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WHERE IS HEAVEN?

"What is Heaven?"

"Child, how can I tell

Of the beauty that rests on 'the city of God?'
Nine eyes hath not seen it, my feet hath not
trod

Its golden paved streets set with jewels whose
worth

Outshine and outvalue the jewels of earth.

And what is Heaven? I know only this:

'Tis the birthplace of glory; the essence of
bliss."

"Where is Heaven?"

"Dear, how do I know?

We gaze into space through the blue throbbing
air,

Sun crowned and star gemmed, and we say, 'It
is there.'

Above, and beyond us, more high and more
high,

God's palace, whose floor is our beautiful sky.

And where is Heaven? I know only this:

'Tis the hope of all ages wherever it is."

ROSE HARTWICK THORPE.

DISCOURSE

*Delivered by President Geo. Q. Cannon,
at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday, December 18th, 1891.*

REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.

In arising to address the Saints this afternoon I do so with a great desire in my heart that I may have the assistance and presence of the Spirit of God, that that which may be said may be of profit to all who shall hear; and that this may be the case I trust that I shall have the faith of those who are present. I do not believe that any Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who feels as he should do, would ever have any inclination to speak to the people unless he had the assurance that the Lord would assist him and give unto him that which should be said. I never wish to speak unless I can be edified by my own remarks; and when we have the assistance of the Lord, those who speak and those who hear are mutually benefitted.

As a people, and as individuals, we need to know the mind and will of God concerning ourselves. We are told this is our privilege. The Lord has told us in great plainness that he is willing to pour out His Holy Spirit in power upon His people who seek for it. He has also told us it is His desire that His people should live so

near unto Him that He can communicate unto them His mind and His will; in other words, that He will guide His Church by revelation, as in days of old. And this constitutes one of the great differences which exist between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and all other churches and organizations of a religious character upon the face of the earth. There is one church, at least, which believes in a priesthood which, it is alleged, has derived its power from the days of the Savior and His Apostles. But it is not a general belief that the Lord inspires men and gives unto them His word in our day. In the Church of Jesus Christ, however, it is distinctly understood that the Church cannot stand, cannot progress, cannot accomplish the mission assigned unto it, unless there be constant communication from God to man. This, as I have remarked, is a distinctive feature, and causes a great deal of opposition, because men who do not have faith are apt to attribute, and do attribute, to men's brains and men's imaginations that which the Church may accept as the counsel of heaven. But it is most unreasonable, if we believe the words contained in the Bible, to suppose that the Church of Christ can be organized on the earth without receiving communication from the Head of the Church. It is true; that in Christendom the universally accepted belief is that there has been no communication from God to men since the days of the Apostles. Nothing that has been written or spoken since the close of the Scriptures is accepted by Christendom as authoritative or coming direct from God. The canon of Scripture has been closed, according to the general belief. But it is believed that in previous times God did communicate His mind and will to the children of men. The writers of the books of the Old and New Testaments are credited with the gift of inspiration. They wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and among religious people who believe in Christ as the Savior of the world these writings are considered sacred.

It is a remarkable fact that God never had a people upon the earth whom He acknowledged as His who did not receive communications concerning His mind and will and His purposes connected with the earth and the inhabitants thereof. He revealed Himself to the prophets. He sent them

forth as Jonah was sent to Nineveh, and He confirmed the truth of their words by fulfilling them. In those days, when there was no communication from Him it was considered a sign of the departure of the people from the right path. After the death of Samuel, Saul sought to obtain communication from heaven. There was no prophet in the land, no Urim and Thummim; and he had recourse to the witch of Endor to obtain some knowledge concerning that which he wanted to know. And this is recorded as an evidence of Saul's wickedness. The case of Elijah and the priests of Baal is another notable instance of the difference between a servant of God and those who are not His servants. These priests professed to have divine authority, and Elijah proposed a test to show to the people of Israel whether they were what they pretended to be or not. Elijah looked upon it as essentially necessary that there should be communication from God to man, and that there should be a recognition by God of the authority which He had bestowed upon him. So it has been in all the history that has come to us from Genesis to Malachi.

When the Savior came among men there had been a long period of time wherein there had been no voice of inspiration heard among the Jews, and the whole nation was startled at the statements which the Lord Jesus made concerning His authority and the authority which He bestowed upon His servants. It was one of the great accusations which they made against Him, that He, being a man, made Himself equal with God. They could not understand how a man could receive such power as He professed to have. They were shocked at that which He taught them. But He taught His disciples faith in God. He taught them that the works which He did they could do, and even greater, because He was going to the Father. He inspired them with the principle of faith. He reproached them constantly because they were of little faith. He told them that all things were possible to them that believed. And it had a great effect upon His disciples. Their faith was increased, and after the Savior's crucifixion, they received a great endowment of power from on high, with which they went forth and accomplished great and mighty works in the name of their Master, and in accordance with the promises which He