

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 24.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, JUNE 1, 1895.

VOL. L.

DISCOURSE

Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday, April 6th, 1895, by

PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I wish to read for our instruction a few verses which will be found in the first chapter of John's Revelations, as follows:

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

In connection with this I wish to read from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, 110th section:

The vail was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.

We saw the Lord standing upon the breast work of the pulpit, before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, the hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying—

I am the first and the last, I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain, I am your advocate with the Father.

Behold, your sins are forgiven you, you are clean before me, therefore lift up your heads and rejoice.

Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name.

For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.

This vision was seen by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 3rd, 1836.

Here are two testimonies concerning Jesus Christ. That which I first read was given about 1800 years ago, the other about 59 years ago. I suppose

there are many millions that believe in the first testimony which I have read in relation to the Son of God, as described by John the Revelator. This second testimony about the same personage, the Son of God, is believed but by a very few compared to the great number of people who believe in the first testimony. In reference to John, who bore testimony to the Son of God, I never was familiar with him. Indeed I never saw his face; I never heard his voice; I never had the pleasure of shaking hands with him. But Joseph Smith I was familiar with: In the year 1832, if I mistake not, I first saw him and heard him preach. And from that time on, with the exception perhaps of a couple of years, I was intimately acquainted with him. I have conversed with him many times. I have heard him preach many times. I have sat at his table at various times. I knew him to be a man of God, full of the spirit of his calling—a man whose integrity could not be disputed, and who was honest in all his endeavors. No one that was as intimately acquainted with him as I was could find any fault with him, so far as his moral character was concerned. As to the second individual here that bears this last testimony, Oliver Cowdery, I was partially acquainted with him. I heard him preach, and talked with him; and while he was engaged in promulgating the principles of the religion which he espoused, the same that you and I have espoused, no fault could be found with him. At that time he was a good man, and always bore a faithful testimony to these things which God had plainly manifested to him. But like some others who were prominent in the Church in 1836, and before and after that, he got dissatisfied, he got jealous of certain parties, and after a time he apostatized, and remained in that condition for many years; but just previous to his death he came forward and requested to have the privilege of being rebaptized and become again a member of the Church. Yet during all the period of his apostasy, so far as I understand he always maintained the truth of this testimony which he bore in regard to the truth of the principles of Mormonism and the various manifestations which he received of the Lord. Now, I bear testimony of the good character of Brother Joseph Smith, of his honesty, his fidelity, his faithfulness, his generosity and benevolence, as a man and as a servant of God. This is why I have read these testimonies.

Now, there are several thousand Latter-day Saints before me, and there is not one but has a work to perform. We did not come into this world accidentally. We came for a special purpose, and it was undoubtedly through certain

arrangements in the other life where we dwell that we came into this life. Well, in the Temples we are accomplishing a great work in reference to our kindred dead. We have from time to time important manifestations that God approved of this labor that we are performing in our Temples. Most extraordinary manifestations have been experienced by individuals that are laboring for their ancestry. It is a mighty work that we are accomplishing. Thousands of persons have been baptized for their dead during the progress of our labors in the Temples. I wish to speak of a few things in reference to the importance of this work and of individuals being engaged in it. As I said, we have not come into this world accidentally. It is my opinion that there has been an inspiration to bring about certain relations that we are forming here in this life, and most likely they arise because of certain relations that existed in our previous life. We respect those relations. As President Woodruff told us at our last conference but one, in speaking on this subject, we respect the relations that were formed years and generations ago when the Gospel was not among the children of men. One of the first commandments that God gave when He introduced the human family upon this little globe upon which we dwell was that they should multiply and replenish the earth. That was a matter of the highest importance, or God would never have given that commandment. It was of the utmost importance that the earth should be peopled with the sons and daughters of God. Circumstances were of that nature that men and women never could be exalted and receive the fulness of glory unless they passed through this ordeal. They had to come to the earth, which was called the second estate. We had a first estate, in which we dwell, moved and had a being. We knew one another there. And in consequence of having kept our first estate, we had the privilege of coming into this estate, in order to pass through the ordeal and get that necessary experience and education that should prepare us to sit upon thrones and govern and control our posterity worlds without end. We came here because we were sent here and because we were willing to come. In this life we send our missionaries to the world. We select our young men and give them missions to travel among the nations. It is not one of the most pleasant things that might be imagined for a young man to start out, not having had any experience, to go to a land and among a people that he knows nothing at all about, and in many instances does not even understand their language. He realizes that he will have trials, troubles