

LATTER DAY SAINTS'

MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE.

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For the Messenger and Advocate.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."
2d cor. 5—7.

Who can peruse the sacred records, containing an account of the travels, precepts and lives of the ancient saints, —with an honest heart before God,— without having their minds impressed with the sacred truth that they "walked by faith, not by sight." When the inspired penman presented the above declaration to his Corinthian brethren, his soul was filled with a subject that had engrossed the attention of all inspired men from the days of Adam until the present time; and will continue to be a theme on which the saints will delight to dwell, until "mortal puts on immortality and death is swallowed up of life."

Perhaps there is no saying in the bible, that will more universally apply to the saints of God in every age of the world, than the one above quoted: St. Paul, the author of these words, possessed the same principle, and was dictated by the same spirit, while calling upon his Hebrew brethren, and setting before them the evidences of faith and the history of the ancients, the victories they won, and the blessings received while "walking by faith, not by sight." See Hebrews, chap. 11.

There is a joy not easily expressed; bursts into the soul of the sincere honest believer in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, while perusing their lives and viewing their integrity before God, in obeying his commandments, maintaining his cause, keeping his covenants, and "walking by faith, not by sight," while at the same time, it often brought them into the most narrow paths, the greatest difficulties and the most appalling dangers, that could possibly be presented to the natural view; notwithstanding this, they walked by faith, maintained their integrity, proved their God, and found deliverance. Was, or will there ever be an age of the world, when there are saints on the earth that are fit subjects for the celestial kingdom, whose faith has not been tried to the utmost, even trials that would fall nothing short of sacrificing their good names, their houses and

lands, wives and children, and even their own lives, for the cause and kingdom of God? If so, we should be under the necessity of coming to the conclusion, that the Lord was a respecter of persons: but sooner than to charge God foolishly, we would believe that God did and would have a tried people, and equally tried too, in the days of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Elijah, Daniel, Lehi, Alma, Moroni, Jesus, Paul and Joseph, and until "He reigned, whose right it is to reign."

To the reflecting mind it is at once instructive and interesting, and teaches an important lesson, to peruse and contemplate the scenery of an Abraham offering up an only son without regard to outward appearance or consequences, because God had commanded him; he did not stop to speculate on faith, or judge by outward appearance; but he walked by faith, believing him true that had promised. What was the fruits of this faith and confidence that Abraham had in the true and living God? Was it not an everlasting covenant bestowed upon him and his seed after him, as immutable as the throne of Jehovah? What encouragement then have the Latter Day Saints to follow the examples of those who have lived in earlier ages, by obeying every word of God, fearless of consequences, even to the laying down of their lives, if it should become necessary, to maintain the gospel and cause of God, and to secure their blessings and rights, and support and honor the holy Priesthood; uphold each other, and keep their birth-rights, and not become profligate, by selling them, as did Esau.

Could St. Paul encourage his Corinthian and Hebrew brethren to "walk by faith, not by sight," by setting before them the long catalogue of the ancients for an example; cannot the brethren in Zion and Kirtland, and all who have embraced the new and everlasting covenant in these days, be encouraged by the same cloud of witnesses? It is possible we may have more testimony than was presented to them: Did they have the privilege of perusing the account of an Enoch and Elijah being translated by faith, or a Noah

building an ark to save himself and family; or Lot leaving the cities of wickedness, for his deliverance; or an Elisha smiting the floods of Jordan with a mantle, crying, where is the Lord God of Elijah, when the waters yielded to his faith; or a Daniel thrust into the den of lions for praying; or the three Hebrews walking in the fiery furnace, for worshiping a God of revelations? all of whom found a Savior in the time of trouble. Did they have a great cloud of witnesses presented before them for their encouragement? So have we. We have not only the examples that are recorded in the bible (the stick of Judah) for our encouragement, but we have the book of Mormon (the stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim) which contains facts of equal interest for our benefit. There is no man that searches the book of Mormon, with a mind filled with prejudice, with no other motive in view than searching for iniquity, that is capable of knowing its value or judging of its worth. But let an individual, seeking for light and truth, read those sacred pages, with humble prayer to God through Jesus Christ, for wisdom and truth, and he will have no difficulty in finding a multiplicity of precepts, that do honor to the character of God, and if obeyed, will prove a savor of life unto life.

We have now taken a brief view of some of the ancients who have acted a conspicuous part in the cause of God, in their day and generation, by opposing sin and error in the sight of an unbelieving people; overcoming the world; making sure their crowns; dying in faith, and will rest in peace, and be blessed with the privilege of beholding God in the flesh in the latter day. Let us for a moment turn our thoughts to that scenery that presents itself to our view in this last dispensation and fullness of times; and am I not justified in saying, that there never was a day when it became more necessary for a people to "walk by faith, not by sight," than for the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints at the present time. Trace the history of the church, that has been travelling out of the wilderness for the last few years, and what have been the outward appearance and prospects? as dark as any other ever left on record. Had not the first elders of the church of Latter Day Saints walked by faith, lived by faith, and stood by

