

REMARKS,

By Elder GEORGE Q. CANNON, in the Bowery, in G. S. L. City, General Conference, Oct. 28th, 1865.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

I appreciate very highly the privilege that I have this morning, and that I have had during this Conference, in meeting with the Saints; it is the first Fall Conference I have had the opportunity of attending for sixteen years. These are indeed precious privileges, which God our Heavenly Father has given unto us—these opportunities which we now have of assembling ourselves together and dismissing the cares that press us from week to week and month to month, casting them aside to concentrate our minds and our thoughts upon the things of His kingdom, devoting our attention to those heavenly principles which have produced so much happiness and peace in our midst. It is good for us to thus devote a portion of our time to the worship of our God. I do not know how the Conference felt; but, for myself, after the vote was taken yesterday to continue our Conference a week or a month if it were necessary, or as long as the servants of God should feel inclined to continue it, I experienced a great relief in my feelings; I felt that that restraint was removed which had, to a certain extent, oppressed us, with the view of hurrying through the business, and getting done by this evening. I thought that it was right, and I felt a spirit of freedom that I had not experienced before, and I presume that all the Saints felt alike on this subject. There is nothing more important for us to attend to than that which we are engaged in to-day. We cannot think of anything that is of greater importance to us, as individuals and as a people, than this service. It is a delightful work, a labor of love that our Heavenly Father has guaranteed unto us the privilege of performing. The organization that we now behold, the wonderful fruits and results which have attended us from the beginning, and that are so delightful to contemplate to-day, have all sprung from the service that we are now engaged in. We may devote time, as it is necessary we should, to the labors of this life, to plowing, to sowing, to harvesting, to building settlements, to accomplishing the labors that devolve upon us of a temporal character; these labors are important and necessary; but they are no more necessary than those that we are now engaged in; they are no more necessary than that we should assemble ourselves together frequently to listen to the word of God, to be instructed in the principles of life and salvation by those who have been our fathers in the gospel.

It is necessary that we should examine ourselves, bring ourselves to the light of truth, to learn whether we are taking the right course; like the mariner, when he returns to port, he compares his ship chronometers with the correct time on shore to see whether they have been keeping true time, and are in good condition to enter upon another voyage to enable him to obtain his bearings correctly, that he may not lose himself when he is on the trackless ocean. We can come to Conference in this manner and examine ourselves like men returning from a mission after an absence of years among the nations. They come back, desirous of comparing themselves with their brethren in Zion, saying, like Paul of old, that they have indeed not run in vain; ascertaining, for themselves, that the Spirit that they have been possessed of, and the course that they have taken, are the Spirit and course that their brethren in Zion have been possessed of and taken. There is a great deal of profit to be derived from associations of this character. It is necessary that we should be brought very frequently to a sense of our condition, of our dependence upon God, of our relationship to Him, of the obligations that rest upon us as His children and servants and handmaidens. We cannot do this, as we should, when we neglect opportunities like this; but, when we come together and our hearts are filled with prayers and anxious desire before God for His Holy Spirit to be poured out upon us, we then can see if we have erred, if we have gone astray, if we have done anything wrong and displeasing in the sight of our Father. These things are brought to our minds, and we see ourselves in the light of the Holy Spirit, we renew our strength before the Lord and our determinations to go forth and serve Him with greater diligence and faithfulness in the future than we have done in the past.

There is a mine of wealth in the gospel of Jesus Christ that is yet comparatively undiscovered by us. We see

the world around us digging here and there, and wandering over valleys and mountains in search of hidden treasures; they spend their days and nights in searching for those things and in planning by what means they can obtain them; but we have, in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which has been revealed unto us, an inexhaustible mine of wealth that is eternal. There is room for us to continually exercise every faculty of our minds and of our bodies in searching out the deep and inexhaustible riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ which has been committed unto us. We have already partaken to some extent of this wealth; we already have realized to some extent its richness, its abundance; and what we have already obtained of it, should be an incentive to us to be still more diligent and persevering in seeking with earnestness and faith unto God to give unto us of His power and more and more of His Spirit and of that wealth which He alone possesses, that we may go on increasing in eternal riches on earth to be prepared to enjoy them throughout eternity. That man is truly rich, whatever his worldly circumstances may be, who improves the opportunities he has, and who seeks with all diligence to obtain all the blessings that pertain unto the holy religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There are those however, whom I have met with, who profess to be good Latter-day Saints, who seem to be satisfied with the profession of their religion, who seem to be satisfied with the fact that what is called "Mormonism" is superior to everything else that is taught among men. I presume, they are of that class of whom Pres. Young has spoken—men who have been compelled to bow in submission to the truth, because they could not contradict nor gainsay it; and that they have become connected with this system has seemed to be enough for them; but is it enough?

