

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Dec. 15th, 1889, commencing at 2 p. m., President August M. Cannon presiding.

The choir and congregation sang:

The trials of the present day
Require the saints to watch and pray.

Prayer by Elder Milando Pratt.

The choir sang:

Gently raise the sacred strain,
For the Sabbath's come again.

The Priesthood of the Twenty-first Ward officiated in the administration of the Sacrament.

APOSTLE ABRAM H. CANNON

was called to address the congregation. The Latter-day Saints, he said, occupy a very peculiar position at the present day. It seems as though the eyes of the whole world are upon them, and that the efforts of men in every part of the earth where they are known are directed toward their overthrow. It is astonishing that a handful of people like ourselves, who have accepted the Gospel, should create such great commotion among mankind. It is strange in one sense, and yet in another it is not; for the Savior when here below told His followers that they would arouse the enmity of the world, and were to expect nothing but hatred and persecution from those who did not see and believe as they did. Paul stated that persecution was a heritage of the faithful; it was predicted, indeed, concerning the latter-day work in which we are engaged that it would meet with the most severe opposition—that men would conspire against it, that combinations would be formed for its destruction, and that those who remained faithful must expect to be tried in the fires of affliction.

We are the witnesses of the fulfillment of these numerous predictions. Although so few in numbers and so weak in comparison with the strength of the world, we have excited the hostility of nations. Combinations still exist to bring about, if possible, the total annihilation of this work of God. There is no iniquity too vile, no sin too great, to be laid at the door of the Latter-day Saints. Every calumny uttered concerning them appears to be gladly received by the world; we have idle tales and false accusations to meet continually. So it was with Jesus and His disciples. He found that the world was opposed to Him; that the people whom He came to bless and among whom He established His Church were those most bitter in their persecution of Him; and finally they succeeded in accomplishing His death upon the cross. He was accused of everything wrong, though His life was one of unexampled purity. Filled with good deeds, He went among the meek and lowly and taught them the plan of light and salvation. He ministered also to their temporal wants, healed their sick, made the lame to walk, unstopped the ears of

the deaf, loosened the tongues of the dumb, and even raised the dead to life. Notwithstanding these manifestations of God's favor, the people charged Him with doing these things by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. He was accused, among other things, of trying to establish a kingdom upon the earth in opposition to that which then existed.

Having traced the course of events leading up to our Savior's crucifixion, the speaker remarked that these same accusations followed His Apostles. Paul and Silas were accused by the Jews subsequently of seeking to break down the government which already existed and establish the Kingdom of Christ; and for this, probably the principal among the charges laid against them, they were cast into prison. They were accused of seeking to turn the world upside down, to introduce new theories, new doctrines, and new ideas that were contrary to the customs and long-established institutions of the Romans and of the habits of the Jews. They were regarded as men deserving of the most severe punishment, and so met with death at the hands of those whom they sought to bless.

It is no new thing, therefore, for men to be accused of evil intents and designs with regard to governments and peoples. The evils which have been inflicted upon us as Latter-day Saints are but a repetition of those which others have endured, and all the troubles through which we are passing are but the fulfillment of that which has been spoken concerning the latter-day Zion. But we believe that God is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, that He should dictate to His people how they should live and act. We believe that He controls the affairs of men and nations; that it is with His permission some nations are destroyed and others established upon their ruins; that these various changes will continue to occur under His direction and with His sanction until the Kingdom of God, for which the disciples were taught to pray, is established upon the earth; and that He will use His own means for the accomplishment of this glorious purpose—a power under which men may live in peace and harmony one with another, wherein love will prevail and control the actions of men, wherein justice will be administered and righteousness shall dwell. We look for this time in the glorious future; we look for the establishment on this earth of a thousand years of tranquility and happiness during which the Saints will be free from persecutions and trials.

But we do not look for this people to take up arms against any nation, or to be called upon to shed the blood of their fellowmen. We are a temple building people—one called of God to establish houses wherein the work of redemption for the living and the dead may be carried on, and wherein great blessings may be received.

The doctrine has been taught ever since I can remember that this government under which we live is the most glorious extant; that it was

the only one under which the work of God could have been established; that under the provisions of its God-given Constitution we are enabled, with the assistance and under the direction of the Lord, to establish His Church upon the earth, to gather the people from the nations, and to prepare them for the fulfillment of every word that has been spoken concerning Zion.

The men who laid the foundation-stones of this republic were those who appreciated liberty, having themselves suffered under the hand of oppression. They had been tried severely by the wrongs which the mother country inflicted upon them, and they fought for freedom. In those early days many who had fled from the old world sought in these western lands, amongst savages, a place where they might be free to worship God. Being inspired of Him, they founded that glorious Constitution under which we live, and which has brought so much prosperity to this nation.

But God has also said in His word that the nation which fights against Him shall not prosper, and those who oppose him will fail in their endeavors. He designed to establish upon this western hemisphere the land of Zion, which we understand to be composed of the pure in heart. We expect that over this whole land will prevail a rule of peace, righteousness, and justice, and that men who live here will have their hearts filled with the love of these principles. When wicked men rule the people mourn; and if they continue in their iniquity, the Lord will in His own due time remove them and call in their place those who will be just and fearless in the administration of the laws. Whenever the people have hearkened to the voice of God, in all ages, they have been prosperous, but whenever they have rejected His counsels and turned away from His guidance, then they have been upon the shifting sands and had no sure foundation. So it is with nations. The nations that have prospered are those which have administered the laws of God with justice and equity, who have sought no oppression upon the people, who have brought no evil upon any party or class.

We are called out of the world and expected to build up a church over which God Himself will reign—of which Christ will be the head. We are called to battle for freedom, not with earthly weapons, but with the wisdom which comes from God. We are called to cry down oppression wherever it is found and seek to establish perfect liberty upon the earth.

Having received persecution, we must not in turn become persecutors. We must not seek to heap upon others the iniquities under which we have suffered, but live above such things and follow the admonition of Jesus—to love our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us. If we oppress those who oppress us and revile those who revile us we are no better than the world.

Men may question what the Lord