

## Why Sorrow?

While I was sketching the spire of the Nauvoo temple I was reminded of a little poem that I had written many years ago that seemed to address the question “why sorrow?”

### Of Soil and Men

by Robert Fitt

From saw-toothed peaks of cloud-bound mountains fair  
To boundless sweeps of prairies rich with grass,  
The soils that nourish life must ever bear  
The burden of sustaining life.

Yon fertile soil doth spawn abundantly,  
Its offspring all aglow with comely form,  
As roots enlarged without adversity  
Give bounteous life.

But in the soil bestrewn by rocks, and clay—  
Settled, dense and rocky, stifling growth—  
Plants and men must struggle valiantly  
To scarcely maintain life.

And yet the tortured struggle, at its end,  
Sculpts splendor far beyond a sleek facade.  
In ways few feeble mortals comprehend,  
It molds eternal life.

My struggle is small indeed compared to the struggle experienced during the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. This magnificent structure is more glorious, perhaps, because it has gone through the full cycle of life—birth, joy... then tribulation, death, and recently, resurrection—because of its storied history it stands as a symbol of hope for all of us. I have enjoyed an exciting life; and after wading through nearly eighty two years of the peaks and valleys that daily life affords, I have come to realize that my happiness did not depend on the springboards and stumbling blocks of life—it depended upon how I responded to the successes, and daily bumps and bruises that each day brings, and that a road block can become a springboard if we can bring ourselves to see it through the eyes of hope.

When I visualize the beginnings of Nauvoo, I picture clouds of mosquitoes swarming around the heads of a discouraged pioneer couple

looking hopefully toward the temple while their feet are buried to the ankles in the very bog that their sweat and toil will soon transform into fertile fields.

Such was the struggle in Nauvoo. Life was not easy then. And for most of us, it is not easy now. As the world grows ever darker and as the problems become so glaring and complex that our most brilliant minds are brought to their knees by their enormity, our hope must never dim; for just as the malarial struggles that engulfed our forbears led to “the city Beautiful”, so will our hope in Christ carry us forth to accomplishment and salvation if we will but persevere in faith; for the rocky soils and boggy swamplands of daily life cannot overwhelm us if our hearts are turned to Christ.

Though it will likely not be easy, with the determination, faith and inspiration provided through the Holy Spirit, God will give us the wisdom and courage to wage a successful battle and come out smiling in the end. Just as He did for the saints in Nauvoo.

I have found that I must decide for myself whether I will be happy or not each day, and that whenever challenges or afflictions seem to block my contentment, that the Holy Spirit helps me gain a positive outlook that will carry me through.

Have you noticed how much easier it is to make the right choices, to overcome temptation or to reach out with a helping hand, when the Spirit is with you? Somehow our responses are more positive and our lives are more joyful—even in times of distress—when the Spirit is present with us.

Perhaps Nephi gave us the ideal formula when he said:

*“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”* (2 Nephi 31: 20)