

DISCOURSE

BY

PREST. GEORGE Q. CANNON,

DELIVERED

at the Funeral Services of the late
Prest. David O. Calder, in the
Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday Morning, July 6th,
1884.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

THE speaker commenced by reading the 40th chapter of the Book of Alma in the new edition of the Book of Mormon. After which he said:

Thus readeth the 40th chapter of Alma. My brethren and sisters will doubtless remember that this is a part of the address or epistle that Alma wrote to his son Coriantum, whose mind had been considerably disturbed and exercised over the resurrection of the dead. After reading this chapter it seems as though anything that I might say would be very weak, especially in view of the fact that we are today the mourners, and doubtless every heart is filled with reflections—reflections that are much easier felt and experienced than they are expressed. If there is any time when it seems as though silence is the greatest eloquence it is on occasions like the present. We are called upon to part with a friend; a beloved brother. One who has been faithful, so far as I know, in all things entrusted to him—a man of integrity, a man of worth, a man of humility, a man of God. His life has been before the people, to a great extent. He has been somewhat prominent for many years, and he has left an unblemished record. We are called upon, it seems to me, more frequently these days to part with our friends, and especially with men of prominence than we were a few years ago. The men who took part in this work in the early days, who started out in their youth as members of the Church, have reached ripe manhood and old age, and they are dropping off one by one, reminding us that the time is not far distant when there will be a new generation upon the theatre of action, new men so to speak, will step forward to take upon them the responsibilities that have been so well, so worthily, and so valiantly borne by the men who have passed and are now passing away. I have been greatly struck with this in reflecting upon the changes that have occurred since the death of President Young. It seems as though it was only a few days since he was here in our midst. We have scarcely got over the habit of looking for him to come on the stand and to come into the office, so recent does it seem since he was here. But since his death there have been six Apostles ordained to the quorum of the twelve Apostles. One half of that quorum are, so to speak, new men. This gives us some idea of the changes which are occurring and how rapidly the men of experience are passing away, going behind the veil to mingle in other scenes, to labor in a higher sphere, and to take their part in that great work which is progressing in that world to which we are hastening. My constant and earnest prayer is, that God will still raise up men of faith, men of integrity, men of valor, to take the places of those who are going. I doubt not that He will, in fact I feel sure that this work will lose nothing by the departure of those who are called to go; for as has been remarked already, there is a constant stream of emigration from the spirit world of noble spirits to take the places of those who are going hence. As they pass away, having filled their probation, others are pressing forward to the gates of life, anxious to emerge into this sphere of existence, pressing forward, a vast column of them, noble and holy beings, ready to take their part in the probation which God has assigned unto all his children.

We often think when we are perplexed and annoyed and tried in our feelings, and sometimes in our faith, that our lot is somewhat hard. Latter-day Saints in days that are passed, especially when subjected to active persecution, and the victims of hate, have felt—that is, some have felt—that they could not bear it any longer. It is recorded of Sidney Rigdon, who, with the Prophet Joseph Smith, had seen the Lord Jesus, who had the events of eternity opened to him, and who had been greatly gifted and blessed of God; it is recorded of him that upon one occasion, when a prisoner in jail in the State of Missouri, he felt that his sufferings were unbearable, that they were greater than he should be called upon to endure, and he murmured about his afflictions. This doubtless was partly the cause of his losing the Spirit of God and becoming an alien to His work.

God our Eternal Father, knows the condition of us all. He understands our circumstances, and he has promised unto every soul that He will give unto him or her strength according to his or her day. He does not forget His children. His providence is over them. His angels are around about them and have charge concerning them. He knows that which is best for us; and in calling upon us to pass through certain circumstances, if we submit to them patiently, receive them in the proper spirit, we will find that they are the best adapted to make us perfect before Him, and to fit and qualify us for that life which is to come.

We are in a world of sorrow, a world of affliction, a world of pain, a world

of death. God has ordained this probation for us. It was pre-arranged before we came here—that we should descend, like our Lord and Master, below all things, in order that we may rise above all things. And He calls upon His children to pass through these scenes, to bear them patiently, to submit to them in the proper spirit, with a promise that if they do so their reward shall be ample. It is a remarkable fact—and we should reflect upon it often, in fact it should be before our eyes continually—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the greatest being that ever trod the earth, lived a life, it may be said, of abject poverty all the days that He was upon the earth. He who created all things, the Lord of life and glory, descended so low as to be born in a stable and be cradled in a manger, and had scarcely anything with which to supply His wants. Most pathetic were the words which He uttered upon one occasion, revealing most graphically the condition in which He was placed, namely, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." The animal creation were provided for, they had their places of resort, their habitations; but He was destitute among His fellow men. He had not a place to lay His head! And it was so all His life, dying as He did, a death of ignominy. Now if pleasant circumstances were the best things and the best for us to endure and to pass through, no doubt God would have so arranged it in the case of His Only Begotten Son. But He called Him to pass through these terrible scenes. His life was a continual scene of trial and temptation and persecution, and finally, as I have said, He was put to death. He passed through these without faltering, accepting the dispensation of His Father's providence, acknowledging His Father in everything that He did, in all the circumstances surrounding Him, submitting patiently to them, knowing that in the wise providence of His Father they were destined for His good and for His eventual exaltation.

