments for truth, and the advantages of truth, for we can say with one of old, “Bring up a child in the way it should go, and when it is old it will not depart from it.” If we are capable of bringing up a child in the way it should go, I will assure you that it will never depart from that way. Many persons think they do bring up their children in the way they should go, but in my lifetime I have seen very few, if any, parents, perfectly capable of bringing up a child in the way it should go; still most of us know better than we do, and if we will bring up our children according to the best of our knowledge, very few of them will ever forsake the truth.

Now, I beseech you, my brethren and sisters, old and young, parents and children, all of you, try and observe good, wholesome rules! Be moral, be upright, be honest in your deal. I do not wish to find fault with the Latter-day Saints, but I assure you, my brethren and sisters, we take too much liberty with each other; we do not observe the strict order of right and honesty in many instances, as much as we should, and we have got to improve in these things. We have been hearing, today, how the kingdom of God is going to prosper on the earth. So it is, that is very true. Do we think that we will prosper and abide in it, in unholiness and unrighteousness? If we do, we are mistaken. If we do not sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and live by every word that proceeds out of his mouth, and shape our lives according to the rules laid down in Holy Writ, and by what the Lord has revealed in latter days, we will come short of being members of this kingdom, and we will be cast out and others will take our place. We need not flatter ourselves that we are going to prosper in anything that is evil, and have the Lord still own us. It is very true that he is merciful to us and bears with us. “Wait another day,” he says; “Wait another year, wait a little longer, and see if my people will not be righteous;” and those who will not, will be gathered to their own place; but those who will sanctify themselves before the Lord will inherit everlasting life. God bless you, Amen.