

Men Ought to Practice What They Teach—Necessity of Faithfulness on the Part of the Saints—the Young Ought to Live Their Religion—Blessings Received Through the Exercise of Faith

Remarks made by President Heber C. Kimball, at Centerville, Sunday, Feb. 19, 1865.

I desire most humbly to talk very simply to my brethren and sisters. It is as much my duty as it is the duty of any other member of this Church to learn how to be a Saint. I have got to learn how to be a truthful man, an honest man, an upright man, and I have got to make myself competent, through faithfulness to God and my brethren, to teach others with propriety. It is a common saying, "Do as I say but not as I do;" but I want to do just as I teach you to do without any deviation. There is not anything in my calling that will justify me in doing wrong. It would be nonsense for me to undertake to preach righteousness, virtue, truthfulness, and justice, and not be a righteous, virtuous, and just man myself. You hold a portion of that same holy Priesthood which I hold; it is no matter what office you hold in that Priesthood, and it has all emanated out of the holy Apostleship, making these different offices and callings branches of the Apostleship. We all have a Priesthood to honor, which it is impossible for us to do unless we honor ourselves; and all who hold the Priesthood and honor themselves, are worthy of honor; and it is impossible to honor the Priesthood in that man and not honor the vessel that holds it.

We can command the respect of all men as a people by making ourselves self-sustaining, by acquiring a knowledge of all kinds of mechanical business; and our sisters can make themselves honorable by learning to knit, weave, and spin; how to make a harness for a loom, and how to warp the yarn, after they have spun and colored it. Every young woman who calculates to be a wife and a mother, should make herself acquainted with these matters. Is there any female in our society too good to learn and work at this home industry? I think not. If there are any who consider themselves so, they are also too good to wear homemade clothing. The Priesthood is also with the woman, because she is connected with the man, and the man is connected with his God. Being so connected, we must all be honorable if we are good.

The earth is enlightened by the same light which enlightens our eyes, which is the light of Christ, which enlighteneth every son and daughter of Adam and Eve who cometh into the world, and it is the same light by which I see you this morning. And we have, in addition to this, a holy Priesthood, and have been commanded to go forth and preach the Gospel, and teach the ways of life to all men, and not to be taught by unbelievers. We are also instructed to lead all meetings as we are dictated by the Holy Ghost. The spirit of truth is the spirit of revelation, which we may all possess, for it is the privilege of all Latter-day Saints so to live and honor God as to receive of his attributes and nature in greater perfection, and become more like Him. We are the sons and daughters of God; we have proceeded from him through the laws of generation, the same as my children have proceeded from me. God is the great father of our race, and as a man is not perfect without the woman, neither is the woman without the man in the Lord; they depend upon each other, and are necessary to each other for the propagation of our species.

I enjoyed myself very much at your party last night. Such social gatherings are always good in their effects, so long as we keep within the purview of the religion of Jesus Christ in all such exercises. It is my privilege and duty to live so as to become a good man, as much so as any man in this Church and kingdom. Being an Apostle does not excuse me in the least from the performance of every duty which the religion of Jesus makes binding upon me; and, as far as I am concerned, I live as faithfully as possible, considering the failings of mortality which I have in common with all men. There is not a day passes over my head that I do not bow before the Lord once, twice, or thrice; that is the way I have got to live, in order to be a good man, and retain the light of the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth; and the same faithfulness is required of you, because you are members of the same body and of the same Priesthood. We should all be alive in the performance of our duties. We cannot live the religion of Jesus and not pray. I have had an experience in this Church of some thirty-two years. I commenced to pray before I heard of the Work of the last days, and I have prayed every day from that day until the present time. I have never been in a circumstance or place wherein I could not pray, if I was disposed to do so. As faith without works is dead, being alone, so our religion is of no benefit to us without prayer. I cannot live and be prospered in the kingdom of

God only by a faithful attendance to every duty. When Jesus Christ came to the world as the messenger of life and salvation, he called upon all the ends of the earth to come unto him and be saved, for besides him there is no Savior. He also said, I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman, that is, he proceeded from the Father; and he further says to the twelve, "And ye are the branches;" and he exhorted them to abide in him even as he abideth in the Father. In doing this they partake of the same spirit. If we abide not in Him, we become like a limb that is dead and ready to be burned.

