

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

ELDER GEO. Q. CANNON,

In the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
July 20, 1879.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

I AM greatly pleased this afternoon at having the opportunity of meeting with the Latter-day Saints, and of listening to the testimonies that have been borne by Brother Staines in relation to this work. I, also, have been absent for some length of time. Upwards of 34 weeks ago I left this City to go East; I have been back twice during that period for a few days, and it is a great pleasure and I may say a delight to me to have the opportunity of being here to listen to the instructions, to the singing, and to partake of the spirit that prevails in this tabernacle; to me it is the spirit of home, it is the spirit of peace, and I have more delight and satisfaction in mingling with the Latter-day Saints than I have under any other circumstances. They are my people. Their religion is my religion. Their God is my God. Their future is the future in which I hope to share. If they be prosperous I hope to be prosperous. If they have adverse circumstances to contend with I expect to share in them; and it is this knowledge of which Brother Staines has spoken that prompts these feelings to which I refer. If there is any peculiarity about what the world call Mormonism, or that which we term the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as taught by his Church, that I admire, that I love, that causes me to feel thankful unto God; it is the peculiarity which reference has been made by Brother Staines, namely, that William C. Staines, or George Q. Cannon or any other man or woman however humble, who is connected with this Church, has a right according to the promises of our heavenly Father, to receive revelation from him when needed. I would not give much for a religion, the revelations of which were confined to two, three, four, or perchance twelve men. It would not recommend itself as the religion of the Being who is the Father of all, who has created all, and who has placed us all here upon the earth as his children. This feature to which I refer is one of the most delightful characteristics of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Staines has referred to the Prophets Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and to others who have stood in prominent places in this church, who have received revelations from God; and who imparted these revelations to the people. Of what value, of what special value, would these revelations be to those to whom they were imparted through the medium of these men, unless they had some means of testing their truthfulness? What a terrible condition we should be in if God in his providence were to confine his knowledge in that way—if we were required, as some imagine man kind are required, to submit to the teachings of their fellow-men and to accept and practice them, because those men say they are from God! Imagine the condition of the Latter-day Saints if this were the case! Imagine the condition of the whole world if one man stood prominent, or three men, or twelve men, or fifteen men, stood prominent, receiving revelations from divinity and conveying these revelations to the children of men, with the requirement that those who received them should submit to them as the voice of God, and the people themselves be destitute of any means of testing the truthfulness of these revelations, except so far as they might appeal to their reason and to the sense of right that is begetten in them! Now, a great many people who are not acquainted with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the teachings of that Church—and I do not know but some who are members of that Church—imagine that this is the nature of the organization of the Church of Christ, and that this is the manner in which knowledge is conveyed to the people, and in which the requirements of the people are submitted to by the people. Why this Church could not stand, could not have endured the trials and afflictions and the opposition to which it has been exposed, one hour if that were the case. It would fall to pieces, there would be no power, no cohesive power, to

