

An Address by Eliza R. Snow

Delivered in the Ogden Tabernacle, at a Relief Society meeting, Thursday afternoon, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1873.  
(reported by James Taylor)

Note: Eliza Snow (as the sole woman), traveled with her brother, Lorenzo and other Brethren of the church, throughout Europe and the Middle East for several months visiting dignitaries, countries, missionaries; their highlight being a visit to the Holy Land. Having recently returned, Eliza shares some of her experiences in this address. She wrote letters to Emmeline, about their journey, which were published in THE EXPONENT from time to time, so everyone was familiar with this trip.

In Lyons, we saw them weave silk of various descriptions. They weave photograph likenesses and battle scenes, and delineate countenances plainly as if they had been painted.

In the King's Palace in Munich, I was shown window curtains made of glass, in brocade and beautiful colors. Without feeling of them, I should not have thought but that they were silk, but they were glass.

I visited many churches and cathedrals; I visited mosques; saw all I could under the governments where we traveled. And the more I saw, the more I felt the necessity of the Lord! Having a government on the earth for the sake of the people, and thought, how well off the Saints in Zion were; and what blessings they enjoyed. Blessings and privileges above those of all the nations of the earth. And, we my sisters, we have the privilege of being organized according to the pattern which God has given for the females in the church of Jesus Christ. We are privileged above all other womankind on the face of the earth. I thought when I was abroad, I thought before I went and I have thought much since I returned, how necessary for the Saints of the living God to be more of a distinct people than what they are, to be the Saints of God in very deed—and to be as different from the rest of the world as our privileges are here exalted—we should be a shining light to the nations of the earth. But I often say to myself, are we what we should be?

I was talking with President Young about how we were received abroad. He said that the Saints were growing in influence; and that if they lived up to their privileges, their influence would be far greater than it is now. I told him that I believed that if we were as distinct a people as the Lord wanted us to be our influence would be far greater. He said it would. But instead of that, are we not trying to gain influence by assimilating to the habits and customs, and the spirit of the world?

Now I do not know that this would apply to my sisters in Ogden, for they are a live people. Their works exhibit that. And their reputation bespeaks them to be awake to their duties. But, still, we are never to come to a stand point. We are to be progressing, and growing better. If we have done well today, we must do still better tomorrow. We believe in eternal progression. It will not do to say that we have so much to do that we cannot do anymore, because the works and duties for women in Zion are constantly increasing. Nowhere on the earth has woman so broad a sphere of labor and duty of responsibility and action as in Utah.

I tried in many instances to make people believe that women in Utah had more freedom than women had anywhere else on the earth. But they thought that they knew better than I did. I told them how long I had lived with the people, and that I ought to know better than strangers.

To be sure we have trials, but what are they? I want to ask my sisters now a serious question. When you are filled with the Spirit of God, and the Holy Ghost rests upon you—that comforter which Jesus promised, and which takes of the things of God and gives them to us, and shows us things to come, and brings all things to our remembrance—when you are filled with this spirit, do you have any trials? I do not think you do. For that satisfies and fills up every longing of the human heart, and fills up every vacuum. When I am filled with that spirit my soul is satisfied; and I can say in good earnest that the trifling things of the day do not seem to stand in my way at all. But just let me lose my hold of that spirit and power of the Gospel, and partake of the spirit of the world, in the slightest degree, and trouble comes; there is something wrong. I am tried and what will comfort me? You cannot impart comfort to me that will satisfy the Immortal mind, but that which comes from the fountain above. And is it not our privilege to so live that we can have this constantly flowing into our souls? To be sure we have many of the crosses of life, but what do we meet them for? Are they for our own good and benefit or do we meet them all as for Zion's sake? Do we let Zion take full possession of our desires, our ambition?

Now my sisters, though I took that tour to Europe and Asia, would I have gone to gratify my own personal selfishness? I felt that it was right for me to go. My sisters sent me. I went believing that good would result from my going. And I have had that belief all the time. I never once regretted starting. I told President Smith that I did not think that anything could occur to make me regret that I went. I try never to allow myself to do anything for a selfish gratification. Still we are all frail and weak mortals, of the earth, earthy. But that comforter, which is a legacy that belongs to every Saint of God and to everyone who has been baptized for the remission of sins, will lift our desires to a nobler aim, and we forget all about self. We have self all absorbed in the interests of the work of God. We are here to perform duties, and to do our part towards establishing God's Kingdom. We, my sisters, have as much to do as our brethren have. We are to work in union with them. Every woman who fills her position as a wife, honorably stands as a counselor to her husband. Not a dictator, a counselor. And what a life it is to live my sisters! What a noble life, to live, so as to fill this position, in which we are blessed, and are honorable as women of God.

