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REMARKS

Made by President George Q. Cannon,
at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Utah, Sunday, Nov. 20, 1892.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

Brother H. S. Gowans' remarks have suggested some reflections, and I would like, if I can have the Spirit, to express them. I will read a little of the law of Moses to be found in the 21st chapter of Exodus:

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life.

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Now I will read to you the law of the Gospel on these points as revealed and taught by Jesus:

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

But let your communication be, Yea, yes; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you:

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you,

what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

In these verses that I have read in your hearing are found the two laws. One is a law that was given to a people just emerging from slavery and bondage, a degraded people, incapable of receiving any higher law than that of retaliation. It may be called a law of carnal commandments. They were not able to receive the higher law of the Gospel, and this law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" was given unto them by their lawgiver, Moses. The reasons for it are very evident. Those who have traced the history of the children of Israel after they emerged from Egypt can readily understand how apparently incapable they were of comprehending the higher law which Jesus taught in the words that I have read in your hearing. They were a people who could not rise to the comprehension of doing good for evil, of returning kindness for unkindness. As soon as they emerged from Egypt, notwithstanding the many manifestations of God's kindness and of His miraculous power which they witnessed, they were ready to turn round and stone Moses. They asked him if there were not graves enough in the land of Egypt that he should bring them and their children into the wilderness to perish. After they had been led through the Red Sea and delivered by the power of God; after they had had water brought forth from the rock; after they had had quails sent to them; after manna itself, the food of heaven, had been sent to them for their daily sustenance; even then they were ready to stone the man through whom God did these mighty works, and they had no confidence apparently in Moses beyond his supplying their daily wants. To such people this law of retaliation was given. But Jesus came, and He taught a higher law; He taught the law of the Gospel, the law that pertains to the celestial kingdom of God—a law which, if obeyed, would lift men nearly to the level of angels. That law was that they should return good for evil, kindness for unkindness; that they should pray for those who despitefully used them; that they should be generous even to those who injured them; that they should salute their enemies and show favor

unto them; for if they did not do this they were no better than the publicans.

As Latter-day Saints, we are under this law. God requires us to practice these principles that Jesus taught, and unless we do so we are not the children of God, we are not Latter-day Saints. We may call ourselves by the holiest of titles; we may vaunt our religion to the skies; we may declare that we have had communion with God, and have been ministered to by holy angels, and have had revelations from Him; but I say to you today in this congregation, unless we live up to these principles which Jesus taught, we are not the true disciples of the Son of God, and we will be found wanting in the day of the Lord Jesus. We cannot return hate for hate and be justified in doing so. We cannot return evil for evil and expect God to sustain us in doing it. I do not care who the men are that indulge in that spirit, I say to you, my brethren and sisters, this day, in the presence of God, that if they do this they will lose the Spirit of God. That Spirit will withdraw itself from them and they will be left in darkness. There is no justification for any such thing. On the contrary, all the words of God pronounce against such a spirit and feeling. I cannot speak evil of my brother and be justified in doing it. I cannot do wrong to my brother, no matter what his wrong may be to me, and be justified. God will not sustain me in it, neither will He you. Those who do this may think they have justification for it, but they cannot, in the spirit of the Gospel, have any such justification.

I wanted to bear my testimony to this, in line with the teachings that Brother Gowans and Brother James H. Anderson have given to us this afternoon. I know that their teachings are correct, and I believe, just as Brother Gowans has stated, that men who have endured many trials and passed through many ordeals, will, if they are not careful, lose the Spirit of God and get into darkness, and be led astray, and imagine that they are justified before the Lord in taking the courses that they do take. It is for each one of us to live so humbly and so meekly before the Lord that we shall not grieve His Holy Spirit and not offend our brothers and our sisters; and maintain their fellowship, their God without grieving the Spirit of God, and he will have to answer for it. Can I, in my position, do this with