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BY

APOSTLE WILFORD WOODRUFF

DELIVERED

In the Tabernacle, Sunday, May 14th, 1882.

REPORTED BY GEO. F. GIBBS.

I feel disposed to read a charter in the Bible; the chapter that I shall read contains, perhaps, a stronger chain of truth concerning life and death, the fall and redemption of man, the redemption and resurrection of the dead, than any other I know of in the Bible.

The speaker then read the 15th chapter, of 1st Corinthians, and said:

Before proceeding to make any remarks upon this chapter, I wish to say that there is no person who knows, before entering this building who is going to address the assembly, and, therefore, we have no prepared sermons to deliver, it may be a miller or it may be a mason, it may be a carpenter, or it may be a farmer, a lawyer, a merchant or otherwise; this practice is peculiar to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the tendency is to make the speaker, whoever he may be, depend upon the spirit of inspiration to guide his thoughts and dictate his remarks. And, as a general thing if God, through this means, gives us nothing to say, we can say nothing to instruct the people.

I have often expressed my views with regard to the position we occupy before heaven and earth, before God, angels and men, and the views of Jesus and His Apostles and Elders as they have come down to us give a key to what I wish to say upon this subject. If there is an Emperor, a King, a President, a ruler of any nation or people, whether a monarchy, kingdom or republic, that takes away from any of his subjects or fellow-citizens the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, he deprives them of a right which the God of heaven has guaranteed unto them. These are the sentiments of the Latter-day Saints. We believe in giving to all men freedom, freedom in spirit and action; we believe in religionists of every creed and faith enjoying the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, which right is guaranteed unto them by God Himself; and the man or set of men that would deprive their fellows of this God-given right assumes a responsibility that they must answer for before the bar of God. If I had the power and control of the whole world I would never think of depriving any man, woman or child of this natural; this inherent right, whether their religious views were true or false. Can you find from history that God at any time forced any man to heaven or Hell? No, you can not. And we as Latter-day Saints claim this right and privilege for ourselves to worship God, to believe in God, and to believe in the records of divine truth—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the revelations of God.

A public speaker, a teacher of the people is held responsible before God and his fellowmen for the doctrine he teaches; if he teaches any other gospel than that laid down in the Bible and taught by the ancient Prophets and Apostles he is under condemnation, no matter who he may be. Paul realized this fact so keenly that he, in speaking about it on one occasion, said: "Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;" and he repeats this sentiment two or three times over.

I wish to say a few words on one of the verses I have read, the 22nd: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The world, more or less, has found a great deal of fault with Mother Eve and with Father Adam because of the fall of man; what I have to say with regard to it, I express as my own opinnion. Adam and Eve came to this world to perform exactly the part that they acted in the garden of Eden; and I will say, they were ordained of God to do what they did, and it was therefore expected that they would eat of the forbidden fruit in order that man might know both good and evil by passing through this school of experience which this life affords us. That is all I want to say about Father Adam and Mother Eve. Adam fell that man might be, and men are that they might have joy; and some have found fault with that. It has been said that God commanded Adam to multiply and replenish the earth; and it has been said that Adam was not under the necessity of falling in order to multiply and replenish the earth, but you will understand that the woman was deceived and not the man; and according to the justice of God she would have been cast out into the lowly and dreary world alone and thus the first great command could not have been complied with unless Adam had partaken of the forbidden fruit. We acknowledge that through Adam all have died, that death through the fall must pass upon the whole human family, also upon the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and all the works of God as far as this earth is concerned, it is a law that is unchangeable and irrevokable. It is true a few have been translated, and there will be living upon the earth thousands and millions of people when the Messiah comes in power and great glory to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, who will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, from mortality to immortality. Nevertheless they must pass through the ordeal of death involved in the change that will come upon them. The Savior himself tasted of death; He died to redeem the world; His body was laid in the tomb, but it did not see corruption; and after three days it arose from the grave and put on immortality. He was the first fruit of the resurrection. There was no prophet, no saint or sinner, from the days of Father Adam to the days of Jesus that ever rose from the dead through the keys and power of the resurrection. Although we read of some who were restored to life, but this was not what is termed the resurrection.

