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CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

Remarks made at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday, April 6th, 1895, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord may rest abundantly upon us, especially our brethren who are called upon to speak; for it is an unusual task to address so large an assembly. There is generally danger that we pitch our voices too high and they break upon us. I shall be pleased if I can speak just loud enough to be heard, and yet not waste any volume of my voice.

I esteem it a very great privilege to attend these general conferences. It is a very important matter that the people should gather together twice a year in general conference to transact the general business of the Church, by common consent. We also meet four times a year in every Stake to transact the business of the Stake. We meet at least once a year in our wards to transact the business of the wards. Changes continually become necessary through deaths and removals and other causes, and it seems essential that the organization of the Church and all of its departments be kept perfect, that there shall not be too much labor resting upon a few, but the responsibility be properly shared, according to the design of our Heavenly Father in the organization of His Church. I presume that this Church organization is a perfect one when it is kept complete, with the First Presidency and the general authorities. The labor is properly divided, and no one needs to be overworked. Then when our Stakes are complete in their organization, with the Presidency and a High Council, with Bishops and their counselors, and the regular helps in government, there is no need for any part being neglected. Hence I say that it is a very important part of our lives and experience that we meet together on occasions of this kind, not only to transact the business and keep the Church organization perfect, but that we may also receive the word of the Lord and the counsels of the Holy Spirit through the Presidency and the Apostles, who hold the keys of the kingdom, and who have held those keys from the beginning and will hold those keys to the end. When these men stand up before us to give us instruction, they do so as the oracles of heaven. They do not stand in their own strength, nor in their own wisdom. They are not given to prepar-

ing, by the light of their own experience and judgment, discourses to be presented before the people; but they store their minds with information, with every particle of light and wisdom and understanding that can be obtained from our Heavenly Father, and they stand before you to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And when they speak, they speak forth scripture; their words are scripture, just as the words of the Apostles Peter, James and John and of the Nephite Apostles are scripture. Their words are the words of truth, the words of the Lord, and they are particularly suited to the requirements of the people at the present time. The words of the Lord that came through His servants in olden times were important and were fitted to the condition of the people who received them. The words of the Lord given to the Nephites under the direction of the Savior when He visited this continent were suited to the requirements of that people at that time. Yet the truths enunciated to the peoples of the east and of the west, so far as they pertain to doctrine and the plan of life and salvation, are suited also for us. But we find ourselves at times in emergencies and conditions that require the counsels of the Lord just suited to the occasion—counsels suited to a people located in the valleys of these mountains, not to the people of Jerusalem 1800 years ago, not to the people in South America 1400 years ago and more. Israel has been gathered today from the four corners of the earth, in answer to the establishment of the principles of salvation by the Savior. We have cities and towns to build; we have country to subdue, and counsels peculiar to the locations and to the circumstances that surround us are needed. We have an endless variety of experience and of difficulties to meet and grapple with in this life; and it is necessary that there should be three men standing as the presiding authority of the Church upon the earth, representing our Father who is in heaven, one man being the mouthpiece of God to the whole world, and a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, such as President Woodruff is today, and such as President John Taylor, President Brigham Young and President Joseph Smith were. As these men were in their day, so is President Woodruff today; and when President Woodruff's work shall be filled, some other man designated by the voice of God will stand at the head of this great work upon the earth. The Lord will provide the man, and He will provide him two counselors, who shall also be men of God, competent to voice the mind and will of God to the people. Then associated with these three are the chosen Twelve, the Twelve Apostles of

the Lamb, who have been selected to stand by the Presidency, and to be a presiding traveling High Council to the Church, who hold the keys of the kingdom, with authority to regulate and set in order the affairs thereof. And under the discipline of the Church, that has so perfectly developed during its experience of sixty-five years today, this work has come to completion in its organization.

It is the business also of the presiding authorities of the Church to use their helps in government—Presidents of Stakes, High Councils, Bishops and their counselors, and the quorums of the Priesthood; to not only set in order occasionally, but to keep the Church in order, that it may be cared for in its organized capacity, and that the proper attention shall be given by the courts of the Church to see that whatever of unpleasantness or disagreement arises shall receive proper attention in the proper time; that if difficulties threaten, if disorders appear on the surface, they shall be looked after, just as the skillful physician looks after the health of a patient. It is the duty of these organizations to attend to these affairs. You who are acquainted with the conduct of the affairs of the Church know that the Presidency of the Church, when their attention is called to any special part of the kingdom or to any mission, or if there is any difficulty that needs prompt attention, they never neglect the matter, but messengers are forwarded at once. If there is difficulty in any Stake of Zion; if difficulty should arise in any mission, as did arise once upon the Sandwich Islands, and Apostles were sent post-haste to set in order and regulate the affairs of that mission—when such occasions arise, the First Presidency are competent and are authorized to take care of them, and they have all the helps that they require. They have not only the Twelve Apostles that can be sent with authority and power, but they have the Presidency and High Council of every Stake, and the Bishopric of every ward, as well as the quorums of the Priesthood and other helps in government in the midst of the Church. So that the Church is carefully cared for and the people are nourished, corrected, reproofed, instructed and looked after, that their salvation may be secured. This is necessary; for we find that it is the nature of men to wander and to fall into sin. It is the nature of men to love the things that we ought not to indulge in. It needs therefore careful attention from the various authorities of the Church, so that whatever of evil presents itself may be checked in its incipency. We have found in our experience that where the brethren who have charge of the various depart-