

## REMARKS

*By President George Q. Cannon at a General Priesthood meeting held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday evening, April 5th, 1890.*

From Brothers Karl G. Maeser and James E. Talmage we have heard good reports and excellent talk concerning our Church schools. Certainly, their remarks are very encouraging, and the success which has attended the effort to establish these schools is of the most gratifying character to the General Board of Education. We have felt that God was with us in this effort, and that the Latter-day Saints have had the spirit of it and have met the expression of feeling concerning the movement with hearty responses. I do not know any theme upon which we can grow more enthusiastic, if we would allow our minds to contemplate the future, than this subject that has been mentioned this evening—the education of our children.

The Latter-day Saints have suffered as no other people, at least in our generation, have for their religion. We have forsaken all things, it may be said, in order to obey the mandates of God as revealed in the principles of the Gospel. We have taken joyfully the spoiling of our goods, the driving from our homes, and everything of this character, for the sake of the Gospel which the Lord has revealed. Today, Elders go out for two and three years at a time, and they spend these years away from home preaching the Gospel, without remuneration of a pecuniary character, and think themselves exceedingly fortunate if they are the means of bringing a few score of souls to the knowledge of the truth. This has been the case for many many years. I have heard in this Tabernacle, many times, as you all have doubtless, discourses delivered by our most accomplished Elders, full of the Spirit of the Lord, incontrovertible in argument, founded upon the scriptures in such a manner that no one could dispute them. Hundreds of strangers have been present and heard them; yet how many of them have embraced the Gospel? If there have been a dozen, I do not know them. Of late years, our efforts in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles have not been very fruitful of results. Our Elders have gone abroad and preached diligently. They have encountered great opposition and have many times submitted to great hardships. It is reported to us that some have had to sleep out of doors, because they could find no place in which to lodge. Now, right around us are thousands upon thousands of spirits which have come pure from the eternal throne of our God. They have come here free from tradition and ready to receive instructions such as shall be imparted unto them. I suppose that it is not overstating the matter to say that there are within the circle of our influence and operations somewhere in the vicinity of seventy-five thousand children of school age. I have not

consulted the reports lately, but in the Sunday schools we consider that there are between fifty and sixty thousand children enrolled. Think of the immense influence which sixty thousand children, properly educated, will have in the earth, if we will furnish them with the facilities that are within our reach. Why? it is stupendous, the mere thought of so many children being trained and indoctrinated in our principles, as they are in our schools, and a foundation laid of faith in God; then upon that great foundation a superstructure reared of an understanding of the principles of the Gospel, and combined with that, a knowledge of science as well as of the ordinary branches of education. Just think of it, you Elders who have gone out in former days, having been called from the plow, from the anvil, from the carpenter's bench and from other laborious occupations. Think how you felt when you realized how ignorant you were of those things that the world considered necessary. Now we have these facilities within our reach. We have the opportunity of giving to our children this instruction, and it is more valuable than all the money that can be given to a child. I have asked some of my children (I have some ten or twelve of them going to the academy here) which branch of the study they like best. Every time I have asked the question the reply has been, Theology. This is very delightful to me, to think that children can have theology taught them so that they will take more interest in that than in any other branch of study; for as theology is to the world it is the most dry, and repulsive, I might say, study to which application can be made. Of course there are exceptions.

Every five years, a new generation of children is launched, so to speak, into the field. Take a child from thirteen to eighteen years of age and during that period the character is formed, and you can give direction to the mind in such a manner that it will influence all future life. It is not necessary to dwell upon the strictness with which Catholics cling to education. They comprehend this better, probably, than any other sect. They recognize the importance of indoctrinating their children while they are young in the principles of their religion; for experience has taught them that when they do this the children will not depart from those principles. You scarcely ever find a Catholic who becomes an atheist or an infidel. It is Protestantism that is breeding infidels—Protestantism which denies the Priesthood and other true principles, in its anxiety to destroy Catholicism and its influence over the minds of its adherents. The result is, among the Protestants atheism flourishes, while among the Catholics it can scarcely be found. It is true, in Catholic countries there is great carelessness in many instances, and they practice many things which we think are very irreligious and contrary to the principles of righteousness. Nevertheless, their religion

never loses its hold upon them; they cling to it, and before they die they generally try to make peace with the church. This is the consequence of early training.

We should profit by this. There is no direction, according to my view, (and I speak my own views about this) in which we can expend means more judiciously and with greater results to us, as a people, than in the building of school houses and the furnishing of them with everything necessary to provide good education. Today, in this city, rich as we are, there is not money enough derived from our college to pay our teachers. The Salt Lake Stake Board applied to us a few days ago and said that they were so embarrassed that they could not carry on the school unless some assistance was rendered them. Not only that, the rooms that are used are inconvenient, they are inappropriate, they cannot be used to the best advantage, and a great many children have to be turned away because of the lack of accommodation. This is a sad thing in a city like Salt Lake, with the wealth that we have.

I suppose more would have been done in this direction had it not been for waiting to hear what the decision of the Supreme Court would be in regard to our property. Our attorneys are unsettled themselves as to the best method of securing property that may be given for educational purposes. On this account a number who have promised funds have withheld them until something of a reliable character can be reached concerning the best method of holding them. But, brethren, we can at least give the interest of that which we intend to donate, that it may go towards supporting this school. Our schools should not languish in this city, nor in any of our counties. There should be a liberal response, a willingness to endow these schools, and put them in a position where they can grow and furnish the education that is so desirable to our children. I desire to see such colleges established in our land, and such proficient teachers obtained by these colleges, that there will be no necessity for any of our young men or young women to go elsewhere to gain a knowledge of any branch of learning, no matter what it may be. And I think the time is not far distant when this consummation can be reached if we will foster these institutions of learning and encourage our teachers. At the present time there is a great lack of competent teachers. But we have a large number of young men who are very bright, and under the influences that prevail here, with our temperate habits, with the strength of intellect which God gives unto those who pursue lives of righteousness, I think it will not be long, with the stimulus there is at the present, before we shall have a corps of teachers that will not be excelled anywhere in this land, because we have the element here out of which to create them, under the blessings of God. But we need school rooms.