With such an example as this before us we ought to hesitate when we are inclined to murmur, we ought to pause when we are inclined to find fault with those circumstances which may surround us. We may have affliction, we may have great sorrows, there may be circumstances of the most painful character connected with our lives; but if our trust in God is unflinching, we will accept them as a part of the dispensation of His providence to us. When I see men and women in poverty I often reflect upon the remark that was made to the rich man in the parable of our Savior. He said to the rich man: "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." But the day of compensation had arrived. Lazarus had gone to the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man was in a place of torment. I often think that there is a great compensation awaiting the humble and the poor and the destitute, who in this life do not have their good things. If they are patient, if they are submissive, if they cling to the truth, if they are obedient to the commands of God, undoubtedly there will be a day of reward for them.

The main thing for us, my brethren and sisters, is to cherish in our hearts the spirit that God gives, cherish those good and holy influences that He pours out upon His children, live up to the light that He has revealed. If we do this, we are as perfect in our sphere as God our Eternal Father is in His. Every being—and I take pleasure in reflecting upon it—every being, no matter what his condition or circumstances, no matter what his race or his nationality, no matter what his creed may be—every being who lives up to the light that God has given, whether it be much or little, is perfect in his sphere just as God the Eternal Father is, and will receive a reward according to the light that he has received.

There is an important truth revealed unto us in one revelation that is given, and that is that the heathen nations will be redeemed, and they that knew not law shall come forth in the first resurrection, and it shall be tolerable for them. There is a grand thought in connection with this, that they who know no law shall have the privilege of coming forth in the first resurrection. God has said this, and His word cannot fail. They will be redeemed because doubtless they lived up to the light that they had received, that which God had given unto them. "And then," says the revelation, "shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that know no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them; and Satan shall be bound that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men."

There have been ideas prevailing in many quarters that the heathen nations would be consigned to endless torment, and that there was no redemption for them. But how comprehensive is the plan of salvation! How glorious is the Gospel of the Son of God! It is indeed glad tidings to every soul—glad tidings of great joy, for even the heathen shall be redeemed. Though they knew no law, yet they shall come forth from the dead and have part in the first resurrection. This is so different from the traditions of men, so contrary to many of the teachings of those who have professed to know something concerning the plan of salvation.

My brethren and sisters, God has revealed unto us the everlasting Gospel. He has revealed unto us the plan of

salvation. He has extended unto us the most glorious promises that were ever made unto any of the children of men. He has placed within our reach the gift of eternal lives. He has promised unto us glory and immortality; in fact every gift that is desirable or that any being can enjoy He has promised unto us. Let me read to you a little of what God has promised to those who are faithful to Him in these last days, and I do not confine it to these last days, but unto all those in every age who have obeyed the Gospel. I read from the vision contained in the 76th section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants:

50. And again, we bear record, for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just:

51. They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given;

52. That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

53. And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true;

54. They are they who are the church of the first born;

55. They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—

56. They are they who are Priests and Kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

57. And are Priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchisedek, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son;

58. Wherefore, as it is written, they are Gods, even the sons of God—

59. Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's;

