

served, but never more so than at present.

All Christian people join this day in praise of that wonderful advent which made this the day of days to earth and the inhabitants thereof—an event waited for nearly 4000 years by those to whom the promise was made, and which they looked forward to with a living faith, that He who should come was anointed to be their Redeemer, and that He would have power to save all those who would believe on Him.

From the day of Adam's transgression the blood of animals was shed and sacrifice offered as typical of and to preserve in memory the sacrifice to be made of Him whose blood should cleanse from all sin. The promise of a Savior was made to many worthies who lived in early days; and the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts of the children of Israel while in bondage was a sign of their faith. Their deliverance from death was typical of that Christ whose blood should deliver them from the bondage of sin and death. It was again typified in that serpent lifted up upon the cross on which all of the children of Israel might look and live. Again it was confirmed by that holy angel who announced to Mary that she should bear a son who should rule over the house of Jacob forever; and when born and presented in the Temple as the divine infant, he was pronounced to be the light of nations and the glory of Israel. All these looked with an eye of faith to the time of His coming, and the miraculous manifestations of His power.

Since then history and many witnesses not only declare His coming, but tell of His life, His cruel death, His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven from whence He came, to the home and glory of the Father, whose only begotten Son among men He was.

Let imagination for a moment contemplate the character of that divine mission which so grandly achieved a triumph over death, and demonstrated the fact, by actual personal experience, that man may come to earth, fill his mission, and despite of death break its bands and return in person from whence He came. And further still we may query, what must have been the emotions of His spirit while contemplating the mission appointed to Him during those four thousand years from the time He was chosen and ordained; for it is written of Him that He was as a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. And, viewing His appointment with human eyes, we can only conclude that His love was sufficient to cast out all fear, or we would say, love and fear must have alternated, and at times made terrible the contemplation of suffering more than man can suffer, be tempted more than man was ever tempted; and finally to suffer the most ignominious death, invade the regions of the dead to set captives, bound there, free, and proclaim liberty to the entire race of man. Only by the power of divine love could such a mission be contemplated without shrinking from the fearful ordeal to be endured.

He to whom had been given all power both in heaven and on earth was pledged to use it only under the

power and influence of love; that love that constitutes the charity that never faileth; that charity, with faith and hope, which constitutes the element in which dwell all spiritual, intelligent beings. We cannot view Him there in the light of humanity; must not compare that state with our frail human existence; but we may contemplate from a knowledge of His career the royal grandeur of those sublime virtues which we may acquire by passing through the like ordeal, endure but feebly as He endured, and overcome as He overcame, in fighting for that crown of glory, which He secured and is laid up for all those who shall rise triumphant by virtue of His redeeming love.

It is His character, the virtues of His Godlike career that we should seek to emulate, as He sacrificed His happiness and glory, and suffered for our good to become a Savior; so let us cherish the exalting virtues of love and charity in the acts of our lives, that we may be entitled to like honors and participants of like glory.

This day which commemorates the advent, life and earthly career of Him who was the Messiah, God with man, is a day to be honored by every professed Christian, and affords evidence of that honor and esteem of His character by doing as he did; by bestowing some gift as token of His love for another that shall be a blessing to the receiver—the giver to bestow the gift by virtue of some sacrifice on his part that shall be evidence of Christlike charity. Let us all put on this day the mantle of charity, never to be again dirobed of it, ever remembering that self-denial and willing sacrifice are necessary virtues of a Savior and Redeemer of our fellow man. Sacrifice alone puts this power within the reach of all. The one that gives the least by sacrifice gives more than the one that gives most out of His abundant riches. Such was the judgment rendered by this same Christ, whose judgment is just; that the widow's mite, which was her all, her living, was more than the abundance which had been contributed by those whose wealth of riches prevented the possibility of any sacrifice to them, of any personal enjoyment whatever.

Love is commendable in all, but let it be evidenced by some generous act, or by some kindly word that shall be Christlike in purity of motive and shall serve to awaken that sympathy that shall elevate humanity, by blessing the needy, comforting the afflicted, and by making happy all who are willing to come under the influence of a Savior's love, and enjoy His divine favor.

Circumstances and conditions which attend us in this life are often of an adverse or afflicting character, though they may be for our purification, if rightly appreciated. For instance, many of our homes are bereft of loved ones with whom we shared the happy hours and merriment of last Christmas. Our spirits still yearn for their society, evidencing the strength of that eternal bond which memory claims should not be broken; but they are gone, and who of us that remain have the assurance that we shall ever witness another in time? We may look forward to the future in our anticipations, as we are

compelled to think of the past from our realizations; and would that it might be otherwise. Here is a mighty lesson to learn, discovering, as we do, that His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. To acquiesce in those dealings and providences which seem to afflict and give us sorrow, and in them to discover the merits of an allwise and eternal plan, is our lesson of life to learn. When learned, we may look upon the most heartrending scenes of life with like composure as Christ did when awaiting His appointed time for the trying test of His career, and know that a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory is the reward of our endurance.

Merry be the Christmas and happy the New Year to all who love our Lord, the Christ!

BEAR LAKE STAKE.

Editor Deseret News:

On Monday, Sept. 7, 1891, I left Salt Lake City by team bound for the Bear Lake Stake of Zion and returned on the 20th of October following, after traveling 639 miles, visiting twenty-nine settlements of the Saints in the interest of Church history, and preaching thirty-six times. Of the settlements visited twenty-seven were in the Bear Lake Stake, and two, namely Almy and Evanston, Wyoming, in the Summit Stake. Almost without exception I was well received and cared for by the presiding officers and leading men of the different settlements, who nearly all seemed to understand the importance of improving the method of keeping ward records, and promised to act upon the suggestions given in this regard.

Among the places visited were Star Valley and Salt River Valley. Most readers of the NEWS undoubtedly know something about Star Valley, Wyoming, where five flourishing settlements of the Saints constitute an important part of the Bear Lake Stake of Zion; but there are perhaps many who have never heard much of Salt River Valley, lying immediately north of the former, partly in Wyoming and partly in Idaho. In order to reach this valley from Auburn, or Grover, the traveler passes through a canyon following the course of Salt river, which here is both deep and wide in places, and has to be forded twice. Formerly the road crossed the mountain. Emerging from this canyon, a broad and attractive valley greets the gaze of the traveler, and on the different streams which put into Salt river from the snow-capped mountains on the east, a number of ranches and farms, recently opened, convinces the stranger that he is still on the borders of civilization. These scattered settlers constitute the newly organized Glencoe ward, over which John W. Thonson presides as Bishop, with Hans J. Emmert and Sidney Allen as counselors. The numerical strength of this ward, which was first organized June 17, 1891, is 33 families, or 170 souls. The centre of the ward, or the point where the meeting house stands, in section 23, township 34 north of range 119 west, is on the east side of Salt river, about eighteen miles north-west of Afton, in Star Valley.