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## REMARKS

Made at the Semi-Annual Conference, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Tuesday Afternoon, October 5th, 1897, by

**PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.**

I feel thankful to God my Heavenly Father that I have lived to see the day when I have one of my own posterity called to this office—a privilege which all my predecessors, presidents and counselors, who are in the spirit world, have had. Their sons are sitting before me here. I need not mention them; you know them yourselves. I have had this desire in my heart, and the Lord has granted it unto me, and I am very thankful for it. I am satisfied that these two young men we have called will magnify their callings. I am satisfied that it is in their hearts to do it.

I want to remark here the difference—I was thinking of it while the brethren were talking—between the position of my son and our brother here and my position when I was called to the Apostleship. While in the worst apostasy we ever had in this Church, when Apostles and leading men were fighting the Prophet of God, the Lord told me to rise up, choose a companion, and go to Fox Islands. A great deal that I have done, and in my missions, I have been led by inspiration of Almighty God to do. I knew no more what was on Fox Islands than I knew what was on Kolob. I chose Brother Jonathan H. Hale as a partner. We went through Canada, and there met John E. Page, who was laboring there. We administered to one woman that was possessed of the devil, which was cast out. We healed the sick, and the blessings of God were with us. We crossed on Lake Ontario, and from there down to Albany, and Farmington, my native place. I there met my father and my mother. It was the first time I had seen them since I had been a Latter-day Saint. I held a meeting among them. I baptized my father, my step-mother, my sister, several uncles and aunts, and organized a small branch of the Church, composed of all my relatives except one—a Methodist preacher, who was boarding at my father's house. Old father Smith told me, when he blessed me, that I should bring all my father's house into the Church. I certainly baptized everybody that was in the house at the time I was there. I then went on my way to Fox Islands. When I got there I found two congregations—a Baptist minister, a meeting house, a Baptist congregation, on the north island; a Methodist minister, a Methodist congregation, without any meeting house, on the south island. I commenced preaching there, and very soon saw why the Lord had sent me there. There was a people there wishing for the ancient order of things. I baptized most of those congregations. Without dwelling upon it, I will say I baptized over 100 while there.

While in the ministry there I received a letter from Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, in which he told me that the Lord had given him a revelation, and named to me the persons that were called to fill the places of those who had fallen. My name was among them. He said that he wanted me to gather up the Saints I had baptized and bring them to Zion. What were the circumstances? I was on an island of the sea. There was not a horse or an ox on the island. There was not a man or a woman that knew how to harness a horse. I told one of the brethren, who had some money, that we must furnish a train of horses, wagons, harness, etc., and he proposed to advance the money for that purpose. He went with me and we bought about fifty horses; and then I had to match these horses, and get harness to fit them. I went to a wagon-maker and engaged twenty or twenty-five wagons. I did this in order to prepare the people to go with me, according to the words of the Prophet. I arranged everything, agreed with this brother to furnish the money, and left in advance with the understanding that they were to leave the first day of September. The letter to me was dated the first of August. I went to Maine, as my wife was there with her first child. I waited for this company to come to me, but they did not come till the first of October. We had then to travel from Maine to Missouri through snow, rain, and mud. However, we passed through it all, and got up there, according to the commandment of the Lord to me.

That was the way I was called to the Apostleship, and what I had to go through. I have felt from that day to this that it has been good to serve the Lord, good to honor God and to obey His commandments. No matter what we may be called to do, or what office we may be called to fill, if we trust in God and do our duty, we will be carried through. Of course, I am here among you now. But I have been on the sick list a good while. Still the Lord has blessed me, and I have got back to my former state, in a measure, of health and strength. How long the Lord will permit me to live I do not know anything about; but I have to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all these affairs with myself. I have been edified at the teachings that have been given us at this Conference. What President Smith has said, what President Cannon has said, is true. They have spoken upon principles that we should lay to heart.

I tell you, brethren and sisters, the God of heaven has set His hand to build up Zion, in fulfillment of all the revelations of God to man from the days of Father Adam down to this day. The counsels that have been given here today are just and true, and we ought to observe them. I cannot sin, you cannot sin, we cannot turn from the commandments of God in anywise, but we are the losers by it. Again, I will say to this congregation, God Almighty will afflict these

Latter-day Saints if they do not pursue the course they are called upon to pursue. The Lord will build up Zion and carry out His purposes; but we will be chastised unless we listen to the counsels of the servants of God. If these Latter-day Saints turn to the right or the left, on political questions or on other principles, to separate themselves one from another and from the commandments of God, the Lord Almighty will hold them responsible, and they will be chastised for doing it. I know this as well as I know I am alive. I am anxious for the salvation of the Latter-day Saints. I do not know anything about what you are on politics, but we should be united together and labor together to build up Zion. We have been called from the nations of the earth to do that; and if we do not do it, the judgments of Almighty God will rest upon us. I feel myself that the time has come when we ought to look around and about ourselves, and see what we are doing and what we should do. My prayer to God is that we may open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our hearts to understand the word of the Lord and the responsibilities we are under. We stand here, a little handful of men and women in the eyes of the world, but we are called to build up Zion.

Here we have four Temples, thank the Lord our God! Into those Temples we enter and redeem our dead. We have blessings which have never been given to any other generation since the days of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The Lord has raised up a people for this purpose. You hold the keys of the destiny of your fathers, your mothers, your progenitors, from generation to generation; you hold the keys of their salvation. God has put that power into your hands. But if we do not do what is required of us in this thing, we are under condemnation. If we do attend to this, then when we come to meet our friends in the celestial kingdom, they will say, "You have been our saviors, because you had power to do it. You have attended to these ordinances that God has required."

I will say to this congregation that the very men whom God raised up to lay the foundation of the American government—those noble men, from Washington down—have been to men in these Temples and required the ordinances of the House of God at their hands in their behalf. They have told them the position they occupied in the spirit world, and those men have gone forth and fulfilled these requests, and those noble men have received the ordinances of the House of God. A great many things have been required of us as a people, and as far as we have fulfilled them, so far we are justified. But do not let us lose the hold we have got. Do not let us turn our backs upon the commandments of God, and do those things that will place us in difficulties in days to come.

The eyes of the heavens are over us; the eyes of God himself, the eyes of