

SERMON BY ELDER C. SCOTT,

At Lamoni, Iowa, September 10, 1893.

Subject, BUILDING UP ZION.

WE invite attention to a familiar subject; it is much easier to speak upon an old subject with which we are familiar than to attempt to occupy ground that is new. Our lesson is found in Psalm 102: 12-16: "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

The subject of the building up of Zion is that to which we feel to invite attention on the present occasion. David, in this statement, is evidently looking down to the work of the Lord to be accomplished preparatory to the second coming of Christ. The scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments represent the coming of the Lord in his glory as his coming to receive his people into their rest; to give to them their reward; to enable them to enter into the enjoyment of that bliss to which they have been looking forward in all ages. It seems to me that to all Latter Day Saints no theme is more encouraging, or better calculated to enrapture the heart than the building up of Zion in the latter days. To this period all the world, all the prophets of the past have looked and anxiously sought for a clear understanding of, because it is in connection with the culmination of this work that they look for their reward, and around it clusters the ultimate realization of their hopes. You remember that the Apostle Peter, in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, tells of the restitution of all things which had been spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. To this testimony

of Peter, the prophets of all ages prior to his time, and subsequent to his day also, we are led to believe, have looked.

It ought to be a matter of the highest importance to us that we are living in what might be termed a prophetic age. We cannot fail to see that the hand of God is moving, turning, and overturning among the nations; and when we look at events as they are developing before us, and will develop from now until our Savior comes in glory, we can but see that we are living, we are dwelling in a grand, an awful time; in an age of ages, the culmination of which will be sublime; in a period of the world when the Lord is preparing the nations of the earth, and a people especially, to enter into that great reward, that state of eternal bliss. Can we realize it? Can we make it other than a fact? Does it become to us a glorious reality? Shall we, do we live in a time when the visions of the past are to resolve themselves into a grand realism? Is the glory before us? Individually, I believe that it is. The text is, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Paul, looking out through the ages from his day, saw this work, and speaking of the existence of Zion among the Gentile nations, says, concerning the fruition of the salvation of Israel, "There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." When I shall take away their sins! The sins of Israel! We do not for a moment think that we may spiritualize this text according to modern theology, and apply the term "Israel," to spiritual Israel, for it would be made to appear that blindness had happened to spiritual Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles had come in; but it was to literal Israel that

was recognized as God's people that the prophecy had reference who through transgression had become blind to the things of God, and whose blindness, according to the prophecy, was to continue until the fullness of the Gentiles had come in.

Zion is defined in the first place, to be heaven. In the fiftieth Psalm David says, evidently speaking of the Savior and his mission, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined," and the Apostle Paul in his second Corinthian letter, commenting on this very Psalm, says: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, through Christ, God was to shine, and morally and spiritually enlighten the world. Heaven is Zion in its perfection.

Zion, in the second place, in its application relates to holy places upon earth. You and I are especially interested in this, because we are living in a period of the world when God's people are commanded to live in holy places; hence you read in 2 Samuel 5: 7 that David captured the stronghold of Zion. Zion was applied to that stronghold; it had previously been a fort; giants lodged there; but David was enabled to capture them; he had taken the fort and established the worship of the Lord there, and hence it was called Mount Zion, in its literal application.

In the third place, the term "Zion" in the Scriptures is applied to a city, a holy city, contemplated by the prophets of old, a city whose people shall all be righteous. No unrighteous ones there! no unholy ones there at the great day of its glorification. "Thy people," says the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah on the same subject, "shall be all righteous."

In its fourth application, Zion applies to the church. You may learn this by reference to Isaiah 28: 16 with the last verse of Romans 9. It is to Zion, in the sense of the church, that we wish for a few moments to invite attention. □ It needs no argument to convince Latter Day Saints that the kingdom of heaven, the church of

Christ, the church of God, the congregation of the Lord, will actually exist in the latter days, and through that congregation the Lord will accomplish his work, his marvelous work and his wonder.

One thing with reference to the character of the building in its organic sense, to which we wish to give a passing remark, is this: it will enable those who believe in the latter-day work to see the harmony of the work in the latter days with that of prior ages so far as building up *the Zion* or the church is concerned. In its organic structure, the church, or kingdom of heaven, is an outgrowth of principles, just as much as the Farmer's Alliance, Freemasonry, Odd Fellowship, or the Good Templars is an outgrowth of principles. Its outgrowth from those principles is just as legitimate spiritually and morally, and as logical as it is for a mustard stalk to grow from a mustard seed. Whenever that kind of seed is planted you could not reasonably expect any other organic outgrowth than one having the very nature and character of the seed planted; hence whatever the organic structure of the church, the outgrowth of the principles of the gospel as preached by Christ and the apostles, if the same gospel is now preached, you cannot expect an organism differing from that, any more than you can expect to sow mustard and reap wheat. Therefore, if the seed of the kingdom, the word of God is planted in its unchangeable form as originally designed of God; if like circumstances govern, like causes will produce like effects; men were sinful then, men are sinful now; the design of the gospel in its development then was to redeem man from sin, that is its purpose and object now. It requires the same power to redeem fallen man now that it did then, consequently, so far as organism is concerned, the church growing out of gospel principles would be the same now as in the days of old. It could not be otherwise. Moreover, the spiritual fruit growing out of the lives of those individuals who are governed by that gospel, would be similar; its manifestations would be seen growing out of every regenerated, renewed, pure, humble, sincere heart; and where

those fruits as manifested in the lives of Jesus, Paul, Peter, Moses, and the ancient worthies, are not manifest *now*, there is reason to believe that the seed has fallen on the wayside ground, and that the birds, or Satan's emissaries have gathered it up. You can only discern the tares when the head of the wheat or its fruit begins to be developed; outside of that the tares and the wheat look just exactly alike. I saw it practically represented once, I could tell no difference in the stalk, in the blade, or even in the color, so far as that is concerned, and it was only when the fruit was developed that the tares appeared and were made manifest and it was seen that there was no wheat fruit there. It resolves itself, therefore, into a practical question; this building up of Zion is a practical question to all and has a bearing upon each individual, each person, each of God's children is closely interested in it.

