

On the 6th day of April the church will have been organized fifty years, and we might with very good propriety call it a year of jubilee, or rather the close of the year of jubilee. And while we are assembled together, either in our meeting prior to the Conference or afterwards in the Conference, it becomes us, when we reflect upon the kindness and mercy which God has vouchsafed to us during the last fifty years, to renew our covenants before him, and feel in our hearts that we are his people and that he is our God. His mercy and salvation will still be extended to us, if we will only obey his laws, keep his commandments, and pursue that course that is proper and acceptable in his sight.

I do not wish to make many remarks this morning. I thought I would just rise and introduce some of those principles that naturally tend to bring our minds to reflection.

On the fiftieth year, in former times, among the ancients, they had what was termed a year of jubilee. Slaves were liberated. People who were in debt were forgiven their indebtedness—that is, the poor, the needy and the distressed. And we are reflecting upon some things pertaining to that matter, which will be presented in due form; and we wish to start, as it were, and feel to determine in our hearts that the Lord is our God, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, and he shall rule over us; and we will try and be his people and observe his laws. And I would ask my brethren and sisters to give us an interest in their faith and prayers, that we shall be enabled to advance such principles as will be calculated to enlighten, to quicken, to refresh and to strengthen us, that we may pursue in after years, with more vigor and determination, that path which God has revealed unto us. Amen.

ELDER WILFORD WOODRUFF.

President, brethren and sisters: God bless you, (Amen), and may the peace of God abide with you, and the Spirit of God within these walls, and may it rest upon the Apostles, Elders and Saints while we assemble together to worship God. I feel in my heart to praise the Lord for his mercies and blessings over the Apostles and Elders and Saints and church and kingdom of God to the present hour. I see before me here the symbols of the history of this church and kingdom, and some of us have been preserved by the hand of God to pass through its travels, its progress and its history almost from the beginning until the present day; and while I listened to the remarks of Brother Taylor, I reflected in my own mind upon the day and age and time of our history. Fifty years have passed and gone, or nearly so, since the organization of this church and kingdom on the earth. Whatever the feelings of the world may be with regard to the Latter-day Saints, with regard to their lives, their history, their organization, their persecutions, and their drivings until the present day, whether they believe or disbelieve, it matters not to the purposes of God, who stands at the head, even our Heavenly Father. This is the church and kingdom of God; it is the church of Christ; it is the organization of the kingdom of God, that has been spoken of by all the prophets since the world began; it is the Zion of God that Isaiah and Jeremiah and many of the other prophets saw by vision and revelation in their day and generation. In my own mind I cannot conceive

of any fifty years since the creation of this world, in its history before the heavens, before the Gods, before the angels, and before the world, of more importance or consequence than the last fifty years through which we have passed; and if the veil could only be lifted from our eyes, so that we could see and comprehend our destiny, our position, our responsibilities, and what is required at our hands by the God of Israel, we should all of us feel the importance of improving our time, magnifying our calling, striving to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

I hold in my hand our testament. The testator is dead, has been dead for a great many years. He sealed his testimony with his blood. That testament is in force, has been in force upon all the world from the day of his death; and not only from that day, but from the time these revelations were given to the inhabitants of the earth. That testament contains a volume of the most important revelations God ever gave to man. Fifty years ago, or nearly so, when He gave some of these revelations, the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "If you believe my words you will go and prune my vineyard while the day lasts; If you believe these revelations I have given you, you will take hold and build up this kingdom." When I reflect that it is fifty years since these revelations were given, I ask myself the question—What condition are we in to-day as a people, as Latter-day Saints? What is our condition, our position to-day before the Lord? What is the condition of the world? What is the condition of Great Babylon? What is the condition of the Saints, the Elders of Israel, and the Lord's anointed, and the people whom he has chosen and called upon and raised up to take hold and build up Zion, build up the kingdom, sanctify themselves before God and prepare themselves for the coming of the Son of man? I have sometimes feared in my own mind concerning ourselves, that we are not living as near to the Lord as we ought to do; we do not always comprehend the responsibilities which we are under to God our Heavenly Father. When I reflect, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord has ordained the establishment of Zion, upon the responsibility that rests upon us in warning the generation in which we live that they may be left without excuse in fulfilment of the revelations contained in this volume (the Book of Mormon)—when I reflect that we are called as the servants of the Lord to perform this work, I feel within my own mind as the Lord has said now nearly fifty years ago, that if we believe the words of the Lord we will labor while it is called to-day. The Lord looks to nobody else, he expects nothing from anybody else, as far as the fulfilling of the revelations in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants are concerned; he looks to no other nation, kindred, tongue, or people henceforth to go and perform this work, but the Saints of the living God. If the Lord has any friends on the earth they are the Saints of God, and if the Saints of God have any friends anywhere, they consist of the God of Israel and the heavenly hosts, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

