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REMARKS

Made at the Sixty-eight Annual Conference of the Church in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Sunday afternoon, April 10, 1898, by

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AND

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

I have been requested to occupy a few moments of your precious time this afternoon. I greatly desire the sweet and enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit to direct what I shall say to you, that the time may be occupied acceptably and profitably. I have been greatly edified in the instructions that have been given from day to day during this protracted and exceedingly interesting Conference. A great deal has been brought forward for our consideration, deeply interesting, and should be exceedingly profitable unto us.

We are living in times of momentous importance, times which are marvelously significant from every point of view in which we may consider the conditions of the human family at the present time, whether religiously or politically, or whatever view we may take of it. Jesus, when on the earth, informed His associates that in the latter times there should come many false Christs, and there would be a great deal of wars and rumors of wars in the earth, etc. This same Jesus, risen from the dead, and again speaking to His Prophet in the last days, has spoken to us more definitely and significantly upon this point than He did at that time to the brethren with Him. He was pleased to say to His Prophet, Joseph Smith, on the 25th day of December, 1832, the day celebrated as the anniversary of the birth of Christ, that there should come wars in this land, and specifically stated that they should commence in the state of South Carolina. This revelation was preserved in the archives of the Church until July, 1851. Some nineteen years after this revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph it was brought out and published to the nations of the earth. Since then it has become common property to all the inhabitants of the earth who have been pleased to examine the revelations of God to the Latter-day Saints. It was stated that this was to be the commencement of wars that should cause the death and misery of many souls. It was not until 1861—about ten years after this revelation was published—that this was fulfilled. And it was not done in a corner, nor in any obscure part of the earth, but it was fulfilled just as the Prophet said it should be. The first guns of that war were discharged at Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, South Carolina. It is now a matter of national history, and all the human family should know that it was given to Joseph Smith in 1832, some twenty-nine years before it occurred, and which cost this nation so

much anguish and the lives of nearly a million of precious souls.

This has come to pass, and the same Lord Jesus Christ has given us through the same Prophet Joseph Smith to understand that the day is near at hand when peace shall be taken from the earth, and that it has begun to be taken from the earth. These things have been read in our hearing during this Conference. Now, we may as well understand that as the other great revelation of 1832 was fulfilled, which the whole human family know who are of civilized or semi-civilized condition, just so certain is this also likely to be fulfilled. It furthermore states in the revelation that has been read to us, that the time will come when all nations shall be at war; when every man that will not take up his sword to defend himself against his neighbor will have to flee to Zion. These prophecies indicate a growing tendency in that direction. And I wonder if the latter part that I have just quoted is not already tasted in its bitterness in the island of Cuba near to our coast though they have not the chance to flee to Zion, but have to take up their sword against their neighbors and have to contend for their liberties, and are at the present time in a horribly distressed condition, objects of the charity of the whole nation and of the other nations of the earth.

Living then in times when these tremendous prophecies are hanging over the heads of the human family, partly fulfilled, partly unfulfilled, and when the angel of the Lord came with his message in these last days declaring the Gospel revealed again and bringing especially the word, "the hour of his judgment is come," shall we take no notice of these great and wonderfully significant sayings? The brethren who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, will feel the necessity of maintaining closer business relations than we have been in the habit of doing for the last decade to two. If we had hearkened to the good counsels that were given to us by our President, and made it a point, as they and the officers of our cities and counties did, to make once a year a clean sheet, and get no further into debt, we would have been in a much stronger business condition today than we now are, and many men would have saved themselves sleepless hours who now have to lie awake to study how they are going to raise the money to meet their obligations and to save their homes from being taken away from them.

We live in a time when the nations of all the earth are so disunitedly united that the tension of their connection is drawn to its utmost limit in many places. We need not only to notice the case here on our coast, but it is so on the other side of the globe. Nations are ready to go to war, and anxious for the opportunity. It seems as if the spirit of war had gone forth until great men who pose as patriots, and would like to be considered states-

men, are ready and clamoring for war. Latter-day Saints have always taught the principles of peace and good will. This came to us through our Savior. But He told us that we were going to come to a time when we would have contention and strife even in our families; when a man's enemies should be they of his own household—another affirmative statement of that terrible consummation that was before referred to. The world are tending to that. But the Latter-day Saints are tending to peace, to union, to fellowship, and love. While in the midst of our deepest affliction, harrassed, tormented, scattered and peeled, and coming here as far as we could get away from civilization to make a home, I say while we have been passing through these things we have had a peace within us; we have a settled conviction of the knowledge of God; we know that He has accepted us as His children; we know that He has manifested himself to us frequently by gifts and blessings and manifestations not a few. Thus have we been right along. And while we do not nor are we under any necessity to, make any great demonstration or indulge in any spread-eagle discourses to convince the people that we are at peace, and that we wish they would keep the peace, that has been the way we have felt. But the Lord has told us that Zion would be the only people on the earth that would be at peace in the earth. Therefore, we want to overcome evil with good, cultivate this spirit and the keeping of the commandments of God, and get that spirit that Brother Joseph was talking to us of this morning, to know that we are born again, that His Spirit is in us, that we live by it and are guided by those principles; that it is the light that leadeth our feet, and we want to live so as to keep it growing brighter and brighter till the perfect day.

Considering these are the times and conditions in which we live, it seems to me that the teachings we have had during this Conference have been wonderfully adapted to our condition, not only the spiritual portion, but the exhortation to the wise management of our temporal concerns. I would urge the brethren to make all reasonable effort to get out of debt, and live honest and honorable before all men. If you have but little, realize that that much comes as near being yours as anybody's, except the Lord's, who has made you the steward over it.

We see then that the growth and tendency of all influences existing among the human family are towards discord, violence, warfare, contention and strife. The union that used to be felt among people in neighborhoods is being lost. The confidence of men with men is being lost. We hear it common among the people that we must treat every man in that way that we do not know but he may turn to be dishonest.

Now, in the light of the great work that is going on, we want to cultivate