

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Jan. 5, 1890, commencing at 2 p. m. President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir and congregation sang:
Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

Prayer by Elder William C. Dunbar.

The choir sang:

How fleet the precious moments roll!
How soon the harvest will be o'er.

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

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

addressed the congregation. He commenced by remarking that his experience had been sufficient to convince him most thoroughly that the Elders who occupied the position which he had been called upon to fill that afternoon certainly need the sustaining power of God. Without it they would be altogether unequal to the task of teaching the Saints those things in which it was necessary that they should be instructed. When in answer to the united faith and prayers of the people (continued Elder Roberts) the Spirit of the Lord descends upon a congregation and the speakers who address that assembly, then the people are taught; indeed, for they are taught of God.

Since coming to this stand and looking upon the decoration of this building, I have thought there is one point connected with it that might be regarded by strangers as something very peculiar, owing to the reputation which the Latter-day Saints have abroad; and that is, you are sitting and worshipping God under the American flag, which constitutes a part of these decorations. Because, through misrepresentation and misstatement, it is supposed that the Latter-day Saints have little or no respect for this national emblem. It occurred to me that this fact was one of many, both in theory and practice, that would go very far toward dispelling misrepresentations which have gone abroad in relation to our views concerning the American flag and the principles which it represents.

It is the common belief among us as a people that our destiny is inseparably united with that of our country and with the principles which underlie that government. The Book of Mormon—which we regard as equally sacred with the Jewish Scriptures—gives us to understand that the land in which we live is a choice land, that the providences of God have been over it, that He will guide its destiny and work out His purposes upon it. It might not be amiss to call your attention to some of the passages which touch this idea. When the Prophet Lehi, who left Jerusalem with a colony of people and finally reached this land, was about to pass away he called his sons about him and blessed them, as

was the manner of the ancient patriarchs. In blessing two of his sons who had been born to him during his travels in the wilderness, after leaving Jerusalem, he said:

"Notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children for ever; and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord."

It would appear from this that Lehi had no exclusive claim upon it, but that it was dedicated to him and his seed and to all other peoples whom the Lord should bring unto this land.

"Wherefore," continues the Prophet, "I, Lehi, prophecy according to the workings of the Spirit which is in me, that there shall none come into this land, save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.

"Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which He hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound, cursed shall be the land for their sake; but unto the righteous it shall be blessed for ever."

Another Prophet of an earlier day said words of similar import. He was a Prophet among the Jaredites, a people who originally came from the tower of Babel and preceded the Nephites in the occupation of this land of America by a number of centuries. Moroni, in giving an account of the words of this Prophet, one Ether, and speaking of the travels of this first colony to America, says:

"The Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord had preserved for a righteous people;

And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whose should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them.

And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity;

"For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God, or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land that they are swept off."

"And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God, that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you, as the inhabitants of the land hath hitherto done."

"Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written."

There are other passages in the book referring to this same subject, but I take it that this is sufficient to prove to us that this land of America of which these things are said is a choice land, is reserved for a righteous people, and is dedicated to liberty; and the people who inhabit it have the assurance from God that they shall be free. There is one more passage, however, to which I wish to call your attention, and that because it comes down to the age of the Gentiles, the first colony that inhabited the land having been led by the Lord from the Tower of Babel until they reached America, multiplied, increased, and became a mighty and prosperous nation. So long as they lived in harmony with truth, with those principles which God had revealed from heaven, they were prospered, they were blessed, they were in high favor with the Lord, and their government, institutions and liberties were preserved unto them. But when they forgot the decrees of God concerning the land and forsook those principles of righteousness which had been their bulwark hitherto, then destruction suddenly came upon them, they were swept from the earth, and only one man was left to represent that mighty nation. The colony which was led out of Jerusalem by Lehi and finally reached this land—that, too, became a nation; and it is the ruins of their cities, temples, and mansions that are strewn upon the face of the land to this day. But so long as they were true to God, devoted to His service, and sought to establish righteousness they flourished and prospered, and had many periods of great happiness, liberty, and freedom; they were untrammelled; the harvest of righteous men was indeed abundant. After a time, however, they followed in the footsteps of the Jaredites, they forgot God, they rejected the Gospel, they trampled the principles of righteousness under their feet, they were forsaken of God, and then came their sudden destruction. They wandered into darkness, and the remnants of that nation are still known and seen—a warning to all other nations that shall inhabit this sacred land, exclaiming aloud, "Walk not in the footsteps of our fathers; avoid the errors that they made; cleave unto the principles of righteousness if you would retain your exalted civilization and the liberty of which you boast. That is the message which the Lamanite, degraded, uncivilized, proclaims unto the proud nations that now occupy the land of America."

The discovery of this continent, the coming of the Gentiles and their final occupation of it, were all foreknown and predicted with such great clearness that we who now live after the events have transpired cannot comprehend them more clearly