

THE DESERET NEWS. WEEKLY.

DISCOURSE.

By Elder GEORGE Q. CANNON,
delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt
Lake City, Oct 7th, 1868.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

There have been some exceedingly important questions presented before us for our consideration at this Conference. I look upon them as of momentous importance, because upon their correct solution depends, to a very great extent, the perpetuity of our homes, and of the institutions which God has given us. God has entrusted to this people His gospel. He has placed in His church the oracles of the holy priesthood. He has given unto us the labor of upbuilding His Zion on the earth, and it is for us, if we expect to receive the reward that He has promised, to fulfill that trust faithfully, let the consequences be what they may.

Already the establishment of this work has cost the best blood of this generation. Already a prophet, a patriarch, apostles and numerous Saints have laid down their lives to establish the work with which we are connected. It is for us to decide during this Conference whether that blood has been shed in vain; whether the sufferings, trials, difficulties and hardships, our exodus from the lands which we formerly occupied and inhabited, our pilgrimage to this country, our sufferings since we came here, the labors we have expended in rearing this city and in extending civilization throughout this Territory—I say it is for us to decide to-day and during this Conference whether or not all this has been in vain; and whether we will build up His kingdom according to His divine commandment, or divide our strength and energy, and the talents with which He has endowed us in building up a system or systems that are opposed to this work. It is for us to decide whether we will submit to the jurisdiction of the holy priesthood, or whether we will renounce that jurisdiction and our allegiance to God. These are the questions which present themselves before us to-day. They are important questions, and should be decided carefully and understandingly.

I look upon the position which we occupy to-day as, in some respects, a critical one. Not that I anticipate any danger, or have any fears that we are going to be overthrown, if the people will only be true to themselves and their God. I know, as I know that I live and am speaking to you to-day, that this is the work of God. I know that He has promised that it shall stand for ever, and that it shall break in pieces everything that is opposed to it. But I also know that in order for it to accomplish this great work, and for us to share in all its benefit and blessings, we individually must be faithful to it, for the blessings which are promised to us are made conditionally. If we prove recreant to the trust that God has given to us, others will be raised in our places to take the great work in their hands, and carry it forward to its full consummation.

I look upon the present time, as I have said, as a critical one. I feel that if we do not listen to the counsels that are given to us, God has a scourge in store for the Latter-day Saints. I feel in every fibre of my body, in every nerve of my system that this is a turning point with the Latter-day Saints, and that there is required of us to-day, a decision upon this subject. We have now, for a long period, done as we pleased. We have gone here or there, and done to a certain extent to suit ourselves, regardless of God, the counsels of His servants or the interests of His kingdom, and regardless of every thing save our own general interests. The consequence is that there is growing up in our midst a power that menaces us with utter destruction and overthrow. [We are told—openly and without disguise, that when the railroad is completed there will be such a flood of so-called "civilization" brought in here that every vestige of us, our church and institutions shall be completely obliterated. When we are told thus plainly and undisguisedly, would it not be folly, nay insanity, for us to sit still, fold our arms supinely and await the crash without making a single effort to ward it off? A people who would be thus besotted would be unworthy the blessings which God has bestowed upon us.

I know there is a feeling of great confidence in the minds of our brethren

and sisters. They have, as President Young has often said, a great amount of faith; they have so great trust in God as to go and sell their grain, expecting that God will feed them whether the grain is in the bin or not. Some such confidence as this seems to pervade their minds respecting that which is in the future, and they manifest to a certain extent, carelessness and indifference in regard to carrying out the counsels that are given them, thinking that God, who has so signally preserved them in times past, will still continue to protect them. It is an excellent thing for us to have faith, but we should not have faith alone. Our faith should be associated with works, and the latter should correspond with the former. When our faith and works are united we can call upon God for help to enable us to accomplish that which he requires at our hands.

When I reflect, my brethren and sisters, on past scenes, as I have been doing while listening to the remarks of the brethren during this Conference; when I reflect on the condition we were in when driven from Nauvoo, and on our journey from the Mississippi to this valley—the sufferings of the women and children, and of the aged among us; when I reflect upon the hundreds we buried in Winter Quarters, and the privations the people endured while there; on the hardships the people were compelled to endure after their arrival here, and remember that all this was caused by the red hand of persecution, by mobocracy and the violence of wicked men, who envied us the possession of our Heaven-given rights. When I reflect upon all this, and also upon our circumstances now, I feel thankful for what God has done for us, and my prayer, oft repeated, has been "O God, never let this people again become a prey to mobocrats, never let us fall again into the hands of our enemies, but if we do wrong, do Thou chasten us and save us from the hands of those who have persecuted us." This has been my feeling. But when I look at our circumstances now, I feel as though the people had forgotten that which they have passed through, and were not averse to having a repetition of those scenes.