With regard to redemption, Paul said: All the children of Adam are redeemed from the fall by the atoning blood of Jesus, and all infants are redeemed as well as other people. There is no infant or child that has died before arriving at the years of accountability, but what is redeemed, and is therefore entirely beyond the torments of hell, to use a sectarian term. And any doctrine, such as the sprinkling of infants or any religious rite for little children is of no effect whatever neither in this world nor in the world to come. It is a man-made doctrine, and therefore not ordained of God; and I will defy any man to find in any of the records of divine truth any ordinance instituted for the salvation of little innocent children; it would be unnecessary on the face of it, and the only thing that can be found is where Jesus took the little ones in his arms and blessed them, which is and would be perfectly right to do according to the order of God. But the sprinkling of infants or the doctrine that infants go to hell under any circumstances is a doctrine ordained of man and not of God, and is therefor of no avail and entirely wrong and displeasing in the sight of God. So much about the infants. I will say again they are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and when they die, whether of Christian, Pagan or Jewish parentage, their spirits are taken home to God who gave them, and never go to suffer torments of any kind.

Another subject I wish to say a few words upon: "In Christ all are made alive." Since the day that sin entered into the world men have been held accountable for their own acts, and it has been known upon this earth from the day, at least, that Cain slew his brother Abel. And sin has presented itself in different grades; there are murder, blasphemy, lying, stealing, whoredom, and abominations of many different forms, which have followed man from generation to generation. For there was a power that dwelt upon the earth in the form of thousands and millions of fallen spirits, one-third of the hosts of heaven, which had been cast out of heaven with the devil in the great rebellion, who remain in that condition and who do not possess tabernacles, and they make war upon the Saints of God wherever or whenever they are found upon the earth, and upon all men; they seek to destroy the whole human family, and have done so from the beginning until the present day, and they have not ceased their labors nor do they intend to while Satan remains unbound. All the children of men who arrive at the years of accountability are guilty of sin, all being inclined to do evil as the sparks are to fly upwards. "What shall we do to be saved" was the cry of the people who heard the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the same may be said to be applicable to all men in every generation. The answer would be, obey the law of the Gospel. This is the safe means given for the salvation of the human family. The law of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which Gospel contains the laws of God; it contains the ordinances, it contains the commandments, and any man that breaks them is guilty before God. And I will here say, as I wish to be understood by all men, that [illegible] but one Gospel upon the earth though to-day there are six hundred three score and six different religious faiths, all more or less diverse one from another; but there is but the one true and everlasting Gospel, anh never will be any more, and it is the same Gospel that was taught to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Patriarchs, and which Jesus and the Apostles preached; it never did vary in the least in one single instance, nor never will. And I say, if we teach any other Gospel than that which was taught by Jesus and His Apostles, we teach a false Gospel, and shall be under condemnation before God, angels and men.

What is the Gospel as taught by Jesus himself? The very first principle was faith in the Messiah; this was the first principle ever taught to man. When Adam, after being driven from the garden of Eden, went to Adam-ondi-Ahman to offer sacrifice, the angel of the Lord asked him why he did so. Adam replied that he did not know, but the Lord had commanded him to do it. He was then told that the blood of bulls and goats, of rams and lambs should be spilt upon the altar as a type of the great and last sacrifice which should be offered up for the sins of the world. The first principle, then, ever taught to Father Adam was faith in the Messiah, who was to come in the meridian of time to lay down His life for the redemption of man. The second principle was repentance. And what is repentance? The forsaking of sin. The man who repents, if he be a swearer, swears no more; or a thief, steals no more; he turns away from all former sins and commits them no more. It is not repentance to say, I repent to-day, and then steal to-morrow; that is the repentance of the world, which is displeasing in the sight of God. Repentence is the second principle.

I have heard many men say, no ordinances are necessary, that belief only in the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary to be saved. I have not learned that myself from any revelation of God to man, either ancient or modern. But on the contrary, faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism for remission of sins were taught by patriarchs and prophets and by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Baptism for the remission of sins is an ordinance of the Gospel. Says one, baptism is not essential to salvation. Jesus not only taught it but rendered obedience himself to that requirement, not that He was baptized for the remission of sins, but, as He said, "to fulfil all righteousness," thus in this, as in all other respects giving the example for all who follow. When these principles of the Gospel are complied with a man is then a fit subject to receive the Holy Ghost; and this holy gift is bestowed to day as it was anciently, by the laying on of hands by men possessing the authority to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel. These are the first principles of the Gospel which we Latter-day Saints believe in and teach to our fellow-men.

Joseph Smith received the ministration of Angels, and he by revelation organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and he was taught by those who ministered unto him what to teach to the people, which was the everlasting Gospel.