Paul the Apostle anciently spoke of holy women...It is the duty of each one of us to be a holy woman. We shall have elevated aims, if we are holy women. We shall feel that we are called to perform important duties. No one is exempt from them. There is no sister so isolated, and her sphere so narrow but what she can do a great deal towards establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

I am proud to see so many young ladies associated with the Relief Society in Ogden. There should be an association in every settlement, and in every ward in Salt Lake City. And wherever there is a Relief Society the girls and young ladies should have as much to do as other women already in the Retrenchment Association. You need not be startled at the words Retrenchment Association. If you associate together your minds are improved, you are gaining intelligence, and you are retrenching from ignorance. The Spirit of God will impart instruction to your minds, and you will impart it to each other. I

say, God bless you my young sisters. Remember that you are Saints of God and that you have important works to perform in Zion.

How is it with a great many of our young people. They are baptized when they are eight years old and have hands laid upon them for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Do they know what the Holy Ghost is? Do they ever minister in the Holy Ghost? Have they ever had the gifts of the Gospel? Look around you and think how many there are children of the Latter-day Saints, who know no more of the Gospel of Jesus Christ than the heathens do. Why? Because they have had nothing to do with it. Their fathers and mothers are good Saints, but they are children of Zion. They can go their own way and do as they list. They can be full of the spirit of the gentiles and be so blind that they cannot see the difference between the professions of a gentile and the sincerity of the Saints. They have no light in them. Why is it? Was it so at the beginning of this Church? No it was not. I can hear testimony that in the beginning of the church, children and young people had the gifts of the Gospel, and prayed and sang. They talked as much as old people. They knew what the Spirit of God was. There was no need of cautioning them about the Spirit of the world. They had that monitor within them, the Holy Ghost, which showed them things in their true light. I should like to see the effects of it now in our young people. There is some cause why it is not so. And I think it would amount to quite as much and little more to have attention paid to these things in such a manner that it would save the children that are born in Zion, than it would to go to the trouble of raising money and bringing the Saints from the nations of the earth. Why are there not some steps taken to save the youth?

Now, in Salt Lake City, President Young counseled Sister Horne (Salt Lake Stake RS Pres.) and myself (Gen RS Pres.), and Sister Smoot (Provo Stake RS Pres.) to organize the Young girls. He wanted his young girls organized first. He dictated who should be president, and she to choose her counselors, and start out right. But how did it work? There was cold water thrown on this effort made. It was turned to ridicule by many. They said "what is the use of the girls meeting together, and praying and talking?" And I would ask what is the use of our brethren meeting together? If the young girls and the boys do not need the Spirit of the Gospel, there does not any person need it. But I think the state of society in Salt Lake City does need it. You may talk to the young about the follies of the world and the unholy influences of the gentiles till doomsday, and it will make no impression. But you place them in a position where they will get the Holy Ghost, and that will be a sure protection against outside influences. Some will say, "our boys are sent out on missions and then they get the Spirit of God". Some of the boys are sent on missions and it is necessary to keep them out that they may retain the Spirit of God, if there is not enough of it at home. Some of our young men who are sent out on missions are obliged to seek to God, but when they come home they are laughed out of it, and perhaps fall into the practices of those who are here! It is not so with all of them to be sure.

In referring again to the organization of the young ladies, I may say we have apostatized in Salt Lake City, but there are so many left as to show what that organization would have been if carried out as President Young desired it to be. We have organizations of young ladies, in Salt Lake City, who do not need anybody to tell them about the influences and fashions of the world. They have just as much distaste for them as the older folks have. I do think today that if that counsel had been carried out among the young girls, and boys, and they had been organized and got the Spirit of God, that our society would have

shown a very different character from what it does. Some of the mothers and fathers, who spoke lightly of it, now see the necessity of it to their sorrow.

Well, but now, Sister Eliza, are you not scolding folks? I have to talk so loud as I want you all to hear, and it may seem like scolding.

