

WHEREIN LATTER-DAY SAINTS ARE A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

Address delivered by ELDER NEPHI L. MORRIS, at Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Nov. 4, 1906.

Reported by F. W. Osterstrom.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light."

There is something distinctive in the Latter-day Saints as compared with other religious bodies in the world. When you speak of Catholics, you know that that term embraces all kinds of men to be found in nearly all the races of the earth. When you speak of Methodists, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, you have similar conceptions in smaller degrees; but when you speak of Latter-day Saints you have something distinctive in mind, and you say: "They are a peculiar people." They are unlike the peoples of the world in many ways and some people seem to think that there is nothing in common between the Latter-day Saints and the rest of the religious organizations.

I think it was Mr. Froide, the historian, who said: "The two things in a people which interest us most are how they get their food and what they believe in." To the first question there is not much difficulty as regards the Latter-day Saints today, the question of getting food was a tremendous problem to them a century ago. They have always been an agricultural people, living close to the earth. While they lived here for nearly 60 years under the shades of these magnificent peaks, they have these splendid ranges of the Rockies, which held within themselves untold millions, yet the Latter-day Saints were not particularly interested in that rich treasure. They followed that admonition of their wise leader, Brigham Young, and pursued the simple life of the agriculturist, and husbandman, the Rockmaster, believing as he did, no doubt, that there is not much spiritually associated with mining, neither in the mining camp, nor in the mine of trade, or the exchange, but living the simple life of the agriculturist and the husbandman, there was more likely to be in such a life the element of spirituality. The Latter-day Saints appreciate today that great truth which was urged upon them in their early history. Today they live in a land teeming with plenty. Bounteous harvests of all kinds are reaped each season as a result of their devotion to the counsel which was given to them in their early history in this country. Later, when our friends came abroad—men who were bent on the acquisition of wealth—they discovered the rich treasures of these mountains, and streams of silver and gold, and fountains of baser metals, have been flowing from these mountain ranges ever since. Until Utah has produced its millions upon millions of treasure, adding to the world's aggregate wealth; and with this increased productivity of the country our commonwealth has grown, has become a great nation, has stepped forward in line with other progressive cities and states of our great Union.

The other question, however, is more interesting to strangers; and I take it granted that the larger part of those present today are strangers. I am informed by Elder Goddard, who has charge of the bureau of information, that these guests you are—that there have been registered upon the books of that bureau today, travelers from 31 states of the Union, and from four different foreign countries; so that we have in this congregation a complete representation of the world. There may be some who desire to know what the Latter-day Saints believe in. I trust that they have used the books of truth, having a plain and simple exposition of the belief, the hopes, the aspirations, of the character of the Latter-day Saints. They are, as I have read, from the text, "a peculiar people." First, let me define the relative position of the Latter-day Saints to other sects of religious bodies. We believe in Jesus Christ as the God-man, who came to earth in the meridian of time and established His Church on the earth for the salvation of mankind. We believe that the apostles and the other officers of that Church as being essential to the organization of the institution founded by Him who was its chief cornerstone. We believe in the ordinances and Sacraments instituted by Him and by His associates; and we believe that gospel was preached in all the world in the apostolic dispensation, and then came the apostasy from the faith. The early Christian saints were destroyed under those fierce and unrelenting persecutions of the first, second, and third centuries; and there was a grievous departure from the faith subsequent to, and even during, that period. It is the position of the Latter-day Saints that there was a complete apostasy from the faith. We know full well that the Catholic Church, having received, as they claim, from St. Peter, the apostolic authority to minister in the institutions of the Church, we know also that the Protestant church in the great revolution of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries undertook to correct the errors and heresies of the great Catholic church. The Protestants believed that the Catholic church had departed from the original faith and they undertook to bring about a reformation therein. They never assumed to restore the gospel. None of the reformers from Luther, Knox and Calvin down to the non-conformists, Wesley and Whitefield, ever professed to have restored the gospel which had departed from the earth. In this relation you may appreciate the position of the Latter-day Saints. They believe the apostasy of the first, second, and third centuries

