

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, May 8rd, 1891, commencing at 2 p.m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn commencing:

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!
The latter-day glory begins to come forth.

Prayer was offered by Elder Edward Stevenson.

The choir sang the hymn:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed.

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

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

was called to address to congregation. He said that among the many scenes which were peculiarly striking in the career of the Lord Jesus Christ there was one which always made an especial impression upon his mind. The description of it was recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, from which he proposed to read. It occurred some forty days after Jesus had risen from the dead, during which time, we were informed, He had been teaching His disciples of things concerning the Kingdom of heaven. Towards the conclusion of that very important era in His ministry, He gathered those who believed on Him upon the Mount of Olives, and they put to Him on that occasion this question: "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom unto Israel?" To this Jesus replied:

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.—(Acts i, 7—11.)

It seemed to him that among all the promises which the Lord had made unto those who believe in His name, there was not one capable of giving more comfort or more satisfaction to the Christian than this. It was looked upon as a glorious hope among the privileged Saints; and he believed it was so even yet among those who had implicit faith and confidence in the promises of God.

From time to time in Christian nations this question of the return of the Messiah was agitated. Times were set for the event to occur. They had been in the past. He saw by the newspapers of last evening that they were in the present; and he presumed that in the future others would arise who would undertake to fix the date of that great event—notwithstanding the fact that

the Lord Jesus Christ declared that it was not for men to know the times nor the seasons, which God had reserved unto Himself, and which He would only reveal at His own good pleasure. But apart from any consideration of the time when or the place where this event was to occur, he believed it to be the most glorious hope that the Christian had that the Lord Jesus Christ, who once ministered among men in the flesh, would return to the earth and bless it again with His presence.

He took it that no truth, no promise, was so frequently alluded to in the writings of the inspired Apostles as this subject of the Messiah's return. Particularly was this the case in the writings of the Apostle Paul. In writing to the Saints of Thessalonica he used this language:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—(Thessalonians iv, 14-17.)

Now, Paul sometimes used the rites of the churches, and said to them in the course of his instructions, "I give this as my judgment." He was honest enough to do that when not certain that he was prompted by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But in this instance he emphatically said that what he now wrote was "by the word of the Lord."

We might continue to read passage after passage which emphatically set forth that the Lord Jesus Christ would return to the earth. We gathered, too, one other fact from the reading of these last passages—that He would come to reward his Saints, to inaugurate, doubtless, the resurrection from the dead, and to punish the ungodly. This was in harmony with what Jesus Himself said even previous to His crucifixion, when He declared that the inhabitants of the earth should "see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, to reward every man according to his works," surrounded by the glory of His Father.

These two truths, then, he would have the congregation distinctly remember—that the Lord Jesus Christ would come, and that He would come to judgment. From the language of Paul to the Thessalonians, it would seem that he expected His immediate coming—that he held it up to the Saints in those days as something to which they might look forward within the immediate future. Referring thereto he said to them, "Those of us who remain to see His coming shall be caught up"—as if the event might possibly happen within the lifetime of that generation. He presumed that Paul was wise enough in the things of God to know, when he said that no man knew the day nor the hour of Christ's coming, that he did not seek to grope into the future and penetrate the designs and purposes of God,

which He in His wisdom had obscured and withheld from the children of men, but while Paul did not know the day nor the hour that had been set for that glorious appearing, he did know that some very important events would transpire beforehand. What one of those important things was we might learn from this same epistle to the Thessalonians. Said he to them:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that He might be revealed in His time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

From this language the speaker said he gathered that Paul understood very clearly that previous to the fulfillment of this glorious promise respecting the return of the Messiah there would exist a long night of apostasy, in which the powers of darkness would receive the homage and worship of the children of men, instead of the God of Heaven. He doubtless knew that men would transgress the laws of the Gospel, that they would change its ordinances, break their covenant, and keep unto those teachers who would turn away their ear from the truth. He knew that damnable heresy would creep into the Church, defiling the Gospel of life and salvation. Hence he bore record that the "mystery of iniquity" which should bring about this deplorable state of affairs was working even in his time, and would continue to work until finally the glory of the Gospel should be corrupted by the vain traditions of men. He saw that that power would hold sway until the Lord should come and consume it by the glory and power of His coming.

He was reminded of another thing which was also to occur before the fulfillment of the great promise of Christ's second coming. It was recorded in the writings of Malachi:

"Behold I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye see, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

It would appear, then, that before the Lord should come a messenger would "prepare the way before" Him. He (the speaker) might have remarked, however, before alluding to this matter, that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which had been corrupted through the great apostasy foretold by the Apostle Paul, would be restored to the earth again in all its purity. We