

THE DESERET NEWS.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

NO. 27.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1859.

VOL. IX.

[For the Deseret News.]

THE VALES OF DESERET.

TUNE—Nelly Gray.

In the valleys of the mountains, which we now call "Deseret,"
We have passed many happy years away,
And if wisdom should dictate it, we'll remain much longer yet,
And intend still to be happy while we stay.

CHORUS.

Here the aged and the youth, who espouse the cause of truth,
Godlike counsel, in a Prophet's voice can get;
Let this chorus, then, be sung—Long live Brother Brigham Young,
And ever fruitful be the Vales of Deseret.

We have come from many nations, and from many sects
and creeds
To unite in one, upon the gospel plan,
And, as we could not do so 'midst the world and its misdeeds,
We have gathered to these valleys where we can.

We've the Rocky Mountains 'round us, as a wall of sure defence,
And in their vast recesses we can hide,
And the foes of truth and righteousness can never drive us hence,
While we keep the Lord of life upon our side.

Then, ye Saints of God, keep gathering from ev'ry land
and clime
To the Valleys of the mountains in the West,
And let it be your maxim—to steer clear of ev'ry crime,
And each emulate to serve our Father best.
G. S. L. CITY, Sept. 4, 1859. H. MAIBEM.

SERMON BY ELDER ORSON PRATT, Aug. 28, 1859.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

I will call the attention of the assembly to the last chapter of Malachi, 5th and 6th verses. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

I do not feel this morning, to make apologies particularly, but present myself before you, because I am requested so to do, feeling that I am fulfilling the duties of my office and calling to comply with the requests of those set to preside. There is one subject which I will briefly touch upon as a kind of preface to my remarks, and that is in relation to one's preparing himself as a servant of God, to preach the principles of eternal truth. We should not study beforehand the precise subject, upon which we will preach, or the precise language that we shall use in treating upon any subject; but this does not preclude the idea of a man's informing himself upon all subjects. This I have often thought, is not understood as it ought to be, by the officers of this church.

There are many perhaps, who feel a disposition to neglect all improvement of mind, thinking that if they are placed in a position where they are called upon to preach, that God will give them not only the subject but the language also, and everything pertaining to the duties of their callings as public speakers. Altho' we are taught, that we are to take no thought beforehand what we shall say, yet we are nowhere taught, in the revelations of God, to let our minds run down—our understandings and our judgment to be spent in idleness, without treasuring up the things of the kingdom of God, and storing up useful knowledge. Indeed, we are commanded in the revelations of the Most High directly to the contrary from the idea which has prevailed among some.

We are commanded over and over again to treasure up wisdom in our hearts continually—to treasure up the words of eternal life continually, and make ourselves acquainted not only with ancient revelation but with modern, to make ourselves acquainted not only with things pertaining to time, but with things pertaining to eternity—to make ourselves acquainted not only in regard to things of earth, but also in regard to things that are in heaven—to inform ourselves upon theories, principles, laws, doctrines, upon things that are at home, and upon things that are abroad. And the same Almighty being who has commanded us to do these things, has commanded us to take no thought beforehand what we should say, for every well instructed scribe, we read in the New Testament, bringeth out of his heart things both new and old. It is not the ill instructed scribe, it is not the person who does not study, it is not the person who suffers his time to run to idleness, but it is that man that instructs himself in all things within his reach, so far as his circumstances and abilities will allow; such a one will bring forth before his hearers, things that will edify in relation to old times, and also in relation to the present and future—things both new and old. Moreover we read that the Holy Ghost shall give you in the very hour, what ye shall say.

What need, then, inquires one, is there for a person to inform his mind, if the Holy Ghost will give him in the very hour what he shall say? It is not every man that has sufficient faith to obtain that amount of the Holy Spirit that will bring the subjects, the ideas, the language and the system of the subject all before his mind at once; there are but a very few persons which ever lived upon this earth that have had sufficient faith to obtain all this fullness of these gifts; and it is one great reason why the Lord has commanded his servants to instruct themselves, because of the weakness of their faith. Then, if they have fulfilled this commandment, they will have more confidence

in God; but if they have neglected this commandment what confidence have they that the Holy Ghost will be given to them?