For years after we came into these valleys we felt as though we never wanted to see the face of an enemy again, and if we could only have bread and water and peace we could be content. We felt, as Bro. Pratt expressed himself yesterday, that if we had only wolf and deer skins to clothe ourselves with we would be satisfied, if we could only have peace. It was peace we came here to enjoy. It was for peace that we fled from our former homes and made the long and wearisome journey to these valleys.

But how is it to-day? What are the circumstances which surround us now? Why, here in the head city of Zion, in the centre city, where the foundations of the temple are laid and where the House of the Lord has been reared in which endowments and sacred ordinances are given, what do we find? We find a power growing up in our midst that threatens us, in the most plain and undisguised manner, with utter destruction. Is this so? It is, and has been so for years; and this power has been fostered by us as a people. It has grown, flourished and fattened upon us and the means we have produced. Is it not necessary, then, that something should be done? To my mind it is clear that some effort, such as has been proposed, should be made to concentrate the Saints and to set before them the principles of salvation in such a manner that they will understand the course they ought to take.

While the brethren were talking yesterday, and while we were South, I often had brought to my mind a circumstance that occurred in Nauvoo. It was on the 10th of June, 1844. I had occasion to go to the City Council of Nauvoo, with some proof sheets to the editor of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.—Elder John Taylor. I was a boy at the time, the printer's "devil," as it is technically called. While there, the subject under discussion, was the declaring of the *Nauvoo Expositor* a nuisance. Doubtless many of you recollect that paper, one number of which was issued by the Laws, and other apostates. You who do not recollect the paper may recollect reading about it. There was some excitement at the time in the Council. They had passed an ordinance declaring it a nuisance, and empowering the city marshal, John P. Green, to abate it. Joseph and Hyrum were in conversation at one of the windows of the room. Hyrum remarked to Joseph: "Before I will consent to have that paper continued to defame our wives, sisters and

daughters, as it has done, I will lay my body on the walls of the building." The sentiment as he uttered it, ran through me. I felt as he did. Yet we, for years, have had in our city a paper which publishes, if possible, more abominable lies about us and our people than were published by the *Nauvoo Expositor*, for the abatement of which Hyrum Smith said he was willing to die. We have not noticed it; we have suffered it to go on undisturbed. But the time has come for us to take this matter into consideration. Brother Pratt said yesterday that our papers scarcely ever alluded to it. We have never alluded to it; we have deemed it unworthy of allusion, it is so utterly contemptible; but I now lay it before you. What we are doing on the present occasion is to fully bring it home to our minds, that we may see and understand the nature of the power that is growing in our midst, which we foster and sustain.

I glanced over a few of these papers that are now being published here, and there are two from which I will read you a few extracts so that you may see the spirit which animates our opponents.

In an editorial of the 11th of August we find the following, written in regard to an extract taken from one of our papers:

"The hankering for seclusion and exclusion, and the foul spirit of the assassinator to secure them, stick out in every word of the above extract. It is as full of the fell spirit that has always actuated the crew, whose spokesman this Editor is in this instance, as the sting of the adder is of venom. But it is the vain and weak boast of a throttled bully. The day has gone by when hired bands of cut throats, "destroying angels," can ply their heinous avocation, and drive from the Territory, or murder all whom Brigham Young and his crew do not want in it. This fellow, who at the bidding of his master, Brigham, to whom he servilely and profanely bows as his god, insults the citizens of the United States by telling them that no one but those who bow as servilely as himself to Brigham, shall have leave to stay in this Territory, ignores the fact that the Salt Lake basin is a rich oasis in which nature has lavishly congregated all that is needed at the Half-way Point on the great National highway, the Pacific Railroad, and that it all belongs to the citizens of the United States, and not to Brigham and his crew. We speak advisedly when we say Brigham and his crew, for by reference to the doings of the Latter-day Saints' Legislature it will be seen that they have attempted to give Brigham and his set very great quantities of the richest part of this valley, including mill privileges, &c.

Hitherto this Territory has only been of interest to the people of the United States because of the infamous establishment sought to be set up in it in the sacred name of religion, and the motor of the warfare against the gross outrage has been alone the moral sense of the country, but now for the reasons just named, a commercial interest is added, and the two together will as surely as truth is truth, and right is right, crush out the vile thing and rid the country of the foul blot, peaceably if possible, but with a besom of destruction if that is inevitable." [Mark these words! How much they sound like the language of the manifesto of the mob in Jackson County, Missouri!]