60. And they shall overcome all things;

61. Wherefore let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet—

62. These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ for ever and ever.

63. These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to reign on the earth over his people.

64. These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.

65. These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.

66. These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.

67. These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the first born.

68. These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

69. These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.

70. These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

In the words that I have read we learn plainly the future of Brother Calder. He has done all these things here required. He has gone hence, having fulfilled his mission, having wrought out, through obedience to the commands of God, the probation that was given to him. He obeyed the law of the Gospel. He was baptized by one having authority, and received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by one having authority, and having gone on from that time until the day of his death, obeying humbly and meekly the commandments of God, laying up for himself treasures in heaven, he will realize all the promises that have been given unto those who have been most faithful in the flesh. In reading these words, so full of glory, so full of hope, so bright and Godlike; in reading these, my brethren and sisters, I read the future of every faithful, humble Latter-day Saint. I read to you the glory that is in store for you if you are faithful and true in this probation in keeping the commandments of God, in submitting patiently and humbly and submissively to the providence of God our Eternal Father, that He sees fit to call you to endure or to pass through, and every faithful soul, every man and woman, no matter how obscure, will most assuredly attain unto all this glory. We cannot conceive of it. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of that glory that God has in reserve for those who keep His commandments, who do His will. All we have to do is to keep His commandments. All we have to do is to submit to His will. All we have to do is to bear patiently the trials and the afflictions and the persecutions—if persecutions should come—that He will call us to pass through. But just as sure as the sun shines, just as sure as we live, just as sure as God lives, so sure will every promise that has been here made be fulfilled unto those who live for them. They will go when they leave here, as our brother has gone, to their reward. There is no doubt, not the shadow of a doubt in my mind as to the future of the spirit that inhabited this tabernacle. He has gone behind the veil. He has gone from our side unto the paradise of our God, there to await, with joyful anticipation, the morning of the first resurrection, when his body will come forth from the tomb; not as we see this body that we look at this morning. I could not have recognized David O. Calder. When living he was a handsome man. This morning I looked at his face and I regretted doing so, he is so changed. But when he comes forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with immortality, blessed and crowned with glory, you will see a perfect be-

ing, a being full of joy and happiness.

The power of Satan has ceased so far as his spirit is concerned. Satan is bound as soon as the faithful spirit leaves this tabernacle of clay and goes to the other side of the veil. That spirit is emancipated from the power and thralldom and attacks of Satan. Satan can only afflict such in this life. He can only afflict those in that life which is to come who have listened to his persuasions, who have listened to obey him. These are the only ones over whom he has power after this life. But the Latter-day Saints who have been faithful, the men and the women who have kept the commandments of God, those who have lived according to the light that they have had, whether it be much or little, when they leave this state of existence they are placed in such a position that Satan has no power over them; he cannot tempt them, he cannot afflict them, he can do nothing to interfere with their happiness, but the wicked, those who list to obey him, those who give heed to his spirit, will only be still more completely in his power in the life that is to come. They will go into outer darkness; hence it is said, there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, because of their sin and transgression in this life. Already we have a foretaste of it. You watch the men who yield to the temptations and allurements of Satan; you watch the men and women who give heed to his spirit, and you will find written legibly upon their faces that misery that awaits them in the world to come. I have been greatly struck with this. I remember a case of this kind which at the time struck me with exceeding great force. I was in San Francisco, publishing a paper and in charge of the Pacific coast mission. An Elder came from this place, apparently full of zeal to go on his mission to the Pacific Islands. He was so anxious when he reached San Francisco, being a man of eloquence, to speak to the people, that he proposed to me that he would deliver two lectures upon the subject of plural marriage. I was very glad to have him do so, because there was considerable anxiety in the minds of the people to know about affairs in Utah. We placarded the city, and delivered the lectures. During these lectures he bore a very strong testimony. I was pleased at his testimony in favor of the Gospel, for I had some doubts about the man previously. Some little time afterwards—he having been detained in San Francisco—he told me, in the course of conversation as we were walking up from my office, that he had doubts about this work, and about Joseph Smith being a prophet of God. I was amazed at the communication. I said to him, "How is it possible that you could bear such a testimony as you did at these lectures if you are in the condition you describe? 'Why, brother George Q.' said he, 'when I looked at the congregation as I bore testimony to them concerning Mormonism, I wished in my heart that I could believe my own testimony as the people seemed to believe who listened to me!' To me it was the most horrible confession I had ever listened to. The idea of his being such a hypocrite as to bear such a testimony and then wish in his own heart that he could believe it as the people who listened to him seemed to believe it. I said to myself, 'This man will apostatize. The root of the matter is not in him.' I asked him if he had not transgressed, or what he had done to bring himself into such a condition; for no man ever lost the faith without there being a cause for it. He declared to me that he had not transgressed with women, and that this unbelief arose from some other cause than that. I have since, however, heard statements which lead me to conclude that he told me a falsehood when he made this statement, and that he had corrupted himself with women. He went away. Some weeks or months afterwards he came back and when I saw him it seemed to me that I never saw a walking hell so plainly as I did in looking at his face. It seemed as though hell was in his face. Punishment and condemnation were written there. Already the evil one had placed his dreadful seal upon him. And so it is with all those who give heed to the spirit of the evil one. A man that has had the light, the truth, the Spirit of God, and has grieved that Spirit, when the other spirit takes possession of him, there is a complete transformation. Those who know see it in his face, and feel it in his spirit. They cannot associate with him without discerning that there is a spirit of darkness and evil taken possession of him; and so it is with all who take this course. They already begin to have a foretaste of that dreadful misery that awaiteth those who break the commandments of God and listen to the spirit of the evil one. Men may have pleasure in sin, they may take pleasure in breaking the commandments of God and doing wickedly; but it is a pleasure that will be attended with evil results, the effects of it will be felt throughout the endless eternities of our God. If they do not go so far as to commit the unpardonable sin, they may be brought forth through the power of the Lamb, but even then how backward and awful will be their condition! Think of it!

