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REMARKS

Made at the Weber Stake Conference, Ogden, Monday, October 19th, 1896, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

It affords me a great deal of pleasure to be in attendance upon this conference, and I trust that while I attempt to speak to you I may have the assistance of your faith and prayers. I enjoyed the treat that was given to those present this morning in listening to President Wilford Woodruff and Elder Franklin D. Richards, two brethren of such long and faithful experience in the Church. I sometimes wonder how long the Lord will preserve these aged brethren and give us the benefit of their experience and wisdom. I think I never heard President Woodruff talk for fifty-five minutes with greater ease and give so many interesting items of his experience as he did this morning, and all who listened were greatly favored. He has been preserved to such a great age and has had such a remarkable experience that the Latter-day Saints cannot prize too highly the opportunity of listening to him, the Prophet of the Lord, the mouthpiece of our Heavenly Father to all Israel, the fourth in line from President Joseph Smith, and one who was associated with the Prophet through a great share of his life and labors. I feel that all Israel are blessed in having his presence and labors among us, and that our faith and prayers should be exercised in his behalf, that he may remain among us for a great many years. We have learned to have confidence in him and to love him; for he has so thoroughly proved his faith and devotion to the Prophet Joseph, to the Prophet Brigham Young and to the Prophet John Taylor through all their administrations. We have felt in the case of all our leaders, that it was a calamity when they have been taken from us. We have always wanted them a little longer, and have done all that we could to preserve them and to keep them among us. It is a rare thing that we want changes in the ranks of the brethren whom the Lord has chosen to represent Him among His people. We rarely ever want a change in Apostles, or in Presidents of Stakes, or in High Councilors, or in Bishops. We become acquainted with our brethren and with their integrity and devotion, and we learn to love them, and we do not contemplate with pleasure the time when we must part with them. Every time I see President Woodruff stand upon his feet to talk, I feel as though I want to listen to him just as

long as he can possibly talk. Doubtless all Israel feel the same. We feel in our councils of the Presidency and Twelve that as long as he can talk to us, sitting or standing, giving us advice and counsel and the word of the Lord, we are honored and favored more than we know how to appreciate. As in the case of the Prophet Joseph and his other successors, we may not fully appreciate our present Prophet till after he has gone; yet I believe that Israel has learned, and is learning better all the time, to appreciate their faithful brethren, not only those who preside over them, but their neighbors and kindred who are faithful. The Gospel is calculated to bring us into a nearness to each other, to make us one, to correct in us all our errors, our transgressions and our weaknesses, and to give us strength by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost for the discharge of our duties. It is important that we submit ourselves to the inspiration of that Spirit.

I was delighted this morning also in listening to Elder Richards speaking in regard to the necessity of our obtaining the Holy Ghost, emphasizing what President Woodruff had said concerning the words of the Prophet Joseph and the Prophet Brigham in relation to the importance of the presence of the Holy Ghost. It is the especial office and calling of the Holy Spirit to be with us, to bear witness to us, to convince us of the truth, and to enable us to become acquainted with the Father and with the Son. No man can know the Father except by the revelations of the Holy Ghost. No man can know the Son but by the Holy Ghost. No man can know the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Prophet Brigham Young, the Prophet John Taylor, the Prophet Wilford Woodruff, the Apostles of olden as well as of modern times, to be men of God except by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They may believe that these are great men, and possibly that they are servants of the Lord; but to know it, and to know the truth and the plan of life and salvation, no man can only as the Lord reveals it. But when the Lord does reveal it, it is just as plain and simple to the mind as anything that we see or hear. All our faculties are convinced by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is more than the testimony of man. It is more than the voice of the Lord. It is more than the visitation of the Father, or of the Son. For it is an abiding testimony. It is the channel of communication between heaven and earth. Through it comes all knowledge, all intelligence, and all testimony. It has always been the order of conveying knowledge and understanding in regard to the things of God.

Hence the importance of our taking a

course to obtain the Holy Spirit and to keep it. It is not enough that the gift of the Holy Ghost should be conferred upon us at our baptism; not enough that we should actually receive it; not enough that it should bear witness to us of the Father and of the Son and of the truth of this work; but it is important that it should dwell with us and be our companion, so that the testimony within us may be kept bright unto salvation. It is not possible to obtain eternal life and go back into the presence of the Father, except we are led by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. No man has ever been led back into the presence of the Father by an angel. It is not the business of angels to be with us constantly, to lead us by the hand, and to inspire us. As we were taught this morning, when it is necessary angels are sent to perform a certain work; but when it comes to establishing in the souls of the sons and daughters of God a knowledge of the truth, that is the office and calling of the Holy Spirit. When the Savior announced that any man who would do the will of the Father should know of the doctrine, He knew that if a man would do the will of the Father He would receive the testimony of the Spirit of the Lord, and there is no power, no light, no intelligence, no knowledge that can begin to compare with the light, intelligence and knowledge of the Holy Spirit; for it is the power, influence and wisdom of God. That Spirit is planted in the soul of every man and woman who serves the Lord and keeps His commandments; and when that Spirit abides in our hearts, then we know without a question in our hearts, in regard to the doctrine. When we lack that knowledge, or when that knowledge is scant and hardly exists within us, it is because our labors are scant and our devotion to the Lord hardly exists; for I say that just as fast and to the extent that we serve the Lord and keep His commandments, so does the light and inspiration of God come into the soul of man. The doing of the will of the Lord opens the windows of the soul, and that light and revelation pour into the soul as readily as air pours into these windows when they are opened. That Spirit is ready to come into the soul of every child that is born into the world, at the first opportunity, although it can be easily offended and driven away. When there is a sign of repentance and humility and devotion in the soul of man, that light is ready to enter there and to bear record of the Father and of the Son. It is our business, my brethren and sisters, to make ourselves acquainted with that Spirit, to obtain it and to retain it, and not allow it to depart from us. When it departs from us, we should turn to the