

REMARKS

Made at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday afternoon, February
13th, 1898, by

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

There is a saying that "whatever leads to good and to do good, is of God; whatever leads to evil and to do evil, is of that wicked one." The first remark I wish to make is in relation to the mystery in my mind concerning events that have transpired since the world was made and God created man. We all belong to Him. We do not belong to the devil. He never made us. He never made the world. He does not own it. But he is here on earth. The mystery to me is why the God of heaven is so much more unpopular than the devil on the face of the earth; why the inhabitants of the earth, who are the children of God, feel so much more prone to do that that is evil than to follow the commandments of God. The Son of God, when He came to the earth in the meridian of time, died to save the world. The devil did not do it. Still Jesus Christ was the most unpopular man that tabernacled in the flesh in His day and generation. He had more enemies than almost any other being that ever lived. The nation in which He dwelt warred against Him, and after a little while they put Him to death. Why do men feel that the devil is of so much more consequence than Christ, and show themselves more ready to do evil than good? There is no being that has power to save the souls of men and give them eternal life, except the Lord Jesus Christ, under the command of His Father. Take the whole history of the world, from Father Adam down to this day, and the commandments of God and those ordinances that will save men have always been very unpopular. How was it in the days of Jesus? Jesus spent about three years and a half after He entered the ministry, and then He was put to death. They warred against Him and His principles; and not only against Him but against His followers. His Apostles were all put to death, excepting one, and he would have been destroyed if the people could have killed him; but John the Revelator was preserved by the power of God, while the others were slain. Why were they killed? They were unpopular. The world did not receive their doctrines. Read the history of the world in the days of Adam. Seth, Enos, Jared, Mahalalel, Canaan, Methuselah, Noah, when men lived almost a thousand years, and you will find that even in those early times the children of men turned against God. They sought that that was evil, and pursued a course wherein the Lord was angry with them, and He swept them off the face of the earth with a flood. Noah and his family were saved, and the only ones that were saved. Do you ever meditate upon this strange presentation to our minds in the history of the dealings of God with men? It does not matter what age of the world you look at, whenever the Lord has raised up Prophets and Apostles, Pastors and Teachers, and commanded them to do a work, they have been unpopular and their work has been unpopular. Take Jeremiah, for instance. When the Lord sent him forth to teach and warn the people he was very unpopular. They put him in the stocks; they cast him into a pit; they persecuted him continually, until it seems to me he must have felt like saying, "You may all go to hell, for aught I care; I am not going to bother my soul about you any longer." But he could not do that. The Lord had said to him in sending him forth:

"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."

He commanded Jeremiah to go and do as He commanded. What was the consequence? Jeremiah was persecuted, and when he complained of the condition of things, the Lord told him to go unto Zedekiah, the king of Jerusalem, who had persecuted him, and say unto him that the judgments of God would come upon him, his eyes would be put out, he would be carried captive to Babylon, and he would die in captivity.

I need not dwell upon these things; but they are worthy the contemplation of the Latter-day Saints. It has seemed such hard work to do right, and so easy to do evil. Temptation to do evil is on every hand, from the day of our birth until we go to the grave.

How is it in our day? These Latter-day Saints know our position. The God of heaven sent an angel to Joseph Smith. That angel taught him many things, and told him what to do. Among other things, he told him there was a record of the ancient inhabitants of this land hid up in the hill Cumorah, and commanded him, in due time, to go forth and receive that record and translate it into the English language. We have that record before us, and it is true. It has come forth in fulfillment of revelation. John the Revelator said:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."

That angel appeared to Joseph Smith in his youth. The Lord also gave unto him many revelations. He received the Holy Priesthood from under the hands of heavenly messengers who held the keys of the Priesthood. He received the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchisedek Priesthood, by the administration of angels from God out of heaven. He organized the Church of Christ. That man lived fourteen years after he entered into the ministry. He brought forth the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants; he organized the Church, and then he, like the Apostles of old, was slain for the word of God and testimony of Jesus.

What has been the history of the Latter-day Saints, even on this great American continent, and under one of the most liberal governments God ever gave to man? Joseph was tormented and persecuted. His followers were persecuted. They were driven from the lands they occupied, and scarcely had a place to plant their feet. Tribulation followed them, until they were compelled to come to these valleys of the mountains. We have had a hard time to live in a free country like America and under our great and glorious government. Why this persecution, why this oppression and this opposition? Why this warring of the world against the Gospel of Jesus Christ? There is but one Gospel; there never was but one, and never will be but one Gospel. That Gospel God has revealed to us. It is the Gospel of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance of sin, baptism for the remission of sins, the reception of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and the gifts and graces following those who embrace those principles. You are my witnesses of the truth of these things. We have found it to be an uphill work to get the rights of American citizens. God has established us here in these valleys of the mountains. We came here as pioneers. We found a barren desert, with no mark of the white man anywhere. You see what there is today. It is in fulfillment of the revelations of God.

Why is this spirit in men to persecute one another, to fight against God and His people, as has been the case from the creation of the world down to our day more or less? It is wrong, and every man that takes a course of this kind will have to bear the burden of it. There is but one power in heaven or on earth that can give man a part in the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality and eternal life, and that power comes from God, and not from the evil one. We ought to look at these things as they are.

I have a few remarks I want to make on a certain subject connected with this. We have, as you all know, lately put forth before the public a document concerning a certain man who has been associated with us—that is, Colonel Isaac Trumbo. It has been a marvel to a great many why the Presidency of the Church put that forth and published it to the world. It is because what we wrote there, brethren and sisters, is true. Whether he is unpopular or not, it makes no difference to us. We have had so few men who have not been in this Church that have stepped forth and done what he and some others have done, we have felt it our duty to acknowledge it. I want to say to you, one and all, that I do not want to have Colonel Trumbo go before God, whether before or after the resurrection, or any other time, and say that Wilford Woodruff, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, deprived him of the honor that he should have had for trying to assist the people in their calamities and in obtaining a State government for Utah, etc., as we have rehearsed in that paper. I am willing to acknowledge Colonel Trumbo, or any other man, who has gone forth as he has for years and assisted us in the days of our trial. He is responsible for his own acts. We have had some friends in the midst of our difficulties. It has been uphill work with us all the way through in these valleys of the mountains, but we have managed to pull through, by the blessings of God and the labors of a few friends with our own. Colonel Trumbo was one of those friends. He took hold and labored with us, and I feel it is my duty to acknowledge him before my brethren. I do it for that reason. I would do it for any other man that labored with us. We have had a great many that labored against us and for our destruction. We have had to bear these things from the organization of this Church. I was associated with Joseph Smith from 1833 to the time of his death. After his death I was associated with Brigham Young. I brought him into this valley in my carriage. I traveled with him and labored with him up to the day of his death. So with John Taylor, and so with the Apostles and this people. I know, as God lives, that this is the work of God. I know the Gospel has been revealed to us, and we have it. It is our duty to abide by it. Inasmuch as we will do this the blessings of heaven will attend us, and we will have power to build up Zion in fulfillment of the promises of God. I am a firm believer myself in rewards and punishments, and in the gifts and graces of the Gospel. I have from my childhood been a firm believer in the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and the teachings of Jesus Christ. What He and His Apostles taught was true. They were put to death for those truths, and so have our leaders been put to death for those truths. Some of us have been preserved in the earth. The Latter-day Saints are gathering together to fulfill these revelations that have been given to us. Let any man read the revelations in the Bible; read the 49th chapter of Isaiah:

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord has comforted