hold it together. The strength, the power, the cause of the perpetuity of this work, the marvelous character of its operations throughout the nations of the earth, the wonderful attractiveness of this Gospel, the secret of its great success in foreign land, preached by illiterate men, consists in the fact that God the Eternal Father, reveals his mind unto every honest soul who humbly seeks for it. Not to one man, not to three men, not to Apostles, not to Bishops, not to high priests, not to sevens, not to Elders alone, but to every humble soul who in sincerity, and with a broken heart and contrite spirit, bows himself or herself in secret before the throne of the great Eternal, and in humility asks, in the name of Jesus, for a knowledge to be imparted to him or to her whether it is the truth he or she has heard. This is the secret of the success of this work. This is the cause of its wonderful power and the attractiveness it has for the hearts of the children of men. This is the reason that illiterate men, going forth bearing testimony of these things, have been so successful throughout all the nations of the earth where they have been, and it is this that draws them, as we have been told this afternoon by Brother Staines, by thousands from foreign lands and causes them to come to this land and to assimilate with those already here; until we have in this Territory of ours, throughout these valleys running north and south, east and west, a people unexampled, and in many respects unlike every other people that we know any thing about. Why, in this last company, which came in a few days ago, the members if it spoke some seven languages. I remember a company of Saints leaving Liverpool while I was there, the members of which spoke nine different languages. They were Latter-day Saints gathering up from various lands, some from Switzerland, from France, from Great Britain, and from the various nations of Europe, all coming together, singing the songs of Zion in their own languages, bearing testimony that God had revealed to them in their own language the truth of this, the everlasting Gospel. With such a spirit they come to these mountains, they scatter among the people already here, they become homogeneous. We have here a oneness of feeling and purpose, a oneness of spirit, and a oneness of sentiment and of heart, that you may look for in vain elsewhere throughout the whole earth. I sometimes think we overlook those great and glorious blessings that God has given to us. We overlook too frequently the spirit of oneness that has been poured out upon this people. Men ask for a sign; they say, "Where are the evidences of the divinity of the work you believe in? You say that you preach the Gospel of Jesus; you say that you are the people of God." Why, could there be any greater evidence given of the divine character of this mission than is witnessed in the effects of this Gospel upon the people who embrace it? We are led to expect that heaven is a place of unity, a place of love; that there is no quarreling, no litigation, no strife in heaven; no man warring against his fellow-men, no man exalting his creed and his ideas as superior to the creed and the ideas of his neighbor; all dwelling in peace and in love. That is the idea of heaven that has been taught to us in the Bible? Anything else would not be heaven; any other kind of place could not be heaven. Is it not reasonable to suppose, then, that if the spirit of heaven rests down upon a people, that they will be united, that they will love one another, will die for one another, if necessary? Why, certainly. If I were to start out to-day in search of the Church of Jesus Christ, if I did not know of its existence upon the earth, I would expect to find a people united together, a people who loved one another, and who brought forth the fruits of the Gospel of Jesus as he taught it. I would expect to find a people who gave an exhibition in their lives of those heavenly truths taught by Jesus when he was upon the earth. And until I found such a people I would despair of finding the Church of Christ. Men might perform miracles before me, and say a great many wonderful things unto me, but unless I could find a people with the love of Christ in their bosoms, united together as the heart of one man, a people who loved one another, I do not think I could,

with the knowledge I have, recognize them as the people of Christ, or as the people of the Church of Christ. For the evidences that they were that Church it would not be in profession alone I would seek. It would not be in their Sunday service alone. It would not be in the sermons that were preached in their tabernacles, or meeting houses, or churches alone. It would not be in any of these things alone that I would seek, but it would be in the fruits of the Gospel as I found them exhibited in their daily life, in their conversation, in their associations, one with another. If I found a quarrelsome people, if I found a people fighting one with another for their rights, if I found a people taking up weapons of war against each other, no matter by what name they were called, no matter how high-sounding their professions, I would say, these cannot be the people of Christ; these are not the fruits which the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ brings forth. But if I found a people who were humble, meek, lowly, willing to endure wrong rather than do wrong; if I found a people persecuted for righteousness sake; if I found a people of whom all men spoke evil, though their lives were not evil, though their conduct was humble and pure and they were disposed to love one another and dwell together in peace, I would begin to say, here are some of the signs, some of the fruits of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I must stop here. I must examine into this matter. I must look after these people, and see whether they are the people of whom I am in search. If I were to come into this valley of Salt Lake and find a people professing to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, were I to trust to report I would be inclined to say they cannot be the people they profess to be. Why? Because all manner of evil is spoken against them. Is there any crime in the black catalogue of crime of which they have not been accused? Is there any evil which people can perpetrate with which they have not been charged and declared guilty? If I were to be disheartened by reports, I need only stop in Salt Lake City, or in Utah Territory, to have that feeling; but if I remembered that those in Christ Jesus are sure to suffer persecution, and that "if they have called the Master of the house B. eizebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"—I might, if I bore that fact in mind, stop and examine further. If I looked around me and inquired concerning the Latter-day Saints, I would probably find that they did not drink liquor, did not get drunk; I would probably find they did not take the name of the Lord in vain, did not go to law one with another, but were averse to it, and were in favor of promoting peace, and that because of this they offended lawyers, judges and others. If I were to look at the material aspects of the city, I would find a beautiful city, laid out and planned with wisdom, laid out by somebody who knew something of life and what was proper for society. If I made further inquiry I would learn that a few years ago, before the advent of so-called civilization in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, that from the Idaho line in the North to the Arizona line in the South, there were no liquor saloons, no drunkenness, and profanity was punished; but in every settlement and in every house throughout the length and breadth of the land prayers ascended morning and night to the God of heaven, on behalf of themselves and their children, and on behalf of the honest in heart throughout all the nations of the earth. If I happened to be there when a company came in, and in mingling with that company asked what brought them to this land, I would be told in Norwegian, in Swedish, in Danish, in German, in Italian, in Welsh, in English, in Polish, in Dutch, in French, that each of these men and women had obeyed the Gospel as it was taught to them by the Elders who had been sent to them, and that in answer to prayer they had received a testimony from the Almighty for themselves that they knew this was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that they were commanded of God to gather out from the various nations, and that in response to that commandment they had come out and were here. These would be the things that would be told to me. If I were to inquire among them respecting other matters, I would find that they believed in this book,

