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THE IMPORTANCE OF REVELATION.

*Discourse delivered in the Tabernacle,
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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

My beloved brethren and sisters, it has fallen to my lot this afternoon to occupy this stand. How long I may address you will depend upon the amount of your faith and influence that I may receive, and of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that I shall enjoy. Having been called to occupy this position, and having, as I believe, quite a degree of faith in the authority of the Holy Priesthood, I do expect to be endowed with a portion of light and intelligence while I am acting in this capacity that may probably do some of us, at least, some of the good that we require.

Our presence in this assembly would seem to indicate on our part a desire to be enlightened in those things that more immediately pertain to our religious and moral obligations. We certainly did not come here this afternoon to discuss politics; neither did we come expecting to be enlightened on propositions affecting exclusively our business interests; but in accordance with our religious training we have assembled here that we might lay aside our temporalities and devote a goodly degree of our attention to the obligations we are under to learn and to do the will of God our Heavenly Father. This, at any rate, I think is the feeling that should inspire every worshipper who has assembled in this Tabernacle on this occasion.

The position that the Latter-day Saints occupy in the world is unique. We stand here representing the only true Church of Christ. We represent to the children of men that we have received the oracles of the Holy Priesthood, and that the administration of that Priesthood is in the hands of those who have received that authority direct from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in this generation. We do not make this assertion without believing it. We have not embraced this faith simply because we consider it the most tenable; but we have embraced it because we believe it in its entirety, and by believing and obeying it have received the Holy Ghost, which has borne testimony to us of the truth of the teachings that we have accepted. We, therefore, in the name of that Jesus whom we serve, and being entrusted with a mission from Him, call upon all the children of

men to give heed to the glorious intelligence, that God has spoken from the heavens in these last days, and has called upon all men everywhere to repent of their sins, to be baptized for the remission of them, and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It has always been a marvel to me why the children of men regard this invitation with so much indifference, and how little interest it seems to possess for them; and I try to discover the reasons for this indifference. Certainly there is nothing of greater importance to the inhabitants of the earth than such a message—a message emanating from our Father in Heaven, through our Lord and Savior, commanding all of us to repent of our sins, to be baptized for the remission of them, and to receive those blessings that will qualify us for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. For the sake of illustration, if you will indulge me a short time, I will give you a little of my own experience, to show how this testimony may reach every heart.

Forty-two years ago, religion was a subject that possessed no attraction for me. I was not then a believer in the Bible, nor in the divinity of Christ. I had been brought up with associates who affected scepticism. I say "affected" it, because I believe, like myself, they never looked far into the subject of religion. One day I read an editorial in the "Family Herald," a London paper, headed "Live for an Object," and it impressed itself very deeply upon my mind. The gist of the argument was something like this: "Every young man should set before him an object in life. If he would live for that object and make all other things bend to its attainment, there was hardly anything under the sun that he might not accomplish." I read and re-read the article. It seemed to fill me with a desire to live for an object. And I went to work to consider what object I would live for. The first thought that came into my mind was that the object I ought to live for should be to learn and to do the will of God. But I did not believe in religion. I thought there was no truth in Christianity. That it had been instituted for the purpose of aggrandizing a few and holding the masses in bondage and superstition. Then I replied to that thought this way: "It may be true, however, although I don't understand it." Having reached this conclusion, I made up my mind that there was only one way to find that matter out, and that was to go on my knees, in humility, to the God that I believed existed and was the hearer and answerer of prayer. I prayed to Him night after night and day after day, the burden of my prayer being, "O Lord, if there is

any truth in Christianity, put it into my heart to understand it." I attended religious meetings. If I were to tell you frankly the truth, I would say that the result was that the more I listened to the preachers the less I liked them. I attended deistical meetings; I liked them. Atheistical meetings I could not endure. But I kept up my prayers, and abstained from all evil associations. I remember the first tangible answer that I got to my prayers. I went to my lodgings one night, in the year 1853, (I had never heard of the Latter-day Saints up to that time) and in going into my room I saw a bound volume laying on my bed. It had been left by a stranger seeking lodgings. I picked it up and found it was entitled "Orson Pratt's Pamphlets." I commenced perusing the book. I opened at "The Absurdities of Immaterialism." Had the pamphlet been written to meet the needs of my mind on that occasion, it could not have been better written. I was then studying a work called "Cooper's Analysis of the Holy Scriptures." He was an unbeliever and was attempting to show the impossibility of the Bible being the Word of God, because it apparently contradicted itself in so many places with regard to the personality of the Deity. "The Absurdities of Immaterialism" met every point. I read it through with a relish. I turned to another pamphlet and another, and still another. I cannot describe my feelings at the time. To my intense astonishment, when I got through and thought I would retire to rest, I found it was nearly six o'clock in the morning. I had been reading the whole night, and was filled with a spirit that I had never known the like of before. Of course, it was a marvel to me what it all meant. I knelt down and thanked God there and then for hearing and answering my prayer; for the germ of life and light had entered into my soul according to my desires. And I firmly believe that unless I had earnestly desired the truth, it would never have so impressed itself upon me.

You will excuse me speaking about myself; but I wanted to illustrate this fact stated by the Apostle, that "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Some people say that revelation from God is incredible, because unnecessary, and unnecessary because the Creator has endowed us with the light of reason, which, if we will listen to its dictates and give heed to its instructions, will form for us all the religious and moral obligations that He will require of us. Now this sounds very nicely. It is the creed of the moral philosopher. Let us examine it for a minute or two. Man-