

APOSTLE ABRAHAM CANNON

said there was, perhaps, no greater peculiarity of the Saints than this: That they believe in continuous revelation, and that every Elder, who, in the strict line of his duty, rose before a congregation, became a revelator, for he is commanded not to speak except as guided by the spirit of God. When he so speaks, his words become scripture to the people. This is the cause of our progress. While we acknowledge the Scriptures as far as they are translated correctly, to be the word of God, and while we receive the Book of Mormon and other books as Divine works, we depend more especially upon the continued revelations given to us and suited to our peculiar circumstances and want. It is, however, not possible for God to contradict Himself even if sometimes one counsel from Him seems to be contradictory to former counsels. When we fully understand all, it will be found that each new revelation is but a step on the same eternal road of progress, which shall ultimately lead to celestial glory.

It is not necessary that President Woodruff should be in person in all the wards to proclaim the word of God. Each presiding officer should receive the word of the Lord continually to those over whom he presides, and the people should sustain these men, that they may have the Spirit of Truth to give necessary advice and instructions at all times. But these men have not the privilege of receiving revelations to the Church, because this is given to him whom God has chosen as His mouthpiece. By disregarding the counsel of these men, we are in danger of losing the guidance of the Spirit, and sometimes this is the result of the sins of a few individuals, as was the case with ancient Israel, in some instances. Every sin should therefore be put away before it becomes a stumbling block to the whole people.

When the Book of Mormon was translated, it was said that there were many things not yet revealed, but these things are given us, only as we are willing to carry out those doctrines which have been revealed. The Lord is willing to pour out upon us a stream of light and intelligence, if we only are able to receive it.

Look upon what God has done for us. We notice how truths first revealed to the Latter-day Saints are gradually gaining ground in the world and are being publicly announced by the divines of the earth. An instance of this is the doctrine of eternal punishment, which is now being discarded in its ancient unscriptural form. This is but one of many doctrines which have received the same acceptance. Let us be faithful, and God will surely fulfil His promises concerning Zion.

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

was the next speaker. He said, in substance, he had been much interested in the reports presented to the conference, and also in the remarks made this afternoon. I am glad to see so many gathered in conference on this occasion, but regret that so many of the local officers were absent this morning.

The reports were exceedingly interesting, and, personally, I would have liked to have heard more of a similar kind, for it seems to me that we do not

know as much about these matters as we should. The absence of so many may be due to the epidemic, la grippe, to which reference was made. Every man who holds an official position should consider himself in duty bound to be present at such gatherings as these. He owes it to his office.

We have today heard many principles enunciated, explanatory of our views as a religious people and of the characteristics of our organizations. These are interesting because they are not so often touched upon. Those who have been here must have been instructed and otherwise benefited by what they have heard.

The explanation concerning the High Council would be satisfactory to the members of the Church, for many are not familiar with the working of this body because they have had no occasion to bring any case before it.

It has struck me, when considering the organization of the Church of God, that if there were nothing else to give evidence of the Divine hand that built this work, such systematization should be enough to convince men that the human mind has not planned it. A remark was once made to me by a Congressman, now dead. He said, "What a magnificent organization you have. Whence did you get it?" He was familiar with the various ecclesiastical bodies of the world, but he said he had found nothing to compare to it.

An idea prevails that the Saints are held together by ignorance or by influences appealing to their lower nature. It is thought that our missionaries go forth among the ignorant people of Europe and, by presenting to them the advantages of this country and holding out the prospect that they can have as many wives as they want, bring them into the Church and out to this country. Perhaps I overstate it when I say this idea prevails, but I have certainly found many who seemed to entertain similar ideas. For this reason many means have been employed to impair the influence of the leading men of the Church. It has been thought if this could be accomplished, the Church would be destroyed. And so the leading men have been made so many targets for the shots of the enemy. They have not been safe in their persons; they have not been secure in their property and particularly not in their character. Men would actually seek to take their lives and, as an illustration of the saying of our Lord, think that they would be serving God by killing those men.

The fact is that there is not a freer people on the earth than the Latter-day Saints. They are at liberty to act and free from spiritual bondage. Every man who holds office among us holds it because the Saints choose to sustain him in that position, and the people are untrammelled in the exercise of their power in this respect. When God selects a servant, it is for the people to say whether they will sustain him or not. True, where the Spirit of God is, there is unity, and there is no reason why human beings should not live together in unity, but it does not follow that they surrender their rights or their individual judgment. The Spirit of God is the cause of our unity. If men from the most distant parts of the earth are endowed with this Spirit,

they will, when brought together, find that they see things alike. This is what is done in the work in which the Saints are engaged and it can be truly said of it that it is a "marvelous work and a wonder." It is phenomenal. People say all sorts of things about it, because it is strange to them, and they have recourse to all manner of explanations of the things they witness in these valleys, ignoring, however, the true cause and denying that it is God who is in the work. But this is the only way in which such effects can be accounted for. It requires nothing short of Divine power to bring about such results. It is indeed a grand power, one beyond man, which has been able to bring this people together. To say that there is no God in this work requires more effort than to admit that God is in it. I can account for this Church only by seeing the Almighty in it.

We have heard about the officers of the Church and that we should listen to their counsel. This is very well so far as it goes. But we may ask, Has any man a right to teach doctrines independent of the research of the other individuals of the people? Everyone has a right to know for himself the truth, and this is another characteristic of this community. The constant exhortation to us, whether at home or abroad, is to ask God, each one for himself, and plead with Him for a personal knowledge of the Divinity of the Gospel. The Saints desire no converts who do not seek such knowledge for themselves. This is the secret of the tenacity with which the Saints cling together and to the principles in which they believe, even in the face of death and the most bitter persecutions. This is not a process of leading men blindly or taking away their judgment, or de-luding them by falsehoods. "Mormonism" includes nothing of the kind. It is a system of salvation, revealed for the redemption of man. Take this view, and you can account for all the influences that have brought the Saints together—for their cohesion, for their love, for everything which is different from what you perceive in other men. Take any other view, and the whole is incomprehensible.

I am exceedingly thankful that we all can have a testimony in answer to our prayers. Many of those here present were once apprehensive for their eternal future. There are divisions all through the world and you did not know which way to go. Every minister had his own way of reaching heaven. In the midst of all this, it was clear that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc., and men were groping about in darkness to find the true path, each one pointing out his road as the right one. In the midst of all this uncertainty, a man appeared who claimed to be a servant of God and told you that he had authority to baptize and to lay hands on you for the reception of the Holy Ghost, promising, at the same time, that if you repented of your sins and accepted the message, you should know for yourself that it was the gospel of the Lamb. How you rejoiced at this, feeling that it was almost too good to be true. But you did repent and was baptized and received the Holy Ghost, and the result