My being one of the First Presidency of the Church does not excuse me from living my religion; but I should, on that account, be more faithful, and show an example to the flock of Christ, and constantly be alive to know how things are progressing in the Church, and be dictated by the Holy Ghost in every act of my life, that I may have power to discern the spirits of men, and be able to give unto them the very counsel that my Father in heaven would give them if he were here himself. I endeavor to take this course, and when I give counsel, I do not run against Brother Brigham, because I am led by the same spirit. You call these things little things, but they are as big things as I know of; these things lie at the root of the matter, and from them spring the fruits of righteousness. The main roots of a tree are fed by the little fibers, and from them spring the trunk, and the branches, and the fruit. Let us cultivate those principles which lie at the root of all righteousness, that our professions and works may accord with each other, instead of being contented with a mere form of godliness, without power or foundation. This Church is founded upon eternal truth; its roots run into eternity, and all the power of the devil and wicked men may seek its overthrow in vain, for it will triumph over death, hell, and the grave. I know this. I know it by revelation—by the Spirit of God, for in this way my Heavenly Father communes with me, and maketh known unto me his mind and will. I have never seen him in person, but when I see my brethren I see his image, and I discover the attributes of God in them. Then let us honor our bodies and spirits, which are made in the likeness of him who has created all things and upholds them by his power.

I have never seen a time since I entered this Church when there was greater necessity for this people living faithfully than now. It is a very prosperous time, and we are gaining property fast; and many, I fear, are losing sight of everything else but the riches of this world; and, were you to warn them of it, they are so blinded by the deceitfulness of riches, that they would not believe a word you say. The more people stray away from God the harder it is to make them sensible of their danger; and the more light that men and women possess, the easier it is to correct them when they go astray; because they are more like the clay that is in the hands of the potter, and they can be molded and fashioned according to the will and pleasure of the master potter. We have got to walk very faithfully before our Father in heaven, and strive with all our might to honor the covenants we have made with him in his house.

I do not say but that you are just as good men and women in this place as in any other place in the mountains; yea, I admit that the people are better in the country towns than in Great Salt Lake City, for the froth and scum of hell seem to concentrate there, and those who live in the City have to come in contact with it; and with persons who mingle with robbers, and liars, and thieves, and with whores and whoremasters, etc. Such wicked men will also introduce themselves into Davis County, and among all the settlements throughout these mountains; but where the people are truly righteous and just, wicked men can do them no harm; were the people all righteous who profess to be Latter-day Saints, they would constantly be on their watch against the encroachment of a wicked power. The wicked and corrupt who have settled in our community are taking a course to lead away those who are willing to be led away from the truth—those who have turned away from God; and it will be for our good, as a community, if such persons will leave and never again return to our Territory, unless they can do so with a determination to serve God and keep his commandments. I love those who love God; they are more precious to me than gold, and silver, or possessions.

Do we live our religion as faithfully as we might? Are we not in the habit of telling lies now and then? Oh, yes, we tell occasionally a white lie, or a little catnip lie, once in a while. We should be perfectly truthful and honest in all our sayings and dealings with all men, especially with those who serve the same God that we do, and are in the bonds of the same religion. How to do this is one of the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. By telling these little fibs we lose the spirit of the Lord and get into darkness, then the simplest truth becomes a mystery to us; but