of the Christian era was universal; and the earth, since the holy priesthood—with power to act for and in the name of God and officiate in the ordinances of the gospel—was not upon the earth, it was necessary that it should be restored to the earth in order to make the gospel since the gospel had been taken from efficacious to save the souls of men. We could cite you to prophecies of the Hebrew scriptures, prophecies of the New Testament, in which this condition was plainly foretold. Take for instance the prophecy of Amos, "Behold I will send a famine in the land; not a famine for bread or thirst for water, but for the hearing of the word of God; and men shall go from the east even unto the west, and they shall wander to and fro, and shall go from sea to sea to seek the word of God, but shall not find it." This was a foretelling of the condition which existed during the dark ages, the great night in history, the apostasy from the Christian church, which the Protestants undertook to correct in the reformation which was led by Wycliffe and Luther and their associates. The position of the Latter-day Saints is that since the gospel dispensation had been closed, since men holding authority to act in the name of God had been destroyed from the earth, it was absolutely necessary in order that the gospel be restored, that the heavens be opened, and the keys and authorities of the priesthood be restored to mankind. This is, I say, the distinguishing feature of the Latter-day Saints as compared with other Christian sects. It was John the apostle, who, on the Isle of Patmos, looking down to this day said: "And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having a everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, saying with a loud voice: Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is at hand." Speaking of the last days, when the end of the world should come, the Savior said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come." Now, the Latter-day Saints are simple enough in their faith in God and His written word to believe in these prophecies regarding the gospel dispensation. They believe that there had been a dreadful famine in the land, when the word of God could not be found, the men should travel from sea to sea, from the east even unto the west, they should not find the word of God because there was not a man bearing the holy priesthood; there was not a man endowed by the Holy Ghost who could speak the word of God unto them. Speaking along this line, the Apostle Peter said: "And the word of God endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Whenever a man holding the priesthood of God, ordained and appointed to officiate in the name of God, when such a man could speak the word of God unto them, the question was greatly agitated by religious sects which were conducting the revivals in that section of the land. And this boy, reading the holy Scriptures with piety and faith, read the promise of James in the Bible, which he says: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." The youth believed the word of God to be true. In his autobiography he says that no scripture ever impressed him so deeply as did this simple one. He went into the woods to pray, and asked for the wisdom which he confessed he needed, knowing not which of the sects he should join. While he was praying two heavenly beings appeared to him, one of them telling him he was to join none of the sects for they had all departed from the ways of the Lord. This personage was the Son of God. According to the story of this youth, the Father and the Son appeared unto him, and in answer to his prayer told him what he should do. Immediately he became the object of contumely and vituperation. Ministers who professed to be the representatives of the meek and lowly Jesus, turned upon this youth and vehemently denounced him as an impostor or a hypocrite—a deceiver or else one who was deluded himself; and from that day to this, Joseph Smith and his followers have received that kind of treatment, to a very great degree, from nearly all the world. It is because they professed to have received an angelic visitation, a divine revelation. This has aroused the opposition and the vehement hate of men who profess the name of Jesus, the Nazarene. The belief of the Latter-day Saints in these things must be candidly admitted even though they are at variance with the conceptions of the religious world. The Christian sects of today believe that the ministrations of angels is remotely removed from the present day, that revelations have been done away with. In this we differ. We claim that the blessings and powers of the gospel of Jesus Christ are the same in this dispensation as in the other dispensations. Angelic visitations, revelations, and miraculous manifestations of the Spirit were given in the primitive Christian church, and we claim that the same powers and manifestations

