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## DISCOURSE

Discourse delivered in the Tabernacle,  
Salt Lake City, Utah, Sunday,  
September 19, 1897, by

**PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON**

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

In arising to address you this afternoon I sincerely desire an interest in your prayers. I feel that I would rather sit and listen to others speak than to attempt to do so myself; but it has been some time since I have met with the Saints in this Tabernacle. I have attended conferences in other places when I have been in the State, but have had few opportunities of meeting with you in this city.

There is a wide range of subjects upon which to address the Latter-day Saints; but to edify and to instruct we should have the presence and the assistance of the Spirit of God. We differ, as you know, from nearly all other people in respect to our methods of preaching. It would be very contrary to our custom and to the command of the Lord for a man to come into our meetings as a minister of the word of God with a written sermon or a discourse throughout and prepared beforehand to deliver to the people. We are commanded of the Lord to ponder upon His word, to have it in our hearts, and to trust to Him to give us that which should be delivered to the people. Through this practice the Gospel has been preached by the Elders of our Church throughout all their extended fields of labor. The Latter-day Saints have been led in all their movements by instructions delivered in this manner, and the results have been of a most gratifying and satisfactory character. In times of trouble, when we have been involved in difficulties and environed by trials, it has been a great consolation to the people to have the word of God delivered to them under the present and immediate inspiration of the Almighty.

The career of this Church has been a most remarkable one. No people, I suppose, have had such a checkered career, or have passed through such vicissitudes. There have been many times in our history when it has seemed as though we would be overwhelmed and destroyed. We have had to face a great many serious and menacing difficulties, and it has required something more than man's wisdom, something more than the learning of the schools, to guide the people under such circumstances, to counsel them, to comfort them, and to give them that light which they stood in need of. It is a consolation today to look back to the years that are past and to realize that at no time, and under no circumstance, however adverse and menacing, has there been any lack of the Spirit to guide, to instruct, to warn, and to comfort the people. This is our consolation, and in this, I may say, consists our strength as a people. If

this Church had been led by man's wisdom, by so-called learned men, whose chief and only qualification was their learning, shrewdness and knowledge gained from earthly sources, it would have been easy in the early days to foretell what our fate would be. Man's wisdom would have been insufficient to cope successfully with the evils that we had to meet and the threatening and dangerous circumstances through which we passed. When all before us has been dark, when not a glimmer of light has shone upon our pathway, when nothing but the light of God could point out the way in which we should walk in order to escape the evils by which we were surrounded, God has given unto us that inspiration and light which were necessary to comfort and relieve us. This has not been the case only once or twice, or a few times; it has been the case from the day when this work was founded by the power of God sixty-seven years ago until this day.

The history of this people called Latter-day Saints is in many respects a marvelous one. Characterized as it has been by the exhibition of great union, it is in every aspect very remarkable. View it from every standpoint and it stands out clear, unique, and, it may be said, phenomenal. There is no organization that I know anything about that is like it. As one of the Prophets of old said, in speaking about the work of God in the last days, it is "a marvelous work and a wonder." It possesses features that are not seen elsewhere in a combined form. There are individual features perhaps which other organizations possess, but no organization possesses such a combination of features in perfection as does this work. This work which God has entrusted to us is the fac-simile of that work which our Lord and Savior founded when He was upon the earth. I cannot think of any feature that that work possessed, or that that dispensation was endowed with, that has not its parallel among us. It is this that causes my heart to rejoice in being a Latter-day Saint, and living in an age like the present. When I think of the work that our Savior founded; when I think of the commandments that He gave; when I think of the power which He bestowed, and look around for it among men, I find it only among the people and in the Church of which I am a member.

If this congregation of people were to be transported into the presence of those who embraced the truth under the preaching of the Son of God and His Apostles, we would find that their experience, their belief, their hopes, their faith, their power, would not be anything that would startle us, except perhaps in the wonderful increase and progress made by them. We could talk with them understandingly. It is a pleasing thought to reflect upon that when we meet our Lord and Savior we have reason to believe our earthly experience will have been something similar to His. He was persecuted, He was hated, His

name was cast out as evil, He was martyred. Individually and collectively, we have had a similar experience, except that we have not all been martyred, though many of our number have had to lay down their lives. It is a strange thing to tell, an almost incredible statement, that in this nineteenth century men have been martyred for their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Gospel! Yet this is true. It is a strange thing to tell that men and women by the thousands have been driven from their homes, have been robbed and plundered, have been stripped of their possessions, have been slain, and have had all manner of evil said of them, and all because they believed in Jesus Christ and in His Gospel! This would almost be incredible if it were not known and could not be easily substantiated.

Now, it is a consolation to know that we are striving to attain to the very objects and blessings that our Lord and Savior and His disciples taught as essential. Men say:

"You Mormons are mistaken. These things are done away with. They belong to another age. You are making a great blunder in contending for the faith that was once delivered to the Saints. When you say you desire revelations, we tell you that God has ceased to communicate with man, and revelation has ceased. When you say you are contending for the gifts that were once enjoyed in the ancient Church, and that you believe these things can be obtained in our day, we tell you that you are mistaken, because hundreds and hundreds of years have passed and they have not been witnessed, neither have they been in possession of men. Therefore they are done away with, and it is a delusion for you to imagine that these miraculous gifts are to be obtained in our day. When you lay hands on the sick and anoint them with oil, as the Apostle James said was done in his day, you are indulging in a species of mummery. It is heathenish, obsolete. The day is past for such things as these."

Such statements as these are made to us and published about us, and our Elders have to meet them in preaching the Gospel to the world. When they preach the doctrines of the New Testament they are met with this kind of talk. It is a consolation to us, however, to know that if we are in error, which I know and you know we are not, we are at least trying to walk in the path that the Savior marked out. What harm is there in the Elders of this Church going out and preaching without purse and scrip? They do it; they have done it. It has been the practice in the Church from the beginning.

"Ah," says one, "that is past; that practice might do in the days of the Apostles, but it is unsuited to our time; it is not consistent with our methods, and it comes in conflict with our ideas of what preachers of the Gospel should be. We believe that men should receive salaries. We be-