In my view, we as Latter-day Saints are approaching a change. We are approaching important events. It cannot be otherwise in the face of the revelations of God, in the Bible, in the Testament, in the Doctrine and Covenants, than that a change is about to take place in the world. The Lord has said that he would make the work short in the latter days, that he would cut it short in righteousness. Fifty years is a good while to pass away in the dispensation

and generation in which we live, and it has taken from the earth during this time a great many, I will say all of the founders of this church and kingdom. It has taken into the spirit world many of the Apostles, many of the Elders, many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, and sometimes when I look around and contemplate on the past, I at times feel lonesome. I look back to the days of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and to the patriarchs, prophets and apostles that lived in that day, and I find that a great share of them are in the spirit world. There are but very few left now who were alive at the organization of this church upon the earth. I believe that Brother Orson Pratt is the only man who dwells in the flesh, who is in the church, who was organized in the first Quorum of the Twelve. Brother Taylor and myself remain of those who were organized in the second organization. But Brother Taylor and myself and Brother Pratt and a good many others will not tarry a great while here. We shall pass on to the other side of the veil, and join those who have gone before, as will many who are in this congregation. This is not our home, but we will dwell in the flesh until we pass through a change. We are apt sometimes in our reflections to marvel and wonder why the Lord has taken away so many men who have been called as Apostles and prophets and Elders of the Zion of God into the spirit world. The Lord has had his motive in these things. I see (pointing to the paintings on the ceiling) Joseph Smith with Moroni, and here, with Peter, James and John, receiving the priesthood. How long did he (Joseph) tarry here in the flesh? Only fourteen years after he organized this church and kingdom, the church and kingdom of God, the church of Jesus Christ. We felt as though we could not live, could not exist, without Joseph. We felt a good deal as the Apostles did when Jesus told his disciples that if he did not go away the Comforter would not come. They did not comprehend him; they did not understand that Jesus Christ was to be crucified, notwithstanding that he told them that if he did not go away the Comforter would not come. Joseph Smith remained with us longer than the Savior did. He remained only about three and a half years after he was thirty years of age, an age which the Jewish law required a man to attain before officiating in the priesthood. Joseph Smith remained with us about fourteen years. He remained until he had received all the keys of the kingdom of God which were necessary for the establishment of this church and kingdom, and which were necessary for those men who followed him to have those keys upon their shoulders, that they might continue to build upon the foundation that had been laid; but as soon as Joseph received the keys of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood, as soon as he received the keys from Moses for the gathering together of the House of Israel in the latter days, and from Elijah to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children and children to the fathers—when Joseph received all these keys, and had power to seal them upon the heads of other men, the Lord called him away. Why did he call him into the spirit world? Because he held the keys of this dispensation, not only before he came to this world and while he was in the flesh, but he would hold them throughout the endless ages of eternity. He held the keys of past generations—of the millions of people who dwelt on the earth in the fifty generations that had passed and gone who had not the law of the gospel, who never saw a prophet, never saw an Apostle, never heard the voice of

