

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON,

At the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, August 6, 1893.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

In standing up before you this afternoon, my brethren and sisters, I desire an interest in your faith and prayers, that my mind may be directed to those subjects that shall be of the greatest profit to us; for I do not want to stand here and speak my own thoughts, nor to say those things that I may think proper; I would rather the Lord would dictate that which shall be said. To this end I desire His Holy Spirit. How do I know what you need? How do I know the yearnings of your souls, or that which will satisfy you and cause you to leave this meeting thanking the Lord for that which He has given? I do not know, nor does any human being; but the Lord knows, and I have never yet attended a meeting, when we have sought for the Spirit of God, that we have not gone from that meeting rejoicing in that Spirit and in the testimony of the truth. This is the beauty of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It feeds those who hunger after righteousness, it dispels darkness, it gives light, it imparts comfort and consolation, it lifts the soul, and lightens the burdens which rest upon the children of men.

The experience that we have had, as individuals and as a people, has been most remarkable. There are men in this congregation who have traveled thousands of miles to preach the Gospel of the Son of God as the ancient Apostles did—that is, without purse or scrip. They have traversed sea and land; they have labored in the cause of God efficiently and been the means of bringing hundreds, and in some instances thousands, of souls to the knowledge of the truth. They have gone out into an unfriendly and uncharitable world, where they have had but little or no sympathy, where all the religious world has been arrayed against them; and yet they have wrought great good, and they have won souls, they have returned rejoicing, even as the Apostles of old did, when they came back and told the Master that even devils were subject unto them. No other people that I know anything about have had such an experience. Men have gone forth trembling, because of their weakness. They did not know when they went out how they would succeed. But when they wanted clothing, God put it into the hearts of men to give it to them; when they wanted money, there were those raised up to furnish it. They did not have to go naked; they did not have to go without shelter; neither did they have to go hungry. I myself have been in this condition, as well as hundreds doubtless who are here today. I have had brethren remark with whom I labored, "What in the world are you going to do; your clothing is nearly gone; you must have some clothing, and where shall we get it?" They did not know; I did not know. But I can bear testimony today, in the midst of this congregation, that

during many years' labor in the ministry, without purse and scrip, I never went hungry, I never went destitute of clothing, I never had to go without shelter; when I needed money it was given to me, and I never yet in my life asked a congregation or an individual for any of these things, except to ask at a house perhaps if I could stay there over night.

On one occasion, on the Sandwich Islands, I went over from the town where I was living to Walehu, where Brother Francis A. Hammond (who now presides over the San Juan stake) and his wife were living, and I stayed with them over night. We were destitute of garments, and we did not know what to do about it. Money then in that country was exceedingly valuable. Why, they would have litigation over the price of a chicken, and it seemed impossible to obtain money to supply our wants. We knelt down in the morning and asked the Lord to open the way. Brother Hammond and I started to go to a branch about twenty miles distant. On our way through the hills we met a man who had been up to the place where I lived to get a Presbyterian preacher to come down and perform a marriage ceremony; but the minister was gone, and he asked me if I would go with him and marry the couple. We went with him. It was a Canadian half-breed that desired to be married to one of the native women, and after the ceremony was performed and we gave them some instruction, he gave us five dollars. That five dollars was as large an amount as five hundred dollars would be under some circumstances. If it had dropped out of the heavens it could not have been more unexpected than it was. But it answered the purpose, and the Lord put it in the way. The Presbyterian minister lost the five dollars by being absent; but I expect he could spare it better than we could.

This is only a little incident, but I could stand here and relate hundreds of similar incidents, how the Lord opens the way before His Elders. I was sent on a mission to California. I had translated the Book of Mormon in the Hawaiian language, and we had succeeded, by borrowing money, in procuring a press, and type and paper with which to publish this. Our agent had bought it and sent it to the Islands while I returned home; but after it had reached the Islands, Brother Parley P. Pratt, who was in California, desired to have the press and the type and paper sent over to San Francisco for his use, and he issued a prospectus for a paper called the *Mormon Herald*, and wrote home to the Presidency, desiring that I should be sent to assist in the labor. I had only been home a few weeks after an absence of five years. President Young told me that he thought I had better get ready and go, and two printers were selected to go along as Elders and help in the work. We reached San Francisco on Sunday, with our means about exhausted, and to our surprise we learned that Brother Pratt had started home. I followed him to his camp, and found that everything had closed up in San Francisco. There had been an attempt made to buy a vessel in order to bring the Saints from the

Sandwich Islands to this country, and a good many Saints had invested their means in this. Some rogues had got possession of the vessel by giving a bottomry bond for it; after which they took it down on the coast of South America and had it wrecked. The people lost their money, and it discouraged everyone. Brother Pratt said he scarcely knew where I could could get a meal of victuals in San Francisco; the people felt so badly. I was a comparative youth at the time, and it was quite discouraging. One of the leading men of the branch in San Francisco said, "If you have got a thousand dollars, you can start the press here." I told him I had not a thousand dollars, but the Lord had sent me and I was going to do what I had been sent to do. The result was the Lord opened the way wonderfully. Money increased in our hands. A twenty dollar gold piece would go as far, it seemed to me, as a hundred dollars would under other circumstances. Everything worked to the accomplishment of that which had been designed. Two thousand copies of the Book of Mormon were published, bound and sent to the Sandwich Islands—at least the greater portion of them, and a paper was published, branches were raised up, scattered Saints were organized, and a great work was done. The Lord raised up friends and put means into the hands of the Elders, and that which seemed so dark and impenetrable was changed, and the Lord's blessing rested down upon the efforts that were made. This was all done without purse and scrip. Of course, money was furnished; but the Lord did it, men simply being His agents.

So it has been all through the history of God's people. The labors of the Elders of the Church have been of such a character as to inspire them with the greatest of faith and confidence in God. When He wants a work done, there is nothing that can prevent its accomplishment, if the men that attempt it will only have faith. See how this was illustrated in the case of the sons of Lehi. Lehi was impressed of the Lord to send his sons back to Jerusalem for the brass plates that were in the possession of a man who belonged to an older branch of the family, Laban by name. The Lord had shown to Lehi that if he were to go into the wilderness and across the ocean to the land which He had promised to him and his children without some kind of record, there would be danger of their falling into idolatry and forgetting their origin. Therefore, it was necessary, in the mind of the Lord, that these records should be obtained from Laban. Lehi went to his elder sons and explained to them the necessity of the case, and he wanted them to go back to Jerusalem and get the plates from Laban. But they had no faith. They said Laban would kill them. He was a man of influence and power, and it was no use for them to go back. They did not want to go. Their father asked too hard a thing of them, and they did not feel inclined to do that which he said. Lehi then went to the fourth son and explained to him what he wanted, and he replied, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the