In one sense it ought to be enough for us to know that we have received the truth and be satisfied with it, yet we should continue to seek with energy and with faith to partake of those blessings and of that power which our Father and God has to bestow upon us. If we would seek to be possessed of these things with the same diligence the world seeks for earthly riches, there is not a soul within the sound of my voice but what will be refreshed, filled and satisfied with the blessings God will bestow upon him or upon her. It is a characteristic of the gospel of Jesus Christ to not be easily exhausted, on the contrary it is always attractive. You hear it to-day, as you heard it thirty years or thirty-five years ago, and it possesses as many charms and as many attractions now as then; repeating it does not wear it out—does not make the subject threadbare—does not deprive it of its interest; but on the contrary, its interest increases as years roll over our heads; as they pass by, our interest in the work of God and our love for it and our appreciation of its greatness increase. In this respect it differs from everything else we know of; it satisfies every want of man's nature. Is there a want you can think of, is there anything in fact connected with man's existence here, spiritual or temporal, mental or physical, that the gospel of Jesus Christ does not satisfy? If there is, I have failed to discover it. It comprehends everything; it gives light and it gives intelligence, it gives wisdom upon every department of human life, it satisfies every longing desire of the soul.

Before the gospel reached you, my brethren and sisters who have received it since you were of mature years, there were wants that existed which now no longer exist; there were longing desires which you indulged in, and which were ungratified by that which you could obtain from the world, that are to-day gratified to their fullest extent; there is no desire of your heart, there is no feeling of your soul that cannot be satisfied legitimately and consistently with your nature in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know how you were, those of you who embraced the gospel in Babylon—you know how you were when the gospel found you; there was, to quote a familiar expression, an aching void within you. There were desires of your soul, or of your spirit, which could not be gratified by the chaff and husks fed unto you by the so-called teachers of the day; there were aspirations for knowledge, for truth and for God that nothing could satisfy; you sought in vain for their gratification; you searched on the right hand and on the left, you inquired here and there, but you could not get the knowledge you needed; there was no one who could give you the satisfaction you yearned after; but no sooner did you

hear the truth, no sooner did you hear the sound of the everlasting gospel, and the voice of a man endowed with the Priesthood, than you felt that you had found the pearl of great price, you felt that the desire of your heart was about to be gratified, and that if this religion proved true, if these statements and testimonies could be relied upon, then that which you had so long sought for, and desired was within your grasp.

Men may strive to repress these yearnings and desires after knowledge, as priests and teachers do to-day throughout the earth, they may ridicule and deny their existence, but there is that within us, as children of God, which speaks louder and has more force, potency and effect than the traditions of our fathers or the teachings of our former priests and teachers ever had;—there is the voice of nature, there is the voice of heaven in our hearts, which calls for revelation from God, which calls for knowledge, which calls for certainty, which calls for something that is tangible and that can be relied upon, and which man with his man-made systems and with his fooleries, cannot gratify nor supply by any means in his power. We hear men constantly talk about the delusion that exists here, and about the folly of men seeking for revelation and knowledge from God. The man must be an idiot who talks so; he who makes such assertions does not understand the human character. If he had studied himself, he would have seen that there was something within himself which claimed more than that which man can give—that there was a voice within him which demanded and called loudly for truth, tangible, reliable truth, something that could be understood, and that came from God. If this were not so, why do we see so many men running hither and thither after knowledge, after spirit-rappers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and phrenologists, to tell them their fortunes and reveal something relating to the future; they will do anything that will give them any idea of their future. These may be the perversions of the feeling, yet you see the manifestations of this want cropping out in various forms all over the earth, among every people and even among the heathen. When it is not governed by truthful principles, it is found running astray, and leading men and women astray who are guided by it.