any man who was inspired of God and had power to teach them the gospel of Christ, and to organize the church of Christ on earth. He went to unlock the prison doors to these people, as far as they would receive his testimony, and the Saints of God who dwell in the flesh will build temples unto the name of the Lord, and enter these temples and perform certain ordinances for the redemption of the dead. This was the work of Joseph the prophet in the spirit world. Now, I believe in my own mind that every Elder of Israel who has gone into the spirit world, who has been faithful in the flesh, has as much to do on the other side of the veil as we have to do here, and if anything more so. This is my view with regard to the labors of the Elders of Israel. The Lord hath need of some on the other side of the veil. He preserves some to labor here, and he takes home whom he will according to the counsels of his own will; this is his manner of dealing. Those of our brethren who have passed away have got through the labors of the flesh; we are left here to labor a little while on the earth. Then I would like to ask my brethren and sisters this morning, in view of these things, if these things are true, if this is the church of Christ, if this is the Zion of God—which the Lord Almighty foreordained before the world was should be established in the latter days, and had a class of men and women whom he had reserved in the spirit world, whose lives were hid with Christ in God and knew it not, to come forth and stand in the flesh and take hold of this kingdom and build it up, and war with the world, the flesh and the devil—then, if this be true, what manner of men and women ought we to be? I feel in my reflections, in my thoughts and in my meditations, that we, as Elders of Israel, should have nothing else to do in this world while we dwell in the flesh but to build up this kingdom, and when we are building up this kingdom we are building up ourselves; when we are faithful to God we are magnifying our calling.

The eyes of the heavenly hosts are over us; the eyes of God himself and his Son Jesus Christ; the eyes of all the prophets and Apostles who have dwelt in the flesh; they are watching our works. I have spent more time lately with those who are in the spirit world, in my night seasons, than in all the rest of my life together. On one occasion I thought in my dream that Presidents Young, Kimball, George A. Smith, and many others, attended one of our Conferences. When Brother Young was asked to preach he said: "No, I have done my preaching, I have done my instructions in the flesh; I have come to hear you talk, I have come to look at you, I have come to watch over you, I wish to see what this people are doing." This has been the answer and these are thoughts I believe in. I believe we are not shut out from God, we are not shut out from our brethren, though the veil is between us. They understand our works, our condition, our position, and I feel a desire myself, what little time I have to spend in the flesh, to make my time useful. I wish to do what I can for the building up of the kingdom of God. I wish to do what I can to bring to pass righteousness, and I feel that we should all be in this position; we should all labor to occupy our time, our talents, and our attention as far as we possibly can to build up the kingdom of God.

I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints. Sometimes people apostatize; we speak of people getting into the dark. It does not make any difference who sells whiskey, nor who drinks it; it makes no difference who blasphemes the

name of God, or apostatizes from the church and kingdom of God, as far as the establishment of the kingdom of God is concerned; the Lord has got valiant men and women in his kingdom who will be true and faithful to the Lord and his work. If half of this church were to fall away, it would not destroy the purposes of the Lord. With regard to ourselves that is another thing. Many men who have received the gospel, and have had the Holy Ghost conferred upon them, have fallen away, but in doing so they condemn themselves, they destroy themselves, they miss and lose all the hopes they ever had of eternal life and the blessings of God in the celestial kingdom. Men may fall, but the kingdom of God never, never. The Lord has a good many men and women in this church and kingdom that cannot afford to surrender any principle that the God of Israel has commanded us to obey, no principle that the Lord has commanded us to receive, no principle that is embodied in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why? Because we know and understand very well that our destiny, our position, and our blessings are all in his hands. We also know that the destinies of all the armies of the nations of the earth under the whole heavens are in the hands of God. The Lord guides these things; he will guide them. We are approaching an important day and time. We are approaching a period when there must be a change in Babylon, a change in our nation, and a change in Zion. Judgments are going to begin at the house of God. They will go forth, and will not be taken from the earth until all has been fulfilled.

My brethren and sisters, I wished to say this much this morning. I desired to exhort you, and I exhort myself. Let us watch and be sober. Let us keep the commandments of God. Let us labor for the Holy Spirit, for without this no man can serve God. What condition is the world in? To-day the world is a great way from the Lord, and they are getting a great way further off year by year, and just so far as they get from the Lord in this world, just so far off will they be in the world to come. Bear this in mind.

