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## REMARKS

Made at the Semi-Annual Conference, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Wednesday Morning, October 6, 1897, by

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My brethren and sisters, in standing before you a short time, I humbly solicit your faith and prayers, that something appropriate may be suggested to our minds. I have rejoiced, and do rejoice, in the instructions of this Conference; and our joy may be said to consist, through the Holy Spirit, in the propriety and the practical value of the teachings imparted unto us through the servants of the Lord.

I have been highly edified in the remarks directed to the youth. I feel especially interested in the cause of Mutual Improvement, because I recognize in it an institution established by the wisdom of the Lord through His servant, President Young, affording the young men and young women of Zion an opportunity to exercise the talents with which the Lord has endowed them. And it is a work of great magnitude. It is necessary, as stated by President Cannon and Brother Kimball, that we should study the Scriptures and become conversant with the principles of the Gospel, with the predictions of the Prophets, and the purposes of the Almighty concerning us and mankind at large, and, not only in the direction of these particulars which are designated as strictly religious, but to become acquainted with all good principles. I think it is in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants where the injunction is placed upon us by the Lord through the Prophet Joseph, and it is always binding, that we should seek for wisdom by study, out of the best books, by prayer and also by faith; that we should become acquainted with the laws of the kingdoms and nations of the earth, and with the law of the kingdom of God; should become acquainted with things which are above the earth and which are in the earth; we might say, become informed regarding all things as the Lord, through various agencies, gives us opportunities for acquiring knowledge.

What a broad field of study for the youth of Zion! Would any man with intelligence and honesty dare to attribute narrow-mindedness to the Latter-day Saints? I think not. The Latter-day Saints are not afraid to come in contact with the world in every form. They are not so narrow but what they are willing to receive truth wherever it can be found. We recognize the fact that there are fragments of truth scattered abroad in the earth, that they have been handed down among the children of men on the pages of history and by tradition from generation to generation. Many of the oriental religionists that are designated by the more enlightened as heathen have ideas which are not at variance with some of the principles of the Gospel. In reading the history of Mexico, we find statements there re-

garding traditions of the ancient inhabitants of that land in reference to the Deity and in regard to the coming of a God to this earth; and we can see that it has reference to the mission of the Son of God among the children of men. And so in regard to the people of Asia and other countries of the globe. The youth of Zion should be conversant with these things.

There is one grand and glorious principle, that should be understood by the young people to guide them in their studies and investigation in regard to all things, and that is, the possession of the Holy Spirit. No man, says the Apostle Paul—and it has been repeated in every Gospel dispensation—"can understand the things of God but by the Spirit of God." He may understand the things of man by the spirit of man; but the Spirit of God has a mission, as stated by the Savior in the 16th chapter of St. John, where he says, "Howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth, for," he says, "he shall not speak of himself"—here is another lesson in that passage: even the Holy Spirit does not assume authority to speak—"for he shall not speak of himself, but that which he heareth, that shall he also speak. He shall take of the things of the Father and shall show them unto you," showing that the Spirit of the Lord associates with the Father and the Son, and communicates the mind and will of the Lord to the people, who are so happy and so blessed as to enjoy that great gift. If we can understand the things of man by the spirit of man, we can also understand the things of man by the Spirit of God, for it "searcheth all things." How essential it is that the young men and the young women of Zion should enjoy the companionship of the Holy Spirit, the importance of which cannot be spoken, it cannot be fully realized. And to enjoy that spirit, we should understand another principle, and that is that to possess it we must harmonize our lives, our daily walk and conversation with certain requirements that the Lord has made of us. It is one thing to receive the Holy Spirit; it is another thing to keep it constantly with us. We received it on condition of faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, and the condition of repentance from all sin—a genuine repentance, a laying aside of the things which are obnoxious to God. We received it on condition of accepting the simple ordinance of baptism in water for the remission of sin. We received it on condition of the imposition of hands by men authorized of the Almighty to perform that sacred ordinance for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We never can isolate the principles of the Gospel, and expect by the mere outward acceptance of that principle, to enjoy the blessing which is attached to it. No man has received a remission of sins by baptism alone. No man has received the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands alone. There must be associated with it the fulfillment of the conditions that belong to these fundamental steps

which introduce us into the Church of Christ. Simon the sorcerer was baptized by Philip. He went through the ordinance in form, but the Apostles Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and laid their hands upon and baptized the Samaritans; and those that were penitent only, who had pure faith in God, pure conviction that Jesus was the Christ, received the Holy Ghost and enjoyed some of the gifts thereof; and when Simon the sorcerer saw that they enjoyed this gift, he offered the apostles money, and he said unto them, "Give unto me also this gift that on whomsoever I lay my hands they may receive it also." And the Apostle Peter, by the authority and power of God which rested upon him, said unto him: "Thy money perish with thee, seeing thou hast thought to buy the gift of God with money. I perceive that thy soul is in the gall of bitterness and sin."

So it may be said of all the Latter-day Saints. Men have embraced the Gospel, that is, in form. Some have been introduced into the Church formally, but they have dropped by the wayside. We found hundreds of backsliders in the states of Missouri and Illinois, who had embraced the Gospel, many of them in the days of Joseph Smith. Some had received a testimony and sinned against it and became embittered, while others had not received it in sincerity of heart, and they were easily led aside. I want to impress upon the youth that to enjoy this Spirit, we must not only receive it by the ordinances of the Gospel, but we must take a course in life that we can keep it constantly with us. The Spirit of the Lord will not associate with evil in any form. As quoted by Brother Kimball, the Spirit of the Lord will not dwell in unclean temples; and the Apostle Paul felt so impressed with this that on one occasion he said to the Corinthian Saints: "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and he cautioned them to avoid evil association, to avoid coming in contact with the influences that were of the world. The Savior gave this caution to his disciples, when He said unto them, "Beware of the leaven of the Gentiles." The young people should understand that the foundation, the stepping stone to Mutual Improvement is the reformation of life. If there is a young man that is guilty of any habit that is contrary to the injunctions of the Gospel, the first step necessary is to lay that aside. Lay aside the habit of smoking cigarettes, lay aside the habit of chewing tobacco, lay aside the habit of swearing and profanity, and Sabbath breaking, and seek unto God in humble prayer for the enjoyment and the impressions of the Holy Spirit.

If we will do that, the Lord will preserve us from scepticism and infidelity. One of the brethren in his remarks spoke about neglecting to read the Scriptures and thereby becoming an easier prey to infidelity. I thought of my own testimony regarding this