Will the Lord bestow his Holy Spirit upon an unwise and unfaithful servant?—upon one who disobeys his commandments, who sits himself down in idleness, and will not attempt to inform his mind upon all subjects within his reach?

If any person supposes this they are greatly mistaken; but if he tries to fulfill the commandments of God, making himself extensively acquainted with the attributes of that Being whom he worships—if he tries to become acquainted with all useful subjects he will then have faith; he can then go before the Lord and ask him for his Spirit to indite, in the very hour, that particular subject which he has previously informed himself upon, and to bring it forth before the people in a proper light, and in a proper manner; but without this, his efforts will be in vain.

It is most likely that an individual who has disobeyed this commandment, instead of preaching by the Holy Ghost, will preach by his own wisdom; and he will tell you about ten thousand things which the Holy Ghost never puts in his heart—he will preach about so many things, that it will be impossible for the enlightened among his congregation to see anything in his ideas that will be calculated to edify or instruct.

I have made these preparatory remarks, particularly for the benefit of my brethren of the ministry, for I know the difficulties they encounter when they go abroad. I have been abroad with several companies of missionaries from this place, and I have seen them lament and mourn, and have heard them tell their feelings one to another, saying, "O that I had occupied my time that I have spent as it were in folly, in treasuring up the principles of eternal life—that I had studied the scriptures—that I had made myself acquainted more extensively with the doctrines of the church—that I had made myself acquainted with those principles revealed from heaven for our guidance! I should then have been prepared to stand before the inhabitants of the earth and edify them with regard to our principles." I have heard these lamentations for months after they were in their fields of labor; and I have really been astonished at the idleness of those who are growing up, who expect to be servants of God, and to occupy a conspicuous place in the kingdom of God. I know many of us can plead some sort of an excuse; the hard labors we have to endure in irrigating the soil, in penetrating the mountain canyons for wood and timber, all these things have a tendency to fatigue the body and the mind, so that we have not the same opportunity for information that we would have, if we were more at leisure. After all, cannot every man look back upon many hours that have been spent in foolishness?—perhaps in going to dancing school, or in going to parties wherein there is no particular profit? Not only hours, but days are spent that might have been used for better purposes, consequently you have not a sufficient excuse to justify you in spending your time in idleness.

Having made these remarks, we will now call your attention to the words of our text. How far I may, on the present occasion, treat upon the subject that is laid down in the text, I do not know. I will endeavor to treat upon it as far as my mind shall be opened by the Holy Spirit, and if any other subject is presented to me, I shall follow it, and deviate from the subject couched in the text. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

What great and dreadful day of the Lord is meant in the words of our text? Was it the great day of the coming of our Savior in the flesh to make an atonement for the children of men? Is there nothing contained in the last chapter of Malachi that will give us a clue to that day—that will give us an understanding of what is meant by the great and dreadful day of the Lord? Go back to the beginning of that chapter, and you will read something like this, "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch; but unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up like calves of the stall, and ye shall tread down the wicked and they shall be as ashes under your feet in the day that I do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

Were these things predicted in relation to the first coming of the Messiah? No. All the proud and all that did wickedly in that day were not consumed as stubble and the righteous did not go forth and grow up like calves of the stall and tread down the wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet at the first coming of our Lord; then surely this coming of our Lord had relation to the great and terrible day, the day of burning, the day in which wickedness should be entirely swept from the earth, and no remnants of the wicked left, when every branch of them, and every root of them should become as stubble, and be

consumed from the face of the earth. That is the terrible day that was spoken of by the prophet before which a certain messenger was to be sent. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Who was Elijah the prophet? He was a man that lived upon the earth some 2500 years ago. He was a man of God that had power to call down fire from heaven and consume his enemies.