There are a great many good things that I could talk about, but I want to talk about things that still produce effects, and effects of salvation. It does not do to fool away our time thinking that all is well. It is necessary for us to be laying that foundation, which will secure the salvation of the young, as well as of the old, and not leave it to the exigencies of time, nor to the chances of circumstances, but each one of us see to it ourselves and cultivate those principles that will tend to salvation.

Now, I am thankful that these my young sisters meet together. You will be blest. Sister Richards (Ogden Stake RS Pres.) will be blest for promoting these organizations. I understand you are in connection with the Relief Society. It makes no difference. But I want to say one or two things, that I wish you to remember. It is not only “necessary” for you to meet together, you should talk to each other, and talk of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You can talk of your everyday concerns. But accustom yourselves to talking to each other of the principles of the Gospel. It will lay a foundation for your being eminently useful, hereafter. That is what you are born for. You might as well have been born in some other nation or dispensation, unless you can feel that you have a mission in Zion. Study the principles of the Gospel, converse on them, understand them so that you may be able to cope with any of the wisest of the world. They are coming here. They often ask questions of the young, when they would not interrogate the older ones. You want to understand that you are living to be Saints, and never be ashamed to acknowledge yourselves to be Latter-day Saints. It is not enough that you are born in Zion. It is true that the Prophets said it should be an honor to be born in Zion, but it is a dishonor not to live up to the blessings of the Gospel to which you are heirs.

I see the Relief Society here has no house of its own—no house that it can control. I know the sisters are accommodated. But each Society needs a house at its own disposal. And if the sisters in Ogden, with the sanction of the Brethren, undertake to build a house, the brethren will help them. It is said that god helps those who help themselves, and the brethren are so god-like that they will help you. Bishop Wooley is now stepping forward to have such a house built in the 13<sup>th</sup> ward in Salt Lake City.

There is another thing I want to mention before I sit down. President Young is requiring the sisters to get students of Medicine. He wants a good many to get a classical education, and then get a degree for Medicine. So far as getting the degree is concerned, there would be no advantage, but in connection with the degree, the female practitioner stands on the same grounds a man does. Are there here, now, any sisters who have hibition enough, and who realize the necessity of it for Zion’s sake, to take up this study? There are some who are naturally inclined to do so. If they cannot meet their own expenses, we have means of doing so. It is proposed that the sisters instead of expending means to emigrate foreign Saints, spend that means in educating young women. Those who go through this course should be young women. We have, in Salt Lake City, a Mrs. Barker, who proposes to teach. But there are many

branches you need to study before going to the expense of being boarded abroad to study. You need to study Physiology, Anatomy and other kindred branches.

Then another class of women is wanted more advanced in age, who are natural nurses, and would be willing to study obstetrics; this lady is going to give a series of lectures for their benefit. If some who have natural inclinations for nursing would come and attend these lectures, that would be fulfilling the requirements so far. We are waiting to get up as large a class as we can. There are some eight or twelve now. President Young said that he wanted one, at least, from every settlement. Of course, so large a city as Ogden, should furnish quite a number; so that we can have our own practitioners, instead of having gentlemen practitioners. In ancient times we know that women officiated in this department and why should it not be so now? The difficulty is in getting the sisters to feel like undertaking it.

Now if there are any who will attend through all of these classes, their expenses will be met if they are not able to meet them. Several Ogden women should attend this course of lectures, and confine themselves to that particular department.

We have to get up these classes and attend to all these things. Don't you see that our sphere is increasing? Our sphere of action will continually widen and no woman in Zion need to mourn because her sphere is too narrow.

God bless you, my sisters, and encourage you, that you may be filled with light, and realize that you have no interests but in the welfare of Zion. Let your first business be to perform your duties at home. But, inasmuch as you are wise stewards, you will find time for social duties, because these are incumbent upon us as daughters and mothers in Zion. By seeking to perform every duty you will find that your capacity will increase, and you will be astonished at what you can accomplish. You have been astonished at what duties you have done. The Lord help us. The Lord is with His Saints and helps them to do His will and He watches over them by night and by day. Inasmuch as we continue faithful, we shall be those that will be crowned in the presence of God and the Lamb. You, my sisters, if you are faithful will become Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God. These are your callings. We have only to discharge our duties. By and by our labors will be past and our names will be crowned with everlasting honor, and be had in everlasting remembrance among the Saints of the Most High God.