

OH PSHAW AND CONFOUND

No place is regarded by the Mormons with such sanctimony as the temple. The ceremonial and ordinance work which goes on in this sanctuary is considered to be of such a sacred nature that it is not usually discussed outside of the temple except by way of general reference.

The closest temple to Brigham City was across the mountain in Logan, and only saints in good standing, properly recommended by their bishops as worthy members were admitted. Some people from the Brigham City wards made frequent and regular excursions to Logan to participate in the rights. Others attended only very seldom and others not at all. Among those who had never been to the temple was the town doctor, affectionately known as Doc to most of the older generation.

A convert to Mormonism, he has never had time away from his practice to get active in church affairs. Nevertheless, except for a strong addiction to profanity he was a good practicing Christian. His wife had been trying to get him into the temple for some time and he finally gave in and obtained a recommend from the bishop. He came to our place to have it countersigned by a member of the stake presidency.

This entire episode took place on three separate evenings spaced within a weeks time. On that first visit Father said, "Doctor, this is one of the most satisfying things I have done in a long time, to sigh this recommend for you."

"Well, Brother Clem, I guess it's about time. A man can't to on being a heathen for ever."

Three nights later he was back again. This time there was a bit of caution and some tension in the dialogue.

"A note by the phone said you wanted me to stop by and that it's not a professional call. I hope it's nothing trivial, Brother Clem, you know I'm a busy man."

"I'm much obliged to have you stop in Doctor. I won't keep you long but we do need to hear your side of what went on in the temple the other night".

"I don't know what anyone's in such a lather about. I just told this old codger where to get off."

"I've been asked to talk to you about using profanity in the temple. There's a report came back to the stake presidency from Logan."

"Now Clem, you know the habits of a lifetime aren't easy to be free of, and this old hypocrite riled me to the boiling point. He was beside me all evening. Found fault with everything I did. My clothes weren't on right, didn't hold my hand right, didn't do this, that; and the other right. He kept after me the whole time 'till I was damned near ready to knock his block off. I got through before he did after all, and waited for him to come through into the last room.

"Then what happened?"

"I grabbed hold of him and said, 'I beat you, damn you, I beat you. And, by hell, I bet I make it into the kingdom before you do too.' Those pious asses standing around there looked at me like I'd just tipped over the ark of the covenant."

"Well I can understand how you got your dander up," said Father, "but you ought to learn to bridle your tongue in a place like that."

"After I've had a while to think it over I'll want to go back again and do it up right. Maybe he won't be there next time I go."

"Now as to this matter of using profanity, it seems to me you could use better language. Why don't you say something like 'oh pshaw' or 'confound it and let it go at that?'"

"Clem, you've got your way of talking and I've got mine. People wouldn't understand me if I started talking like you, so as far as I'm concerned, to hell with oh pshaw and I'll be damned with confound it."

With that he stomped out and that was the end of the whole affair as far as he was concerned. However, the next night the other members of the stake presidency came to discuss how the matter had, been handled and with what success. The reformation of the doctor was of grave concern. They could hardly wait for the prayer to be over with so as to get to the weightier matters of the law.

The second counselor was the first to show his anxiety over the whole affair. "President," he said, "How did the doctor respond?" Did you impress him with the seriousness of the matter?"

Father gave a detailed account of the interview of the night before after which it was suggested by the others that maybe the doctor ought to be called back, since that was hardly a proper way for a man to acquit himself. It seemed downright defiant.

"He's a better Christian than I'll ever be," Father said, "I just couldn't sit in judgment of a man who does the Lord's work twenty-four hours a day in his own way. Why, he brought half the rising generation of this county into the world. And, half the grown-ups owe him fees and money he'll never press to collect. My mind went empty of all criticism. If he's to be reprimanded or condemned any more one of you will have to do it."

Nothing more was ever said about the matter to the good doctor.