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## DISCOURSE

*Delivered by President Geo. Q. Cannon, on Sunday, September 4th, 1892, at the Conference of the Salt Lake Stake, held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City.*

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

The proceedings of this conference have thus far been exceedingly interesting, and I am sure that everyone who has attended its sessions will feel amply repaid for the time they have spent in the meetings. I trust that during the remainder of this conference we shall be blessed with the presence of the Spirit of God, that the very things which should be said in the way of instruction and counsel may be said, and that we may look back to these days with pleasure in recalling our feelings and that which we have listened to.

It is very gratifying to hear the reports which have been made concerning the condition of this Stake. Although I reside in the Stake, I am absent so much that I did not have a clear conception as to its actual condition. I was, therefore, greatly pleased to hear the reports which were made to the standing of the people who as to the members of the Church, profess to be members of the Church, and also as to their deportment, as well as the manner in which the Elders as labor and their labors are received by the people. It certainly is gratifying to learn that there is a disposition to avoid everything like contention or litigation. The position that I assume is this: When Latter-day Saints are living as they should live there ought to be no trials before the Bishops or High Council. There should be no difficulties of this character; but every man should be willing to concede, even if he feels that he is in the right and that the person who contends with him is in the wrong. The Savior taught the doctrine that when men sue you at the law for your coat, give to them your cloak also. I believe in that doctrine, although it is difficult, doubtless, to carry out under present circumstances. But when Jesus taught that doctrine He expected those who believed in Him to teach it and carry it out. The spirit of the Gospel is embodied in those teachings. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Some may say that this is impracticable, and unnatural; but we have proved in our experience that it is per-

fectly practicable. And the God we worship will bless those who carry out the teachings of His Son Jesus. If we are animated by His Spirit, we will seek to do as He did. We shall love one another. We shall seek to do each other good. We shall prefer another to ourselves. We shall be unselfish in our associations and our dealings; and if some man is exacting, and determined to have trouble, concede to him that which he demands, if it be in our power, and let the wrong be upon him. Suffer wrong rather than do wrong, and leave the result with the Lord. This is the ideal society of a Christian, and it is the mode of life that our Lord and Master enjoined upon His followers. It should be the aim of the Latter-day Saints to so live as to have this Spirit constantly with them.

Therefore, I was greatly pleased this morning to hear that there was a decrease of trials before the High Council and the Bishops' courts. I trust this decrease will continue until quarrels and difficulties will entirely cease among us. We expect to make this earth a heaven, with the help of our God, and let us begin now and carry out those principles that will make it heaven. I know that in doing this we are blessed. God has blessed those who have submitted to wrong and have not sought to retaliate or wreak vengeance. He has blessed us in manifesting in our lives the spirit that the Lord did. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and this, too, in the hour of His agony, when hung upon the cross. When we think of Him, the Lord of life and glory, the Creator of the earth, coming down and submitting Himself as He did to ungodly men, to be spat upon, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be crowned with thorns, and then to be crucified, and all this with the utmost patience, carrying out in His life the teachings that He left on record for humanity, it ought to be a never-to-be-forgotten lesson to us to seek for the same spirit and to make it practical by carrying it out in our lives. The beautiful part of the Savior's life is that He never taught a principle that He did not practice. This should be so with His followers. They should seek to practice that which they profess, and to do everything in their power to benefit their fellow men; not those alone who are their friends, for Jesus said the publicans did that;

not to benefit those only who benefit us, to return good to those who do good to us, but to do good to all men—to those even who may be unfriendly to us or who may do us injury. The doctrine that Jesus taught was to do good to them, that His followers might show that they were the children of God, who lets His sun shine upon the good and the evil, and causes His rain to descend upon the just and the unjust, and who bestows benefits upon all mankind, whether they be good or evil.

We were told this morning that God has chosen this people. It seems almost like arrogance, no doubt, to those who do not know the people, to make such a statement; but it is nevertheless true. We are not the only ones, however, whom he has chosen or called. He has called upon all men. But we have been so favored that our hearts were touched by the message when it was brought to us and we were prepared to receive the glad tidings. The rest of mankind are equally entitled to these favors with ourselves. God has not selected a few out of His family to receive special blessings to the exclusion of the rest. But He has placed these favors within the reach of all. He has manifested His willingness to bestow every blessing connected with the Gospel of salvation upon all mankind. But it is a remarkable fact that there are very few comparatively who are prepared to receive His word and the testimony of His servants whom He sends forth. Now it might be thought, looking at it in the abstract, that every human being, if he were told that God had spoken again from the heavens, would be anxious to know whether that statement was true or not, especially in this day, when there is so much confusion among men concerning God and His plan of salvation. But, as I have said, it is a remarkable fact that there are very few who seem to care anything about it. I suppose this is due to the fact that there is a general and an all-pervading unbelief concerning God's willingness or power to speak again to mankind. The teachings of the religious world for generations past have been to the effect that God had ceased to communicate His mind and will to man; that He had withdrawn Himself from any active interposition in the affairs of the children of earth; and this has been so long taught and so widely believed that when men hear it said that God had spoken again from