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Delivered at the Salt Lake Stake Conference, Sunday, Dec. 12, 1897, by

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

Since entering the Tabernacle this afternoon I have regretted that those who are here now were not here this morning. I do not know when I enjoyed a meeting like the one held this morning. There were very few present, but to me it was a most delightful time. I am warranted in saying that President Woodruff also enjoyed it. We exchanged views about it, and said how pleasant and interesting it was. That which was of interest was the reports of the Bishops who spoke. There must have been some ten discourses this morning. They were very brief, but they were very much to the point. I believe that the Latter-day Saints who are here this afternoon would have been edified, and strengthened, and comforted by the remarks that were made by the various Bishops in describing the condition of their wards. I think that this should be one of the objects of our conferences; that the people should have described to them, by the men who are closely associated with the people in the different wards, the condition of the Saints, and the feelings that prevail. We may know something about the ward we live in; but it is gratifying to know concerning other wards. Those who labor in Relief societies, in Sunday schools, and in Mutual Improvement associations can all be benefitted by hearing what is being done elsewhere. We certainly are greatly favored as a people in our organizations. I do not know how the people could be looked after with greater care than they are. We should appreciate this. By listening to these reports we can perceive the care that the Lord is exercising over us in enabling us to have these various organizations. There is one thing that we are superior in—we have the word of God without money and without price. We have the talent, and the inspiration, and the gifts that the Lord has bestowed upon men and women, at our command, it may be said; and we need not worry about buying pews, or about the paying of our pastors or ministers. It is true that we pay our tithing—some of us do—but instead of that being a cause of impoverishment, it is a source of blessing and strength and a cause of prosperity. You cannot find today upon this continent a community that is so prosperous in every direction, especially when we consider how we came here, as the Latter-day Saints are. I am warranted in saying there is not a community where there is so little absolute poverty and want; for if you had heard this morning that which was described to us, you would have seen how thoroughly are the measures taken to provide for the wants of the poor. Every man who spoke mentioned

the efforts that were made and the means that were expended to supply the wants of the poor. In this respect the Lord has blessed this people; and if we would only appreciate that which He is doing for us, and make use of the agencies He has put within our hands, there is no reason why we should not be the most happy and favored people upon the face of the earth. He has given unto us the wisdom, if the people would listen to it, to relieve this community from their distresses, and to put them into a position where there would be no want and no unemployed among them. I do not say this boastingly; I say it to the glory of God. I know that the wisdom has been given by God to frame measures that would result in the employment of this entire people and in the increase of their happiness in relation to temporal matters. But like Israel of old, and like the people of God in almost every generation, the people are slow to hear and to understand. They have not faith; they are distrustful; and instead of sustaining that authority which God has bestowed upon men in His wisdom and kindness, they are fearful of it and do not wish to be led by it.

I would like to call the attention of the Latter-day Saints to our condition. I would like to point out to you what God has done for us, and how marvelously He has prospered this people since we came to these valleys. Remember, my brethren and sisters, how poor the great bulk of this people were when they came here. Hundreds and thousands have come to this land entire strangers to our methods of making a living, ignorant of agriculture and of our manner of transacting business, and unacquainted with our customs; many of them unable to speak our language; and they have come here in poverty. It has been the poor among men who have received the Gospel. It has been the poor who have been gathered from the nations of the earth. For several years five hundred teams were sent from here, season after season, to the Missouri river, loaded with flour, which they cached on the way, so that it could be picked up on the return journey, and they brought the poor Saints here in that way. What other community on the face of the earth could do such things as this? Think of it! 500 teams, driven by 500 men, accompanied by guards, with two yoke of oxen to each wagon, and in many instances four yoke! Think of the magnitude of the labor and the expense involved in this! It cost the entire season's labor of the 500 men to go to the Missouri river and return again. And this was done as freely as the giving of a glass of water to a thirsty person. There was no murmuring about it; but from one end of the then Territory to the other, the men came with teams loaded with flour and provisions to go to the Missouri river and back again, and to feed those they brought back with them. People were brought here in this way by thousands; and when they arrived

here they received employment and soon became independent, so to speak; at least, they were relieved from abject poverty, and they were supplied with food and clothing and shelter. Now, that is a stupendous work, and it has been done by the Latter-day Saints.

Men ask where the evidences are that this is the work of God. It is the most extraordinary thing in the world that men are so blind and so densely ignorant that they cannot see that this is a marvelous work and a wonder, as the Lord said it would be, and that it is not the work of man. What man, by his own power and wisdom, unassisted by the Lord, could accomplish that which is before our eyes?

We talk about tithing, and some who are weak in the faith feel perhaps that it is a burden. Why, it is a great benefaction to this people. It is a principle which will enrich the Latter-day Saints. God tests our faith by it. He gives unto us, as His children, the blessings of the earth, and then He asks for His share. Not that He is hungry; not that He needs anything; the cattle on the hills are His; everything we possess He has given to us; but He asks us, for our own benefit and blessing, to give to Him one-tenth. If we will do this, He says He will prosper our harvests, bless our flocks and our herds, increase our basket and our store, and fill us to overflowing. Do you think it makes any difference to His happiness, His greatness or His glory, whether we do this or not? But very little. But it adds to our faith and it gives us strength.

The Lord wants to teach the inhabitants of the earth new principles—or, principles that have been long forgotten. Man has thought that he prospered by his own wisdom and strength. People look upon a man who is prospering, and they give him the credit of it. They give the creature the credit instead of the Creator. The Lord intends to change this. He has been trying now for sixty-seven years to do it. He wants men to look at life from a different standpoint; to believe that there is a power to enrich that is beyond man, and that prosperity comes to men by their doing that which He requires at their hands. Have we not proved this? We certainly have.

I sometimes allude to our missionaries in this connection. We have now, I suppose, about fourteen hundred men preaching the Gospel. They will be absent from home several years. When they come back, will they be distinguished in the wards where they live by their poverty? Are those who have been on missions and have returned, distinguished by their poverty from the rest of their brethren? They are not. The men who have been on missions are as prosperous as those who have not been on missions. I have proved this myself, as most of us have. There were fifteen successive years during which I was only home nine months; and I have been going almost constantly from that time. But the Lord has prospered me. I am not