when our minds are enlightened by the spirit of truth, everything is plain and clear to the understanding. People get an idea that there is no sin in little lies, or catnip lies. You read in the Book of Mormon, where it is said that the devil goeth about deceiving the children of men, and tells them to lie a little, and steal a little, and take the advantage of your neighbor a little, and speak against thy neighbors a little, and do wrong a little here and a little there, and thus he leadeth them with silken cords, as it were, down to destruction. It is just as much a crime to steal a penny or a cent as it is to steal a quarter of a dollar—the quarter of a dollar is more in value than the cent, but what difference is there in the crime? These little things we are apt to pass over unnoticed, but they will operate materially against your obtaining that glory which you design to inherit in the next existence. If little wrongs are not checked, they will lead on to greater ones, until we are cheated out of our salvation. By checking these little wrongs, as they are called, we become more grounded and rooted in the faith of Christ, as a tree is rooted and grounded in the earth.

We ought not to take a course to injure each other. A man holding the Priesthood of the Son of God, a High Priest for instance, will try to destroy the influence of a better man, causing him to walk in sorrow, that he, the High Priest, may step over him and get to some particular distinction; but as the Lord lives, and as the sun shines, such men will be deceived in their designs, and will receive in full the measure they have tried to measure out to others. In our deal with each other, it is better to give a man a dollar than to take a cent from him; by wronging a man of a dollar or a few cents, you may thereby cause a division between yourself and one of your best friends. What for? For a poor, miserable dollar. I have been, and am now, subject to many weaknesses that I would guard you against, but I am trying to fortify myself and overcome every evil that is in me.

I will relate a little incident in my own experience to illustrate the selfishness of the human heart, and how by perseverance it can be overcome. I have lately been at work putting down some carpets in the endowment rooms. I had a piece of good carpet myself, and a spirit came upon me which whispered, "Brother Heber, you may just as well put that carpet into the endowment house as let it lie on one of your floors." Before I got it out of doors to move it to the endowment house, my generous feeling puckered up and a thought came to me, that the Church was fully able to carpet its own rooms. I took the carpet and put it away again. In a day or two afterwards a thought came to me like this, "Heber, you had better take that carpet and use it in the Lord's house, for before the spring it may be eat up with moths." I looked at the carpet again, after bringing it from its hiding place, and said to myself, "That is really a pretty carpet; it is almost too good to put down in that house," and I put it away again. The thought came to me again, "You had better put it in the endowment house and beautify the Lord's house with it, for the Lord may notice it, and he will, no doubt, see you dressing up and adorning his house." I seized the carpet again and dragged it out of doors at once, and placed myself between it and the door, saying to the carpet, "You do not go back again into that room any more." I presume that nearly all of you have had just such feelings and just such fightings against the power of evil in yourselves, and against carrying into effect your good and generous intentions.

The other day my wife was sick; she came to me and requested me to pray to the Lord that she might be healed. The matter passed from my mind. The day following this I remarked to her that I had not seen her looking so well for some time previous. She replied, "I am perfectly sound." I had forgotten about her request that I should pray for her, and had not done so; but she was healed through her honesty, faith, and integrity towards the holy Priesthood. She revered and honored it; the Holy Spirit saw it, and the angels of God saw it, and she was healed by the power of God, without the laying on of hands. It was with that circumstance as it was anciently. "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

We who hold the Priesthood do not honor each other as we ought in our intercourse with each other; if we do not honor each other, how can we expect to be honored by God and by his Holy Spirit, who seeth us and is cognizant of all we do. We must try to overcome all unpleasant and unkind language towards each other, and strive to have our intercourse such as angels will applaud. It is written, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Some people do not believe that there are any devils. There are thousands of evil spirits that are just as ugly as evil can make them. The wicked die, and their spirits remain not far from where their tabernacles are. When I was in England,

twenty-eight years ago next June, I saw more devils than there are persons here today; they came upon me with an intention to destroy me; they are the spirits of wicked men who, while in the flesh, were opposed to God and his purposes. I saw them with what we call the spiritual eyes, but what is in reality the natural eye. The atmosphere of many parts of these mountains is doubtless the abode of the spirits of Gadianton robbers, whose spirits are as wicked as hell, and who would kill Jesus Christ and every Apostle and righteous person that ever lived if they had the power. It is by the influence of such wicked spirits that men and women are all the time tempted to tell little lies, to steal a little, to take advantage of their neighbor a little, and they tell us there is no harm in it. It is by the influence and power of evil spirits that the minds of men are prejudiced against each other, until they are led to do each other an injury, and sometimes to kill each other.

