

## ELDER ABRAHAM OWEN WOODRUFF.

My brethren and sisters, I feel very weak in attempting to express myself on this occasion, and I pray that the blessings of God may rest upon me, that I may enjoy your sympathy, while I seek to do so. Though I have not placed myself in this position, I have no doubt as to the inspiration of those men who have called me; and in occupying it I realize that I am not called to a position above the people, but to be one of them and a servant of the people of God. I feel that this is my mission. As Brother Cowley says that this day a prophecy was fulfilled which was uttered some years ago by one of the Apostles present today, I can indeed say the same as being fulfilled in my case. My father intimated as much to me something over three years ago, while I was upon a mission to Switzerland, Germany and Austria, although I have never mentioned this matter to a living soul. He told me that that was the mind and will of God concerning me at that time. I have sought to overcome my weaknesses; and in standing before you I realize that I stand before my God, stripped of everything which will hide any of the deeds of my life, and realize that I appear in His eyes in a different light to what I appear in your eyes. I realize that I have had weaknesses, but God knows that I have sought with all my heart to overcome them and to fit and prepare myself for any call which He might make of me. It will be the pleasure of my life, and my greatest object and desire, to be your servant, and to assist in building up Zion. I believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that there is a living God. I have been placed in circumstances in my short life where I have had to prove this to be the case or to prove that belief in God was a deception. I also believe that Joseph Smith was a true, inspired servant or the living God, and that the principles which were revealed through him, of faith in God, of repentance, of baptism, of the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and the other principles connected with this Gospel, are of God and are necessary to salvation. I believe that the organ-

ization that existed in the primitive church exists in this Church today; that we have the living oracles of God, and that these men who have been called to these positions are inspired servants of God. My Father in Heaven is a witness that I have never sought or desired any prominence in this world, but have rather desired to lead a quiet life, thinking myself not worthy to be anything but the least in the kingdom of God. And I know not why I should have been called to this position, were it not that I am the least, or have cause to be the most humble among you all.

May God help me, and give me strength to do what is right and to discharge my duties, and be true to the confidence which my brethren have placed in me, and which you place in me upon this occasion. This is my greatest desire, and that I may be true and faithful, and useful in doing good, proclaiming the word of God, sustaining the authorities of the Church, and in looking out for your general welfare. May God give me this power; and if so, I will covenant—if He will give me strength, to overcome my weaknesses and to resist the evil of this world. I do covenant with you, as I have done with my God and do now with my God, that I will seek with all the power which He will give me and which He has given me, to be a faithful servant unto you, and to dedicate my life and all the energies which God has given me to the building up of His kingdom and to the proclaiming of His word. May God help me to this end, and help us all to fulfill our duties, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## PREST. WILFORD WOODRUFF.

Some experiences connected with the Ministry—His call to the Apostleship—The Saints to be Afflicted if they do not Labor for Zion—Redemption of the Dead

I feel thankful to God my Heavenly Father that I have lived to see the day when I have one of my own posterity called to this office—a privilege which all my predecessors, presidents and counselors, who are in the spirit world, have had. Their sons are sitting before me here. I need not mention them; you know them yourselves.

I have had this desire in my heart, and the Lord has granted it unto me, and I am very thankful for it. I am satisfied that these two young men we have called will magnify their calling. I am satisfied that it is in their hearts to do it.

I want to remark here the difference—I was thinking of it while the brethren were talking—between the position of my son and our brother here and my position when I was called to the Apostleship. While in the worst apostasy we ever had in this Church, when Apostles and leading men were fighting the Prophet of God, the Lord told me to rise up, choose a companion, and go to Fox Islands. A great deal that I have done, and in my missions, I have been led by inspiration of Almighty God to do. I knew no more what was on Fox Islands than I knew what was on Kolob. I chose Brother Jonathan H. Hale as a partner. We went through Canada, and there met John E. Page, who was laboring there. We administered to one woman that was possessed of the devil, which was cast out. We healed the sick, and the blessings of God were with us. We crossed on Lake Ontario, and from there down to Albany, and Farmington, my native place. I there met my father and my mother. It was the first time I had seen them since I had been a Latter-day Saint. I held a meeting among them. I baptized my father, my step-mother, my sister, several uncles and aunts, and organized a small branch of the Church, composed of all my relatives except one—a Methodist preacher, who was boarding at my father's house. Old father Smith told me, when he blessed me, that I should bring all my father's house into the Church. I certainly baptized everybody that was in the house at the time I was there. I then went on my way to Fox Islands. When I got there I found two congregations—a Baptist minister, a meeting house, a Baptist congregation, on the north island; a Methodist minister, a Methodist congregation, without any meeting house, on the south island. I commenced preaching there, and very soon saw why the Lord had sent me there. There was a people there wishing for

the ancient order of things. I baptized most of those congregations. Without dwelling upon it, I will say I baptized over 100 while there.

