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## DISCOURSE

*Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday, April 5th, 1895, by*

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

It gives me great pleasure to have the privilege of meeting with the Latter-day Saints in this conference. I need not say to you that I have been highly delighted with the sound instruction that we have received this morning and the testimonies that have been borne by Elders A. H. Cannon and M. W. Merrill. These brethren have been portraying to this congregation the great necessity for the people being employed. I imagine that some people also need their minds employed. I delight, my brethren and sisters, to belong to an association that worships God, and where all things are done by common consent. I delight to be numbered among that people where every man can speak his own views without feeling under any restrictions. I delight in being associated with an organization where there is a perfect law of liberty extended unto the members thereof. Paul the Apostle said he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it was the power of God unto salvation unto all those who believed, and a perfect law of liberty—that is, perfect liberty to do what was right.

While sitting on my seat I have been going over a little of the early history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In speaking of these things I have to depend entirely upon what I have read and what I have heard others say; but as near as I can understand Joseph Smith came to establish the Church of Christ upon the earth in this dispensation of the fulness of times. He was not a graduate of college. He was not a man who prepared himself to be the leader of this great dispensation. He was an ordinary man, laboring with his father in the fields. But the Lord had mercy upon the young man, and undoubtedly he had been ordained before the foundations of the earth were laid to come forth in this dispensation to be the medium through which the Lord should reveal His mind and will unto the children of men.

But there is one thing I have noticed; from the very time that the Prophet Joseph went out to pray in secret in the woodlands in the State of New York, the power of Satan has been manifest. That power attacked the young man to such an extent that it seemed like it would destroy him; but our Father in

heaven and His Son Jesus Christ, condescending to answer the prayers of the young Prophet, came down and visited him, and the power of Satan was at once banished. Now, is it not strange that the devil could not allow this young man to be alone while he poured out his soul unto God? It may seem strange to some, but I must confess that I have got to that condition of mind where it does not look strange to me. We find that the Prophet of the Lord, in going to keep his appointments with the angel Moroni, was interrupted and waylaid by ruffians who desired to destroy his life. We find that the ministers of the various denominations in the region in which he lived were aroused with bitter animosity against him, and from that time forth it was one continual stream of oppression and opposition, until the day he laid down his life for the testimony of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I think the Prophet was arrested some forty-nine times and honorably acquitted of the charges that were made against him.

While traveling in the Southern States, I visited the home of Colonel Charles Zachary a resident of Henry county, Georgia. He had attended a meeting that was held by Elder Mathias F. Cowley and myself, and invited us to his home after the meeting. He was a man of prominence and experience, his hair was as white as snow. He said to me that there was something strange and remarkable about the Mormon people. He remembered well of hearing many years ago of a young prophet called Joseph Smith, that professed to receive revelations from the Lord, in the State of New York. He also remembered hearing of him going to Ohio, and from there to some of the western states. He said he had been reading the newspaper for about forty years, and had read a great many articles about the Latter-day Saints, but had never read anything good about them. But, he said, what has impressed me very strongly is the fact that you people have grown and multiplied, and finally you are taking a part in the politics of the nation. He remarked that he thought he could see something in the destiny of the Mormons that had a greater power with it than the power of man. Well, I felt complimented to belong to the organization to which this gentleman referred.

After the Prophet had left the state of New York he was busy all the time, and the opposition against him became great and powerful. You all know the history of the persecution of the Saints in Missouri and in Illinois. The persecution began to have its effects upon some of the Latter-day Saints. As in the parable of the Savior, some of the

seed had fallen upon stony ground, and when persecution came they turned away sorrowing; it was found that the seed had not taken good root. This can be seen in the early history of the Church. There was one man who held the position of counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith; he was a great orator, and he became so enthused with the power of his oratory that he thought he could carry the Kingdom of God before him, and he told the Prophet that he thought he could get along without him. The Prophet said, "You try it, Sidney." He did try it, and he withered up and became almost unknown and lost his Priesthood, his gift, his power, as do all those who have turned their faces away from this people and opposed the presiding authority thereof from that day to this; but the kingdom of God has not been shaken, but has gone steadily forward and onward until it has arrived at a condition when there will be present during this conference representatives of from fifteen to twenty nations, who will hold up their hands to support Wilford Woodruff as the prophet, seer and revelator to this Church. Many of the Saints found fault with the Prophet Joseph. Some of the presiding authorities found fault with him; and at one time things had reached such a climax that there were only two of the Twelve Apostles, then present, who stood firm and faithful to the Prophet Joseph. Satan is a man of great intelligence, having dwelt with God the Eternal Father; and he knew that Joseph Smith was, in embryo, one of the greatest prophets that ever came forth among the children of men. Therefore, he sought by seizing hold of and overpowering him to blot out the possibility of the Church of God being organized in this dispensation of the fulness of times. But this is another instance which shows that the wisdom of the Lord is greater than the cunning of the devil. The Lord came to the Prophet's aid when he knelt in the woodlands in secret prayer, who was assailed by Satan, and he had strength given to him according to his day and he was released from the power of the evil one.

What I want to bring before your minds is this: Here were men who had testified that God the Eternal Father had given them a testimony, who had testified that Jesus Christ was the Son of the true and living God, and that Joseph Smith had been raised up as a prophet, and they turned their faces away from the servant of God in the hour of tribulation. These are they, my brethren and sisters, that the Savior likened unto the seed that fell upon stony ground and it did not grow. They stood firm for a little season, but when persecution came they found fault with