Wherever human nature exists there is found a desire for the knowledge of the truth, a want of that which pertains to God and to eternity; and this want or desire cannot be repressed. There is no power on earth that can repress it; men's traditions may stifle it; but when the spirit is allowed to operate freely and unrestrained, it breaks through all these barriers and brushes aside these cobwebs to seek for truth—pure truth as it comes from the Eternal, and when it once obtains a taste from the fountain of truth, and can drink freely, it is refreshed, and the one great desire of the heart is satisfied. This is as it has been with us, my brethren and sisters; hence the contentment that prevails through our valleys and settlements; hence the peace that is to be observed in our families. Peace broods over Zion; there is life and buoyancy in the hearts of the children of Zion. Why is this? It is because we have received that which we have desired; because we are living in harmony with the laws of our being; it is because the wants of our nature are being gratified through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If there be any among us who are not satisfied, if there be any among us who are wandering hither and thither, looking for something that they do not have, they are the ones who have committed sin and transgression; they are the ones who have grieved the Spirit of God; they are the ones who have forfeited their claims upon God for His Spirit and His love, and they go with their souls unsatisfied seeking for contentment, but finding it not. If there be any among us who are thus seeking, they form a class that is distinct from the faithful, humble Saints of God who live their religion and work righteousness.

It should be a cause of thanksgiving and gratitude with us that God our Heavenly Father, in the abundance of His goodness and mercy, has revealed unto us His everlasting gospel, that in His kindness He has sent His Holy Angels from the heavens, with the truth, and the power and authority to administer the truth, and the ordinances pertaining to the truth unto the inhabitants of the earth. Yes, God in His mercy has visited our planet, where darkness reigned, where confusion and ignorance had spread their dread consequences, and all were like the blind groping for the wall, when the voice of

God sounded from the heavens and broke the long silence that had existed for so many generations. Bro. Brigham has said that, in his young days, when he looked at the inhabitants of the earth, he was reminded of an ant hill in a state of excitement with the ants running hither and thither without aim or purpose. Now, this was the condition of ourselves and fathers when the sound of the everlasting gospel came to the earth. The inhabitants of the earth were running hither and thither, and there was no one to guide them, no one to control them, no voice to be heard among the children of men saying with authority: "Here is the way, walk ye in it;" there was none to say: "thus, saith the Lord;" not a voice inspired of God, to be heard from pole to pole, from east to west; but all were ignorant, all were confused, all were dark. But since the gospel has been restored, since it was received by Brother Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and preached to the people, and they listened to the testimony of God, what a change has taken place in the character of some portion of the population of the globe since that time.

There are principles and qualities that have been and are being developed for the last thirty-five years, that were supposed to have no existence among men; it was supposed that they had disappeared, that they never would be restored again. The key of knowledge, through which the Apostles wrought such wonders in the days in which they lived, was no longer to be found among men; but as soon as the Holy Priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith—for he received the power and authority from heaven, and through him the principles of heaven were restored to the earth—then what a change we behold! From the midst of the chaos that existed, order has been produced; from the midst of the strife that everywhere prevailed, union has been brought to light; from the midst of confusion and war, peace has been established; and we see qualities developed now in the midst of our fellow-men which we supposed never could have existed again. What is this attributable to? Says one, "it is attributable to imposture and delusion." So they said in the days of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; but, let them say as they please, we enjoy these fruits; for whereas we lived in strife, we now live in peace; whereas we lived in confusion, we now live in the midst of good order; whereas we lived in ignorance, now we live in the midst of knowledge, we bask now in the light of eternity—in the rays of that light which surrounds the throne of God our Heavenly Father and our souls are satisfied, and we can rejoice and be glad, and thank God from morning until night for having bestowed upon us His everlasting truth. Why should it not be so?

We are taught to believe that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every soul that believes. Salvation from what? "Oh," says one, "salvation to our souls." It is the power of God unto salvation, the salvation not only of our spirits but of our bodies. In ancient days it saved the Jews, the Greeks and the Barbarians from error, from evil of various kinds, and it will in like manner save us. In heaven, we believe, it produces order, peace and happiness; and we expect, when we leave here, to go to a sphere where, under the influence of the gospel, every good quality of our nature will be developed. Why should we not receive, by the application of those heavenly principles to us and our lives here on the earth, the same results? They have produced them in days gone by, they are producing them now, and will continue to produce them as long as we live in accordance with them.

Now, my brethren and sisters, there is nothing left for us to do but to be faithful to that which has been revealed unto us. The evidences which we have received are of that character that we will be under the heaviest condemnation unless we live agreeably to the principles God has given unto us. We cannot plead, as many can, that we are ignorant; we cannot make excuses of this kind, for we are not ignorant; we are in the enjoyment of knowledge. We never went to prayer in our lives, in secret, and supplicated God in faith for the blessings that we needed that we did not receive the desires of our hearts, and we arose from our knees feeling that God was with us, and that His Spirit and power were near unto us, and resting upon us. There never was a time, from the day that we became Latter-day Saints to this day, that we have asked in humility and meekness for any blessing and have had to arise from our knees dissatisfied and empty; but we have always received