You recollect, on a certain occasion, that the king of Israel sent up fifty men to take Elijah the prophet that he might be slain. Elijah went up and sat on the top of an hill, and when those fifty men approached him, they said, "come down thou man of God, etc." Elijah said, "If I be a man of God let fire come from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." Fire descended and they were consumed. Another fifty were sent, and they repeated the same mockery, and the prophet of God repeated the same, "if I be a man of God let fire descend from heaven and consume thee also and thy fifty;" and it was done. That same man of God was in his day filled with faith, with confidence in God, and was armed with the power of God; and on a certain occasion he came forth before the Israelites and said to them how long do you halt between two opinions?—if God be God serve him, if Baal be God serve him.

How shall Israel test the matter? How shall the people know whether God is really the God of Israel or Baal? Why, says Elijah, I will tell you how to test it. You gather together all the prophets of Baal into one assembly, and let them offer an offering unto their god Baal, and I as a prophet of the other God will offer an offering; and if Baal answers by fire, then he shall be the true god; but if the God that I Elijah worship, answers by fire then he shall be the true God. They concluded to put the thing to a test; so they assembled the prophets of Baal, some four hundred and fifty in number, into one grand assembly, and they killed a bullock, and laid it upon the altar and commenced crying to Baal, "O Baal hear us;" they were very earnest and very zealous in their cries and petitions to Baal; but no voice, no answer; no fires descended from Baal to consume the sacrifice. By and by the prophet Elijah began to mock them; said he, "Cry aloud: for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked;" cry louder, and they did so, and cut themselves with knives and lancets to excite the compassion of their God; but with all their cries, continued all day long, they could obtain no voice, no revelation, no answer, no messenger, no fire.

By and by Elijah the prophet killed a sacrifice and built an altar of stones, and laid his sacrifice upon the altar, and told them to turn out water in great abundance into the troughs around about the altar; after which Elijah merely offered up a simple petition to the God of heaven, the true God, and behold fire fell from heaven and devoured the sacrifice, and not only that, but it consumed the water itself and all things pertaining to the sacrifice were consumed by the fire that descended from heaven. Many of the people were convinced that Baal was not the true God and that the prophets of Baal were false prophets. What was the result? This true prophet said to them, take those prophets of Baal, and slay every one of them; so they went to work and killed all the prophets of Baal. By and by this same prophet went forth into a certain place followed by Elisha, knowing that the time was come for him to be taken from the midst of Israel; and behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horsemen, and it came down from heaven, and Elijah was placed in the chariot and wafted to heaven, body and spirit, flesh and bones.

Then Elijah is not dead. If we could have a view of the heavenly host at the present day, we would see Elijah there. But he is to be sent from heaven on a mission to our earth. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, shall come." We need never look for the coming of the Son of God—for the day when he shall suddenly come to his temple and sit like a refiner of silver, and as with fuller's soap to purify and purge the sons of Levi, etc., until Elijah the prophet is sent. But the great question is, has he been sent? If he has, it must have been of a very recent date, for the great and dreadful day of the Lord has not yet come; for there are still wicked men upon the earth. What is the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith? We believe him to be the prophet of the Lord in this great and last dispensation.—We Latter Day Saints believe this fact. What did he testify in the Kirtland Temple, after it was built and consecrated, and dedicated unto the Lord of hosts? He testified that he in connection with others had the ministration of Elijah the prophet who appeared to them in great glory. You can read this in the history of Joseph Smith the Prophet; we can read all the instructions that were given in relation to his particular mission.

