

REMARKS

BY

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON,

At the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Sept. 24th, 1893.

REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.

I have been very much interested in the remarks that have been made by Elder Moses Thatcher, and I am sure that when I say we were glad to hear his voice once more in our midst I only express the feelings of every heart. He has had a very severe illness, and for a while his life seemed to be almost nearing its close; but the Lord, in answer to prayer, coupled with good nursing and care, has restored him to comparative health, and I am very glad to hear him speak as he has today. I can bear testimony to the truths he has spoken concerning the Gospel and the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph and the future of this work. And this is the privilege that we all have. This constitutes the strength of this latter-day work. Every man and woman connected with it has the privilege of knowing for himself and herself respecting the truths that are taught by the Elders of this Church. The Lord has given His Holy Spirit to every one who has obeyed the Gospel in sincerity and in truth; and however little they may know in some directions, our Father, in His infinite kindness, has given them a knowledge in that direction which is of the utmost importance to them concerning their salvation. A man may not be very learned; he may not know much about the sciences of the world; he may not be able to comprehend many principles that are taught, but when the vital principles of truth connected with man's salvation are set forth in his hearing he is able to discern truth from error and to grasp the truth and testify to it. This makes him a power. And when thousands are united who are in possession of this gift, it makes a mighty power in the earth.

The First Presidency have just returned from Chicago, as doubtless you all know. We have had a very interesting visit. President Woodruff's health, notwithstanding we had some little fear about his enduring the fatigue of the journey, is better, I believe, than it has been since the dedication of the Temple. He has received benefit physically from the trip. Being with the choir was a source of continued delight to us, to see the manner in which the choir acquitted itself, the character of the receptions which were given to it, and the good feeling that was manifested on every hand. It has often been remarked since the choir left here that their visit would be productive of greater good than almost any number of missionaries. I am prepared to believe this statement. It shows how the influence of this work is going forth. We have an exhibition of the manner in which our Father can dispel prejudice and soften the hearts of the people, as He promised He would do from time to time, in behalf of His church. Suppose it had been announced five years ago that within

that period the Tabernacle choir would go to Chicago and enter upon a musical contest to which the singing organizations of the whole country had been invited to come and participate, and that they would be received with honor and be credited with the best singing, though only receiving the second prize, who could have believed it? It would have been a difficult matter for the people to have comprehended, under the then existing circumstances. And to be told that audience, after having paid a dollar for admission, would ask to have sung that hymn which is so sweet to our ears, the composition of Sister Eliza R. Snow, "O, my Father, Thou that dwellest," etc., would have sounded incredible to the bulk of the people. But it shows what the Lord can do.

At Chicago everything went off in the most pleasant manner. It would be difficult to ask for kinder treatment; in fact, I do not see how it could be given to us. I feel very thankful that this is the case. I am thankful to see people free from prejudice; to see them look at the Latter-day Saints as they truly are; to see us in our true light; and recognize the fact that we are struggling, with them, in our way, to advance the human family and to make progress. For there is a spirit of progress abroad in the world at the present time—a disposition to improve. Of course, there are differences in views as to how this progress shall be effected, and the methods that shall be adopted to achieve the ends. Naturally, we think that our method is the best. Others have not agreed with us in this view. But people now are almost compelled to acknowledge that, with all our alleged faults and sins, we have been making progress, and that we are a progressive people, and that the lines which we have adopted as our lines of progress are worthy of consideration and examination, because the results are such as to warrant the world in paying attention to this. Of course, we need not expect that there will be any very great hurry in acknowledging our worth or recognizing us in our true character. The air has been filled with misrepresentation. The very atmosphere has been so beclouded with falsehood and misrepresentation that it has been almost impossible to see us through it. But it is gradually clearing up, and men and women are beginning to look at us with different lights and to acknowledge that indeed the Latter-day Saints are accomplishing a great work.

Allusion has been made to our financial matters. I believe that to other communities if the same indebtedness and obligations had been resting upon them that have rested upon us, there would have been a great deal more financial trouble than we have had. There has not been a failure yet of any of our banking institutions. But I believe there would have been had it not been for the conservatism of the people and for the disposition to be patient and not get excited. I am delighted in seeing this feature of our character exhibited and recognized. The spirit which the Gospel brings is among the people. You can feel it. There is a serenity of mind, a calmness, and a disposition not to become excited or to run to extremes. I have remarked once before

here that in my intercourse with leading men I have endeavored to create the impression in their mind that we could be relied upon, and not be carried away by every will-o'-the-wisp. This is our true character, and it is well to have it understood and known.

Referring again to Chicago, there is an extraordinary spectacle being witnessed there in the convocation of this parliament of religions, as it is called. I suppose all of you who read the papers know more or less concerning this. While we were there, there was a Japanese, a learned man, who took the opportunity afforded him—very much, however, to the disturbance of some of his hearers—to give his reasons why the Japanese, or the heathen as he called them, did not receive Christianity. He held up the conduct of the Christians in a light that was not very flattering to us—if we come within that category. At any rate, he attacked the conduct of our nation as a Christian nation—and we are part of the nation—for the manner in which the Japanese had been treated, and said if the fruits of Christianity as they had been shown to them were the genuine fruits of that religion, they were not willing to accept Christianity. I thought that if the purpose of this parliament of religions was to see ourselves as others see us, his address would be one of the most profitable that had been delivered. It is better to have plain talk about faults and defects, and have them set forth plainly in a kind spirit, than it is to be told that we are perfect. I would rather listen to censures, if they are just, and fair criticism upon our methods, than to be told we had no faults. Common sense ought to tell every one that we are not faultless. We have many faults, and we have many characteristics that can be properly criticised. But, of course, if we are criticised, we would like to be criticised in the right spirit and with a proper feeling.

There are some things that are going to puzzle this parliament after a while, as I view it—that is, the orthodox Christian part of it. I consider we are Christians, though we are not recognized always as orthodox. But the orthodox Christians in their teachings have conveyed the idea that the Savior came and taught truths which had never been heard of before in the world. One speaker in his address said that there had been some truths that had not been revealed until Jesus came, and that there had been a great many things, for instance in the Old Testament, that were suited to a barbarous age, and that the men who practiced them had not much knowledge of God. He alluded to the sacrifices under and previous to the law of Moses and thought how improper they were; only suited to a barbarous people and age. But the inhabitants of the earth had emerged from barbarism and ignorance into light—conveying the idea that Abraham and Moses and the prophets knew but little concerning God and the plan of salvation as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. But here come the Buddhists and the followers of Confucius and they prove that long before the Savior was born many of the truths which He proclaimed were taught by their leading men. This is likely to furnish good ground for in-