Again, men received the Holy Ghost through the imposition of hands, after being baptized for the remission of sins. The Holy Ghost was imparted in that way, according to the promise of those who preached the Gospel. Joseph Smith when he organized this Church in 1830 organized it by revelation; and while we had hundreds of churches and systems and religions, not a single denomination upon the earth at that time preached the Gospel as taught by the ancient prophets and Apostles, or had a church organized on the earth with prophets and Apostles, or with signs following the believers as in ancient days. Can you tell of one? I never heard of one until I heard the Elders of this Church preach the Gospel and set forth the order of God. When God commanded Joseph Smith to go forth and organize the Church, what authority had he to do so? None at all until he was ordained under the hands of those who had held the keys of the priesthood upon earth. And I will say to this assembly, in the days of Jesus Christ He taught these principles to the Jews; He brought the Gospel to the Jews and established His kingdom among them, and it came with all its gifts, graces and powers: the sick were healed; devils were cast out; the gifts were manifested among them. But the Jews rejected Him, and they finally put Him to death.—He and His Apostles. He came to His own Father's house but He was not received; and then, according to command, this Gospel went to the Gentiles—we are all Gentiles in a national capacity, we are not Jews, the Jews are another class of men; they put the Savior to death, and have suffered for 1800 years in consequence,—they have been trodden under the feet of the Gentiles even until the present day. Those that took part in that deed and those who sanctioned it said, Let His blood be upon us and our children after us. The Gentile Judge was willing to release Him because he could find no fault in Him; but the feeling and sentiment of the Jews was, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" What infidel is there, no matter who he is, who does not believe in God, let him read the revelations of heaven and see the fulfillment of prophecy from the beginning of Genesis to our day, and he will see them fulfilled to the very letter. There is nothing that has been predicted by Jesus or the Apostles but what has already been fulfilled to the very letter as far as time will admit, and what has not will be. When, I say, the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles it went to them in all its power, its beauty and glory, Priesthood and ordinances as it was offered to the Jews. And Paul, in writing to the Romans told them not to be highminded, but to fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, who were the Jews, because of their unbelief, how could he be more merciful to the unnatural branches, who were the Gentiles? Has there been the true Church of Christ upon the earth since the Apostles were slain? Can you find a Church upon the earth organized as it was in that day? No not one. The Gentiles followed the example of the Jews in their unbelief and in putting to death those who bore the holy priesthood; and instead of the Church of Christ has sprung up every kind of Church during the last 1,800 years. But in these the last days God has again restored the everlasting Gospel; and any man who believes the Bible [illegible] fulfilment of prophecy without believing that God would send again to the earth angels to deliver that Gospel. And why send an angel for this purpose? Because the Gospel was taken from the earth in consequence of the unbelief of the Gentiles and the powerful opposition that was brought against the comparative few who represented it. And in fulfilment of the revelation of St. John, John the Baptist came to Joseph Smith and conferred upon him, after a period of preparation on his part, the Aaronic Priesthood which authorized him to preach and to baptize for the remission of sins, and to administer the sacrament, but not to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. In due time, however, Peter, James and John appeared to him also and conferred upon him the Melchesidek order of Priesthood and Apostleship, which gave him the power to organize the kingdom of God upon the earth. These are truths whether the world believe them or not. It makes no difference; it is the work of Almighty God, and He is the originator of it. How is it with the Elders of Israel? God has called men from the plow, the hammer and anvil, from the carpenter's bench, etc., unlearned and weak mortals, and they have been sent out to the world to bear record of this new and everlasting gospel restored in our day. And what have they said to the methodists, the Baptists, and all other religionists and classes of men. God Almighty has given unto me a dispensation of the Gospel and I offer it to you; he that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that I am his servant having His Gospel message to declare to all those to whom I am sent, and repents and is baptized for the remission of his sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost. This has been the purport of the message we have borne to men and nations for the last fifty years. And now if God has nothing to do with this, how is it that we have been able to gather together thousands and tens of thousands from about all nations under heaven by the simple proclamation of the Go-pel-message? How long would it be before Joseph Smith or any other man who would go forth bearing the message that we do, and making the promises that we make, would be found out to be an imposter unless the promises he made were genuine and looked upon in such a way as to give entire satisfaction to those who hearkened to his word? The whole secret of our success as far as making converts is concerned, is that we preach the same Gospel in all its simplicity and plainness that Jesus preached, and that the Holy Ghost rests upon those who receive it, filling their hearts with joy and gladness unspeakable, and making them as one; and they then know of the doctrine for themselves whether it be of God or man. And this Gospel of Christ which we offer is what has led this Church from its first organization until to-day. And, as I have often said, had it not been for the Gospel revealed to us, we might have labored until we were as old as Methusaleh, and Utah to-day would have been as barren as it was in 1847 when we first came to these valleys. At that time we found a barren desert, yes, as barren as the desert of Sahara, with no mark of the Anglo Saxon race. But travel through Utah to-day and we find houses and cities, gardens and orchards, meeting-houses and tabernacles and school-houses and dwellings, with the blessing of God attending the labors of the people; and a community of people from almost every nation taken from the various sects and parties, and they are here through the inspiration of Almighty God, and I know it. We have not had power of ourselves to influence any man or woman with regard to these things. They have been influenced by the testimony of Jesus Christ and by the Gospel of the Son of God. These are principles by which all men are saved. All men are saved by and through the blood of Jesus Christ, through obedience to the Gospel.