"This Editor, in his shallow boasting, forgets, or purposely keeps out of sight, the truth that this Mormonism, which is sacrilegiously called a religion, is a heathenish heterodoxy, and that therefore the orthodox churches of the land, whose members number millions, will throw themselves against the spurious monster of Utah with all their force. This force only awaits the opportunity that the railroad will give it. In that day it will do you no good to buy a pitiful Congressman, and he must be a pitiful one indeed who would sell himself to Brigham."

In another article, which appeared on the 8th of September, we find the following:

"There are numbers of foreigners in this Territory, who have never abjured their allegiance to the foreign ruler from whose dominions they emigrated; and who have year after year voted for local officers and a delegate to Congress. There are others who, deceived by the representations of the Probate Judges, either wilfully or ignorantly made, that they had no power to naturalize, have taken out their papers from the Probate Courts, in many instances paying a larger fee therefor than the clerk of the District Court would be entitled to charge. These foreigners all occupy and hold more or less land in this Territory, and expect to avail themselves of the pre-emption law to the exclusion of actual citizens who are ready and desirous of occupying the land which the laws of the United States gives them a right to do. Many of these foreigners, either holding no papers at all or those spurious ones issued by Probate Courts, have since the passage of the act of 1862, prohibiting polygamy in the Territories of the United States, openly and persistently violated its provisions; and have been loud in the expressions of disloyalty towards the government of the United States."

If we were living in the days of Nauvoo and I had heard these extracts read I should have thought they were from the *Warsaw Signal*. But these execrable sentiments were not published in Warsaw, they were not published at the Sweetwater, at Austin, or Virginia in Montana, but they were published at Salt Lake City, in the centre stake of Zion, as at present organized. They are circulated through our streets, and placed in the hands of our children. They are disseminated throughout the Territory, so far as they can be; they are sent to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south, and everywhere as far as the influence of our enemies extends. In these infamous sheets the public are informed that the Latter-day Saints are assassins and everything that is vile, low and degraded. And no attempts are spared to excite against us in the minds of the officers of the parent government feelings of hatred, and to make them believe that a crusade ought to be inaugurated against us. When a paper of this kind is published in our midst and goes forth to the world unchallenged, it is a difficult thing for men and women outside of this Territory to realise that everything in its pages concerning us is false. If there were any greater evidence needed of our patience and forbearance and of our law-abiding tendencies than we have already given, they are to be found in the fact that the editor of this paper is not hung. (Hear, hear.) In any other community he would have been strung up to a telegraph pole; but here, in Utah Territory, in Salt Lake City, under the nose and in the eyes of the people and their leaders, this man who proclaims these infamous falsehoods travels our streets unnoticed and unchallenged. Let it be known throughout the world what we have submitted to in this respect, and there is not a man from Texas to Maine, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who would not say we are the most patient and forbearing people on the Continent, or we would not submit to it. In any other Territory that office would be "guttered" within five days.

I allude to this matter because this paper is sustained in our midst, and those whom we sustain, sustain it; our money pays for its subscriptions. Our money pays its editor, buys its ink, paper and type, and pays its compositors and pressmen.

I will refer to another instance of the growth of this antagonistic power in our midst. A short time ago a circular, got up secretly by certain reverend gentlemen dwelling in this City, and probably printed and mailed by night, was sent broadcast throughout the East, in which every vile epithet that so-called religious men could consistently use, was applied to us as a people. In this circular, these so-called Christian divines appealed as they said, from a strange land and from the midst of a strange people, to their brethren in the East, invoking them, if they wished to save this land from barbarism and to civilization to raise \$15,000 to buy a lot, on which a rectory might be established and a school built. And the purpose for which that school was designed was to inculcate the children of the Latter-day Saints with their damnable and pernicious doctrines. Who sustains this institution, and who sustains and has sustained this paper? You can answer these questions. Will we patiently submit to these things? Shall we bow ourselves as willing slaves to the yoke they would fasten upon us? (Cries of "No, No.") Well, then, if you will not bow to it, stop your trading with men of this class and sustain your friends; sustain those who want to build up the kingdom of God, who are one with us. If this fight must come and we have to cut off all from the church who will not reform in this respect, I would rather have it done now than wait until, envied by enemies, we are thrust out of our possessions at the point of the bayonet and compelled to flee to the mountains for safety. (Congregation said "Amen.")

As an individual, I have no fellowship with those who sustain the enemies of the kingdom of God. I never did have. From my childhood my heart has been in this kingdom; every pulsation of it has been for Zion.

For years we have submitted to this treatment at the hands of outsiders in our midst. The present paper has been, if anything, better than its predecessor, for that had no editor's name to it. Fostered on the hill here, its contributors were men who wore the uniform of our respected "Uncle." Its printers were men who were paid as soldiers. There was no name published at the head of its columns, and it was more base even than the present publication, because no one was responsible for its contents. I have