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## BLESSINGS NOT APPRECIATED.

*Discourse delivered at the Utah Stake Conference, Provo, Sunday Afternoon, January 14, 1894, by*

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

We have had a great deal of excellent instruction today, and no doubt that which has been said has prompted many reflections, which will be very profitable to us if we have the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance after we leave here. I do not know any people upon the face of the earth who have so many privileges in this respect as the Latter-day Saints. The Gospel is preached in great simplicity, accompanied by power; and there is no subject connected with our present or our future existence that does not receive attention from the Elders who speak to us. In this respect our position is different from that of any other people. I doubt whether there ever was a people upon the face of the earth, considering the length of time that the Priesthood has been in our midst, who have had greater opportunities of learning concerning essential and important matters than the Latter-day Saints have had. There has been a continuous flood of instruction and counsel, and reproof and warning when needed. We have walked in the light, and not in the dark, and have known the mind and will of God concerning us. This is a privilege that ought to be esteemed beyond price by every one of us.

It is most delightful to be in meetings where the Spirit of God reigns, controlling the speaker and softening the hearts of the hearers. I do not take any pleasure in meetings where this is not present. It is a blessed thing to know that God is with us, and that He condescends to pour out His Spirit and give unto us a testimony that He is with us. While I was sitting here today I remembered that which occurred last Sunday in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City. One of our young men was called to speak, and of course, being unexpectedly called upon, he came up to the stand with a great deal of fear and trembling; but he spoke under the influence and power of God, to the delight of all who heard him. I do not know when I have listened to a discourse with greater pleasure than I did to his; and the cause of my rejoicing was that God was with us. This young man supplicated the prayers of the congregation in his behalf, and God heard those prayers. This is our condition. We are the peo-

ple of God, acknowledged by Him. We have the testimony from Him that we are His people, and that we are doing that which He accepts. It should be our aim, when we come to conference, not to be satisfied unless we feel the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the power thereof resting down upon us. We should come with our hearts prepared for that, seeking for it in faith, our desires ascending unto our Father in heaven in the most fervent manner to soften our hearts and to give unto us His Holy Spirit. We should ask Him also to give it unto those who address us, that they may speak the words of life and salvation, that each of us may go from the meetings feeling that the Lord has been with us, and has given us bread to feed our souls and to strengthen us in the midst of our trials, our afflictions and our perplexities. One of the great blessings that we enjoy, my brethren and sisters, is that we can go unto God, and go with a knowledge that He will hear our prayers. If we are in sorrow, if we have heavy burdens, or are in any manner perplexed, He will hear us; He will lift our burdens, lighten our sorrows, dispel darkness, and fill us with light and with that heavenly feeling that comes from Him through the presence of the Holy Ghost.

In listening to the remarks that have been made concerning the Priesthood, my mind has gone back to early days. I am satisfied of one thing—we hold the Priesthood of the Son of God too lightly. President Woodruff has told us how long he labored as a Priest. Such a thing is unheard of nowadays. When a young man goes on a mission, the feeling is, both on the part of the young man and of those who send him, that he should at least be an Elder, and that his efficiency is curtailed, to some extent, if he does not possess that Priesthood. While President Woodruff was telling us about the powers of those holding the office of a Priest, I recalled my own experience. I labored as a Seventy a good many years, and I possessed as a Seventy all the authority that was necessary apparently to do all that was required at my hands. So it is with an Elder, and, to a limited extent, with a Priest. Of course, a Priest cannot confirm members of the Church and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost; but in every other respect there is scarcely a limit to his usefulness and his power. I have felt that we have made these blessings too cheap. Our young men do not seem to value the Priesthood as their fathers did. One reason of this is that when a young man wants to be married, and the young lady is a member of the Church in good standing, the natural desire of the parents of both

parties, as well as themselves, is to go to the Temple and have the sealing ordinance performed. To do this the young man must have the Melchisedec Priesthood; and in some of the Stakes complaints have been made to us about the carelessness of these young men after they have been ordained. In the Salt Lake Stake they get up in the priesthood meeting and say, in response to questions propounded by the President of the Stake, that they will attend the meetings of their quorums and to the duties of the priesthood that is about to be conferred upon them; yet many fail to do so, and bring themselves under condemnation thereby.

I believe that our endowments are too easily obtained. Men and women go to the Temple who do not understand or value the precious blessings that are bestowed upon them, and I have felt for years that something should be done to change this, so that instead of it being necessary for a man to receive the Melchisedec Priesthood, he will first manifest his efficiency in the Aaronic Priesthood and show his capabilities and good desires before receiving the higher Priesthood. I firmly believe that this will be so some time, and that men will not get the fullness of the endowment with the ease that they have done, but will receive that part which belongs to the Aaronic Priesthood. These blessings become so common that many people do not value them or know how to use them.

When the Prophet Joseph first communicated that the Lord had revealed to him the keys of the endowments, I can remember the great desire there was on every hand to understand something about them. When the Prophet would speak about his desire to complete the Temple in order that he might impart unto his fellow servants that which God had delivered to him, a thrill went through the congregation and a great desire for this filled their hearts. I can only judge as a youth, but I know that was the feeling among the adult brethren. Then when he did communicate the endowments to a few persons before the Temple was completed, the whole people were moved with desire to complete the Temple, in order that they might receive these great blessings therein. They were valued beyond price. A man that could go in and get his endowments was looked upon as though he had received some extraordinary blessing—something akin to that which the angels received—and it was estimated and valued in that way.

How is it now? There is a complete indifference, it may be said, in relation to it. Young people go there stupid, with no particular desire only to get