The first resurrection, we are told, will be in the beginning of the Millennial era. One thousand years will elapse before the wicked will have the opportunity of coming forth; they will sleep in their graves for that thousand years, and they will await with dread the time when they shall receive pun-

ishment for their sins. In the meantime, they will be in a state of utter darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The Latter-day Saints do not believe, however—God having taught us better things—that there is a place of torment, to which the souls of the children of men will be consigned throughout the never ending ages of eternity—that is, those who have not committed the unpardonable sin. He has revealed to us a sufficient amount to show us how dreadful is the condition, even under the best of circumstances, of those who sin against light and knowledge and break the commandments of God. We are told that those who lived in the days of Noah, who refused the Gospel, the message of life and salvation that he offered to them, were consigned to a prison house, that they remained in that prison house until the time when Jesus descended into hell and unlocked the door and preached to them the Gospel of repentance. Twenty-five hundred years—according to our chronology—had elapsed since those spirits had been consigned to this place of torment, this prison house, from which they could not emerge, into which no light from the eternal world could penetrate, into which no heavenly messenger had access. There they were locked up in the prison house of God for this long period of 2500 years. With what expectations they must have awaited the arrival of some messenger who had the power to unlock the door and enter into their house and bring them some comfort and some help. How much better for them to have obeyed the message of God through His Prophet Noah! How much better it would have been to have repented and borne all the afflictions, all the pain, and all the persecution that Noah and his household bore, or that any servant of God had borne, than that they should be in such a condition as this!

My brethren and sisters, God our Eternal Father has given us every inducement to serve Him. There is nothing that God is not willing to bestow upon us—that is, nothing that is good for us, nothing that would help us, nothing that would be of advantage to us. Satan can offer us nothing. When he took the Savior up to that elevated place and showed Him the kingdoms of this world, and offered Him all, he did not offer Him anything that the Savior Himself would not possess, and neither can he offer you or me, or any son or daughter of God, anything that we will not possess ourselves if we are faithful to our Father. It is all God's. Everything that Satan claims or seeks to exercise dominion over is God's. The earth is His, the fulness of it is His, everything connected with it is His, and He will give it unto His faithful children just as it is here said:

"Wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

There is nothing left. There is nothing outside of it. It comprehends everything. Therefore, there are inducements for men to be faithful, for women to be faithful. What are these perishable things? Suppose that David O. Calder's life had been devoted to the acquisition of earthly things, and he had piled up gold until it had reached, if possible, the height of the Twin Peaks, of what value would it be to him to-day? Would it be of any benefit to him to-day? No. He has had to leave everything behind. Everything that he has done, all his earthly labor connected with this life, is left here behind. Even his tabernacle, that belongs to the earth. Even it must remain here. He cannot take it away from this earth. It belongs to the earth. We can only take that away which belongs to the sphere whither we go. Our spirits are not made out of the matter that belongs to this earth, therefore our spirits do not remain. But our tabernacles are a part of the earth. They have been fed and nourished from the elements of the earth. Therefore when the time of dissolution comes, when the fiat of death goes forth and there is a separation, the spirit goes back, as I have read in your hearing, to the presence of God. God created it and it goes to its own sphere; but the tabernacle stays here. And so it is with all the gold and silver and everything else that man can accumulate. He cannot take any of these things away with him. All that he can take is that which he has acquired by his experience here upon the earth. If he has been faithful to God in keeping His commandments and has received promises from God, he can take them with him. If his life has been one of purity and he has gained experience in purity, he can take that with him. If he has cherished the Spirit of God and made that his constant companion, he can take that with him. On the other hand, if he has taken an opposite course, and has given heed to the evil one, he comes under condemnation, that spirit goes with him and becomes inseparable until the time comes for him to repent and begin where he might have begun in this life if he had chosen to do so.

Therefore, let me say again, my brethren and sisters, there is every inducement in the world to serve our God. Think of the joy and peace that those have who keep the commandments of God. Why, it is peace from morning to night, from month's end to month's end, from year's end to year's end. The reflection that God is with us, the knowledge that His Spirit rests down upon us, and the consciousness that we are accepted of Him—is there anything that excels it? Those who