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LOOKING BACK.

How often, when the heart is sad and lonely,
Fond memory returns to other days,
Ere health and wealth and youth had fled
forever

Adown the stream of time's eternal maze.

How dear the retrospection is to mortals
Who view along unbroken chain of years
Replete with virtue, not a blot to sully;
Or stir the lowly penitent to tears.

How many men can turn the pages over
Of life's long way, without a pang of dread,
That some forgotten sin will be uncovered,
And conscience be upbraided from the dead.

How many dare to say, with head uplifted,
I never yet have caused a moment's pain
To friend or foe. Ah! few indeed the num-
ber;

Life's history is, I ween, a sad refrain.

J. BOOTH WALSH.

DISCOURSE

*Delivered by President George Q.
Cannon, at Ogden, (Weber Stake
Conference), Sunday Morning,
July 21, 1889.*

I am very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting with you to-day in your Quarterly Conference, and I trust that while we shall be together we shall have the presence and the assistance of the Spirit of God, that this meeting and all the meetings that shall be held may prove profitable unto us. Our experience has taught us that the plan devised by our Father, for the instruction of his children, is the one that is best adapted to attain the end which is designed. The Lord has commanded us to ponder upon His word, and when we arise to instruct His people, to rely upon His Spirit to bring forth from the treasure house of knowledge that He has opened to us the counsel and instruction which shall be suited to the circumstances of those who are addressed. We are commanded to be subject to the direction of the Holy Spirit when we arise to speak; for if we speak as we should do, it is not we who speak, but it is the Spirit of God which speaks through us. On this account, the Elders of the Church do not, at least as a rule, prepare themselves beforehand with either written or memorized sermons, for if they were to do so, they would depart from the order of

heaven, and would prove utter failures. There is scarcely an Elder, probably, who has traveled for any length of time, who has not, at some time or other, thought, "Well, now, when I attend this meeting I will preach on a certain subject," and he has, perhaps, made some attempt to get something framed in his mind that he would like to say; but I have not met an Elder yet, who did any such thing, who has not confessed that when he attempted to speak to the people in this way the result was a failure. It is right that it should be so; because who knows the hearts of those who are here today? What man can arise here with a prepared discourse to deliver to this congregation and at the same time give to them the bread that they may need to feed their souls on this occasion—the bread of life. It requires the knowledge of God to penetrate the hearts of the children of men and know their secret thoughts and their varied wants. There may be some souls come here this morning hungering for comfort and for instruction upon some particular point, and unless that soul is fed by the influence and power of the Spirit of God, it is likely to go away dissatisfied. Therefore, it is our duty, when we come together as we now do, to offer from our hearts prayer to God, that He will give unto us His Holy Spirit, to guide the speaker and to prepare the hearts of the hearers to receive the word as it shall be spoken. If we meet in this spirit, that which we hear becomes the word of God and is profitable to all who listen.

Our situation always has been such that we have stood in constant need of the counsel of heaven. Our circumstances have been of such a peculiar character that we have needed to be sustained and to be instructed of the Lord. No other people in our day have been similarly situated to us. No other people have had the difficulties to contend with that we have had to meet. On this account we have needed, day by day, and, it may be said, minute by minute, the guidance of our Father in heaven. Look at our situation today, and what is there but the power of God that could sustain us, and that would comfort our hearts and cause us to feel

strong in our religion and in the anticipation of the fulfillment of the word of God concerning the work with which we are identified? Looking at the work from a human standpoint, without being enlightened by the Spirit of God and without faith in God, the conclusion would be that the story of "Mormonism," as it is called, would soon be told, that its history would soon be written, and that its future was not one that could inspire hope—that, in fact, its death-knell, it might be said, was ringing. This, doubtless, is the general opinion concerning us and our religion in these days.

We came to these mountains and for many years we were here secluded from contact with surrounding peoples. Long stretches of unsettled wilderness extended between our settlements and other settlements. We were only within reach by long months of travel. During those days of seclusion Utah was left, comparatively speaking, to itself. There was very little to be seen inside of Utah that was opposed to the system of religion which the people believed in, or that could show any particular enmity to the people themselves. We lived in this way for many years, and the idea had almost grown up in the hearts of a great many that this was to be our future condition, that we had separated ourselves from the world, and that we should grow and increase until we should become a mighty power in these mountains, and that nothing could be permitted to interfere with our growth. But had we reflected upon it we might have known—and no doubt many did know—that it was impossible for a people possessing the characteristics that we do to keep secluded. We could not be hidden. In spite of all the obstacles that we naturally had to contend with, the qualities that we possessed had the effect to push us to the front, and to make us an object of curiosity and note. Travelers viewed us with great interest, and books of various kinds were written describing our situation and surroundings and attempting to describe our character. In the providence of God, also, we were led to occupy a place on the continent that, of itself, was naturally attractive,