

# THE SAINTS' HERALD

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"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:31, 32.

"There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none."—Book of Mormon, Jacob 2:36.

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## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

### FELLOWSHIP

(A sermon by Elbert A. Smith, delivered at the Stone Church, Independence, Missouri, March 9, 1919. Mrs. A. Morgan, Reporter.)

#### THE TWO SPARROWS

The subject I wish to talk about this morning is that of fellowship. It was brought to my attention casually some Sundays ago. One Sunday morning when I was sitting under some trees by a fountain in a little public park, I noticed two sparrows on the ground, and immediately the words of the Master came to my mind, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and yet not one of them shall fall to the ground without your heavenly Father's notice." Immediately the thought came to me that these little creatures that I have noticed so casually were recipients of the notice and care of the great God on high. If one of them falls to the ground injured or ill, the same God-given forces of nature are set at work to heal it that are set at work for you or me, if we fall to the ground injured or ill.

I noticed that these little sparrows when they drank at the fountain lifted their heads as though they might be giving thanks to the same God to whom I look for his bounteous care and blessings. I realized then that there was between us a bond of fellowship. We had the same Creator; we shared the fellowship of joy and of sorrow, the fellowship of peace or of pain.

#### THE HUMBLER FELLOWSHIP

There is, in fact, a degree of fellowship between man and the lower animals. In one of his stories Kipling tells how the animals first came and attached themselves to man. The dog came first that he might warm himself at the fire, and so became "the first friend." The horse came next, bowed his head to the halter, and became "the first servant." I think that the reason the Uncle Remus stories, and the bedtime stories by Thornton Burgess appeal so to children, and grown-ups as well, is because they touch

something that is fundamental, the hereditary racial tie that has bound humanity to the lower animals through ages of mutual experiences.

But in this fellowship the animals can go only so far. They may share with us our physical struggles; they may even share our mental struggles, to a certain extent, but they cannot share with us our moral struggles. They do not realize any difference between right and wrong. But we are, as Satan said we should be, to a certain extent, at least, become as gods, knowing good and evil. Yet we remain lamentably human in that we must every day make the struggle of choice between the two.

It has seemed to me that it would be a fine thing if we could select some day, by the calendar, have one titanic struggle, win victory, and have it over forever; but instead, each day, we must make our choice. Each day temptation presents itself—and on the other hand the appeal to do good. Each day we must fight the battle. The only consolation is that victory becomes progressively easy until victory may become a habit; while of course the reverse is equally true, that defeat may become habitual until our wills are entirely broken.

#### THE UPWARD STRUGGLE

Then if we would find fellowship in our moral struggles, we must ascend to a higher plane and find it in the fellowship of man and in the fellowship of God. It seems to me, that just as my reflections appeared to be led casually from the observation of those two sparrows that Jesus said received the notice and recognition of God, up to the fellowship of man, so likewise the human race, in its experiences, has pursued a course that superficially might seem casual, from the brutal plane, where the physical was nearly all that was recognized, up to a plane where there was some sort of social unity and intercourse of a spiritual nature.

But that struggle, though it seems casual, has been one of tremendous sacrifice; and then the course upward from our social intercourse, to the point where we can fellowship with God, involves a struggle equally great, including the death and suffering of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—for we obtain fellowship with God by way of Jesus Christ, his son.

The fellowship of man is a subject of vital importance, and has more, perhaps, than a religious basis, or a theoretical or theological foundation. Doctor Richard Cabot published a book several years ago called, *What Men Live By*, and in successive chapters in that book he deals with work, and play, and love, and worship. These four are fundamental, and we cannot take away any one of them and have a well-rounded life; but of course the last two mentioned, love and worship, come more directly under the subject that I have selected.

John is in harmony with Cabot where he says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." That was an indication that he had passed from death unto life. It was a testimony to him, the love he felt in his heart for others. It was more perhaps than an evidence—it was a *means* of life, and assisted him in passing from the domain of death to the domain of life.

In one of his poems, Markham says:

The crest and crowing of all good,  
Life's final star is brotherhood.

And so this struggle, this upward leading, has its final culmination in brotherhood; brotherhood with man; fellowship with Christ.

#### LIFE MADE TOLERABLE

Just our common friendship is about all that makes life tolerable—the life and fellowship that exists between brothers, father and son, and between husband and wife. The household in which this fellowship has developed between husband and wife and among children and parents certainly is fortunate. In the church, however, this fellowship is sanctified and brought to a higher and holier plane; so that we can truly sing and with the Spirit,

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love.  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

Fellowship is all that makes life worth while. I remember one of the stories I read years ago in *Gulliver's travels*, by Jonathan Swift, about the "Strulbrugs." I don't know whether you recall it, but this traveler in the realm of imagination visited a strange nation, and while there he was told that occasionally there was an individual born who was immortal—he never would die. Perhaps one or two or three such individuals were born in the course of a generation, possessed of eternal life, called Strulbrugs.

