

LATTER DAY SAINTS

MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE.

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„But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.”—1st Peter, 4: 7.

He who had companied with the Savior after he commenced his public teachings till the consumation of that bloody tragedy that removed him from the ken of an ungrateful, ruthless world, or rather as if he would make the injunction more emphatic, and have it laid up or preserved among the archives of the church, he wrote the epistle, of which our text forms a part. In his exordium, we learn the characters he addressed, without the shadow of a doubt: the subject matter of the epistle is also replete with useful instruction to his brethren respecting the great things that pertained to their salvation.

He was qualified to teach from the fact, that he had superior advantages to gain instruction, not only from journeying with the Savior, and participating largely in all the trials and privations, through which he passed while propagating a religion so diverse from any then embraced.

He was qualified to teach from another consideration. God, our heavenly Father, had revealed to him that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. We might here go on and say, that to him also were committed the keys of the kingdom, but without laboring to prove a point so little controverted, we will come to that part of our text which lies with most weight upon our mind, (viz.) “be sober and watch unto prayer.” The reasons for this injunction seem to be couched in the former part of the verse we have under consideration, “seeing the end of all things was at hand.” The reader will here pause for a moment and consider, that the author of our text possessed the spirit of prophecy, although the event to which he alluded did not transpire then, neither yet has it transpired, but, we believe he looked down through the vista of opening years, and beheld what is still in futurity, that the end of all things was at hand.

Here let us reflect a moment. If the apostle with any degree of propriety could urge such a course of con-

duct upon the Saints in his day, with how much greater propriety, and greater force may the same sentiments be urged upon the Saints now, that eighteen hundred years have passed away. The time to which he alluded must inevitably be nearer at hand than it was then. We, therefore, take the liberty to recommend, to our young brethren and sisters, more particularly, be sober and watch unto prayer. We do not suppose, the Lord requires any more strict obedience to his commands of you, than he does of your aged brethren, but you will permit us, who have passed the meridian and are now on the declivity of life, to speak from experience in this matter: “we speak of the things we do know, and testify of those we have seen.” We are well acquainted with the follies and vanities incident to youth, and we do know they are directly calculated to corrupt the taste for mental improvement, viciate the habits, and not only so, but to grieve the Spirit of God and cause it to withdraw its vivifying influences from our souls. These, my young brethren and sisters, are appalling facts. If the Holy Spirit of God reign in you, and rule over you, it will be your meat and your drink to do the will of your heavenly Father. You will therefore, consider this, not among the least of his commands, “be sober and watch unto prayer.” It will make you, that you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the work of the Lord. We expect, notwithstanding the great calamities that shall precede the appearance of the Savior, the wicked who shall survive those calamities, will be full of folly, full of vanity, full of laughter and every evil propensity, and that day will come in a time when they least expect it; indeed it will overtake them as a thief in the night. Think not because you have been baptized for remission of your sins, that you are now perfectly safe, that you are sealed up unto eternal life, that God will save you in his celestial kingdom, when you are demoralizing yourselves, exerting a baneful influence around you, setting at nought his counsels and his coun-

mands, and grieving his Holy Spirit by your foolish laughter and utter contempt of his just requisition, "be sober and watch unto prayer."

Remember, my young brethren and sisters, that God is not mocked with impunity. His all-seeing eye beholds you at all times, and for all your folly, your vanity, and your wicked indulgence in evil, as well as your utter contempt of his authority, he will look down with contempt upon you, and ere you are aware, you will be brought into judgment.—Be assured we tell you no fiction, we inculcate no wild chimeras of a disordered imagination, when we solemnly declare both from our own experience and the dictates of the Spirit of God that persisting in such a course of perverseness, will ere long destroy your confidence in prayer, overspread your mind with gloom, and darken all your prospects of heaven and celestial glory. You may once have been washed, you may have been cleansed, but you are turned again like the dog to his vomit, or like the swine that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Think not that we would enjoin on you a Monkish sadness or hypocritical gravity: not so, but we would have you forsake all your loud laughter which is always indicative of an empty mind, and as we have before remarked, is calculated to grieve the Holy Spirit and make it withdraw, leaving you to the influence of that spirit which lures but to destroy.

We ask you to examine yourselves, brethren & sisters, after you have passed through a scene of folly and vanity and see if your taste for intellectual attainments has not become more obtuse, and your anxiety to become acquainted with the things of God, and our holy religion, far less acute. See if the low expressions and vulgar cants of the Bar-room and other haunts of folly and wickedness, are not fast superseding all the traces of moral refinement in your minds. See if the adversary has not already obtained the ascendancy over you, remember that no one can inhale the pestiferous atmosphere of vice or folly and go away uncontaminated. Evil communications you know, the apostle said, corrupt good manners, and he might with equal propriety have added and good morals. You are not to understand that to be so-

ber and watch unto prayer, is to make you morose, or destroy those fine feelings of your nature that render you cheerful and amiable. You are not to understand that it is to rob you of any rational enjoyment. But remember that no enjoyment can be rational, that unfits the mind and destroys the taste for pure devotional exercises toward God.