I do think that as Elders in Israel we have no reason to be discouraged. God is with us. God is with this people. He is watching over our interests. He guides and directs our destiny, and you may look back and scan the history of this church and kingdom from the days of its organization, and you will find it has never gone backward, it has gone forward all the way through, year by year, no matter the difficulties thrown in our way. We have had persecution and oppression; we were driven from one place to another for many years, until we were driven into these Rocky Mountains, to the land given to Jacob and his posterity, the land preserved for the gathering of the Saints in the latter days. When I look at this assembly and contemplate the work of this people in these valleys and in the surrounding Territories; when I perceive how this desert is occupied, how the Latter-day Saints are progressing, how they are cultivating the earth, building temples, halls, tabernacles, school-houses, towns and villages, I marvel at the work of the Lord. This is the work of the Almighty, and when our enemies look for the stoppage of this work, for the stoppage of the progress of the Latter-day Saints, they will be disappointed, because these things are in the hands of the Lord, and no power can hinder their progress.

I rejoice in having the privilege of meeting with an assembly of the Saints

of God in Salt Lake City, and especially in such a good building as this. It is a credit to the Latter-day Saints. It is an ornament to this Temple Block, and an honor to those who have helped to build it. We must continue these things. We must go forward, not backward. We have this fine temple which we are building at the present time, and there are others being erected in other parts of the Territory, that the Latter-day Saints may enter these temples of our God and attend to the ordinances for the redemption of the living and the dead. I bear testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, the whole spirit world is watching your labor and your works, and as I said in the beginning, if the vail was taken from off our eyes, we would see the responsibility of our acts, and what would be the result of these things? We would labor diligently and do all we could for the rearing of these temples for the redemption of our dead; we would sanctify ourselves and keep the Word of Wisdom, and unite ourselves together according to the law of God. There are many things we do as Latter-day Saints that we should abstain from; we should see the importance of our laboring in the flesh to build up the Zion of God.

I have spent the last year of my life on a mission. I have been traveling with our southern brethren; spent some time in the temple; been through Arizona, where the brethren and sisters are living in the United Order. I will say that I have been pleased with my visit to the southern country. In many of our settlements the people are endeavoring to keep the commandments of God, uniting together according to the order of the kingdom of God; and I will say here that from my experience among them I am pleased with the result, I am pleased with the fruits manifested by the people, and you know we judge a tree by the fruit it bears. I made my home in Sunset when I was not traveling. The people there are living in the United Order, as also in Brigham City and St. Joseph, and while I was in those settlements I never heard an oath, I never saw a quarrel, I never saw any man or boy smoke a cigarette, or use an ounce of tobacco, or drink whiskey, or drink a cup of coffee or tea, except what I drank myself. The idea of drinking coffee where nobody else was drinking it was a very poor example, I thought, for an Apostle; I therefore took, instead of coffee, water and milk, and have felt a great deal better. The promise is that those who keep the Word of Wisdom "shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint," and I can say I have enjoyed much better health than before. Another thing I wish to mention. Among this people, if you go to the herd-grounds, to the shepherds, those who herd the sheep and cattle, you never see any man with a pack of cards. Every man prays morning and night at least, and you will always find a book of Doctrine and Covenants, Spencer's Letters, Voice of Warning, or other good books. I speak of these things because they are manifestations of good fruit. God has blessed the people; they are living together in peace and unity, and there are many others who are blessed of the Lord in that land who are not altogether carrying out these principles. But I do think the Lord requires of us to unite together. I think it is our duty to co-operate together and help bring about temperance, holiness and righteousness.

