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## DISCOURSE

*Delivered at the Box Elder Stake Conference, Brigham City, Sunday, October 27th, 1895, by*

**PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON**

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

As soon as I learned that the quarterly conference of this Stake of Zion was to be held today and tomorrow, a desire sprang up in my heart to come to this conference. I was not invited to do so; but I felt to volunteer, and I am glad that I am here today. I trust that while we are in meeting today and while the conference shall last, the Spirit of God may reign, and that its influence may fill all our hearts by its enlightening power, that darkness may have no place within us, but that light may pervade our souls, and we thereby be able to see and understand the principles of salvation and our own condition.

We are in a state of probation, and we are constantly in danger; and it requires the guidance and the sustaining power of our God to preserve us from the many snares and traps that Satan spreads for the feet of the children of men. I have been quite impressed with the remarks that I have listened to this morning, and I have been impressed also with the condition of the Latter-day Saints. I have been away some little time since the general conference, and have not mingled with the Saints; and it has seemed to me that the Latter-day Saints stand in a perilous position. Satan appears to be doing all in his power to lead away and destroy this people, and there are agencies at work which, if not guarded against, will be the means of bringing many souls down to spiritual death. I cannot recall many times when Satan seemed to be so active and to have as much power as at present in our midst. I speak this with some degree of caution; but I think I am correct in saying it. I do not know that I ever saw a time when it required greater faith and care upon the part of the members of the Church of Christ to walk so as not to grieve the Spirit of God nor to go astray than at the present time. It is apparent that the powers of darkness are being exerted to sap the foundation of the faith of the people.

The power of Satan from the beginning of time until the present has been directed against the Priesthood of the Son of God. Every effort of his has been for the destruction of that Priesthood or the weakening of its influence. He has not only sought to weaken the influence of the servants of God, but he has sought to take their lives. Hence the Savior said concerning him, that he

was a murderer and a liar from the beginning. That has been his spirit. It is by agencies such as these that he has sought to retard and to destroy the work of God in the earth. He has never sought to use any other weapons to any extent. It is true, as you have probably heard, that Satan would be willing to tell nineteen truths in order to have one lie believed associated with them. But this only shows his cunning and the determined character of his opposition to the work of God. And it is a remarkable fact that the spirit of Satan when received by men produces exactly the same effects upon them, and they manifest the same disposition to a greater or less extent that the Savior said he (Satan) had,—to lie and to murder. They lie, to begin with, until they destroy the character of the servants of God and create in the human mind a feeling that their destruction is necessary and proper. It was in this manner that Satan succeeded in murdering the Lord Jesus. He told such lies and caused them to be circulated concerning Jesus, that that generation of Jews thought themselves justified in putting him to an ignominious death. They were so confident of the justice of their action that they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." They were willing to assume all the responsibility of that dreadful deed, and to invoke the consequences upon the heads of their posterity after them, because of the character that had been given to the Son of God. This being the case with our Lord and Savior Jesus, whose life of faultless purity stood out before all mankind, how much more is it likely to be the case with those who follow Him and who bear His name? Is it any wonder that prophets and apostles and saints of God have been martyred? No. Satan has been engaged in this always. He is an enemy to God. He is a rebel. He rebelled in the beginning, and endeavored to destroy the plans of Jehovah. He succeeded in leading away one-third of the hosts of heaven through his craft and sophistry, making them believe that the Father was mistaken, and that He ought to have adopted the plan of Lucifer. From that day, when he was thrust out of the presence of God, until the present it has been woe unto the inhabitants of the earth, because he has come down among us to endeavor to make successful these wicked plans which he framed in the heavens before the world was peopled by the children of God. From the days of Cain until the present, whenever men have given way to that spirit of the evil one, they have been filled with a lying spirit. They have seemed to tell lies with pleasure, and to take delight in circulating them. Then after doing this, they

have seemed to wish to destroy those whom they have told lies about.

This warfare has been waged now for many thousand years against the Priesthood of the Son of God; and the Lord has at times taken it from the earth because of the wickedness of His children, and has not continued it upon the earth lest by so doing His own purposes should be defeated. It would lead eventually to very serious and dreadful consequences if the Priesthood were continued among men and they continued to fight against it from generation to generation, and if the Lord were to force it, so to speak, upon the people. He leaves us to exercise our agency; and when men have combined and exercised their agency, as it has been at various times, to destroy the servants of God, then mankind have had to take the consequences. The men who have borne the Priesthood have been killed, and the Lord has taken the Priesthood to Himself, until the set time should come for it to be again restored. It has been restored in our day, through the visitation of God Himself with His Son Jesus, and through the sending of John the Baptist, who suffered death by violence to gratify a lewd woman. After him came Peter, James and John, two of whom had also been slain for the word of God. They came from the heavens to bring once more to the earth the Melchisedek Priesthood, of which they were bearers, and of which Peter held the keys while he was upon the earth. And again the war commenced! Again lies began to be circulated without limit. Every evil fabrication that the human mind could conceive was circulated, and has been from that day until the present time. Light has been made to appear dark, truth as erroneous, righteousness as iniquity—until men and women have become so thoroughly warped in their minds, through the steady circulation of falsehood, that they cannot discern truth from error, light from darkness, a man of God from a man of Satan. In this way Satan has sought to pervert the whole human family. And he has found willing agents in this generation, just as he did in preceding generations, until the blood of prophets and men of God has flown freely in our day and the earth has drunk the blood of the righteous. Nor to this day are their characters fully vindicated. The world, to a certain extent, upholds and justifies the shedding of the blood of Joseph Smith—the man whom God chose out of the whole human family to be the instrument in His hands to found His Church. Those who slew him justified the cruel and inhuman massacre because of the blackness of the character which they had given him, and the dangerous nature of his