

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

ELDER JOHN MORGAN,

*At the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,
Sunday, August 13th, 1893.*

(REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.)

I have been requested to occupy a portion of the time this afternoon, to be the medium through which the Spirit of the Lord may make itself manifest to you; and I shall be under the necessity of earnestly asking you for an interest in your sympathy, and in your faith and prayers, that I may be led to say something that will be for our mutual good and blessing.

Our Father has, in His wisdom, seen fit to set apart one day in seven for a special purpose, and that is, that it may be to His children upon the earth a day of rest, a day of worship, a day when they will lay aside their worldly cares and the entanglements of business and call in the wandering thoughts of their minds and seek to center them upon the principles of eternal life, and thus prepare themselves for the six days before them. Nature itself bears testimony to the necessity of this great law, by demanding rest for the human body, that the system shall not become entirely unfitted for exertion by activity without rest. There should be given to the body a season of rest, and the mind be diverted from those things that engross it during the six days of the week, and be led to contemplate other matters; and that we may meet together as we do today, that the spiritual man may be refreshed and strengthened, and that our souls may be lit up by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Every Latter-day Saint who has had any experience in endeavoring to live the principles of the Gospel can bear testimony to the fact that separation from the body of the Church and from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper has a tendency to weaken the faith of the individual, and that he requires from day to day the strengthening influences that abide in the body of the Church. All these influences combined are not sometimes sufficient to prevent men and women walking into by and forbidden paths and turn away from the principles of the Gospel; but the purpose of our gathering together is that the spiritual man may be strengthened, and that we may be better prepared to live lives of usefulness and to fill the mission that is assigned us. Under these circumstances, weak and fallible man, in and of himself, would be an insufficient instrument, whatever his talents might be, to instruct his fellow man. It requires higher intelligence and more potent influences than can emanate from mortal man alone to instruct his fellow mortal in the paths of eternal life. It requires that inspiration which comes from our Father in heaven, that the path way of His children may be made clear, and that they shall not be as the blind man groping for the wall.

The saints of all ages have lived in troublous times. They have been surrounded by tribulation and by influences of an untoward character. They have been a misunderstood people, a misrepresented people. Sacred and profane history alike bear testi-

mony to this. In ancient times God's people were not understood. The objects they had in view and the intents of their hearts were not comprehended. The same rule applies today that has applied from the beginning, and doubtless will in the future, until truth and righteousness shall prevail, and men shall see eye to eye, which, we are told in the Scriptures, shall occur when Zion shall come again. While the name and fame of the Latter-day Saints have been heralded to the ends of the earth, yet they have been most grotesquely misunderstood and misrepresented. Strange and peculiar ideas prevail in regard to the objects and intents that actuate the Latter-day Saints.

If there is one point more clearly evidenced than another in all sacred history, it is that there shall come certain times and seasons in the history of this earth that shall be looked upon as the culmination of the events of the providences of our Father. In the beginning or morning of time remarkable events transpired. We have an account of the planting of the human race upon the earth; of their increase and multiplication until they covered it; of the time when they were swept from its face by a mighty deluge; of their again multiplying on the earth, until in the meridian of time the Son of Man came and offered himself as a living sacrifice for the redemption of His brethren and sisters, filled His mission upon the earth, established the covenant of the Gospel, was crucified upon the cross, buried in the tomb, came forth a resurrected and an immortal Being, and presented Himself to His brethren and made known to them, at least in part, the momentous nature of the mission that He had to fill—an epoch in the history of the world that perchance had not been equalled up to that time. Following that we read the sayings of the Prophets and His own words in relation to the great events that should transpire in the latter days, that should so dwarf into insignificance the events of former days that the memory of them should almost fade from the mind of man. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man," when He shall return to earth in power and glory and with authority to reign.

The Latter-day Saints believe that there should be a day of preparation for this great event; and while the world but little comprehends this important fact or the connection that the Latter-day Saints have with it, yet to the Latter-day Saints it is a living reality. The day of the coming of these events is not far distant, and we are living in one of the most momentous ages of the world—an age prophesied of in the past as one in which the work of the Lord should be cut short in righteousness, wherein all things should transpire very rapidly, so much so that the peoples of the earth would be unprepared for them. When over half a century ago there rose up in the western wilds of the state of New York a few people who called themselves Latter-day Saints, there were very few indeed who had the hardihood to believe that those people would grow and increase until they became a mighty multitude in the tops of the mountains, whose name and

reputation should go abroad to the world until they should be known of all men. Yet how rapidly has that been fulfilled. One event has trod on the heels of another so closely that it has seemed almost impossible to keep them in memory; yet let any one take the history of these events and compare them with the words as recorded in the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, as well as the words of the living oracles, and there has been no event of any importance but has been clearly foretold. History has but followed out the words of prophecy; and if heed had been given to these words, no event could possibly have transpired without our minds having been fully informed of it and our hearts fully prepared for it. But we have been like the former-day saints. When the Savior was crucified they lost hope, for they had regarded Him as the Shiloh and the Redeemer, but when they saw Him lifted on the cross they thought they had been deceived, and they went their way. Yet the Savior had foretold those very events; and when He appeared to them in His resurrected and immortal body and called their attention to the things that He had spoken, they remembered them very distinctly. So we, looking back over the path that we have trodden, may recall to our minds declaration after declaration from the mouths of the living oracles and from the writings of inspired men and see how clearly the events that have transpired have been foretold. And what applies to the past may just as distinctly apply to the future. Not one step will be taken, not one line marked out, not one movement made but what has been or will be clearly outlined to the minds of the Latter-day Saints, if they will only give heed thereto.

I read during the singing of the first hymn the title of the anthem which is to be sung, I believe, at the close of this afternoon's services—"Blessed are the men who fear Him; they ever walk in the ways of peace." It struck my mind very forcibly. It is an admonition that every Latter-day Saint should give heed to; and if they will, their paths shall be paths of safety. You today are witnesses to the fact that had the Latter-day Saints given heed to the admonitions and counsel of the Lord as they have been given from time to time through His servants, there would have been greater peace, greater prosperity, and greater blessings showered upon them than their minds can conceive of. But we have seen as through a glass darkly, to a great extent. We have not comprehended the end from the beginning by any means; we have groped, as it were, as the blind man for the wall. We have walked in weakness, we have stumbled in the path in many instances, and we have had to reap the results of that stumbling and of that carelessness.

In the future there will be a greater necessity for the Latter-day Saints to have light and intelligence in regard to the mind and will of God than ever before, because of the conditions and circumstances by which we are surrounded. We look out on the world today in its political organization, in its social organization, and in its financial organization, and we can only think