

day was celebrated in the large Tabernacle today, commencing at the hour of ten a. m. Before that time arrived the body of the Tabernacle was filled with people and nearly all the seats in the gallery were occupied.

The two center rows of seats for some distance back were reserved for the family and friends of President Woodruff, the members of the Legislature and others, until 10:23, at which time the public were allowed to fill up the remaining unoccupied seats.

The Tabernacle choir occupied its usual position, while Beld's Band was stationed in the east end of the gallery and discoursed sweet music at intervals during the proceedings.

When President Woodruff appeared on the stand at 10:07 o'clock, he received a perfect ovation. The

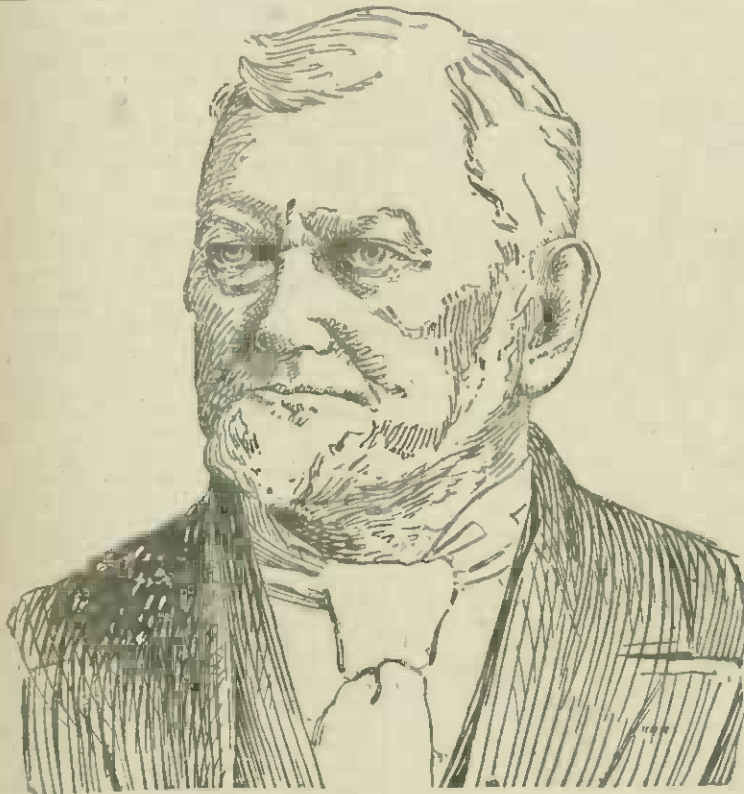
upon this important occasion. Yesterday those who were present might have observed my condition. I was perfectly overwhelmed in consequence of the scene before me. It was not what was said particularly, but it brought to my mind in overwhelming power my boyhood and early manhood and my desires that I might live upon the earth to find a people who would receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by Christ and the Apostles. In meeting with thousands of the children of the Latter-day Saints, it brought to my mind those scenes and the fulfillment of my prayers and desires before the Lord.

I hope this morning I may be able to make a few remarks. I will say this, it has been a desire of my life,

astonish you. I have not been in the habit of this heretofore. But I feel desirous to say a few things that are upon my mind. In the first place, there is not one item, not one sentence in the Constitution of the United States, nor in the laws of the United States, or of the State of Utah, that deprives any citizen, of any name, nature, religion or politics in the land, from joining any political party he wishes or voting for whomever he wishes. This is the right of every man without hindrance. We have been accused at times of using Church influence to guide and direct the State. This is occasionally presented to the public as our action. I feel it my right and duty to say here today that I was acquainted with Joseph Smith and associated with him from 1833 until his martyrdom. I have been acquainted with Brigham Young and associated with him for forty years of my life, at home and abroad, under many circumstances. I have also been acquainted with John Taylor and labored with him in every capacity in which he was called to act. I have also been a member of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles for upwards of fifty-six years of my life. And I have been presiding over the Church itself for a few years. I have been associated with my counselors and with the present Twelve Apostles. And I want to say upon this occasion, before God, angels and all men that are before me, that I never in one instance have ever known any leader of this Church ever attempt to dictate and direct the affairs of the State as member of the Church. At the same time, when any man, no matter who he is—Mormon, Jew or Gentile—goes forth and uses money or any means to hire men to vote for him, I think he steps outside of his right, and stands in a measure responsible.

I want to say so much to my friends this morning. I have officiated for twenty sessions in the Legislative Council of the Territory of Utah, and one session as a member of the House, and it never cost me one farthing for any office I ever held in the Church or in the State or Territory. And I never asked any mortal man on the face of the earth to cast a vote for me that I have any recollection of. As an example, perhaps I may be permitted to say, I am the father of fourteen sons and have a number of sons-in-law, and I believe they are pretty nearly evenly divided on political party lines—Democrats and Republicans. I will give any man five dollars if in conversing with them he can get any one of them to say that his father ever told him who to vote for. Some of you may try to make a little money perhaps at that. (Laughter.) I consider everybody is responsible for himself, and he has a right to vote for whom he pleases.

Again, I never asked any office at the hands of any being in heaven or on earth, not even of my heavenly Father, except upon one instance, which I will relate here. In my boyhood, as you have heard me testify, I went to the Sabbath schools. I read the New Testament. I saw the doctrine there portrayed in plainness, as taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and it was a glorious doctrine. I



PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF.

entire congregation arose in a body, and waving their handkerchiefs joined with the choir in singing "Our God we raise to Thee, Thanks for Thy blessings free, We here enjoy." The scene presented during the singing was very beautiful indeed. While the crowd was not so large as at yesterday's session, yet all the seats were taken and many people were standing in the aisles and on the stairways leading to the gallery.

The proceedings were opened by the Tabernacle choir singing Noble Chief, after which prayer was offered by President Joseph F. Smith. Choir then sang Hail, Prophet, Brother, Friend.

An address of welcome was then made by President Woodruff. He spoke as follows:

I feel highly honored this morning in meeting with so many of my friends

from my boyhood up, never to address any assembly of people whom I could not make hear what I had to say. I feel the same this morning; I do not know whether I can make this assembly hear me or not; but I will do the best I can.

As I can hardly expect to ever have the opportunity of addressing the people of this State and my friends in days to come, I have a few reflections upon my mind that I wish to lay before you. And I will say they are different from any of my public speeches that I have been in the habit of presenting to the people. I have consulted no man with regard to the course I should pursue in my remarks here this morning, and I do not know that I shall satisfy my friends in the remarks that I may make.

First, I want to say a few words upon politics. I hope that will not