

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 2.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, DECEMBER 25, 1897.

VOL. LVI.

## REMARKS

Made at the Salt Lake Stake Conference, Sunday, December 29th, 1897.  
by

**PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.**

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

I look upon that as one of the most important sayings of Jesus Christ while teaching the people in His day. Few there are that find the straight and narrow way. To read such sayings of the Savior as those sets one to reflecting. If it is necessary for the children of men to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to attend to the ordinances of His house, in order to be saved in the kingdom of God, certainly it would appear as if very few will be saved in the celestial kingdom of our God. When the Lord called Joseph Smith, he received the ministrations of Moroni, an angel of God from heaven. According to the teachings that were given to him by the Lord and by the angels of heaven, there was no organization on the face of the whole earth at that time that was accepted of the Lord as His Church. Joseph Smith had received the holy Priesthood by the administration of angels from God out of heaven before he himself was prepared to preach the Gospel. The work that he commenced was like a little mustard seed. Those that followed him were very few in number; and the same spirit of opposition which was manifest in the days of the Savior and in the days of the prophets was manifest in his day and time. He met with the same fate as the Son of God and His Apostles did. All laid down their lives and sealed their testimony by the shedding of their blood, excepting John the Revelator, and he was preserved by the power of God.

This is a subject of vast importance to the inhabitants of the earth, including the Latter-day Saints. According to statisticians, there are about fourteen hundred millions of human beings on the earth. Now, if the Latter-day Saints are all who have received the Gospel of Christ since the organization of the Church, then the numbers who are preparing to go into the celestial kingdom of God are certainly very few. Even if the Latter-day Saints numbered a half million, they would be a very small percentage of the inhabitants of the earth.

There was a small congregation of Latter-day Saints here this morning, and we listened to a number of the Bishops represent their wards and testify concerning tithing, the expense of caring for the poor, and the position they were in. I thought to myself that if we had the desire in our hearts to

be one of that number who will go to receive eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God, and to be where God and Christ dwell, it would certainly pay us to thoroughly keep the commandments of God and do our duty. It causes singular reflections to look upon the history of the inhabitants of the earth. It does not make much difference what part of the world you take, nor what age, mankind have been prone to evil and to yield to the enemy. One-third of the hosts of heaven are represented as having been cast down from heaven to earth. They are fallen angels, who have been on the earth, I suppose, ever since they were cast out of heaven. What is their mission? It is to work against God and against Christ; to lead the children of men to do that which is evil, that they may have power and dominion over them in this world and in the world to come. The children of men in every age have had these fallen spirits to contend with. These powers have been manifest from the fall of Adam down to our day, and will continue until He who holds the keys of death and hell will blind Satan and shut him up in prison for one thousand years, after which he will be liberated to perform his last act for the destruction of the sons of men.

In reflecting over these things, and seeing how it has been in days that are past and gone, it seems, if we are to judge from the revelations and from the saying of the Savior which I have quoted, that there are very few who find the straight and narrow way that leads to eternal life. But the Latter-day Saints have a desire to be saved in the kingdom of God. This is a great desire, and it should be with all men. We should understand that it will pay us to strive to do right and to keep the commandments of God, that when we get through we may receive those blessings that we are looking for; that we may meet with the Lord, meet with Father Adam, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with the patriarchs and prophets, and with the few Saints that have been in the flesh on the earth. I believe this is your desire. It is my desire. I have desired it from my boyhood up. I have thought sometimes that I have made rather a poor attempt at it; perhaps many of us have felt the same; but I think that the little time we have to be here it will pay us to look carefully to our ways and to keep the commandments of God. It will be worth our while to pay our tithing and attend to every other duty that God requires at our hands while we dwell here, that when we get through we may be satisfied. This is my desire with regard to the Latter-day Saints. For when we realize the few that will enter into eternal life compared with those that will go the broad road, it is lamentable.

As Latter-day Saints we have received the Priesthood; the commandments of God have been made known to us; and we have set before us, through the mouths of inspired men, those principles that shall lead us in

the path of life and salvation. Now, in view of these things, what will it profit us to sin? What is there in this life that will pay us to lose all those blessings which belong to the first resurrection and to the kingdom of heaven? It is within our power, by keeping the commandments of God, to come forth out of our graves, clothed in immortal, celestial bodies, with our wives, our children, our fathers, our mothers, our relatives, and our friends, and occupy high and exalted positions in the presence of God and the Lamb, and dwell with them forever and forever. What is there, brethren and sisters, in this world or anywhere else, that will pay us to pursue a course whereby we shall lose the fulfillment of these blessings? There is nothing. Far better for us never to have lived in the flesh than to pursue a course whereby we forfeit these blessings.

We, as Elders of Israel, have labored faithfully to try to save our fellow men in the Gospel of Christ. We have been blessed in this. We have traveled among the nations of the earth and the islands of the sea to instruct the children of men upon these principles. There is no better calling that a man can have than to go and preach the Gospel to his fellow man and to save the souls of the children of men. The Lord said to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer:

"And if, it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of the Father."

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"

Now, our Elders have saved thousands of souls; that is, the Elders have preached the Gospel to them, they have baptized them, ordained them, and given them their blessings.

We ought to look at these things as they are. No matter what the world may think of us, or what their desire may be about us. Even if we are all saved in the kingdom of God, our numbers will be very few compared with the millions upon millions who have never been willing to receive the Gospel in the earth, and who will occupy positions elsewhere than in the presence of God and the Lamb. I listened to the Bishops this morning talk about tithing. It will be profitable to us to pay our tithing. It will pay us to do anything else that God requires at our hands. By doing it we will be justified.

I thank the Lord for my life. I thank Him for His blessings and mercies to me. I have reason to rejoice in this, and I am obliged to give God the glory for all I have ever received. If I have ever done any good; if I have been able to preach the Gospel and to pursue a course whereby I have edified my fellow man, at home or abroad, it has been by the power of God, upon Jesus