

## REMARKS

Made at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,  
Sunday, November 22, 1896, by

**PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON**

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

There are a few minutes yet remaining that may be occupied without wearying the congregation. I have, as doubtless all have, rejoiced in the testimony that we have heard this afternoon from Brother Heber J. Grant. I know it makes every Latter-day Saint's heart warm to hear the testimony of the servants of God concerning the truth of the work of God. If the fire that has been kindled in our hearts has smoldered and become to some extent dead, the testimony of the servants of God concerning the truth of this work rekindles that fire and gives us the old feeling of joy and thanksgiving that we have had in times when perhaps we may have been more faithful than we are now. If we could always retain this precious gift which God bestows, we would shrink from doing anything that is wrong, because the dread of losing it would be present with us. It is a precious thing for men and women to receive the testimony of God's Holy Spirit. It is this that constitutes the strength of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Every man and woman who has joined this Church ought to be, and is in the most of instances, standing as an independent witness of the truth of that which God has done. You divide this entire congregation into units, and let each one stand alone, surrounded by those not of their faith, and he or she is, though solitary, still a witness, independent of all others, of the truth. Then you bring these individuals together, each one understanding the Gospel and having received a testimony of its divinity, and they constitute a body which, in some respects, is entirely incomparable. We ought to be exceedingly thankful to our God for that which He has done for us in this respect. It makes no difference how many may oppose and deny the work of God; the truth has come from heaven, and that truth will remain, and no amount of opposition can destroy it. Of course, you may destroy the custodians of the truth, and in that way extinguish it, at least for the time being; but while they live that truth will abide. And God has said concerning the work in the last days, that it shall not perish, and that the people who have accepted it shall not be destroyed. It will stand and fulfill the destiny that has been assigned to it, until the Savior shall come.

It is gratifying also to hear testimonies concerning the gifts of the Gospel. It fills my heart with delight. I would to God that all of us lived in such a manner that we would have these gifts constantly with us, because if we did we would be a very different people to what we are. We would not be carried about, as many of us are, with every wind of doctrine, and by the cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. We are in that condition today, to some extent. The Apostle Paul says that the Apostles were placed in the Church

expressly to keep the Saints from being carried away by every wind of doctrine and by the cunning craftiness of men. You watch the men that listen to the Apostles, to the authority that God has placed in His Church, and you will find that they are not carried about by cunning craftiness of men nor by every wind of doctrine.

But the people that neglect and deride that authority, they are carried about in that manner. Men may say it is wrong to obey the Priesthood. I tell you the world will not be saved unless it is through the exercise of the authority of the Priesthood of the Son of God, under His own direction. We may as well look that squarely in the face as not. I know it is becoming a somewhat popular doctrine in our midst and some feel as though it is something wrong to stand up for the principles that God has revealed to this Church, and by which this Church has been led to its present condition. We all must sit with our hands on our mouths, for fear we will say something that will offend somebody in connection with the principles of the Gospel and the organization of the Church of Christ. It is the truth that God has restored the Priesthood to the children of men for definite purposes. Is one of those purposes to tyrannize, to oppress, to bind heavy burdens upon the people of God? No, it is not; and the Latter-day Saints know that it is not. God has restored the Priesthood to save men. It has saved men. It has brought blessings, it has brought liberty, it has brought elevation, it has brought the blessings of heaven and earth unto the people who have joined this Church and who have been led and governed by the Priesthood.

Leading men of the nation today acknowledge that the lines which have been laid down for the building up of this commonwealth of Utah are lines of the most patriotic character, worthy of imitation by the whole people of the United States. I have letters in my possession from leading men of this nation, acknowledging these facts. Of course, they do not say anything about religion. But we know the effect it has had upon us from a religious standpoint. Today there is no such example on the earth as is afforded by these Latter-day Saints in these mountains. Look at that which has been done. Thousands have been brought from penury in the old world, not to speak of our own country, to this land and placed in the condition which now surrounds them; a desert land, a land that was uninhabited, has been made to literally blossom as the rose, until it has become the admiration of every visitor. And this has been done by the Mormons and by Mormonism! Thousands of people bless the day that they ever heard the Gospel, because of the freedom it has brought to them and their children.

The aim of the leaders has always been that every man should have a home of his own, cultivate his own land, and not be taxed out of it. We carried out this policy for years, and successfully, too. There was no community anywhere in the land where so many persons owned their own homes, in proportion to the population, as in Utah, and no people that were

more lightly taxed. And the people prospered. They were thrifty. They were taught lessons which if they had been carried out, would have relieved them from the bondage of debt and heavy taxation they are now in. But the people are blind to many things; at least, they do not open their eyes to see. If you Latter-day Saints would take to heart the counsels that you have received this afternoon, and live so that the Spirit of God would rest upon you in power, you would see a great many things that you do not see now, and you would not be carried about by every wind of doctrine and by every story, no matter what it is. I do not feel to reproach you, because I believe you are the best people on the earth. I feel to reproach myself as much as I do any of you. But this is our condition.

Now, the Lord has done wonders in our land, and we do not appreciate that which He has done as much as others who come and look at us. We have been maligne to such an extent that many people supposed we were the most monstrous people on the face of the earth; but when they come and see us, and are told what has been done, and they have the opportunity of examining these things, many are filled with admiration, and they wonder why it is our people are not more appreciative than they appear to be. We allow ourselves to be carried away by everything that arises. In some respects we are the most gullible and easily deluded of any people. Yet there is a spirit of discernment resting upon the people, and when they hear the voice of the true Shepherd they know it.

I am proud and thankful that I am a Latter-day Saint, and that I have a place and a name among you and with you in this land. I have witnessed its growth from the beginning. I have seen the changes that have taken place; I have seen how much God has done for us, and I cannot be too thankful. I try and impress these things, too, upon those who are around me, and who have not seen them. I think we ought to be the most thankful of any people upon the face of the earth; for the hand of God has been visible all the day long in that which has taken place. When I think of the plots and the devices that have been framed to destroy us, I marvel at our preservation. For ten years while I was in Congress I had a constant fight to prevent the enactment of legislation that would have swept away every liberty that we enjoyed, and it required the power of God to preserve this people. Scores of measures were framed here and sent down to Congress, almost any one of which, if enacted, would have deprived us of every civil right. It is only very recently since an attempt was made to disfranchise us and reduce us to the level of the Chinamen and the Indian, and then what would we have been? You look at those races and see the treatment they receive, and you can form an idea of how it would have been with us. We should have been plundered and robbed of everything, and we should have been defenseless. Who would have cared about us when stripped of political power? What is it that