exist in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today. We call ourselves "Latter-day" Saints in contradistinction to the former-day saints who enjoyed the same exercises of heavenly powers. We believe in God the Eternal Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the Old Testament, who was a personal deity, the Father of mankind. Nothing vague, nothing uncertain, but a simple belief in a personal God, the God of the patriarchs of old. We believe in His Son, Jesus Christ who came to reveal unto us His Father—to interpret the Father for us. We believe in Him as being the God-man who had a body as we have and who lived among mankind and was recognized as a natural human being, who possessed very largely of the element, the divine nature in himself. We believe He came to atone for the sins of the world, to reconcile mankind to the Father, God the Eternal One. That He came to show us the right way, for He was the way, "and the light of the world." We believe that He was for us crucified on Golgotha's hill, and that He rose up that body which was lacerated by the spear and the nails, and arose triumphant an immortal being; that He appeared to Mary and to other women; He appeared to the most beloved of the saints. They looked upon Him, and they handled His body, and some of them felt the wounds inflicted in Him while He hung upon the cross. We believe in Jesus the resurrected Lord, who was like unto His Father. "The express image of His Father's person." We believe in a personal God, a personal Savior with bodies like unto our own, except that they are now immortalized. This is the simple faith of the Latter-day Saints; this is also the God described in the Bible, and you will find no other description of the true deity from Genesis to Revelations. You will find no description which does not conform to the conception of a personal deity.

We believe in the ordinances of the gospel. We believe that mankind must acknowledge that God lives, and that He is a rewarder of them that serve Him; that if they do not believe in Him and serve Him they cannot be saved. The next principle following on belief in repentance from sin is not a wordy, sorrowful weeping and waiting for sins committed, but a fervent determination to forsake sin, to incorporate into the soul righteousness in lieu of wickedness. Then, after one has repented from sin, he should go into the waters of baptism and be buried in the liquid grave, that his sins may be washed away. Then should come the baptism of the Holy Ghost, likened unto a baptism of fire. This ordinance was performed originally by the laying on of hands by one who held authority, not by a man who assumed authority, but a man ordained by God and called of God, legitimately ordained to that office. No man can administer in these ordinances unless he be authorized. You will remember when the Apostle Paul and others were preaching the gospel in certain cities, they met a number of disciples who said they had been baptized according to John's baptism; and the apostle asked them this pertinent question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye were baptized?" They answered that they did not so much as know that there was a Holy Ghost. Then he asked as to what baptism they had been baptized, and they said unto him, the baptism of John. John had told them that he baptized with water, but that they should believe on Him who should come after him, even Jesus Christ, and He would baptize with the Holy Ghost. Believing that their baptism had not been legally performed, they were baptized over again, and then the apostles laid their hands upon them and the Holy Ghost came down upon them and manifested itself by speaking in tongues and prophecy. These are the principles and ordinances taught by the primitive church and these same principles, accompanied by the same powers, are taught by the Latter-day Saints today. We believe in principle, we conform in every manner to the faith of the early Christian saints; we believe in everything that is progressive and uplifting. We believe in the "glory of God is intelligence," and that man will be saved only as he advances in knowledge. We believe in education; we believe in teaching and promoting the interests of education; and from the beginning the Latter-day Saints have been loyal to educational interests. The Latter-day Saints believe in purity, in the purity of the home, despite the clamor of 500,000 women to the contrary. The Latter-day Saints do believe in the purity of the home, and you will find among these "peculiar" Latter-day Saints—these hated and despised "Mormons." I know whereof I speak, my friends; it is not hearsay with me. Purity, virtue, integrity and honor are prized among the Latter-day Saints as being more precious than life itself. I tell you this as a solemn truth, no matter what the world says. I know it because it has been taught me from my earliest childhood. The Latter-day Saint motto says to his son: "My son I would rather follow you to your grave than have you lose your virtue and sacrifice your purity." This is not uncommon; it is almost universal with the Latter-day Saints. They love chastity and purity, and they would rather sacrifice life itself than part with these graces and virtues. The Latter-day Saints believe in the home; they believe it should be sacred, and it is the common admonition among the priesthood of the Church, and the common practice of the members of the Church, to read the Scriptures in their homes, to have family prayers, or personal prayers daily. This is the practice of the people; they believe in resisting evil in every form; and for the temporal salvation of this people there has been adopted by them a rule of faith which forbids them to do the practices which threaten the physical well-being of the race today. No Latter-day Saint who is living his religion—as we put it—can use liquor