I realize our condition and the position occupied by this generation. I know we are looked upon as a bad people, and we are considered a very ignorant people. There never were more epithets heaped upon Jesus Christ and the Apostles than upon the Latter-day Saints. Why is this? Are we so much worse than the world? No, we are not. What then is the matter? The Lord Almighty has set His hand to gather His people, and to build up His Zion and to establish his Church in these the last days; and the world do not like the doctrine we teach, as it lays the axe at the root of the tree, and consequently we have been persecuted from the time that this Church was organized until to-day, and the persecution will continue more or less until He reigns whose right it is to reign, until the Lord Jesus Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body.

Now I want to say to the Latter-day Saints, we are called to a certain work, and we have been called of God, and we, as Elders, have gone forth whithersoever we were sent, taking our lives in our hands, traveling hundreds and thousands of miles without purse or scrip. I have waded swamps and swum rivers, and have asked my bread from door to door; and have devoted nearly 50 years to this work. And why? Was there gold enough in California to have hired me to do it? No, verily; and what I have done and what my brethren have done, we have done because we were commanded of God. And this is the position we occupy to-day. We have preached and labored at home and abroad, and we intend to continue our labors, by the help of God, as long as we can have liberty to do it, and until the Gentiles prove themselves unworthy of eternal life, and until the judgments of God overtake the world, which are at the door. Does this generation know what awaits them? Does our own nation? No, the world is ignorant of what must, sooner or later, befall them.

Here is the Christian world professing to believe the Bible, can you show me wherein any of the predictions of the prophets, whether those of Jonah to the city of Nineveh, or those of Isaiah to Israel, or to Tyre and Sidon and other ancient cities and peoples, have fallen unfulfilled? No, there is no man can point to a single prophecy of the servants of God that has failed in its fulfilment. Does not the Christian world know that the Bible is full of revelation pointing to this day and age of the world? Let them read the revelations of St. John given him while upon the Isle of Patmos and they will know what judgments await this generation before the coming of the Son of Man. But when we undertake to declare in all seriousness that God has anything to do with the work in which we are engaged they will laugh you in the face, and the reason is, they have departed from God and are entirely unable to comprehend His ways or His purposes; and instead of believing the plain and literal meaning of the word of God they spiritualize it to suit themselves. Daniel was prepared to enter the den of lions; the three Hebrew children were not afraid of the fate that awaited them; the Apostles were valiant for the truth and shrank not from death for its sake, and why could those men and others under similar circumstances stand by their convictions without flinching? Because, in the first place, they had the truth and they knew it for themselves; and in the second place, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, sustained them as that power alone can in all the trying scenes through which the people of God are called to pass. And this is so to-day. What the Latter-day Saints have done by way of preaching the Gospel under all kinds of difficulties, building up cities and subduing waste lands, and establishing themselves in the earth, they have done by the revelations and commandments of God to them.