While in the ministry there I received a letter from Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God, in which he told me that the Lord had given him a revelation, and named to me the persons that were called to fill the places of those who had fallen. My name was among them. He said that he wanted me to gather up the Saints I had baptized and bring them to Zion. What were the circumstances? I was on an island of the sea. There was not a horse or an ox on the island. There was not a man or a woman that knew how to harness a horse. I told one of the brethren, who had some money, that we must furnish a train of horses, wagons, harness, etc., and he proposed to advance the money for that purpose. He went with me and we bought about fifty horses; and then I had to match these horses, and get harness to fit them. I went to a wagon-maker and engaged twenty or twenty-five wagons. I did this in order to prepare the people to go with me, according to the words of the Prophet. I arranged everything, agreed with this brother to furnish the money, and left in advance with the understanding that they were to leave the first day of September. The letter to me was dated the first of August. I went to Maine, as my wife was there with her first child. I waited for this company to come to me, but they did not come till the first of October. We had then to travel from Maine to Missouri through snow, rain, and mud. However, we passed through it all, and got up there, according to the commandment of the Lord to me.

That was the way I was called to the Apostleship, and what I had to go through. I have felt from that day to this that it has been good to serve the Lord, good to honor God and to obey His commandments. No matter what we may be called to do, or what office we may be called to fill, if we trust in God and do our duty, we will be carried through. Of course, I am here among you now. But I have been on the sick list a good while. Still the Lord has blessed me, and I have got

back to my former state, in a measure, of health and strength. How long the Lord will permit me to live I do not know anything about; but I have to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all these affairs with myself. I have been edified at the teachings that have been given us at this Conference. What President Smith has said, what President Cannon has said, is true. They have spoken upon principles that we should lay to heart.

I tell you, brethren and sisters, the God of heaven has set His hand to build up Zion, in fulfillment of all the revelations of God to man from the days of Father Adam down to this day. The counsels that have been given here today are just and true, and we ought to observe them. I cannot sin, you cannot sin, we cannot turn from the commandments of God in anywise, but we are the losers by it. Again, I will say to this congregation, God Almighty will afflict these Latter-day Saints if they do not pursue the course they are called upon to pursue. The Lord will build up Zion and carry out His purposes; but we will be chastised unless we listen to the counsels of the servants of God. If these Latter-day Saints turn to the right or the left, on political questions or on other principles, to separate themselves one from another and from the commandments of God, the Lord Almighty will hold them responsible, and they will be chastised for doing it. I know this as well as I know I am alive. I am anxious for the salvation of the Latter-day Saints. I do not know anything about what you are on politics, but we should be united together and labor together to build up Zion. We have been called from the nations of the earth to do that; and if we do not do it, the judgments of Almighty God will rest upon us. I feel myself that the time has come when we ought to look around and about ourselves, and see what we are doing and what we should do. My prayer to God is that we may open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our hearts to understand the word of the Lord and the responsibilities we are under. We stand here, a little handful of men and women in the eyes of the world, but we are called to build up Zion.

Here we have four Temples, thank the Lord our God! Into those Temples we enter and redeem our dead. We have blessings which have never been given to any other generation since the days of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The Lord has raised up a people for this purpose. You hold the keys of the destiny of your fathers, your mothers, your progenitors, from generation to generation; you hold the keys of their salvation. God has put that power into your hands. But if we do not do what is required of us in this thing, we are under condemnation. If we do attend to this, then when we come to meet our friends in the celestial kingdom, they will say, "You have been our saviors, because you had power to do it. You have attended to these ordinances that God has required."

I will say to this congregation that the very men whom God raised up to lay the foundation of the American government—those noble men, from Washington down—have been to men in these Temples and required the ordinances of the House of God at their hands in their behalf. They have told them the position they occupied in the spirit world, and those men have gone forth and fulfilled these requests, and those noble men have received the ordinances of the House of God. A great many things have been required of us as a people, and as far as we have fulfilled them, so far we are justified. But do not let us lose the hold we have got. Do not let us turn our backs upon the commandments of God, and do those things that will place us in difficulties in days to come.

The eyes of the heavens are over us; the eyes of God himself, the eyes of every Prophet and Apostle in the spirit world, are watching you, watching this Priesthood, to see what they are doing and what they are going to do. It is of far more importance than we realize and comprehend. Let us awake to the ordinances of the House of God and do our duty, that we may be justified, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang:

"We thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Benediction by Elder Seymour B. Young.