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PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

In arising to address you this morning my brethren and sisters, I trust I shall have an interest in your faith and prayers; for I never arise to speak to the Latter-day Saints or to the world without a desire in my heart to say that which should be said and nothing that should not be said. I feel that it is a very great responsibility to have before me hundreds of intelligent human beings, whose souls are to be saved, to listen to that which I have to say, and I have always been deeply impressed with it, so much so that to this hour I have not got over the fear and the trembling that a call to speak produces, notwithstanding all my experience. I feel this way this morning. I feel that this is an important gathering, and that much depends on that which is said, so that the people shall go away fed with the bread of life and profited by their coming together.

I suppose that the great object all Latter-day Saints have in view is their salvation. There is perhaps not a single thing prayed for with more frequency and with greater fervor by us universally than that we may be saved and exalted in the celestial kingdom of our God. I do not suppose that there is a member of the Church omits that is a prayer; it is universal, so far as observation has extended. And yet if we had the power to count all those who have started out to achieve this great salvation and glory, we would be astonished at the number that have fallen away and have failed in their lives to lay the foundation for that great summation. I look back at my early life and my subsequent associations, and am deeply impressed by the great number whom I have known who are no longer connected with the Church, nor their children, so far as I know. In many instances, they have passed away and their names have been lost in oblivion. Occasionally a name comes to my remembrance and I make inquiry as to what has become of so-and-so, some incident calling back to memory the individual or the family, and frequently I cannot find anyone that can answer my inquiry. Hundreds and thousands have started out to obtain the prize and have not endured to the end; they have started with great hopes and anticipations and with apparently strong determinations to serve God, being filled

with joy because they have found the truth, but after awhile these determinations have become weakened and they have become indifferent to the truth and have lost their standing in the Church, just as is described in the vision of Lehi which we find recorded in the first part of the Book of Mormon. Therefore, it is a glorious thing to meet with men who have been faithful. The last time the First Presidency and some of the Twelve were here we surrounded the bier of one man noted among us whom God had taken home, (President A. O. Smoot) and the chief cause of comfort on that sad occasion was the recollection of his faithfulness, of his unwavering integrity through life. Every man who spoke concerning his life dwelt upon this feature of his character, and all felt that a great man had passed from our midst—great because of his integrity and his unwavering fidelity to the cause of God. And so whenever I meet men and women whom I know to have been faithful, who have remained constantly true to the principles of the Gospel and have never turned aside from the path of righteousness who have been loyal to the work of God and have never betrayed their brethren, my heart warms toward such, and I feel that they are indeed choice spirits whom God has placed upon the earth, and to whom He has given much of His Holy Spirit. No wonder that we can love such; no wonder that we seek them out when we come into a congregation. When we look into their faces and recall events of their lives with which we may be acquainted, our hearts go out in love to them and in gratitude to God that they have been kept thus faithful, and that we too have in like manner been kept faithful in the work of God. These are the feelings that all Latter-day Saints have, I doubt not, one for another.

Now, my brethren and sisters, what is there to prevent us all being faithful in this manner? Is there any destiny in this? Are any of us destined or predestined to be faithful and others not to be faithful? Certainly not; there is nothing of this kind in the providence of God. God did not select Willford Woodruff, or John Taylor, or Brigham Young, or Joseph Smith to be faithful regardless of anything they might do. If any entertain such an idea as this, I beg them to dismiss it from their minds, for there is no foundation in truth in any such assumption. God has selected all of us to attain to this glory, if we will take the course that He has marked out for its attainment. He has pointed out the way as plainly before us as this aisle is before me now in which we should walk; He has told us what to do, and warned us of the dangers that beset our path-

way, and which we must guard against in order to attain to the end in view. We enter in a race, so to speak. We start out full of courage and hope, determined to run the race vigorously and continuously to the end. But something arises to render the race undesirable to us and to lessen in our estimation the high value which we placed upon the prize to be attained when we started out. There are causes which produce this; but they are not due to the predestination of God. The causes are to be found within ourselves. How many members of this Church have felt that they would sacrifice everything that they had on earth, yes, and lay down life itself, rather than deny the faith and thereby lose the Spirit of God and the fellowship of their brethren and sisters? I suppose there is scarcely a soul to be found in the Church that has not had that feeling. How lovely the truth was in their sight when they joined the Church! How desirable salvation and exaltation appeared before them! Everything connected with the Church and with the authority of the Priesthood seemed to them to be of God, and they loved it. They loved every principle of the Gospel with intense love. But after awhile that love fades away; they cease to value their standing, and by degrees these men and women who at one time felt that they would rather part with their life than with their standing in the Church, cease to value that standing and let it go without any effort to retain it, not condescending probably to ask forgiveness for wrong done. Do you not know such cases? They are known by hundreds. The hand of fellowship is withdrawn, and then they become colder and colder, darker and darker, until they lose entirely all the love they ever had for the work of God or for the people of God.

Now, men and women do not get into this condition without cause. The causes are as old as men; they have been operating continually upon mankind for six thousand years, and they have been producing the same results that we now witness. Notwithstanding the lessons of the past, however, you will still see men and women pursuing precisely the same path which has led to such disastrous results in thousands and thousands of cases. Strange, is it not, that such should be the case? Yet it is so, and we have seen it continuously since the organization of the Church. What a sad thing it is to contemplate the life of a man who has spent many of his days and much of his means in the work of God and then allows some influence to take possession of him that turns him aside, and after a while he loses his love for the work of God and his standing in the Church, and ceases to labor for the