I will say a few words concerning a certain principle, and why I say it is because we cannot help looking at the signs of the times as they appear to-day. I was reading in the NEWS last evening a speech reported to have been made by Joseph Smith, son of the Prophet Joseph Smith, in which he accuses us of pursuing an entirely different course from that of his father; that his father had nothing to do with the endowments which form a part of our religious faith; and that his father had nothing to do with the patriarchal order of marriage; and he accuses our bishops of polluting the women of their several wards so that they are not fit for wives. This last accusation is so palpably false and so utterly mendacious as to be entirely unworthy of our notice, and I believe I ought to apologise to this congregation for referring to it at all. But it shows how weak must be the hope and faith of men who pretend to be teachers among the people when they descend to traduce the character of innocent men by wilfully lying in the hope of bolstering up and establishing their own peculiar cause. And with regard to the others, I wish to say, that Joseph Smith utters falsehoods when he says what he is reported to have said about his father; for I bear record to this congregation, and I ask our young people to bear it in mind after I am gone, that Joseph Smith first made known to me the very ordinances which we give to the Latter-day Saints in our endowments; I received my endowments under the direction of Joseph Smith. Emma Smith, the widow of the Prophet, is said to have maintained to her dying moments that her husband had nothing to do with the patriarchal order of marriage, but that it was Brigham Young that got that up. I bear record before God, angels and men that Joseph Smith received that revelation; and I bear record that Emma Smith gave her husband in marriage several women while he was living, some of whom are to-day living in this city, and some may be present in this congregation, and who, if called upon, would confirm my words. But lo and behold, we hear of publication after publication now-a-days declaring that Joseph Smith had nothing to do with these things. Joseph Smith himself organized every endowment in our Church and revealed the same to the Church and he lived to receive every key of the Aaronic and Melchesedec priesthoods from the hands of the men who held them while in the flesh and who hold them in eternity.

I feel to say to the Latter-day Saints everywhere, brethren and sisters, do good and you will reap good; what you sow you will also reap. What our nation sows that it will also reap, and what it measures to others will be meted back to it heaped up, pressed down and running over. I have peculiar feelings in reflecting upon the condition of our own nation. Here are the Methodists and Presbyterians and others all combining to use their influence religiously and politically to put down "Mormonism" which they say is an abomination in the land, and a great stain upon our nation's escutcheon. "O, my God," I feel to say, "I would our nation could see and understand things as they really are." I want to ask a question. When the sixth angel sounds his trump revealing the secret acts of men to an assembled world, which will include us, what will be the feelings of the present generation and the rulers and leading men and women of our nation as well as those of other nations, and the leaders of the Christian world when that angel declares unto all those who have condemned and cried against the Latter-day Saints, especially those who have taken a leading part, saying, "You, yourselves are defiled with women, and your own acts, which are recorded on high will rise in judgment against you. I say to this nation, and especially to those who are actively engaged in bringing about a crusade against us under the cloak of religion, "Sin lies at your own doors, and what you measure unto us will, according to the eternal law of retribution, be meted back to you, and you cannot escape it." We declare to all men that the God of heaven commanded Joseph Smith to introduce and practice the patriarchal order of marriage including the plurality of wives. And why? Because it was the law given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for certain purposes; that holy men might have their wives and children with them in the morning of the first resurrection in their family organization to inherit kingdoms, thrones, principalities and powers in the presence of God throughout the endless ages of eternity. Ladies and gentlemen, the Latter-day Saints are not the people you think they are; they are not guilty of the crimes and wickedness they are accused of, but on the contrary, they are as a people, free from the sins and abominations of this generation. We are represented as being a community of adulterers, and as being murderers. We are no more guilty of such crimes than were Abraham Isaac and Jacob. What God has revealed unto us, and that which we know ourselves to be right and true, we cherish and revere; and the covenants that we have entered into in consequence of the revelations of God to us, we hold sacred. Our wives and children we love and respect, and we could no more deny them their claims upon us as husbands and fathers, than we could deny our God. [illegible] man that has ever lived who can claim a wife or child in the resurrection unless he and she were married and sealed by divine authority by a man delegated of heaven to perform the ordinance of marriage. [illegible] tracts not ordained of God entered into by men, end with this life, and are therefore without binding effect in the world to come. And herein is the difference of the position of the Latter-day Saints and of the Christian world with respect to the married state. The nature of our marriage covenant is sacred and binding both for time and eternity, and I would just as soon think of denying my God as to sever the relationship existing between me and my wives and children. Our plural wives and our children are just as dear to us as the one wife and the children of the Gentiles are to them; and what is more, we have married our wives by command of God, and by authority of His Holy Priesthood, which has been restored again to earth; and if we prove faithful and true to Him and to one another we shall claim our wives and children in the world to come. Amen.

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NOTICE.

FROM AND AFTER THE FIRST DAY of June, 1882, the general management of the Malad Co-op. Mercantile Institution, in all its branches, will be in the hands of Bishop George Stuart and his Counselors. Therefore, all business communications pertaining to said institution will be addressed to Bishop George Stuart, Superintendent F. B. Jones, Esqr., having resigned.

By order of the Board of Trustees.

R. G. EVANS, Sec'y.

Malad City, May 29, 1882.

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