He thought to himself, how exceedingly fortunate these individuals must be, to live forever in this beautiful world with all its attractions and its joys; but when he came in contact with them his ideal was speedily shattered. He found that these men

passed through the various changes and periods of life incident to man until they became aged, perhaps ninety years old, with all the infirmities of age fastened upon them, and then they came to a stationary period and forever remained in that condition, their disease neither increasing nor diminishing. But the thing that made their condition most intolerable was that with the passing of the years their parents died, their children passed away, all their friends whose friendship they had cultivated in their younger years, one by one passed from the scene of action. Being in this state they were incapable of forming other friendships, so at last they were left entirely alone, loving no one, loved by no one. This made their condition so almost intolerable that they fain would have died—but they were immortal.

A man who loves no one and is loved by no one does not need to die to go to hell. He is there now. Immortality would be the worst possible punishment that could be inflicted upon such a man.

#### UNRAVEL YOUR OWN HEART

I remember talking with a man some years ago who had a very wide circle of acquaintances, and I noticed that almost every man that was mentioned in the course of conversation caused this brother to say, "There's another man that thinks a lot of me." I didn't hear him say at any time, "There's a man I think a lot of." It seemed to me he had hold of the wrong string. Sometimes we make a mistake in that way. We cannot all the time pull love towards us as though we were trying to unravel the hearts of the people for our benefit. We must unravel our own hearts. Give our own friendship, and it comes back again a hundred fold, as the Master said.

We do not need to limit our friendship and fellowship, either, to those who are effusive in their demonstrations toward us. Markham has another verse:

He drew a circle that shut me out—  
But love and I had the wit to win.  
We drew a circle that took him in.

The greatest fellowship is found in our fellowship with Jesus. The sweetest words in the New Testament—at least I think they are the sweetest when I read them—are those that he uttered when he said, "Henceforth I will call you no more servants; I will call you friends." There was to be no longer Master and servant, but Jesus and his followers were to be friends.

#### EXCEPT YE ARE ONE

Just as he had been united with God and was willing to become one with us, so he said to us, "Except ye are one ye are not mine." These are significant words, and they might be discouraging words to me if it were not for the philosophy that I have pro-

pounded in my own mind, that though we may not be one in opinion—which seems almost hopeless under existing circumstances, with our various past experiences and differences of training—though we may not be one in opinion, it is yet possible for us to be one in spirit, one in heart, one in consecrated desire to know the will of God, and knowing it, to do it. If we can only attain to that position, the time eventually will come when we will be one in understanding. The divine condition cannot be obtained instantaneously, but by a period of a process of growth.

In three of his miracles Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to things that live and grow: The parable of the corn, first the blade and then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The parable of the mustard seed that grows up and becomes a great plant. The parable of the yeast, that grows and multiplies until it leavens the whole lump.

#### THE KINGDOM NOT MANUFACTURED

The kingdom of heaven cannot be manufactured. It is a process of *growth*, and it involves the growth and the action and interaction and reaction upon each other of a multitude of souls. It would seem to be a fine thing if we could take pencil and paper and sit down and draw the plot of Zion and set the masons at work building the houses; and then draft rigid rules of conduct and life, and compel the people to conform to them. In a week's time, or a month, or possibly a year, we could have Zion; but we cannot do that. We have to wait for the growth of ourselves and the people. It is incumbent upon us to bear with the people, with each other, as God bears with us, until finally the kingdom of heaven has time to grow—and the Master says it comes not by "observation," either.

How long did it take Enoch and his people to establish the city of Zion? Not a month or a year, but many years, and after a long period, the trials and vicissitudes of which are not recorded, and are forgotten by us when we simply read of the crowning triumph when they ascended to heaven and were received by the Father. The fellowship of the Saints with each other is the only route by which we can arrive at fellowship with God, because James says to us, "How can a man love God whom he has never seen and hate his brother whom he has seen?" When this love of God comes into our midst it banishes many of the difficulties that otherwise seem insurmountable.

#### THE INCOMING TIDE

We have sometimes tried to illustrate the love of God and its influence upon the heart of man by the incoming of the tide. Two or three years ago my companion and I were living upon the beach in

California where the tide came up at night and almost touched our doorstep. I noticed there would be a great many days in succession, perhaps for a week, when the waves coming in would deposit along the beach all sorts of rubbish and refuse from the ocean: seaweed, barnacles, kelp, and mussel shells—all sorts of stuff would be piled up along the beach.

Then there would come a night when a tremendous tide would come in from the ocean and sweep that beach from end to end, and in the morning when we looked out the sand would be as clean and fresh as on the morning of creation. So, when the pure love of God, in those "times of refreshing" that the apostle speaks of, comes to our hearts, as in our communion services, we will say, it sweeps away all evil passions, the envy and hatred and malice and temptations that have accumulated, and leaves us pure and clean in spirit and in soul. Then we can realize what the Master meant when he said, "The pure in heart shall see God."

