

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, April 28th, 1891, commencing at 2 p. m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang:

Behold the mountain of the Lord
In latter days shall rise.

Prayer was offered by Counselor Joseph E. Taylor.

The choir sang:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

The priesthood of the Twenty-second ward officiated in the administration of the Sacrament.

ELDER JOHN NICHOLSON

then addressed the congregation, the following being a synopsis of his remarks: I have been, unexpectedly to myself, called to be a speaker to this vast congregation, assembled to worship God. I ask for your faith and sympathy, that I may be able to intelligently and effectively discharge the duty imposed upon me. I am, for the moment, at a loss as to what theme it may be the most appropriate to treat upon. But the Gospel of the Son of God and the designs of our heavenly Father relative to His children provide an ample field, sufficient for every purpose; therefore there need be no lack of subjects on which to speak.

In the prayer offered at the commencement of our services, I especially observed one phase of the petition which may suggest a consistent subject. I refer to the solicitation for the Divine blessing upon a special class of the inhabitants of the earth, who are at present commanding a large share of the attention of the civilized world—the remnants of Israel. Their fathers, in ages past, enjoyed special Divine favor and blessings, but they have for many centuries been under a dark cloud, in fulfillment of predictions delivered by inspired men. From the time that the blood of the Son of God was shed on Calvary, at the instigation of the Jews, they have been a hiss and a by-word where they have dwelt. Yet there are prophecies concerning that people which lead every believer in the inspiration of the Bible to anticipate a time when the mists of disfavor under which they have suffered will be dispelled forever, and they will bask in the sunshine of the smile of the Lord.

It may be appropriate to endeavor to explain some of the views of the Saints in relation to that people, for they have a deeper interest in their future than any community on the earth, so far as I am aware.

The speaker read a portion of a revelation given through Joseph Smith, whom, he said, we esteem as one of the greatest prophets that ever lived, and regarding whose divine mission we have greater and more unanswerable proof, than concerning the calling of any other special messenger of God. This may, to some extent, be explained on the ground that he lived and operated in our age.

In the revelation referred to, which was given at Kirtland, Ohio, March 7, 1832, Christ reiterated certain state-

ments which He first made to His disciples on Mount Olivet, as to His second coming in power and glory. They are to be found in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

Following are the quotations from the revelation in question, contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants:

"And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them, saying, as ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers,

"For as ye have looked upon the long absence of your spirits from your bodies to be a bondage, I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of the scattered Israel.

"And now ye behold this temple which is in Jerusalem, which ye call the house of God, and your enemies say that this house shall never fall.

"But, verily, I say unto you, that desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night, and this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations."

"And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem, and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations;

"But they shall be gathered again, but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

"And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men's hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth His coming unto the end of the earth.

"And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound;

"And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my Gospel;

"But they receive it not, for they perceive not the light and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men:

"And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;"

"And the remnant shall be gathered unto this place.

"And then shall they look for me, and behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory, with all the holy angels; and he that watches not for me shall be cut off."

The difference between the information given in this revelation and that recorded by Matthew is that in the later explanation the events are given in their consecutive order and are therefore clearer, and consequently easier to be understood. The destruction of Jerusalem is first set forth; then the scattering of the Jews; then the events which we expect to take place in our own time and which will constitute the preparation for the coming of the King of Glory.

There is a statement in Matthew to the effect that, as one of the signs of the approach of the second advent, "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." In the revelation given through Joseph Smith the same statement occurs in another form. "A light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness and it shall be the fulness of my Gospel but they receive it not for they perceive not the light,

etc." This is one of the percursor signs. The true Gospel shall be preached as a testimony to the nations before the King of kings shall appear.

It would now be proper to direct your attention to the nature of that Gospel, and the necessity for its restoration, so that the prediction of Christ might be fully verified.

The Scriptures say that in the latter days "The last shall be the first and the first the last." When the Lord was on the earth and personally administered to the children of men, the Gospel was carried to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." At the beginning of His mission he admonished His servants to go not to the Gentiles, but to limit their labors to the chosen people. But subsequently this restriction was taken off, and Cornelius was the first Gentile who embraced the Gospel, Peter having been specially directed to admit him to the fold. After this the message was to be declared to all the world. In this age there is a reversal of the programme. The last were to be the first and the first last, for the light was to break forth among the Gentiles and go from them to the house of Israel. In consequence of this, the Latter-day Saints are here gathered from the various nations of the earth, and we claim that it devolves upon us, who have received the everlasting Gospel, to preach it to every people in order that the Lord's purposes may be accomplished.

Now, as to the character of the Gospel to which Christ referred, and which He designated as that of the Kingdom, it enjoins upon us that we shall believe in Christ, accept Him as our Redeemer and of the sacrifice He made for the whole human family. Having taken this step we must seek to become new creatures, by placing our feet upon the path of regeneration, repenting of our sins and all false traditions. This repentance must be genuine, resulting in the putting away of all unrighteousness. We must repent with a repentance that need not to be repented of.

Having placed ourselves in an obedient attitude, we are prepared to descend into the waters of regeneration being immersed for the remission of sins, that these may be no more remembered against us. This ordinance must be attended to by one having authority to act in the name of Christ. Otherwise it would be of no avail, as the Redeemer must be represented in the transaction. He must be present through His agent, whom He has authorized in order that the administration may be recognized by Him. Hence our Lord says to His duly commissioned servants: "He who receiveth you receiveth me and he who rejecteth you rejecteth me, and he who rejecteth me rejecteth my Father who sent me," showing that the Lord honors his authorized agents when in the line of their duty. Hence, when a repentant believer is baptized and the ordinance is administered by a servant of God who holds the authority to act, his sins are remitted and will never more be held against him. He is now prepared to receive the Holy Ghost, and the spiritual gifts thereof, without which a church would be only a dead body, having "a form of godliness but denying the power thereof."