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A Lesson from the Book of Job*

By Elder Orson F. Whitney, of the Council of the Twelve

A funeral sermon is not for the benefit of the departed; rather is it for the good of those who remain. The dead, as we call them—though they are no more dead than we are, and are as much alive now as ever—are beyond our reach, just as they are beyond our vision. We cannot add to anything that they have done, nor can we take anything away. They have made their record and are in the keeping of a higher Power. But we can do something to comfort those who mourn, and by acts of kindness lessen human suffering. Our Father in heaven expects this at our hands, and it is a very beautiful custom that prevails among us, that of assembling on occasions such as this, to show our sorrowing friends that our hearts are with them.

I read upon the faces of those around me tales of trial and suffering; scarcely anyone here today but has passed through some kind of tribulation. We know what it is to lose father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife or children; and out of these sad experiences our hearts are brought nearer to each other. We are knit together in mutual sympathy and affection. What a blessed thing it is that all our tears and all our tenderness are not for ourselves alone. The big-hearted are those who can feel for the woes of others.

We are here today to express our sympathy and love for the family of our dear Brother Clive who has left us. They are good neighbors and friends of mine; I have always had a warm spot in my heart for them; and I fain would say something, if God will inspire, to relieve their distress. I have known these families pretty much all my life. The names of Clive and Campbell are among my earliest recollections. My father, Horace K.

*A discourse delivered at the funeral services for "Jed" Clive, Salt Lake City, June 7, 1918.

Whitney, and "Jed's" father, Claude Clive, were both connected with the Salt Lake Theater in early days; and I remember, too, Brother Robert L. Campbell, the school superintendent, how he used to visit the University and talk to the boys and girls there; I recall the good counsel that he always gave. I am familiar with the record made by these families, and they have a high place in my esteem.

I much admire the character of Sister Clive, the wife of this man whose mortal remains lie here. She has had to pass through some sad ordeals, and I have admired the patience, the fortitude, the strength of character that she has shown, which has enabled her to rise to meet the occasion and bear in humility the trials that have befallen her. My wife related to me how she called upon her the day after this awful accident, when, in speaking of it and of other misfortunes that had come to her, Sister Clive said: "Yes, I have had sore trials, heavy shocks, but God has been very good to me, and I have always had help from him in the midst of my troubles." Those are noble words. It is good to hear a sentiment of that kind. It reminded me of the immortal speech of the good and patient Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Story of the Good and Patient Job

You all know the story—one of the most beautiful that the Scriptures contain. Job was a man who served God with all his heart; a righteous man, insomuch that the Lord said of him: "There is none like him in the earth." But when "the sons of God" presented themselves before the Lord, and "Satan came also," the Lord having praised his faithful servant, "the Accuser" sneeringly replied: "Doth Job fear God for nought? You have blessed him with abundance; you have hedged him about with benefits. Why shouldn't he serve you? Why shouldn't he keep your commandments? Take away what you have given to him and he will curse you to your face." Such was the substance of the speech. The Lord then said: "Go and take away all that he hath, but touch not himself."

According to this, Satan, before he can afflict man, must get permission from God. He can do no more than he is permitted to do. The Lord said, "Touch him not," and Satan was bound; he could not afflict Job in his person. But he could and did take away what God had given him. Robbers drove off his flocks and herds; fierce winds blew down his houses, and the falling walls crushed his sons and daughters. In a moment, as it were, this happy and prosperous man was reduced from

wealth to poverty, from joy to misery. But did he curse God, or call him in question? No, he uttered those wonderful words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Satan had failed; Job's patience had triumphed.

Again the sons of God presented themselves before him, and Satan was asked: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause?" And again Satan sneered: "All that a man hath will he give for his life; but put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." The evil one then went forth with permission to afflict Job in his person. Smitten from top to toe with "sore boils," he sat down in despair amid the ashes of his ruined home. His wife now came to him, "Curse God and die," was her counsel, but Job replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women." "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In other words: Shall we not be patient in the midst of tribulation—in anything that our Father wishes us to pass through?

Job's faith did not fail. His integrity remained steadfast. He said: "I will trust him, though he slay me." "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Satan was baffled in his assaults upon this righteous man, and when he had borne all that was necessary the Lord blessed him with twice as much as he had before. There was a compensation for all that he had suffered.

Why Men and Women are Called to Suffer

Some beautiful lessons are taught in the Book of Job, but one thing is not made plain there—the reason, the main reason, why men and women are called upon to suffer. Surely there is more in it than the story of Job reveals. It remained for the Prophet Joseph Smith to bring it to light; to set forth the why and wherefore of human suffering; and in revealing it he gave us a strength and power to endure that we did not before possess. For when men know why they suffer, and realize that it is for a good and wise purpose, they can bear it much better than they can in ignorance.

The Prophet was lying in a dungeon for the gospel's sake. He called upon God, "who controlleth and subjecteth the devil," and God answered, telling him that his sufferings should be but "a small moment." "Thou art not yet as Job," said the Lord,

“thy friends do not contend against thee.” Job’s friends, it will be remembered, tried to convince him that he must have done something wrong or those trials would not have come upon him. But Job had done no wrong; it was “without cause” that Satan had sought to destroy him. God said to Joseph: “If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; perils among robbers; perils by land and sea; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the billowing surge conspire against thee, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that *all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good.*”

Compensation in Calamities

There is the reason. It is for our development, our purification, our growth, our education and advancement, that we buffet the fierce waves of sorrow and misfortune; and we shall be all the stronger and better when we have swam the flood and stand upon the farther shore. Lowell was right:

’Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities.

We cannot suffer anything without receiving benefit from the experience. Brother Naisbitt, in his poem, “There’s No Such Thing as Death,” puts it thus:

Throughout God’s infinite domain,
Life reigns perennial, all around;
And every pang or pulse of pain
Leads but to higher vantage ground.

The fall of Adam and Eve was a great calamity, but it brought forth a wonderful blessing; it gave us our bodies, with endless opportunities to advance and achieve. It brought death into the world, but it also brought forth the human family. There was the compensation. “Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy.” The crucifixion of Christ was a terrible calamity, but the atonement connected with it was the foreordained means of man’s salvation. Israel’s calamitous fate proved a blessing to the world in general. God’s promise to Abraham had to be made good. “In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” This promise was fulfilled in Christ, but an important part of the fulfilment began when the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were flung broadcast over the world, that the barren wastes of unbelief might be sprinkled with the blood that believes, and made fruitful of faith and righteousness.

So it is with all our troubles and sorrows; there is a compensation for them. The philosopher Emerson says:

A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or a style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banyan of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighborhoods of men.

How true! To whom do we look, in days of grief and disaster, for help and consolation? Who are these friendly neighbors gathered in today? They are men and women who have suffered, and out of their experience in suffering they bring forth the riches of their sympathy and condolences as a blessing to those now in need. Could they do this had they not suffered themselves?

When the sky darkens and the tempest threatens, where do we go for shelter? To the sagebrush or the willow? No, rather to some spreading oak that has withstood the storms of ages and become stronger because of the fierce winds that have swayed its branches and caused its roots to strike deeper and deeper into the soil. When we want counsel and comfort, we do not go to children, nor to those who know nothing but pleasure and self-gratification. We go to men and women of thought and sympathy, men and women who have suffered themselves and can give us the comfort that we need. Is not this God's purpose in causing his children to suffer? He wants them to become more like himself. God has suffered far more than man ever did or ever will, and is therefore the great source of sympathy and consolation. "Who are these arrayed in white, nearest to the throne of God?" asked John the Apostle, wrapt in his mighty vision. The answer was: "These are they who have come up through great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

There is always a blessing in sorrow and humiliation. They who escape these things are not the fortunate ones. "Whom God loveth he chasteneth." When he desires to make a great man he takes a little street waif, or a boy in the back-woods, such as Lincoln or Joseph Smith, and brings him up through hardship and privation to be the grand and successful leader of a people. Flowers shed most of their perfume when they are crushed. Men and women have to suffer just so much in order to bring out the best that is in them. The nations that have

had to struggle for their existence are or have been the most powerful nations in history.

There will be a compensation for this calamity—this accident. A blessing will grow out of it. Bear it patiently, friends; do God's will, and some day you will know better than you now know why it happened.

What we call death is not so terrible after all. Death on the battlefield or by shipwreck, or in some awful mishap such as this, seems terrible; but at the worst what is it? Simply a passing from one life to another life, beyond the horizon of this existence. We cannot see our dear ones who have departed but they are alive. I need not tell a congregation of Latter-day Saints that Brother Clive still lives. He has just gone into the spirit world, where we will all go some day.

Where is the Spirit World?

And where is this spirit world? Is it off in some distant part of the universe? Do we sail away into space millions of miles in order to get there? No. The spirit world, according to Joseph Smith, is right around us. Our dead friends, as we call them—our departed loved ones—are very near to us, so near, the Prophet says, that they are often grieved by what we do and say. To get into the spirit world, we have only to pass out of the body.

The spirit world, as I understand it, is the spirit of this planet. When God made the earth he made it twice. When he made man he made him twice. When he made the animals, the fishes, and the fowls, he made them twice. When he made the beautiful flowers, such as you see here today, he made them twice. First as spirits and then as bodies, and when the spirits entered their bodies they became souls. This is the teaching of modern revelation; the teaching of Joseph Smith. God made the earth first as a spirit and then gave it a body, and what we call the spirit world is simply the spiritual half of the sphere that we dwell in.

Expert Authority

Someone may say: "Who was Joseph Smith, that he should teach such things; and how do we know they are true? Maybe it is only an opinion; and one man's opinion is just as good as another's." This sounds plausible, but is it true? We say many things hastily, that second thought tells us are not true. One man's opinion is not as good as another's, because men are not equal; they are not the same intelligence, nor are they situated the same. Take two men of equal intelligence; place one on the mountain-top, and the other here in the valley, and which will see the farthest and know most of the surrounding

region—the man in the valley covered with smoke and mist, or the one on the mountain-top, where the air is clearer and the view wider? Down here we see but one valley, while the man up there sees valleys to the east, north, south and west; therefore he knows more about the country and his opinion concerning it is better than the other man's.

We can carry this into every walk of life. When we want an expert opinion on astronomy, we seek an astronomer, not a shoemaker—unless the shoemaker happens to be an astronomer. A musician's opinion on music is more valuable than the opinion of one who "hath no music in his soul." No, unless the men are equal and their surroundings the same, we cannot predicate equality of their opinions.

And why should we limit this to things material? Why is it not true of religious principles as well? Is there not such a thing as a spiritual expert? There is, and the greatest spiritual expert that this world has ever known is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He stood upon eternal heights and was not blinded by the mists of error. Joseph Smith was a spiritual expert; he was Christ's prophet, and his teachings are not mere opinions; they are the revelations of God; they point out the way of eternal life.

Jesus said: "I came forth from the Father, and I return unto the Father." We all came forth from him, and the reasons why we came are summed up in a wonderful revelation to the Prophet Joseph—a selection from the Book of Abraham, which Joseph translated:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads forever and ever.

Earth Life a School

This earth was made for God's children, his spirit sons and daughters, who take bodies and pass through experiences of joy

and sorrow for their development and education, and to demonstrate through time's vicissitudes that they will be true to God and do all that he requires at their hands. Our sainted Eliza R. SNOW gives this wonderful presentation of the purposes of mortal life:

O my Father, thou that dwellest
 In the high and glorious place!
 When shall I regain thy presence,
 And again behold thy face?
 In thy holy habitation,
 Did my spirit once reside;
 In my first primeval childhood,
 Was I nurtured near thy side.

For a wise and glorious purpose
 Thou hast placed me here on earth,
 And withheld the recollection
 Of my former friends and birth.
 Yet ofttimes a secret something
 Whispered: "You're a stranger here;"
 And I felt that I had wandered
 From a more exalted sphere.

I had learned to call thee Father,
 Through thy Spirit from on high;
 But until the Key of Knowledge
 Was restored, I knew not why.
 In the heavens are parents single?
 No; the thought makes reason stare!
 Truth is reason, truth eternal
 Tells me I've a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence,
 When I lay this mortal by,
 Father, Mother, may I meet you
 In your royal courts on high?
 Then, at length, when I've completed
 All you sent me forth to do,
 With your mutual approbation
 Let me come and dwell with you.

School Being Out, We Go Home

That is the whole problem. When we have done the things that we were sent to do, when we have gained all the experience that this life affords, then is the best time to depart. School being out, why not go home? The mission ended, why not return? That is what death means to a Latter-day Saint. The only sad thing about it is parting with the loved ones who go, or whom we leave behind. Surely there is nothing sad in reuniting with dear departed ones—those who have gone before, or those whom we left when we came here. We have to part with our dear ones; that is what makes death sad. But it is

simply a passing into the spirit world, to await the resurrection, when our bodies and spirits will be reunited—the righteous to enjoy the presence of God. They will be here to greet him when he comes, or else be with him when he comes to reign over the earth.

If we can be patient and resigned, and by God's help do his holy will, all will come out well. Trials purify us, educate us, develop us. The great reason why man was placed upon the earth was that he might become more like his Father and God. That is why we are here, children at school. What matters it when school is out and the time comes to go back home?

God bless you, Sister Clive; bless your children; bless your absent soldier boy; bless all your kindred and friends. May peace rest upon this house and descend like the dews of heaven upon your souls!

Our Battle Song

We've answered the call of our Nation, boys,
 We're marching to the fife and drum.
 We're defending our Nation's rights, boys,
 Like our fathers at Lexington.
 Then march to the tune of the fife and drum,
 For Liberty's light shall rule the world,
 And oppression soon must die.

We've answered the call of the world, boys.
 For equal rights for man,
 That Liberty's flag may be unfurled,
 On the sea and on the land.
 Then march to the tune of the fife and drum,
 With Stars and Stripes on high,
 For Freedom's cry is heard round the world,
 And tyranny soon must die.

We've answered the call of Heaven, boys,
 To prepare this world for the Son—
 The Prince of Peace—who soon will reign
 O'er every land and tongue.
 Then march to the tune of the fife and drum,
 And raise your standard high,
 For Freedom's light shall rule the world,
 And oppression forever die.

Mary Isabel Tanner.