

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 22.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, MAY 15, 1897.

VOL. LIV;

## DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Monday, April 5th, 1897, by

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

During our Conference there have been a number of allusions to our rising generation and the importance of training them. Probably there can be no subject mentioned to us that possesses greater interest, because our future as a Church and as families depends upon our children being trained in righteousness. It is one of the saddest things to contemplate, in connection with the history of our people, that families which have been prominent in the Church, or whose head has been a prominent man in the Church, have now no representative among us. Among the highest and most glorious promises that the Lord has made to His faithful servants is that their posterity shall be numbered among His people, and that they shall be blessed of Him. All the records that have come to us from righteous men convey with plainness the great importance of having a faithful posterity. You remember the case of Rechab that is recorded by Jeremiah. Because of the faithfulness of this man's posterity, the Lord told Jeremiah that he should never be without a man to stand before him. We find that men of God have always endeavored to exercise faith in behalf of their posterity. The Lord made covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with the sons of Jacob, concerning their posterity, and these covenants the Lord holds in great esteem, and has promised that in the last days they shall be fulfilled. It is the same in our day, the posterity of faithful men may stray from the Church, but the Lord will feel after some branch of their family and bring it back in days to come to the covenant people.

At times it has been a matter of surprise to some individuals that they have been enabled to join the Church and receive the truth while so many around them have turned deaf ears to it. But if we understood the past as we do the present, we would doubtless see that there are reasons for this, which have existed long before we were born. There is no doubt in my mind that the gathering together of this people from the various nations of the earth, and the manner in which they have received the Gospel, is due to the promises made to their fathers.

It is our duty now, enjoined upon us by the Lord, to bring up our children

properly, and to see that everything is done to preserve them in the faith. Every sort of appeal is being resorted to in order to captivate and lead astray the rising generation of this people. And as modern education spreads, and the theories of men and the sciences are taught in their present form, so the danger of the loss of faith on the part of our children increases, because in all the teachings of the educational institutions of the day there are conveyed doubts and unbelief concerning principles contained in the records that have come down to us from the Lord through His servants. We have seen this proved, from the fact that many of our young men who have gone away to institutions of learning have lost their faith in the Gospel. It seems to be dangerous for young men and young women to go east to graduate at some university or college, because of this tendency to unbelief. Then there are the sinful influences that surround them there, and here also, and the constant danger they are in of doing something that will grieve the Spirit of the Lord and cause it to be withdrawn from them. I believe there is a great responsibility resting upon us in this respect, and concerning which we are too forgetful. It is pleasing, however, to see the care that is being taken by the Mutual Improvement Associations, by the Sunday schools, by the Primaries, and by the quorums of the Priesthood, in behalf of the young people. These influences are having a good effect, and no doubt the sending of missionaries abroad as we do has a good effect also, to arouse faith in the hearts of those who go, giving them a testimony concerning the work of God. They come back having a knowledge, proved by experience; and if they continue to labor diligently at home in their callings, the Lord blesses them and increases their faith. On this account we have great cause to rejoice.

But, brethren and sisters, it is of the highest importance that we, as parents and as members of the Church, should comprehend the purposes of our God concerning us as a people. On this point I think there is not the light and the comprehension in the minds of the people that there should be. It seems to me that we all need instruction in this direction. In our eagerness to make a living, and especially in view of the new conditions that surround us politically, our minds are, to some extent, diverted from the great purpose that God has had in view in founding Zion. We have a grand mission entrusted to us. The Lord has assigned to us a wonderful amount of important work to perform; and in order to prepare us for this, He has poured out His Spirit upon this people in their scattered condition, and has impressed them with the necessity

of gathering together as we are in these valleys at the present time. Allusion was made by Brother John W. Taylor of the gathering of the people and to the fulfillment of the prediction of Isaiah and other prophets concerning their gathering. The gathering of this people from the nations of the earth appears to be the most miraculous work that has ever been performed. There is nothing in history, sacred or profane, that comes anywhere near being so wonderful in all its details as this gathering. God has poured out His Spirit upon us, and upon our fathers and mothers, and has impelled them to leave the lands of their birth and come together as we are today.

Now, there is a great end to be accomplished by this mighty work of gathering. It is the power of God manifesting itself among men. A new era is dawning upon mankind. It is true that the Latter-day Saints are but a small people numerically; but when we are united and obedient to the voice of God, there is no people, no matter how numerous they may be, that attract attention to their movements and operations as the Latter-day Saints do. It is astonishing the interest there is felt in the movements of this people. We have been opposed all the time; we have had difficulties of an almost insuperable character to contend with; and yet there has been a power accompanying this people and impelling them forward and sustaining them that has been miraculous in its operations. We have only to review the history of the Church during the past few years to be conscious of this. We need not go back to the days of New York, nor to the days of Kirtland, of Jackson County, Clay County or Caldwell County, or Nauvoo, nor to the beginning of our settlement here; we have only to go back a few years to see how wonderfully God has wrought in behalf of His people. We have had almost every kind of opposition to contend with, yet that opposition has been overcome. The Lord's providence has been over this people, and they have been delivered in the most unexpected manner. It can be said of us that which was said of Mordecai, as recorded in the book of Esther. When Haman's friends found that Mordecai and Haman were opposed, they said:

It Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

So it is with the Latter-day Saints. There is no power on earth, no matter how formidable and threatening it may be, that can stand in opposition to this work, and every plan that is framed for its overthrow will fall to the ground. Nothing will ever succeed against this