I spent a good deal of my time last season in visiting our Lamanite brethren, the American Indians, and I will here remark that while in Apache

County I learned it was reported that the Mormons were accused of having supplied arms to the Utes who have been at war with the whites, and that we urged them on to fight. A greater libel than this was never perpetrated. The Latter-day Saints have done more to bring the American Indians to peace than all the efforts of the United States put together. Until the Elders of Israel went among the Indians no man's life was safe, no matter who he was; but since we have been amongst them they are the friends of the white man; they are peaceable; many of them have turned their hearts to the cultivation of the earth, and to-day many tribes of them will not steal the cattle and the horses of the white men. We have become acquainted with many of the tribes in that part of the country. We have had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with both the Navajoes and Apaches, who have been wandering, warlike tribes, and no white man's life or scalp was safe with them until the "Mormon" Elders went among them and taught them the gospel and peace and the benefits of cultivating the earth. Now any white man can go among them in safety, if he will behave himself, attend to his own business, and not interfere with the families of the Indians. This will apply to the Navajoes and Apaches, with the exception of a remnant of Apaches who are not under the control of Petrone and Pedro, the war and peace chiefs. This remnant, under Vutone, is still on the war path. The Navajoes return to the whites any strayed or stolen horses or cattle. The Navajoes visit the "Mormon" settlements in peace, where they are fed and treated kindly, taught to cultivate the earth, and instructed in the principles of peace and to prevent war.

We have visited the Oribas, Moquis, Zunis, Lagoonis, and Islatas. All live in villages, the houses of which are made of stone, laid in mortar, and are from one to four stories high, with flat roofs. They and their forefathers have occupied these villages for generations. They are all peaceable Indians, and all wish to avoid war. The Oribas and Moquis occupy seven villages, built upon the top of solid, barren rocks, from 500 to 1500 feet nearly perpendicular, with no soil upon the rocks. The last three villages we visited stand upon a barren rock, one mile long, 100 yards wide at the top, and about 1500 feet high. The three villages stand upon the south end of the rock, from 200 to 300 yards apart, and number about 1500 people. Were it not for a sink in the rock of about 200 feet, with a steep serpentine trail and stone steps, no mortal being could reach those villages, only in a balloon. The natives have no tradition who built the villages, but they have been occupied for centuries, and were located in their romantic situation evidently for the purpose of protection from the Navajoes, the traditional enemies of the Moquis, and also from other enemies, who would rob them of their horses, asses, sheep and goats whenever an opportunity presented itself, until the "Mormons" made peace between the contending parties, and now they are on friendly terms. The Moquis have a thousand or more acres of corn, beans, melons, squashes, and peach orchards planted in the sand on the earth below them, where they raise good corn, from pure white to jet black, without irrigation. The black corn is the best. Every pound of water, wood and corn, and everything they subsist upon, has to be carried up the steep trail and stone steps some 1500 feet, on the backs of men, women and asses, as it is too steep for mules and horses. There is a projection on the east side of the mountain, 100 feet from the top, about 100

yards in length and twelve feet wide. By a trail in the side of the mountain the projection is reached, and every night it is filled with thousands of sheep and goats, which are kept in by a frail stone wall about two feet high. Should an animal jump over, it would not touch ground for about 1200 feet, which would abridge its usefulness for either wool or mutton.

The names of these three villages are—first, Hano; second, Cheehomova; third, Walpe. The last named stands on the south end of the rock, and has about 1000 people. Their workshops stand flush with the outer edge of the precipice. Their dwellings stand from ten to twenty feet back from the edge, with nothing to keep men, women or children from falling off, either by day or night. Five Navajoes were thrust off this precipice, several years ago, in a quarrel, and never struck ground for about 1500 feet. One Moquis chief and several children have fallen off at the same place, and the only wonder is that half of the people of the village have not been killed in the same way. In my visit to these villages I was accompanied by Elders Lot Smith and Ira Hatch.

