

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 10.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, FEBRUARY 24, 1894.

VOL. XLVIII.

TALKS TO THE SISTERS.

Discourses delivered at Ogden, December 13, 1893, at a Conjoint Meeting of Relief Society and Young Ladies' Association of Weber Stake, by

PREST. WILFORD WOODRUFF.

Forenoon Session.

Brethren and sisters, good morning. God bless you. I am happy to meet so many of the Latter-day Saints upon an occasion of this kind. What I may say to you this morning will, of course, be very limited, compared to what I feel in my reflections concerning ourselves and the Church and Zion of God with which we all stand connected.

Sixty years ago this month I listened to the first sermon in this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that I ever heard in my life. At the close of the meeting I invited the Elders home to my house, and I read the Book of Mormon all that night, and the next morning went down with the Elders to a stream of water and was baptized.

In embracing the Gospel I had the consolation that the Lord had preserved me from my boyhood up and given me a realization of my hopes and prayers to see an Apostle of Christ, an Elder, a man of God, who could teach me the Gospel that I had read of in the Scriptures in my boyhood. In the Sabbath schools I had read of the Gospel of Christ, and reflected on the kind of religion the Savior and His Apostles taught, and what the fruits of that religion were as manifested by every Apostle and by the Savior Himself. And though a very young boy, I had a strong desire to hear some man teach the same Gospel that I read of in the New Testament. I could hear of no man who did this. Said they, "we live in the blaze of the light of Christ's Gospel," and with the next breath declared that "we do not need those gifts and graces which characterized the ancient Gospel in those dark ages." Then, said I, give me the dark ages of the world if this religion will give me power to unlock the gates of Heaven and converse with angels, and enjoy the gifts of healing and the powers and blessings that I saw by the Scriptures were manifested in the Apostolic Church. And I prayed the Lord to allow me to live on the earth to see an Apostle and Prophet who would teach me the same Gospel. With the feelings I then had I would have gone a thousand miles to see an Apostle.

After much prayer and anxiety the Lord promised me that I should live to see a Prophet, and live to hear the Gospel, and live to embrace it and preach it to the children of men. The

fulfilment of these promises is what makes me thankful when I meet, as I do this morning, with so many Latter-day Saints under such favorable circumstances.

I commenced my missionary labors soon after I was baptized; went up with the Prophet Joseph to Zion's Camp to visit our brethren in tribulation; and from that hour until this it has been my lot and privilege to stand with the Saints of God and bear my testimony to the Gospel of Christ. I traveled something over 175,000 miles, and without purse and scrip a good deal of the time, and preached the Gospel; waded swamps, swam rivers, enduring many privations and hardships. I went to Missouri holding the office of a Teacher, and held meetings with the Teachers' quorum, and was afterwards ordained a Priest, and started out on my mission.

On my late visit to Jackson County I was struck with the comparison between the past and the present. Now the Mayor of Independence, with a fine carriage comes out to meet us and give us a cordial welcome; while on my mission in 1834, to escape the violence of mobs, we took refuge in the cornfields, and appeased our hunger with the growing corn. I was struck with the marvelous change we now found in our favor. The Lord hath in His own time and way for the accomplishment of His purposes wrought this great change concerning Zion, the Prophets and the Saints in the day in which we live.

I have been through all these things in my day, and through the history of Mormonism; traveled hundreds of miles with the Prophet Joseph; been forty years with the Prophet Brigham Young, and nearly the same time with the Prophet John Taylor, and remain until today. I have seen the progress of the work of God. I have never lost any faith with regard to the final consummation of the Zion of God, the work of God. For the Lord has set his hand to the fulfilment of His divine word written in these sacred books—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. All will be fulfilled in the earth, and that too in our generation or in the generation of our children who are rising up. The great work that is being performed today is marvelous in the eyes of the inhabitants of the earth and of the Heavenly hosts. The word of God is true, and He means what He says, and there is nothing that has been written by inspired men but what will come to pass.

Now I am meeting with the sisters of the Relief Societies. Many of these sisters are aged. I want to say a few words to you in regard to your position, in regard to these various organizations.

They are all of God. Your Primary Associations are in the right direction. Our sisters go forth and take our little children, and gather them together in these Primary Associations. There they are taught of the Lord. They are taught to pray. They are taught righteous principles and purity and virtue. The minds of these little children are imbued with the principles of the Gospel, and they are taught to carry out in their day the principles that the Lord has revealed for the salvation of man.

And then come our Sunday schools. We have some seventy thousand children in the Sabbath schools. It is a joy to see the progress of the work of God upon the earth; and these institutions are glorious to me, and we feel pleasure in these labors to prepare the rising generation for the work of God upon the earth.

The Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations are filling important missions in preparing the youth of Zion for usefulness in their future respective spheres as Elders of Israel and mothers of Israel, and to carry out the work of God.

The last mission that President Joseph Smith, the Prophet, gave to me and to my brethren the Twelve Apostles was, that we should round up our shoulders and bear off this work "or you will be damned," and he spoke the truth in the power of God. I bear my testimony of these things because they are true. The Lord has shown where His power is and where His spirit dwells. Read the signs of the times. Our Prophets who laid the foundation of this Church have sealed their testimony with their blood; and some of the Apostles have laid down their lives for the testimony of God to this generation.

President Young led us here by the power of revelation, and he remained in the flesh until he had finished his mission. He laid the foundations of the Temples here, and filled the valleys of these mountains for many miles with cities, towns and villages and dedicated the foundation of our Temple.

President John Taylor followed him, until he filled his mission. Finally the Presidency rested upon your humble servant.

I marvel that I am here. I know that the Lord has preserved my life. Two powers have been at work with me, one to kill me and the other to save my life; and the Lord has preserved me in the midst of all the difficulties that I have passed through until the present time.

I realized this until the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple; and when that work was passed through, I felt that my mission was ended. I anticipated the dedication of that Temple for fifty years; for I attended the dedication of that