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REMARKS

Made at the Weber Stake Conference, Ogden, Monday, Jan. 18th, 1897, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I am pleased to see so many out this afternoon, and I regret that the house was not filled this morning to hear President George Q. Cannon. I considered it a privilege to listen to his remarks. I rejoice that we have men who can teach us the way of life and salvation. As much as I love life and the good things of life that God has provided for us, the Gospel is more to me than all else on earth. I have never found on the pages of history anything so satisfactory as the Gospel. Through the Spirit of this Gospel the Bible has become to us a new book, because we can read it by the light of that Spirit. It is a lamp that sheds additional ray upon the scriptures, making us to understand the Bible better than any other people upon the face of the earth. Without this light, the Bible has become a stumbling block to our brethren and sisters of the Christian denominations. But with this light of the Holy Spirit it is possible to walk in the ways of life and salvation. And God has granted this great boon unto this people, because of their humility and obedience. It is the humility of the heart, not wealth, nor fine apparel, nor beautiful houses, that wins in the courts of heaven and insures God's blessing upon the creature. All men are born to receive, if they will, the higher order. It will not be intolerable for the heathen in the day of judgment, provided they have lived according to the best light that has been given them; but it will be intolerable for the individual who has received the light and then rejected it, and sinned knowingly before God. These are they on whom perdition the second death will have power. I find myself with you to some extent in a precarious condition. We are walking in the straight and narrow path that leads unto eternal life; and with the knowledge that we possess, if we but deviate to the right hand or to the left and turn from that path that leads to eternal life, it is written that we had better never have been born upon the earth. This is scripture, and not to have been born upon the earth would render us, it seems to me, incapable of receiving a celestial glory in the presence of our Father. These bodies are given to us that we may attain unto this celestial state through obedience. As Christ ascended and obtained His supremacy through obedience, so have His brethren and sisters, the sons and daughters of God, to attain unto this

blessing through obedience in the flesh. Obedience is at the foundation of all the blessings of God. There is no blessing without it. If a blessing is bestowed on the disobedient, it may become a curse to him; and the more blessed the thing bestowed the greater the curse unto the disobedient creature. This we have experienced. The good things of the earth are for the children of our Father in heaven; but when we receive and abuse them they become a curse unto us. Man is a peculiar being. I have studied myself enough to know that I am one of the most peculiar of all of God's creations. I know not myself. I cannot tell who I am. I may look at my face in a mirror, but, as it is written, I go away and immediately forget what manner of man I am. I think today that I will be faithful, that I will perform a certain act; but influences come along and turn me from the path I would tread in, and before the sun sets I do things that I never dreamed of. I find myself in a dual capacity, and that there is a warfare going on within me. There are two distinct parts within me—one the spiritual, from God, and the other of the earth earthy. I know that that spirit dwells in this temple. It is here for a season, to purify this house in which I dwell, and to make it a fit habitation for the spirit in the celestial kingdom of our God. To my understanding, the spirit is without a house to dwell in when it forfeits the body that God has given to it, and a spirit without a body cannot attain to the celestial kingdom. I find also that this warfare within me is of a very peculiar nature. I have two minds in me as well as two beings. When the Spirit of God rests upon me and I make up my mind, then the spirit has been communicated with by the Spirit of God, and it determines what course it will pursue. Then it has to deal with the being in which it dwells, with all those tastes and imperfections that seem to have come down to us from our fathers. The spirit begins its warfare upon the flesh, upon the appetites of the flesh, to try and overcome them. By and by I decide that, instead of doing what I was convinced was proper, I will cater to an appetite that I have acquired in the flesh. Here commences a war between the spirit and the flesh. I am like the man who resolved that he would pass a certain whisky saloon without stopping to take a drink. He walked straight as a soldier past the liquor establishment, and when he got a few rods past he said, "Now I'll go back and treat resolution." It is the tendency of the human family to "treat resolution." I find this war going on in me! But my reflections on this subject carry me at times beyond where I have power to express my ideas. Something tickles the palate of a man and he cannot refrain from it; and after

his taste is gratified in one particular he looks for something else. It is like our sons and daughters; just as soon as one party is over, where they have danced until they are exhausted, they want to know when they can have another party. And so we go on, hastening from one indulgence to another.

Now, there is a conflict going on within us between the spirit and the flesh. Which will succumb? Will the spirit within me, with which God holds converse by His Spirit, succumb to the appetites of the flesh, or will it overpower every feeling and appetite of the body and bring it into subjection to the spirit, that it may be prepared, through the grace of God, for an exaltation in His presence? This is the question before us today.

President Cannon spoke of prayer. I have seen in books of various denominations a form of prayer printed for almost every occasion—prayer for thanksgiving, prayer for mourning, prayers for morning and evening, prayers for the birth of a child and also for the christening, etc. Everything in the shape of prayer seems to be prepared for the people. The way to serve God is made just as easy as possible. It is like a boy I saw in a certain city which has a large number of images and everybody that passes an image takes his hat off to it. This boy was about fourteen years old and he was passing one of these images, and without looking at it, but simply as a matter of habit, he doffed his cap to the image and went on. What is prayer? Is it simply the glancing of the eye on the written page which tells you what you are to say to God? If this is all there is in it, why not let our religion be made as easy as possible? We might go so far as to be like the man who had got tired of even reading his prayers, so he had his evening prayer printed and posted up at the head of his bed, and before he would jump into bed he would say, "Lord, them's my sentiments." But if the heart of man is to be schooled in the religion of Jesus Christ, and the appetites of the flesh are to be overcome, as Jesus overcame, and this body is to be brought into subjection to the law of Christ, of what use is all this extraneous matter? None whatever. It is but a device of the enemy to lead the multitude astray.

Now, this people are not going to obtain salvation in an easy manner. The Latter-day Saints have got to war with the appetites of the flesh, with the traditions of the fathers, and with those things which God has commanded us to eschew. When we retire at night, instead of having a printed prayer, we must kneel down before the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and then the Lord will surely bear us off victorious. Brethren and sisters, have