or tobacco, for they are forbidden by this rule of faith. Even tea and coffee have been condemned, because they are stimulants and regarded as injurious. It may seem striking to you, yet it is a solemn truth that I speak when I say there are thousands of young men among the Latter-day Saints who do not know the taste of liquor or tobacco; they have never touched these things. I believe I am not exaggerating if I say there are also thousands who have never tasted even tea or coffee. On the other hand, he it said to our shame and to our sorrow that there are thousands among us who are given to these vices and greater ones, but not with the approval of the Church, not in conformity to the tenets thereof. The Latter-day Saints are struggling for purity, struggling to save mankind, physically, socially and spiritually, they are proclaiming these truths and many more to the world, and for that purpose we maintain, perhaps, the greatest proselyting system known among Christian sects. Over 1,500 of our men and boys are in the world preaching this Gospel. They go to your houses and distribute tracts; they preach on the streets, and wherever they have an opportunity they teach these principles to the people, and not one of them receives one cent in compensation for his services. Without purse or scrip they go forth to preach the Gospel, and after fulfilling their missions they come back and resume their labors in the shop, the store, or on the farm. The Latter-day Saints send out seven or eight hundred missionaries every year. They make these sacrifices because they love the world and desire that the people in the world shall be saved. I pray you to consider the Latter-day Saints as your brothers and sisters striving for the salvation of all mankind and inspired with this large hope, this liberal conviction and knowledge that God shall ultimately save all mankind, not only those who live today, but those who have lived and the millions yet unborn, or the Gospel will fall in its divine purpose. Universal salvation is the large hope that lives in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints. May you with us unite to bring about that condition which will put men in the way of eternal salvation, may prayer, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

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AMERICAN DESERTS

ARE VANISHING.

For the last 300 miles or so of its line from Chicago to the base of the Rocky mountains the Santa Fe Railway follows the course of the Arkansas river, in western Kansas and eastern Colorado, over plains which once seemed properly called the great American desert. Long after the road was completed these vast stretches of treeless arid land remained unpeopled and apparently uninhabitable; the lonely railway stations, with an occasional cattle herder's cabin, constituting the architecture of the plain, and the hard-trodden path of the buffalo through the struggling grass forming the public highways. Today the traveler over the same region passes through scores of prosperous towns and past vast fields of grain and the usual products of western farming, but is especially surprised and impressed by the orchards, melon fields, beet farms and sugar factories that mark the Arkansas river valley. Inquiry reveals the secret of this wonderful productivity in the former desert. Irrigation has done it. The water of the Arkansas river, once scarce in the sands and disappeared, is now diverted into canals and thence into little ditches, spread over the fields turned black by the river and decided into new channels, and so made to do its enriching work over and over far down the stream. Here are a few figures about irrigation already accomplished along the Santa Fe route, and something like 200 miles: Land reached by canals and ditches, 500,000 acres, of which 330,000 acres are now under cultivation; cost of irrigation works in the valley thus far, \$10,000,000; length of main canals and ditches taking water from the river, 3,000 miles; length of longest canal, 113 miles; sugar beet farms under cultivation, 26,000 acres, producing this year, at 15 tons to the acre, 540,000 tons of beets yielding the farmers, at \$5 a ton, \$2,700,000 for a single crop; five sugar factories established, at as many points, with a daily capacity of 3,800 tons of beets, and already employing over 1,400 persons. Since the sugar industry struck the Arkansas valley the population has increased 50,000 and the land values have risen 400 per cent. Besides the sugar beet, there flourish peaches, apples, alfalfa, wheat and various fruits and vegetables made possible and profitable by diversion and storage of the waters of the eccentric Arkansas. All this conversion of desert into garden is to be credited primarily to the railway that first made the desert accessible and then taught people how to develop its possibilities. It is interesting history.—Bradstreet's.

DAIRY AND FOOD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT.

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The Deseret News

Salt Lake City, Utah

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