#### LEARNING ZION'S ALPHABET

Sometimes we are discouraged, we feel so insignificant—I presume you have shared with me in this feeling, all of you—when we realize the tremendous difficulties that stand in our pathway in our effort to redeem Zion—the problems that seem beyond human power to solve. I think many of them will be solved in a simpler way than we imagine.

I may perhaps illustrate it in this way: Two or three Sundays ago when I visited Des Moines I had a little conversation with my first teacher, the one who taught me to read, taught me my letters. I felt then and feel now that I am greatly in her debt, and you are, too, to the extent that I may be able to administer to any of your spiritual needs this morning, for the fact that she placed in my hands the key to all English literature in those first few simple yet tedious lessons. Yes, and the key to other literature, if I should care to use it.

The same fundamental principles that she taught me in those early lessons I use every day. By their aid, while then I could read those simple lessons in the primer, I can now read the Sermon on the Mount, the Twenty-third Psalm, the Gettysburg Speech, a treatise on science, or the constitution of the new League of Nations. There is nothing so profound or so exalted that it does not yield its treasure to me when I remember and use those first few fundamental lessons in reading and use the simple letters in the alphabet to spell out the words.

In a like manner I believe that Jesus Christ in the very kindergarten of our religious experience, has taught us many things, that if we will but remember and use will help us solve these problems—and we may not need so many wonderful further revelations as we sometimes feel that we do.

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first great command. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two great commandments hang all the law and the prophets." These are primary lessons that we have been taught for years, but I believe that they will be just as vital and effectual in the school of the prophets as they are to-day in a quorum of deacons—just as effective in Zion as in the most obscure branch. So I take heart of hope, realizing that perhaps if we will but apply the lessons that God has already taught us, all the treasures of Zion and of heaven may yet be within our reach.

#### AN IMPORTANT ADMONITION

Before I close I would like to leave with you a little parting exhortation or admonition. I do not know what point of merit the sermon may have carried to you, but I do feel that the admonition and exhortation are applicable to the present situation, and ought to be of some force and benefit to the people.

It is reasonable to suppose that in the hastening time, which apparently has come upon the world, as well as upon the church, (when everything that can be shaken will be shaken, and is being shaken, and nations are being destroyed or built in a day) that the church also will have its turmoils, and that Satan will endeavor more strongly to frustrate our work as it draws to its culmination.

President Joseph Smith told us years ago that we would never be led into immoral teaching, as some were in the past. That Satan would make his attack within the church and attempt to disrupt that bond of fellowship that I have been talking about, by the use of suspicion and slander, and all that tends to divide brother from brother. During the past year we have seen some evidence of that, and perhaps in coming years we will see greater evidences.

Now, to the admonition. In the closing verse of section 122, the Lord says: "Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called." Let nothing destroy this holy bond of fellowship. "The work whereunto you have been called." *Every* man is called. The Book of Doctrine and Covenants tells that *all* are called according to the gifts of God unto them, and the work is intrusted to all.

#### "THESE ARE MY PEOPLE"

In the communion service last Sunday in the lower auditorium there was a testimony borne that I wish all might have heard. It was borne by a sister, well known to you, a daughter of the late President Joseph Smith. It seems that some weeks ago, while in a period of mental distress, because

of burdens known to herself better than to us, feeling that perhaps she too might fall, in some way, on account of that which she was called upon to bear, she passed a sleepless night of prayer until nearly morning, at which time she fell asleep and experienced this dream:

She thought she was here in the vicinity of the Stone Church. There were many people around the church, some going in and some going away. And a great many were simply wandering around in an undecided way. On many countenances there was a look of doubt and *distress*. She then saw she had in her hand a little traveling bag, indicating perhaps, that she, too, was going away. But she looked toward the church and saw those who were going up the steps into the church, and she handed the traveling bag to some one else, saying, "Here, take this! These are my people! My place is with them!" And when she started towards the church the heavens opened and there was a flood of light and glory, and she saw the Father and Son.

This is the thought: We do not know what may be before the church. We do not know! You do not know! As you sit here under the sound of my voice, perhaps feeling secure, firmly grounded in your faith and convictions, you little realize what trials, what false philosophy, what doubts and strife may be brought to overthrow you. We ought to remember the admonition, "Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you are called," and with this good sister say, "These are my people! My place is with them!"

ELBERT A. SMITH.

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#### ELDER DANIEL MACGREGOR IN FLINT

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Everyone should read the letter of Elder Daniel Macgregor in this issue, telling of the work at Flint, Michigan, for the recent nine weeks.

This shows what an organized effort can do. Preparation was made beforehand. The matter kept before the church by announcements, and doubtless by prayer. The whole city was placarded with the result that the building was full the first night.

This united effort was not relaxed, but the choir and all the Saints continued their earnest support. Certainly all this would have availed little without the speaker, and his earnest presentation of the truth.

We have here another instance of what loyal, intelligent, local support, with an able representative and speaker, and above all with the support and direction of the Spirit of God, will do.

Some are loath to let their light shine. We see what has been done in Flint by united effort. What have you done? What are you going to do?

S. A. B.