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## REMARKS

Delivered at the Utah Stake Conference, Provo, Sunday, July 19th, 1896, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

It is understood with me, when I arise before a congregation, that I have their faith, their good feelings and their prayers to enable me to say something that will benefit both hearer and speaker. In union there is strength, and if we are united here this afternoon we may be able to make a strong appeal to our Heavenly Father and receive His blessing; for we have a right to know His mind and will concerning us and what He would have us to do. We have a right to be strengthened; for I know we are weak, and sometimes we are in despair, because the enemies that injure the body are not always the enemies that we have to contend with. There are influences abroad in the earth that would destroy the faith if possible of those who have covenanted to serve the Lord. Consequently we need spiritual food; we need instruction, and the way pointed out by which we may serve our Maker more effectually. If it were not for the blessings of God, we would not be here. I have seen the day when this land that we are upon might have been classed as a battle-field. Not far distant from here our brethren contended for the life of the colony of Latter-day Saints who settled this country. The blessings of the Lord have made us to prevail, not only over our physical foes, but also over our spiritual adversaries. Up to the present time the Latter-day Saints have been a success; the organization of the Church has been a success. We are no more a hidden people; but we are set upon a hill, where we are seen of all men. Truly there is no civilized nation upon the earth but has heard of the Mormons, and knows more or less about them. Our fame and the name of the Prophet Joseph Smith have spread over all lands. His name is known for good and evil in all the world. Those, however, who trace us know nothing of our character and of the great work wrought out by the Prophet Joseph and his fellow laborers.

I know that the letter of the law is not to be relied upon at all times and in every instance. The plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were given to the Prophet Joseph, by an angel, and the angel gave him instructions, but Joseph Smith had no authority then to preach the Gospel. This Book of Mormon might have been spread abroad all over the earth, and it

the authority had not been given by which the doctrines it contained could be made applicable to the people, it would have been simply the letter without the spirit and the power. Yet we prize this book as given to us through the angel Moroni, bringing to the knowledge of men the principles of the Gospel which had been hidden. These principles had been revealed formerly and were contained in the Bible, yet they were hidden to the minds of men. No man understood them, no man was authorized to teach them, and the world was in darkness. And so far as the Book of Mormon itself is concerned, the world would still have remained in darkness if nothing more had been revealed. But when one divinely authorized came to the Prophet Joseph and to Oliver Cowdery and laid his hands upon them and conferred the Priesthood, then there was authority to act; then the way was opened up before the Prophet of God to begin the great work of this dispensation. I give a great deal of credit to John the Baptist and to Peter, James and John—under God, of course—who restored the authority by and through which the principles contained in these books are made available to the human family; for we know that these volumes would have remained a dead letter if this authority had not been given to man. These blessings stand in a dual capacity. The spirit must accompany the letter. The letter alone killeth, but the spirit giveth life. This fact may be traced through the lives of men. One of the first commandments that was given unto man was to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. But this could not have been fulfilled had not the great plan of salvation been instituted, and made available by and through the administration of our God. We frequently find fault with these things and wonder why it was necessary that one should be slain for many—one who was without sin should be slain for the sinner. But no one was forced into this condition. The Lord, seeing the power that is wielded through love, volunteered to draw all men unto Him and to win their undying love by making a sacrifice of His own life. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends." Lucifer proposed a plan for the salvation of man, in which he said he would save every man by compelling men to do right; but this was rejected. Jesus saw the necessity of man retaining his agency, and he proposed to draw all men unto Him by the cords of love. His offering was a voluntary act on His own part. He did it to bring about the salvation of man; that as in Adam all died, so in Christ should all be made

alive. It was the great love which He had for His brothers and sisters that prompted Him to make the sacrifice. He is the great exemplar. He is the Captain of our Salvation. He has given His life to accomplish it. And we stand today as free men, having our agency, exercising our own will and doing as we please, so long as we do not infringe upon the laws of the land or the laws of God.

Now, it is evident that no man can become acquainted with Christ except He is revealed to him. I read in this Bible that Peter, though he ate with Christ, and traveled with Him, and saw the marvelous things which He did, did not know that He was the Christ till He was revealed unto him. Christ himself said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Therefore, if we know Christ we have had it revealed unto us. I have not seen Him; you may not have seen Him; but those who did see Him and labored with Him were no better off than we are, for they did not know Him until He was revealed unto them by His Father in heaven.

In this day our Father has seen fit to send forth the message of life and salvation to the people, and to gather in his sons and daughters from the nations of the earth; and through the restoration of the Priesthood, power is given unto man to seal upon earth and it shall be sealed in heaven. Again this blessing has come unto man, and the power is restored that will enable him to return into the presence of God if he is faithful. But this depends upon ourselves and the course that we elect to follow. If a man serves God of his free will, he will become like God. If he elects to obey the principles of light and life, he will become as those faithful ones who have gone before, and who now enjoy the condition which Abraham occupies—resurrected beings, possessing immortal bodies. But what would we do without the Priesthood? Where would be the work of God? Where would the people be? Where would you Saints be who have come from foreign lands, if the proclamation of the Gospel had not gone forth by the power of the Priesthood? You would be in darkness, listening to the repetition of words by those who understood not what they read.

I will read a portion of a revelation contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants:

Verily, thus saith the Lord, it shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh their sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am.

The Latter-day Saints have accepted these terms, and the time will come, and