"The end of all things, the apostle said was at hand".

As we have before hinted, if he could with any propriety urge this sobriety and this watchfulness upon the saints from the consideration that the end of all things was then at hand.—with how much greater force do they not press upon us now. The time of the consumation of all things is certainly nearer at hand than it was then.

There is another idea couched in our text, of which perhaps you seldom think, The time is fast approaching, when the saints are to be all taught of God, and when he has now said to you through the apostle, be sober and watch unto prayer, is not this revolting to your feelings and the commands irksome, and disagreeable? Does not the idea forcibly strike the mind, that as the end approaches, such a course of conduct becomes more and more necessary, that we may be prepared to go out and meet the Bride Groom when he comes? That we may not be found in the unpleasant dilemma of the foolish virgins with no oil in our lamps?—Remember that God is not mocked nor his commands to be treated with irreverence or disrespect: his presence fills immensity, and his all-seeing eye surveys the whole of his vast creation.

Although the wise man said rejoice O young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer thee in thy youth, in the same verse, the same wise man has said, but remember that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Thereby plainly intimating that our enjoyments ought to be rational, and not inconsistent with our moral improvement, not inconsistent with the highest intellectual attainments, not inconsistent with that state of mind which ought to actuate us from the consideration that "the end of all things is at hand"

From a review of what we have said we learn 1st. That immoderate

laughter and foolish jesting are at war with every principle of morality or holiness of heart without which, no one will see the Lord: and that we cannot by any forced construction of ours, make them accord with the sentiment couched in our text; "be sober and watch unto prayer".

2nd. We infer from the fact, that God our heavenly Father has pointed out the way by revelation ancient and modern, that his creatures should persevere to glorify and enjoy him, and that we are acting the irrational part towards ourselves as well as that of base ingratitude to him, to let the adversary get the ascendancy over us and decoy us, till folly, vanity, and sin ultimately preponderate and Satan literally "take us captive at his will."

3d. Again whatever course of conduct we pursue that is not in strict accordance with that growth in grace, and that increase in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ required of his saints, we may justly conclude is not pleasing in the sight of our Heavenly Father and the unpleasant reflection that will ere long force itself upon us like an unbidden, unwelcome guest, will gnaw, like a worm, the root of our felicity. We shall then be compelled from necessity, to view the great contrast there is between virtue and vice, and many, very many, we have reason to fear, will when too late, have to make this bitter lamentation "the summer is ended, the harvest past and our souls are not saved".

4th From a view all we have said, and especially from a view of what the apostle has said, "that the end of all things is at hand," we would fain hope you would in kindness suffer a word of exhortation and be wise;

"Be wise to day tis madness to defer,
Next day the fatal precedent will plead,
Thus on till wisdom is pushed out of life."

5th. In conclusion we say if you would enjoy the approbation of a good conscience, if you would have your spiritual strength renewed, if you would be free from the contaminating influence of vice and folly, and be prepared to meet the Savior in peace, when he comes to take vengeance on all those that obey not the gospel, we say deny yourselves of all folly, vanity and every worldly lust, and "be sober and watch unto prayer." amen. W.

THE SAINTS OF THE LAST DAYS.

Nothing can be more pleasing and delightful than to contemplate the situation of the Latter Day Saints; placed as it were on an eminence and bringing within the compass of their observation, all the kingdoms of the world, not only those which now are, but those which are past as well as those to come; favored with the light of heaven by which they can contemplate the history of the world in its true light, understanding the situation of all who have preceded them: the light in which the great Jehovah viewed them, and their relation to the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Having before them the history of nearly six thousand years, where is written the names, the mighty works, and great faith of the former day saints, their God-like nobility of soul, their splended achievements among the nations in their day and generation, their undaunted courage in the cause of truth, their holy boldness in defence of their master's honor; their toils, their perils, their sacrifices, their indefatigable zeal, their firmness, and their steadfastness in the truth, not regarding their life unto death, their abiding testimony by which they condemned the generation which then lived, and will be had amongst men until time is no more: their great faith by which they ascended into the heights, and descended into the depths, and searched out all things, yea, even the deep things of God, seeing the end from the beginning, and the beginning from the end.

Being dilligent and faithflu, while the world was stumbling in darkness and the nations were strangers to the knowledge of God, and knew not him who created them nor him who saved them; they in the midst of darkness burst forth into light, and among those who set in the valley and shadow of death they caused light to spring up; their voices were heard among nations afar off, and their power was felt in the islands of the sea. The messengers of heaven watched them by the way and rejoiced over them in righteousness.

Wide is the field of contemplation which opens to the view of the saints of the latter days, while they read the history and meditate upon the events peculiar to the saints, as set forth in the account which we have of those of