

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 2.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, DECEMBER 29, 1894.

VOL. L.

THE; VERY ETERNAL FATHER.

Discourse Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt City, Sunday, October 7th, 1894, by

ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

Beloved hearers, having been absent during the early part of this Conference, attending to the funeral of a near relative, I realize that I am suffering under a double bereavement by the loss of the precious instruction that has been given during the sessions of this conference. I was much cheered to hear President Woodruff this morning say that it was one of the best that he had ever attended. I realize by personal acquaintance with my brethren of the Presidency and Twelve Apostles that in their instructions to you they would be earnest, fervent, full of intelligence, and that you would be fed with the bread of life.

I wish to say, in attestation of the discourse I listened to this morning by President George Q. Cannon, that I feel a most hearty concurrence in and sympathy with the serious importance of the instructions that were given to the people. The principles and doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, which have been given to us in the years that are past, have brought many of the Saints to a period approaching manhood in the Gospel, by which we have reason to look for and expect more thoroughgoing and more faithful attention to, and consideration of, the doctrines of the Gospel and Priesthood than we could expect years ago. It is true that by bringing new members into our gathering they partake, to a greater or less degree, of the increased intelligence which the older members possess, and this fact renders it all the more important that the older members should be living up to the full standard and pattern of their holy faith, so that they who come later shall find themselves associating with those who are of greater faith, more extended knowledge, and who are able to assist them forward in the way of life and godliness.

It is important for us that we do not permit any of the pernicious influences that are working among us, whether from the pretension of false prophets or false Christs, or whatever may be imposed upon the people publicly or privately, to diminish our strength and faith in the least degree. All these tendencies should serve to arouse in us an increasing energy and fidelity, leading us to seek God more and more, that we

may contend individually and collectively against all these evil influences that are brought in among us. We cannot cease our watchfulness; we must not lay down our armor; we are under the necessity of watching unto prayer constantly. We cannot sit down and take it easy in these matters, lest the adversary, in a moment we think not, get advantage of us; for although present necessities may not seem to be bringing us to a test, there is coming a time when we shall all be brought to the standard of measurement and weight, to know whether we bear the seal of the everlasting Gospel's requirements, and are accounted worthy for such advancement, for such gifts and blessings, for such trust of power and influence, as shall enable us to give proof of our faithfulness. There is no time for us to waste in these things; and while we are thus delving in the way of life, and are made subject to "booms," to oppressions and hard times, as they are called, and to divisions of party feelings because of politics, we have great need, in order to stand successfully and squarely in all these matters, of that measure of the Spirit that shall enable us under every circumstance to act the part of a Latter-day Saint, and not, as is sometimes said of us, to act more gentile than the Gentiles themselves.

It is expected of men who have attained to maturity in life that they will accomplish careful, difficult and intricate labors which younger ones cannot be expected to do. We are supposed to be so far advanced in the knowledge of God, in the power of the Priesthood, and in the understanding of the truth, that none of these things shall move us. Whether a man is of one party or another party, he should understand that what he is doing ought to be for the interest of the whole. There should be no sectional, narrow-minded contrivances for the benefit of the few to the injury of the whole. These are some of the finer works that the Elders used anciently to tell us of. We have heard the Presidency in former times tell us how that we had to be made very fine and put through the finest of screens to become fit for the Master's use. Now is the time for us to be looking to it, to cease all strife and contention and put down everything of the kind. There should be nothing allowed in the political arena that can hurt the faith of any brother or sister or prevent them from sitting down together at the table of the Lord's supper and partaking of that ordinance in the most worthy and acceptable manner. Is this the case with us? If it is not, how far are we off from it, and how much work have we to do with ourselves to obtain that status and remain there? For be it known that un-

less we maintain the unity of the faith and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, we are not the Lord's neither shall we be able to find Him when we shall most need Him. We have to maintain our fellowship with the heavens complete, or in a trying hour we may find ourselves without God in the world. We have then to be on the alert continually, that no spirit, no machination of man or Satan can have power to turn us from the right way of the Lord.

The Lord has very great designs concerning this people, just so fast as He can bring us up to realize them. Now, my brethren, when everything is quiet and still, and there is no particular demand made of us, we all seem to be very much united. But how often is it the case that something comes up and we find that we are a revelation to ourselves directly? We find within us a spirit or frame of mind different from what we previously entertained brought out by something that we had not before experienced. We are being made subject to changes and vicissitudes in all the trials of life, as much as mortal men and women can be made subject to; and I will venture to quote the saying of the Savior in a revelation to us in these last days, that all things that can be shaken shall be shaken. Then who is he that has got his lamp trimmed and burning? Who is he that has got that measure of faith for himself that under every trying circumstance he can go to the Lord and find grace and help in every time of need to enable him to conform his feelings, faith and fellowship to the conditions that surround him? This is a period of revelation. It is a battle that is being carried on, not with steel nor with any carnal weapons, but it is the silent, peaceful and powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and in the hearts of those whom we can prevail upon to become subject to the same, to change us from our naturally selfish inclinations, desires and designs into the ways and purposes of the true and living God; and the way to do that is that we daily keep His commandments, hearken to the words of wisdom, and continually live by every precept that proceedeth from the mouth of God. We are yet a great way from the perfection of the Lord.

I wish the brethren and sisters, the Elders particularly, could be stirred up to search the scriptures and to find out something more of the character of the Lord; for if we cannot find Him out personally, we can learn very much of His character by reading the sacred word of God that is left for us. As we say of one another, "We do not know you personally, but we have come to know you by reputation," so we can learn, in the word of God, if we will