

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, December 28, 1890, commencing at 2 p. m., Counselor Charles W. Penrose presiding.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn beginning:

We thank thee, O God, for a Prophet,
To guide us in these latter days.

Prayer by Elder William R. Barton.

The choir sang the hymn:

Mortals, awake! with angels join,
And chant the solemn lay.

The Priesthood of the Eleventh Ward officiated in the administration of the Sacrament.

APOSTLE ABRAHAM H. CANNON

addressed the congregation. We were living, he said, in very remarkable times. The events which were daily occurring in the world were bound to excite the attention and wonder of the people. Looking at these things as they happened, from a natural standpoint, we could not at present see the object of them; the reason was hidden from our sight. Yet when we viewed them as Latter-day Saints, with the eye of faith and with a partial understanding of the work which God was performing in the earth, His hand was clearly visible in the affairs of men and nations. We saw movements in empires, thrones cast down, emperors removed, republics arise, and various other changes taking place in different parts of the world; and though there seemed to be no order nor regularity in these matters, yet there was certainly a controlling power governing them for the accomplishment of certain purposes.

As Latter-day Saints we believed that God designed to bring the inhabitants of this globe under the rule and dominion of His Son Jesus Christ, who would reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. We believed that nations would be brought under His sway, and affairs so directed as to accomplish those marvelous predictions made centuries ago concerning the latter days. We looked for the fulfillment of that prophecy uttered by Daniel, even before the advent of the Messiah among men, when the kingdom, power and dominion would be given unto the Saints of the Most High; for we believed that the kingdom spoken of by Daniel had been established. The stone to which he referred had been cut out of the mountain without hands, and would continue to roll forth until it should grind to powder the great image which the king had seen, and which Daniel told him represented the various nations of the world from his time till the latest generation.

The Latter-day Saints did not, however, anticipate that bloodshed would be necessary in the establishment of the kingdom of God among men; they did not look for a combat of carnal weapons in the accomplishment of that of which God had

spoken; they did not look for Jesus to send forth His legions among the children of men to destroy those who received not His word or submitted not to His rule; but they did look for the establishment of a kingdom of peace and good will towards all men—the establishment of a government under which men and women might exercise the fullest freedom and have the most perfect liberty. If we understood the Gospel right; if we had not been dotards in the study of that which God had revealed, we must know this—that the Lord never designed to rob men of his agency, to deprive him of the right to choose between right and wrong, truth and error. The Gospel, as had been declared by the Apostle Paul, was a perfect law of liberty, a law under which men and women were expected to develop their highest powers, to be free agents, doing that which seemeth good unto them.

In all ages it had been the rule, the object sought, in preaching the Gospel to teach men and women to be free, to relieve themselves of the burdens of oppression and walk as children of God, seeking to know His will. When the Lord placed our first parents in the garden of Eden He gave them perfect liberty. But there was one particular tree the fruit of which they were commanded not to eat, and the penalty of death attached to a violation of that command. When Adam reached forth his hand to pluck the fruit, and when they were about to eat of it, they were not restrained by God in the exercise of their freedom; but they were guilty of disobedience, and thus was death brought into the world. When Abel, that righteous son of Adam, was slain by his brother, there was no intervention of the Almighty to prevent the commission of his foul crime. When Cain's hand was raised to slay Abel, though the power existed to prevent the murderous act, God did not stay that hand, but permitted the deed to be done; for Cain was acting upon his own agency. When, however, the murder had actually been committed the eternal curse followed. So in regard to the Israelites of old. The Lord continually sought to lead His people in a kindly way, by showing them the results of disobedience. He did not force them into a position of serving Him, but the two plans were placed before them—the plan of salvation and that of death and eternal damnation.

The Gospel of God was designed to give more freedom to man than could any earthly government. We spoke of the glorious principles under which we lived, which lay at the foundation of this God-given republic; we spoke of the inspiration of the Lord which directed the framing of this sacred Constitution; yet the former did not give the freedom which the Gospel gave to man when practiced in its perfection. The governments of the earth were of God; there was no power but came of God, and He had ordained these kingdoms, empires and republics for a wise purpose. It was well that gov-

ernments were instituted among men, even though some of them had laws which were injurious to the inhabitants of the country in which they prevailed. Still, it was better to have the oppression of one man, of the autocrat, than to have no government at all, or to be living in a state of anarchy.

The Lord would bring all things into a proper condition in His own due time, to best suit His righteous children. He would so control the affairs of nations as to cause them eventually to submit to His will; and though people might rise up against His decrees and for a time seem to override His laws and behests, yet He would bring all things to a glorious consummation.

Read the Book of Mormon, said the speaker, and see the evil results which followed the establishment of kingdoms upon this continent; but in that sacred record they could also find beautiful examples given by some of those who ruled as kings among the Nephites. Apostle Cannon gave several illustrations, next remarking that under the rule of righteous judges the people prospered. If such a feeling prevailed in the world in our day as was exhibited by Mosiah and his sons, there would be peace and blessing, instead of war and bloodshed, contention, strife and commotion among God's children. The rule of Christ was one of peace and goodwill, and it was this which the Latter-day Saints should endeavor to establish in Zion and elsewhere; this was the influence which they should seek to extend on all sides. He feared, nevertheless, that with all the knowledge they had received, with all the revelations which God had given them, with all the light that had come from above illuminating their understanding, they were far from practicing the true plan of the Gospel in this regard. He sometimes felt that if conditions were reversed and to the Latter-day Saints were bestowed the power which their enemies—as they were called today—possessed, they would, perhaps, exercise a more unrighteous domination than did those who now opposed the Saints in these mountain valleys. He trusted that such would not be the case; though when they viewed the actions of men in this Church at times and saw the injustice which was meted out by those in authority in the wards and stakes of Zion, he now and then feared that the Gospel had found very shallow soil in the hearts of some of the men who presided in Israel. He forgot the admonition to the Latter-day Saints contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants—that the powers of the Priesthood were inseparably connected with the powers of heaven; and they could be exercised only upon principles of righteousness. When men misused those powers and that authority which God had bestowed upon them, then the Spirit was withdrawn, and they could not have any influence with the unseen powers behind the veil. Why could we not always exhibit that charity and