The villages eastward are built upon slightly elevated pieces of ground, and are much better off than the Moquis. The Zunis, Lagoonis and Islatas, all have large cultivated fields. The Islatas are the most advanced in civilization and industry of any natives I ever visited. The village numbers 3000 inhabitants, and is located on the Rio del Norte, twelve miles below Albuquerque. When I visited the village the people thereof had large fields of corn, kept clear of weeds and well irrigated. They had also large apple, pear and peach orchards, besides twenty-one grape vineyards, with about 1000 vines in each, kept clean and loaded with fine fruit. Their houses were clean and neat and some of their floors were carpeted. Their blood has been kept pure, they being unmixed with other tribes, or with the Mexicans or any white men. The old patriarch, John King, the leading spirit of the place, said it was seldom a case of seduction or adultery had occurred among his people; and he said that death had always been the penalty for the crime.

I saw one peculiar practice in Islata that I never saw in any civilized city. No man, woman, or child was permitted to sweep any dust or dirt from the floor to the sidewalk or into the street under penalty of a fine. All sweepings had to be gathered into baskets, or on blankets, at the threshold, and emptied upon one of the mounds located in different parts of the city.

We occupied a house facing the public square. The largest mound in the city was near that location, and measured 140 yards in circumference and forty feet high, all gathered from sweepings of floors, probably for generations, as it did not appear that any had been carted away.

It is expected that the railway will cross at Islata, there being the only rocky bed and shores for many miles up and down that river.

The Islatas have their own laws, rules, regulations, courts, police, etc. They are a wealthy people, and stand at the head of many of the surrounding villages. They have traditions among them concerning their past and future history, which they are looking for the fulfilment of. Their record gives a history of their final restoration to civilization, industry, prosperity and the gospel of Christ, and their deliverance from oppression and war. This must be the future destiny of a remnant of them, or the promises of their forefa-

thers must fall unfulfilled. Elders Ammon M. Tenney and — Christopher- sen accompanied me on my visit to these villages. Brother Tenney, three years previous, had visited the inhabitants of these villages, and had formed an acquaintance with them and assisted in baptizing one hundred and fifteen of the Zunis.

I feel to thank the Lord that I have lived to see this day and time; that I have lived to see the Fiftieth Anniversary of the history of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and brethren and sisters, whatever little time we have to spend let us spend it in laying aside iniquity, let us labor to build up the kingdom of God. Our position after death will depend upon the little time that we spend here in the flesh, and when I consider—when I can get enough of the Spirit of the Lord to guide my mind to comprehend the blessings of life and salvation—when I consider the great difference between being in the kingdom of God and out of it—I think it will pay any man or woman to keep the commandments of God. Blessed is that people whose God is the Lord. The Latter-day Saints profess to make our Heavenly Father their God.

I do not wish to detain my brethren and sisters any longer this morning. I rejoice again to see you, and again to walk the streets of Salt Lake City. And I hope while we are together in this Conference the Spirit of God may be with us, that our hearts may be enlightened, our minds opened to comprehend our duties, and that we will be inspired to teach the Saints of God in the path of righteousness and truth, which is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MOSES THATCHER.

I have been very much edified with the remarks to which we have listened. I feel that we are a blessed people in being privileged to meet and worship God under so favorable circumstances; and while listening to the remarks of my brethren it has been very apparent to my mind that God's kingdom is increasing, that the stakes of Zion are being extended and her cords lengthened. We are engaged in the work of God, our Heavenly Father. We are, as a people, in the enjoyment of privileges that are very great; indeed, we live in that day and age of the world to which the prophets anciently looked with joy and rejoicing. God's kingdom is being built up, never again to be thrown down nor given to another people. Whatever may be the reflections of the people of the world in regard to the Latter-day Saints, there is one fact that is apparent to them, and that is that we are growing, that we are increasing in numbers, that while our mission is "peace on earth and good will to men," the powers of God are being made manifest, and the principles of the Gospel are being preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

We have been seeking for years to extend this knowledge to the Lamanites, to the remnants of the House of Israel, to the fruit of the loins of Jacob through Joseph, but until recently it has been apparent to us that their hearts have not been opened to receive the testimony which is contained in the Book of Mormon.

I have listened with much pleasure to the remarks of Elder Woodruff which we have heard this morning, in regard to the experience he has had in laboring among the people of Arizona and New Mexico, and it might be of