(the Bible) in its entirety, not a part, not in isolated parts of this book, some parts separated from the rest, but in its entirety, in its doctrinal parts. I would find that they believed that God was the same to-day as he was yesterday, that he is a God of revelation, a God of truth, a God who could hear and answer prayer. I would find that they believed in the organization of the Church as it was in ancient days, God having first set in the Church apostles, prophets, teachers, &c. I would find further that they were contending, as James commanded the Saints to do in his day, earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, a faith by which the mighty works concerning which Paul speaks in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews were accomplished. I would find that they were contending for this faith, that they believed in the signs following them that believe; that they were contending for them, contending for that faith; and teaching their children to exercise it to the greatest possible extent. Now, where else upon the face of the earth could I find a community teaching and practicing these things! I have been, in my time, a somewhat extensive traveler. I have mingled with a great many people, in a good many lands, and I confess to you to-day I have never seen a people who answered this description, except the Latter-day Saints. I do not say this out of vanity, or by way of boasting, because this Gospel is intended for every person, not only for those who are Latter-day Saints to-day, but for every honest man and woman throughout the face of the whole earth. This Gospel of the kingdom has to be preached to all nations, and then will the end come. It is not, therefore, with any feeling of pride because of these being the doctrines believed in and practiced by the Latter-day Saints that I allude to them in this manner, but because God, in his infinite mercy, has revealed the Gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, because it is taught again by divine authority. How could you account for it in any other way? Tell me, if there be philosophers or wise men here. Men say it is delusion, men say it is imposture, men say that the building up of this system is the result of fraud. Most extraordinary results of fraud, if this be fraud! Men going out without purse or scrip, as in ancient days, and preaching the everlasting Gospel, baptizing people, and the spirit of unity and love resting down upon them, accompanied by the Spirit of God, which testifies, as we have heard this afternoon from Brother Staines, as it had testified to him, that this is the Church of Christ, that this is the Gospel of Jesus which they have embraced. People may think, people may talk about the delusion of the Latter-day Saints. Why, to believe that these results which we see are the product of fraud, or imposture, would require far more credulity than faith to believe them to be from God. Where is there a peculiarity of the ancient Church that is not possessed to-day by the Latter-day Saints? Can one be mentioned? Can a doctrine or a principle be mentioned that was contended for in the ancient Church that is not contended for and sought after to-day by the Latter-day Saints? Were they persecuted? Then it is quite certain we can claim a blessing, if it so be that persecution brings blessings. Were their names cast out as evil? Then we can claim with them the same results, if blessings attend any such thing. "Oh, but," says one, "they were good people, the Apostles in ancient days were good people, but you Mormons are a very wicked people." Why, do you imagine that if they had considered Jesus a very good man, a very holy being, they would have crucified him between two thieves? No. The populace, when Pilate wanted to have him forgiven because of the feast of the passover, cried out: "No; release to us Barabbas, the murderer, the vile person. Let him be released, but crucify the Christ; let his blood be upon us and our children." They were willing to risk the consequences, because they believed him to be a vile impostor. Do you think that Peter and Paul, one of whom was beheaded, and the other of whom was crucified with his head downward—do you imagine that in killing them the Romans thought they were killing good, innocent, pure men? Certainly not. They were hated just as much as we are hated. Of course,