We are the sons and daughters of God if we are faithful and honor our calling, and he has respect unto one as much as unto another. In a revelation given to Joseph Smith, it is written, "And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself. For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?" In this way the Lord looks upon this people, and I feel to say, God bless this people with all the power I have got, and with all the good feeling, and with all the Priesthood of the Son of God I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ, and I pray for you and for all this people. Oh, how I desire for us all to be one; for if we are not one, we must see sorrow. Brother Brigham says, If we live our religion and keep the commandments of God, we shall never be moved. That is true. If we are ever disturbed again by our enemies, it will be because we are unfaithful. The first Presidency of this Church and others may be just as righteous and holy as our Father in heaven, and yet a portion of this people can, by their wrongdoing, bring sorrow and suffering upon us. The first Presidency, and thousands of others in this Church, are not guilty of crime; we have done right all the time, and we have to suffer for those who are punished for their sins. When one or two among a family are wayward and break the laws of the land, see what sorrow, and tears, and disgrace it brings upon the whole family. It is just so with us. But oh! my desires are for you to do right, and honor your calling, and work faithfully under the dictation of President Young and others who are co-workers with him in the great Work of the last days.

I feel that I would be willing to work day and night to do my brethren and sisters good. I want the rising generation to come forth and secure their blessings in the house of the Lord, that they may be saved from the evil into which they might otherwise fall. If our sons could fully and clearly see the propriety of living their religion, they would from this day cease to mingle with wicked persons; and our daughters, too, if they understood the consequences, would never be found giving themselves in marriage to wicked men. As parents and teachers, we should try with all of our ability to impress upon the minds of our young people, by precept and example, principles of truth, that they may not remain uncontrolled and exposed to all the allurements of sin. We should tie them to us by the saving principles of the Gospel. I want to see this people established in peace, and in a way that they can sway the scepter of King Emmanuel over the whole earth before I lay my body down to sleep a short time in the grave.

Let us remember that the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by his liberality he shall live. I can tell you a hundred instances where I have been poor and penniless, and did not know what course to take, and the evil one would tempt me and seek to make me bow down in sorrow, but I would rise up in the name of the Lord, shake off my cares, exclaiming, I know that my Father in heaven lives and has respect for me; then I have been blessed, and my way has been opened before me. "Seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. Draw near to God, and he will draw nigh unto you." Oh! what a great comfort it is to know that you live in the favor of your Father in heaven. If I am faithful, I know it is not in the power of any man upon earth to throw an obstruction between me and Him.

Truth has sprung from the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven, and they have met and have kissed each other—they are one. It should be just so with those who possess the holy Priesthood of the Son of God; it never will lead one man to contend against another, and the angels of God never will cause any person to contend about any of the follies of this world, for all the glory of this world is perfectly worthless without God. The life of man is but a few days, and these few days well spent will be spent to secure a place in the haven of eternal

rest. Seeing that we have only a few days allotted us to secure so great a blessing, why can we not be faithful every day and every hour of our lives; and why do we yield the point to wicked influences and spend our precious moments in that which yieldeth no profit?

We shall soon pass away and return again with renewed and immortal bodies that will not be subject to sickness and death; then shall we have plenty of time and opportunity to adorn the earth and make it glorious, as we should be doing now, in order to gain an experience by which we may be profited hereafter. We came here into this world to gain an experience and to serve God and keep his commandments. May peace be with you, and comfort and consolation be multiplied upon you and all the Saints in these valleys and in all the world. I do not fear the wicked, they can do nothing against the truth; let us be troubled about doing right ourselves, and I am willing to risk all the rest. Amen.