

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 19.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, OCTOBER 26, 1895.

VOL. LI.

DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, October 6th, 1895, by

PREST. WILFORD WOODRUFF.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

President Woodruff read from Section 68 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, as follows:

My servant, Orson Hyde, was called by his ordinance to proclaim the everlasting gospel, by the Spirit of the everlasting God, from people to people, and from land to land, in the congregations of the wicked, in their synagogues, reasoning with, and expounding all Scriptures unto them.

And, behold, and lo! this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth;

And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved unto by the Holy Ghost,

And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation:

Behold this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants:

Wherefore be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.

He then said:

I have read these verses this morning before you that you may understand the position that I occupy before God, angels and men. I have a desire to speak a short time to the Latter day Saints; but I want you to understand, as I have read here, that I am not capable, nor is any man capable of teaching the children of men and edifying them in the Gospel of Jesus Christ without the Holy Spirit, without revelation, without the inspiration of Almighty God. Therefore, I want the faith of the Latter day Saints, and also their prayers. I need the Spirit of God to assist me, as does every man who attempts to teach the people the things of the kingdom of heaven. I have been sick for about a week, confined mostly to my bed and room; but I have felt that I did not wish this conference to pass without meeting you. For the last day or two I have had the privilege of mingling with my friends, and I have a desire to express myself upon some things appertaining to our day and generation and to the work of God.

The question arises in the minds of the people in our day and generation,

Does President Woodruff have revelation? Do his counselors have revelation? Do the Twelve Apostles have revelation? Do this people have revelation? We live in too important a day and generation, and in the midst of too important events, for any man to be qualified to lead the people of God one hour without revelation and inspiration from Almighty God. And at this point I want to say a few words with regard to this principle of revelation. Read the history of the world. Old father Adam, three years and a half previous to his death, called together seven of his sons, all High Priests—Seth, Enos, Jared, Mahalaleel, Canaan, Enoch and Methusaleh—with the residue of his posterity, and there he stood on his feet for a long time, clothed with the Holy Ghost and the power of God, and he prophesied unto his sons what should take place concerning them and their posterity to the end of time. Follow this out; take all those early patriarchs and prophets, and later ones, too, and they all have had revelation. They had to have it. Whenever a city became ripened in iniquity, and men blasphemed God and broke His commandments, the Lord Almighty raised up prophets and inspired men to warn that city and the inhabitants thereof of the judgments of God which should come upon them unless they repented. Jeremiah was called to warn Jerusalem and Judea in the reign of King Zedekiah, and in doing so he stirred up the anger of the people against him, and he was cast into a dungeon and abused in almost every way, because he told them what was coming to pass unless they repented. He did not praise them; but he told them that they were committing sin and breaking the laws of God, and if they did not repent, the judgments of God would overtake them. In reading of how they persecuted him and what he passed through, a man would almost expect to read in the book of Jeremiah that he said to them, "You may all go to hell for what I care, I am not going to endure these things." But you cannot read it there; for the Lord in calling him had said unto Jeremiah:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah gave forth the word of the Lord, and not one word fell unfulfilled. And so with every other prophet.

Take the whole history of the world down to the present generation, and has there ever been a time when the people of God did not need revelation? I say, nay. Now, I would ask this congregation; I would ask the Jews, the Catholics, the Protestants, I would ask the

clergy of all nations: Can this mighty dispensation, of which every prophet has spoken, be fulfilled, and can these great events transpire in the earth, without revelation from God? No, most assuredly not. God never gave to a man a greater dispensation than the one in which Joseph Smith was called and ordained of God to organize the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It required revelation. It will require it to the winding-up scene. Zion cannot be built up without it, prophets and apostles cannot do their work without it, nor can the nations of the earth be warned of the great judgments that are at the door without it. Therefore, we say to all men, Joseph Smith was called of God by revelation. And further, we say that no man ever did or ever will have power to warn the world, to preach the Gospel, or administer in one of the ordinances of the house of God without the Holy Priesthood. It is just as necessary in the last days as it was in the days of Christ and His Apostles, or in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah. You cannot separate these things; they belong to the same God, to the same salvation, to the same principles of eternal life.

I have sat and listened to every Apostle that is before me now bear record during this conference. Did not these Apostles speak by the Holy Ghost and the power of God? They did, and their testimony is recorded in the great library of the celestial kingdom of God. They could not edify us without it. I would to God that the inhabitants of the earth would get rid of the idea that revelation ceased when Christ was put to death. It is a false doctrine. Revelation belongs to the salvation of the children of men.

Again, why did the Lord choose such a weak man as Wilford Woodruff to preside over His Church? Why did He choose Joseph Smith—an illiterate boy, as he was called? Why has He chosen that class of men? Because He could handle them. He has chosen men that will acknowledge the hand of God. The question has been asked me many times, Why did not the Lord choose some of the great divines of the day? Because it is not His manner of doing business; it never has been. You may take the apostles and prophets in any age of the world, and they have been very humble men. They are in this day and generation, or the Lord could not handle them. That is the reason the Lord has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the wise, "and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." Could Joseph Smith rise up and boast before the God of Israel that that was his work? Could Brigham Young? Could John Taylor? Can Willford Woodruff?