they thought they were doing God service, as many think they are doing God service to-day in persecuting the Latter-day Saints. They thought they were doing the world some good by ridding the earth of such impostors as Peter and Paul. Their eyes were blinded to their goodness and to their virtues. Things were hidden from their eyes. They could only say they were deluders of the people, that they were worthy of death, and so it is throughout this Territory. The virtues of the Latter-day Saints are not perceived. Our temperance, our frugality, our perseverance, our industry, our union, and all the qualities that have made this wilderness blossom until it is the admiration of every visitor, the joy of every traveler—all these things are obscured, and with many people lost sight of, before the imagination of very many. Brother Brigham was a vile impostor, that all those who have associated with him are no better, and that it would be doing God service to destroy them from the face of the earth, that the people are deluded by them might be from the influence which they wield over them. Oh, generally blind—I was going to say, shall I use such a phrase? There is not evidence sufficient to the eyes of this generation of what has been done in the past, persecution of righteous men, in the killing of them, shedding of their blood, that cannot learn that there is something as a man being a good or a virtuous man, a pure man, yet be maligned by the enemies of purity and virtue, as in the days of Christ? This generation will be a great deal to answer for in consequence of this thing. As Latter-day Saints, we have been accused of every crime. It has been told us that we were ready to commit murder at any time, in order to serve our own ends, that we were ready to shed the blood of the innocent, and that this feeling destroyed life existed among us, that at the same time, throughout the wild mountains and secluded valleys life has been more safe, every more secure, than in the midst of the best managed cities in the Union. There never has been a day since we came beyond the mountains that travelers could pass from the North to the South, and from the East to the West, through all parts, with perfect safety. There never was a day when the Latter-day Saints lived in these valleys, that a man would be insulted either by word or by gesture, night or day, by an old lady or a young lady, traveling from one end of our Territory to the other. Can the said of us to-day? Certainly not; but it was the case a few years throughout these valleys, and we say to you it will yet be the case. I sometimes think that if we were one twentieth part as we are accused of being, it would be very unhealthy throughout the country for a good many years now unmolested. I know this, no other community would bear one-twentieth part the insult and injury that we have submitted to so quietly. What has caused us to do it? Is it because we are capable of feeling, or that we do not want them, that we do ourselves to be imposed upon? It has not been because of these things. Our bosoms have been probably, with the fire of indignation, as much as any people of the face of the earth could under such circumstances. What has restrained us? Simply the knowledge that these men are ignorant, and I believe that the Latter-day Saints have partaken of that spirit which Jesus had when he hung upon the cross. It has been somewhat that spirit that the Latter-day Saints have acted. It would not have been easy for them to have done otherwise had they chosen to do so. It may be said they were restrained by fear. It has not been through the fear of man, but the fear of God has restrained this people. It is far better for us to suffer wrong than to do wrong; it is better to endure evil, ignominy, shame and persecution than to turn and persecute any of these things ourselves. I am looking for a great change to take place in our circumstances. The nation of which we form a part looks with more interest upon us as a people than upon any other part of the United States. There