faith, all their exertions to the present day would have been in vain; yea, they would ere this have been forgotten; but this is not the case. The day has arrived for the God of Israel to set his hand the second time to gather his people from their long dispersion, and do them good, and reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth, in fulfilment of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, according to the testimony of all the holy prophets since the world began. Consequently, Joseph entered his room in faith, and offered up his petitions to God in a manner that caused the heavens to be propitious, and those prayers, by faith, prevailed before God, and that veil that had long been closed gave way, and an holy messenger descended to comfort the servant of the Lord and lay a foundation that could not be moved. Was this all that was effected? No: The powers of error, of darkness, of priestcraft, the earth and even hell itself felt the blow; and every engine of falsehood was put in operation, because a man of God had prevailed with the heavens.— Notwithstanding the stone at this time was as small as the mustard seed, it was not too small to roll; and the sound of its march hath already echoed beyond the bounds of America. What if honest poverty has had in this case to contend with wealth, or even public opinion, popularity, custom, fashion, persecution, ridicule, slander, base falsehood, and every epithet that could be invented, whirled in its path, to block its wheels and stop its progress? Have all these inhuman weapons had their desired effect? No: Truth declares they have not; and in the presence of every beholder, these weapons have been ground to dust beneath the rolling of the kingdom, and driven like chaff before the wind. What glorious contemplations must feed the souls and form the richest treasures in the minds of the first elders of Israel who have by faith acted so conspicuous a part in laying an everlasting foundation for the gathering of Israel, and lifting a standard for the Gentiles to seek unto. The feelings of such men cannot be of an ordinary kind, while meditating upon the scenes that have transpired for a few years past, and realising that they have stood together, as a handful of corn in the earth; and walked together through all straight places

where they have been called, not deserting each other in the hour of danger; but willing to lay down their lives for Christ's sake and their brethren; and all this in the midst of a professed religious, enlightened, and wise generation, with their eyes turned upon them, considering them to be overwhelmed in error, darkness and delusion; and offering them no consolation but Aha, Aha, while they themselves had a beam in their own eye, and were unwise, not knowing the scriptures, neither God, neither understood they his counsel.— But how changed the scene; now those faithful servants of God who have been firm, unshaken, and unmoved, riveted together by the holy covenant, by virtue, confidence, friendship, and brotherly love, in every tried circumstance in life; not murmuring, complaining, or deserting each other, or the cause in which they were engaged; such can now lift up their heads and rejoice, to behold the fruits of their labors, as they tread the courts of the Lord's House, and behold the church traveling out of the wilderness, with a perfect body, each member in its place, and still contemplate the day when the *box*, the *pine* and the *fir* tree shall stand to beautify the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious, which will be perfected through the instrumentality of the faithful saints "by faith and not by sight."

May the elders of Israel never lose their crowns by dishonoring the priesthood, selling their birth-right, or deserting, or rejecting the authorities that are ordained of God. Israel rejected Moses and fell. We have every reason to believe that all the inhabitants of Zion and her stakes, and those scattered abroad, who will obey the commands of God they have received from the bible, book of Mormon, and Doctrines and Covenants, will find a shield in the day of God's wrath, and a covering from his indignation upon the wicked; for the truths of these books will stand, while pestilence, famine, sword and fire will carry woe in their march.

W. WOODRUFF.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.—
EPHESIANS, 4th: 5.

The epistle, of which our text forms a part, as well as all others that were dictated by that eminently useful man, the apostle Paul, were replete with that

instruction, which the saints in his day, needed to guide and direct them. We may form some idea of the peculiar fitness of such instruction at that time, when we consider, that there were various orders of religionists then in the world; and it is but just to conclude they were as tenacious of their belief and the principles of their faith, as people in our day and age of the world. We know there were Pharisees, Sadducees, Essens, and others among the Jews; among the Gentiles or heathen as they were called by the Jews, were various sects of philosophers, differing in their sentiments; some were Stoics, some were Epicureans, some believed in the immortality of the soul, some doubted it, and others denied it wholly. Now when we consider that the church of God at that time was made up of such discordant materials, men among whom such a diversity of sentiment prevailed, previously to their conversion to the christian faith, we shall see the propriety of the sentiment couched in the words at the head of this paragraph. Not only shall we see the propriety, but the absolute necessity of such instruction. Such instructions became necessary from the fact that the gospel, the scheme of things which God had devised, was so diverse from the principles and practices of that generation, that there was no similarity, no resemblance between them.— Every item of the christian faith was important, and was necessary, in making up, or constituting that which the apostle said, was the "power of God unto salvation." Nothing short of that, nay nothing but that, would save men; no, only so, he that inculcated any other plan, or as the apostle declares to his Galatian brethren, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than we have preached, let him be accursed."

Now we may justly conclude that as the church was made up of such as had embraced the various sentiments of that day, and none other than the one taught by him was acceptable in the sight of God, that he should urge upon the churches with peculiar force, that there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism. It is a well known fact to every reader of ancient history, that in that day and age of the world, as well as in all subsequent periods to the present time, there were, and are still, those