

# THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

No. 23.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, MAY 23, 1896.

VOL. LII.

## REMARKS

Made at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City,  
Sunday, April 26, 1896,

by

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I will read part of the Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, commencing with the second chapter of the second epistle:

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

That ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by words, 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 shall be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing 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 [hindereth] will let [hinder], 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 brightness of His coming:

Even him, whose coming is after, the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I have read this scripture for the reason that it bears upon a very important subject, and one with which the great latter-day work is intimately associated. It is a prophecy by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to the effect that before the coming of the day of the Lord Jesus, when He should come in the glory of His Father to reward every man according to his works, the power of Lucifer should be manifested in the earth, and a power not of God should be exalted "above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God."

This is not the only prediction on the subject that the great Apostle left on record. It seemed to be a most constantly in his mind, and in almost every epistle which he wrote to the saints he says something about it. When returning from that great second mission of his,

en route to Jerusalem by way of Ephesus he sent word to all the elders to be gathered together that he might address them. When meeting with them he charged them about their duties in presiding over the flock of Christ—a position given to them by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and he warned them to watch the flock of Christ, "for," said he, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." You all remember the great admonition that he sent to his beloved Timothy, when he told him to be instant in season and out of season, to preach and expound, to warn and reprove and rebuke, with all longsuffering and righteousness; "for," said he, "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

And so the messages and warnings of this Apostle are burdened with predictions of a turning away from the truth and of the arising of a power called anti Christ in the world.

Nor are such predictions confined to the writings of Paul alone; but through all the letters, through all the biographies that make up the New Testament you will find reference to the same great theme, until one is driven to the conclusion, either that the children of men unto whom was committed that dispensation of the Gospel would be untrue to it, transgress the laws, change its ordinances and break the everlasting covenant; or else that the great volume of inspired predictions concerning it must fall unfulfilled.

I make these remarks by way of an introduction to a subject I wish to discuss briefly, if I can obtain the liberty of the Spirit of the Lord; and I speak of this prophecy because there is underlying it a great fact with which the work of God in this dispensation has to deal.

During the last week the announcement has been made through the public press of several reasons why the Latter-day Saints cannot be fellowshipped as Christians by other Christian denominations. I think ten reasons in all are published why we cannot be held in fellowship with at least one of the prominent Christian sects. It is not my purpose on this occasion to undertake to review all of these reasons that are set forth. I may be able only to consider one or two of them. But one of the reasons set forth why we cannot be accepted in fellowship with them as

a Christian sect, is because Mormonism, so-called, "unchurches" all Christian sects and denominations—by which I understand them to mean that we do not recognize them as possessed of the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the divine authority to administer its ordinances.

Our position with reference to this subject grows out of the fulfillment of these predictions of holy writ concerning the destruction of the Christian Church and of the universal apostacy from the Gospel; and, at least in a certain sense, I do not know but the position taken by the sect in question [the Presbyterian church in Utah] upon this particular head is correct; for when the Prophet Joseph in secret prayer enquired of God which out of all the Christian churches He acknowledged as His Church, he was told that God acknowledged none of them—"that the professors of religion drew near to Him with their lips, and with their mouths they honored Him, but their hearts were far from Him." So that we have, as I take it, no right to complain when our Christian friends say that we "unchurch" them—that is, if they mean by that that we consider them as not having the fulness of the Gospel and divine authority to administer its ordinances. There is no occasion for being timid on this subject. The very existence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints presupposes that the world had gone wrong, that the world had corrupted the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and hence there was a necessity for the restoration of the Gospel, and a restoration of the Priesthood of God to administer in its ordinances and proclaim it to the world. If this had not been the condition of mankind before Mormonism, so called, had its existence, then there would be no place for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Again, the Lord has been very emphatic about this matter. In the revelation given as a preface to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, after speaking of giving strength to the Prophet Joseph and his associates to bring forth the Book of Mormon and to translate it by the power of God, he says:

And also that those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this Church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the Church collectively and not individually.

There is no half way ground here. The Lord clearly declares that this Church, which He had given His servants strength to organize, is the "only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth."