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REMARKS

Made at the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, April 4th, 1897, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

My brethren and sisters, I desire the Spirit of the Lord to assist me, so that we may be edified. I know that all who were present this morning would feel a testimony in their hearts in regard to the truths that were uttered by President George Q. Cannon and President Joseph F. Smith, and those present this afternoon will no doubt have the same testimony concerning the remarks of President Snow and President Richards; for the Spirit of the Lord bears testimony to the hearts of all Latter-day Saints that we have listened to the truth. When I listened to the report of President Cannon in regard to the work throughout the earth, although I have had in my mind vividly what is being accomplished, it seemed to me that it was much more important than I had thought. The field is wide, and the harvest is great and ready for the gathering. The great call that is made for missionaries reminds me of the suggestion in the revelations, that he that hath a desire in his heart for that labor is called of God; and every man who has that desire in his heart, who is thus called and goes into the field, will find that the Lord will work with him, and that He is working with those who are in the field today, and is ready to labor with thousands that must yet be called into the field. How grateful we ought to be who have received the truth, who have been blessed of the Lord with faith, with repentance, and with the spirit of humility and obedience; how grateful the Latter-day Saints ought to be to know that we are associated with the work of God which He has established in the earth, and which brings to our understanding a knowledge of the plan of life and salvation. For this has been revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through the Prophet Joseph. We are entitled to have a knowledge; to not be left in doubt, but to have a knowledge of the principles of life, and to appreciate the privilege that is given to us in this last dispensation.

This great and important work that the Lord has established, as we were shown so beautifully this morning by President Cannon, is indestructible. It is not to be left to other people, but is to remain with us, and with our posterity and successors. It is to endure in the earth, and no power is to prevail against

it. What blessed information for the Latter-day Saints to possess, that they are thus connected with the work which the Great Father of all has established in the earth! The beauty of its organization, the certainty of its perpetuity,—that it is to endure, and that there is no power that can prevail against it, whether on the inside or the outside, are things that fill us with joy. Of course, dangers always seem to be greater from the troubles we experience on the inside than from those that attack us from without. But this work is kept in perfect condition. The quorums of Priesthood, as we learned this morning, from the First Presidency down, are kept intact. And they are so kept by the Lord, not by any quorum, nor by the people of the Church. When vacancies occur in the Presidency, or in the Twelve, or among the Seventies, or in the Stakes of Zion, or in the missions abroad, the Lord arranges for the filling of those vacancies. The principle upon which this Church was established and is perpetuated is not the same principle that operates among men. These vacancies are not filled according to the will and choice of men. They are filled by our Heavenly Father. He has direct control and care over the various departments of this important work. In the preaching of the Gospel abroad, in the establishment of missions abroad, and in supplying the demand for Elders, these are all sought out by the inspiration of the Lord, and they are called of God. The Presidency of the Church and the Twelve, who are entrusted with the care of the Church, do not officiate by the spirit of man; they do not exercise their own judgment alone, and select according to their preferences; but the Lord manifests His care for this work. Whenever a man comes to be the President of the Church, the representative of God, and His mouthpiece to His children on the earth, it comes about by order of the Father. It is not by caucusing, and scheming, and the planning of men; it is not by the judgment and wisdom of the Twelve Apostles as men. President Smith referred this morning to some person who contended that the Presidency of the Church ought not to have been organized after the death of the Prophet Joseph. The Presidency was organized after the death of the Prophet Joseph, by the direction of God. The Twelve Apostles presided over the Church during the three years that followed the death of the Prophet Joseph, under the direction of God the Eternal Father; and if the Father had not designated and appointed that the First Presidency should be formed, it would never have been formed. But it is in harmony with the will of God and the order of His great

work in the last days, that the Presidency of this Church should be perpetuated; and the interim between the death of one President and the formation of a new Presidency, is just in accordance with the mind and will of God. It has been in the past, and will be in the future. Whenever the Presidency is to be organized hereafter, it will be done by the announcement of the mind and will of God; and whenever the vacancy which now exists in the Twelve Apostles is to be filled, or in the First Seven Presidents of Seventies, it will be done when God announces it, and not before. We wait, we listen for the counsels of the Lord. We do in regard to the organization of Stakes, in the organization of quorums, and in all the various details of organization in this Church—we listen to the counsels and inspiration of the Lord. The Lord doeth it. When He speaks and gives direction to His servants, they have always the courage to perform that duty. We labor faithfully; we give careful attention to the responsibilities that rest upon us as prominent Elders in the Church; we try to live squarely up to our duties, and the Lord is always ready to come to the rescue and to support and sustain us.

This work is most secure and most thoroughly established, and is never to be broken down. There is not any power inside or outside of the Church, and there never will be, to disrupt this Church and to break it in pieces. The enemies of this Church have always watched, and when there has been a rattle on the surface that would indicate there was trouble within, they have grasped at it with avidity, and they have enjoyed the prospect of the breaking to pieces of this work. They thought, when the Prophet Joseph's life was taken, that that was the end. Why, if there were a thousand prophets to die, it would not interrupt this work; for the Lord has established His Church upon the earth and will maintain it. Has it not grown steadily from the beginning? Has it ever been interrupted for one moment? We have had all kinds of experience; we have been attacked by those who have turned away from us, as well as those who have opposed us from the outside; but the work has moved steadily and regularly forward; and where there are now 1300 Elders in the field, there will be 13,000 in the field yet, preaching the Gospel. We are only just beginning the work; for it is a work that is to spread throughout the earth. The whole world is to be embraced in this missionary labor. The experience of the world today, in their religious and other organizations, is indicative of unrest. They begin to find that they are not built upon the rock, but that their foundations are sandy. That is the