We cannot suppose that that great prophet is coming down upon the earth to wander about among the nations, and to continue in this wicked world; if he is sent at all, he will be sent with power and authority, like other angels, sent from heaven, to bestow the same authority that is upon himself on some individuals on the earth, that they may go forth hold-

ing the same authority that Elijah himself held, having the same keys, receiving the same instructions, in regard to the Latter Day dispensation; a mission, in other words, sent from heaven by Elijah as a ministering angel to seek out the chosen vessels and ordain them, and send them to administer to the inhabitants of the earth. This is the way the Lord commits dispensations; instead of sending angels to wander on the earth he sends them to ordain others, to restore the authority and set the work a-going. This Church had already been organized and certain authority and officers had been restored, but no Elijah had yet come. John the Baptist had come in fulfillment of the 3d chapter of Malachi, and the 40th chapter of Isaiah; he came to restore the priesthood of Levi, in order that those holding it might be purified as gold and silver, to offer an offering, in righteousness when the Lord should suddenly come to his temple.

Peter, James and John had also been sent as apostles to restore the apostleship to the earth; for no man held that power and authority; and in order that it might be restored, it was needful that an apostle, holding the office and authority and the keys, should lay his hands upon an individual to restore these keys and authority and power to act in the apostleship; Peter, James and John, therefore, restored to the earth the same authority and power that they themselves had; but no Elijah had yet come; years had passed along and the temple in Kirtland was, at length, built and consecrated unto the Most High God.

The time had now arrived for other ordinances to be made manifest, for other things to be revealed, for greater light to shine forth, for other keys, powers and authorities to be bestowed upon chosen vessels of the Lord: the full time had arrived for the prophecy of Malachi to be fulfilled when the hearts of the fathers should be turned to their children, and when the hearts of the children should be turned to their fathers, lest the Lord should come and smite the whole earth with a curse.

In order to restore a mission of that kind and magnitude, Elijah had to be sent. We have the testimony of the servants of God in this church, that this was accomplished in the Kirtland temple, in the State of Ohio, many years ago.

But now let us inquire into the nature of this peculiar calling or mission of Elijah: all that is said in Malachi on the subject is—that he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, and there leaves it. What did he mean? Did he mean only to bind the hearts of the fathers to the children, living with them, in greater affection, or the hearts of the children in greater affection to the fathers? Was that all the fullness of the great mission that was to be entrusted to this great translated man, called Elijah? I think not. And when we come to contemplate that while God has revealed in these latter times, we find that the mission of Elijah was something of far greater importance than merely to accomplish this that I have named.

In what sense of the word are the children to be turned unto their fathers, or the fathers to their children? I will tell you what we know and understand upon this subject. The strangers who have attended our meetings, have oftentimes heard from this stand, that the dispensation in which we live was intended to benefit, not only the generation living, but also past generations that have lain in their graves for ages. You have heard this often hinted at, but perhaps no one since you have attended our meeting has taken up the subject to any great length, but merely a few words thrown out and there it was left, a sufficient, however, was said to give you an understanding that we believe God will have something to do with the generations of the dead, that the children that are living here on the earth would be required to feel after their fathers that are in their graves; in other words, that the hearts and minds of the children should be turned, by the mission of Elijah, to the fathers, to search after them, to redeem and save them, though they have lain in their graves for generations.

Inquirers would really like to know if there is such a principle as mankind living on the earth having anything to do with the salvation of those that are dead. The Saints believe that the gospel was ordained from before the foundation of the world; in other words, the Lamb that, in the mind of God, was slain from before the foundation of the world, has instituted a certain plan of salvation by which the whole human family, from Adam down to the latest man and woman that shall have place upon the earth, are to be judged. Thousands of millions have gone down to their graves who never heard one single word of the gospel; they know nothing about it; they know nothing about Jesus Christ, nothing about his atonement, nothing about the fall, and nothing about the true God; but they died in the greatest of ignorance. Will it be consistent with the great attributes of Jehovah to judge them by a law they had no knowledge of? It would be inconsistent, if they were always to remain without that knowledge. But if they are to be judged by that law, that great plan of salvation, ordained before the foundation of the earth, they must be made acquainted with it either in time or in eternity.