We want to notice and not forget that the text says that when the Lord builds up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. When I contemplate this subject, the thought occurs to my mind that when the Lord builds, he does not build with untempered mortar; when the Lord builds, he does not build with unconverted men and women; unconverted men and women may be among us, but the Lord is not building by them. You cannot tie the Lord, in this building, to any unholy works; that is the thought. I cannot do evil works, neither can I engage in wickedness, and claim to be a member of Zion; the Lord superintends this work. "When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory." The untempered or ill-tempered mortar which becomes unsafe falls from where it is placed, crumbles and drops out of its place in the building; allows the winds to pass through; it is no more there; it could not stand the weather; it could not stand the trial; it was unable to stand the heat, and the rain, and the winds. That mortar is just like a house built on sand, when the winds blow, and the rains descend, and the storms beat, that untempered mortar, like the house built on sand, gives away under it and falls, and truly to those individuals

who build on such foundations the fall is great.

Isaiah, in chapter 1: 27, speaking of the work that is represented by the church of God in these latter days, says, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." I want that we remember that text. We used to be taught that the word judgment, as it is in Isaiah 1: 27, referred to a display of the displeasure of God on the wicked nations of the earth. Whether the judgment of the Almighty enters into the work, in latter days, in that respect or not, is not the question just now. Zion is to be redeemed with judgment; there is to be an exercise of divine judgment; God is building; for, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."

John tells you, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [the Father and the Son] is righteous." He that doeth right is righteous. Now the Lord never made a thing right by commanding it do be done. It don't make it right not to steal simply because the Lord has said to me, "Thou shalt not steal." The principle was wrong before the command was given. By the act of robbing we may deprive our fellow men of that that is justly theirs, without giving value received, because we are, by nature, liable to do each other wrong in that way, and God prohibits it, and condemns the wrong, and says to you and me, we shall not steal. God commands anything to be done or prohibits it because it is right or because it is wrong to do or not to do, hence it is that we have a law, both mandatory and prohibitory. God never gave a commandment to make a thing right or wrong. If the law of the Lord has had its effect upon our very heart and mind, there cannot be otherwise than our being approved in the righteousness of God, and that righteousness is revealed in the gospel. No wonder, then, that Jesus says, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock." It is not he that hears these sayings of mine, and refuses to do them; not he that hears these sayings of mine, and puts an interpreta-

tion upon them, and then carries out that interpretation that shall be likened to a wise man. That is where the mistake is always made, where we attempt to do anything our own way. One mistake, on the part of some, is made in not paying attention to the sayings of Christ; another mistake is made in putting an interpretation on the sayings of Jesus, and then instead of doing what is said there we essay to carry out our own interpretation of what was said. There is where men and women are liable to be wrong.

It seems to me that Zion might have been further along than she is, and her converts many more, if she had been willing to carry out the law to be perfect. But alas! it is the old story repeated; for sixty-three years has the Lord in mercy and loving kindness been trying to instruct, and strengthen, and enlighten, and lead his people on, but like the Lord's people in the wilderness, or like the Lord's people in an early day, we have been slow to hear, slow to do; too many times we have misapprehended, and turned away from the right, and the Lord has been, for sixty-three years, trying to impress upon us the lesson that he told us away back yonder in the early days of the dispensation; namely, Zion cannot be builded up, unless it be upon the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom. There is the Lord's negative, the divine fiat; it is the law of the Lord. We insist here, that we had just as well stop now, and labor no longer, as to go on in neglect of the celestial law; for all, so far as any history of the past reveals, who have failed to keep the celestial law, have backed out, have proved a failure in their lives, as long as they abode in disobedience. Condemnation rested upon the whole church, even all, a few years since, for they treated lightly the laws that God had given in this grand, crowning, culminating dispensation of all dispensations.

The Lord says he delights to bless his children, when obedient to his law, with the greatest of all blessings, but if they, having come to a knowledge of the law, refuse to keep it, he says he will curse them with the greatest of all cursings. If you will, to-day examine the works that have

been carried on by those people who fell a few years ago from their exalted position of saints of God, to the great depths of degradation, and false doctrine, and error, and impenetrable darkness into which they have sunk, and compare their works with the works of other men who had not the light they had, you will be convinced of the fact that the cursing inflicted upon them is the greatest of all cursings. Do any of the representatives of the Protestant world lay claim to having received the light that God gave to his people in the latter days? and can it be said they have rejected it? They are incapable of getting down to where that people has got to; they have not had the light; they have not stood so high; they are not capable of enduring such darkness; they cannot come into it and carry out its works. It is plain to the most casual observer that none of them, notwithstanding their high attainments, however great their learning, have sunk so deep, and carried so many with them, as those who have departed, sad as it may appear to say it, from the law a few years ago. If you and I ever get so low, and are bound as completely in chains of everlasting darkness as the angels that fell from their first estate, it will be after we have risen to become equal to the angels and then fallen. The Lord has verified the statement in the law given in the forty-first section of the Book of Covenants and the living example is before us to-day. God blesses with the greatest of all blessings when his people are obedient, but when they disobey he curses with the greatest of all cursings. What people has suffered such marvelous cursings as those who once walked in the light of God?

I want to invite attention, here, to a statement in the beautiful vision that was given to us by the servants of the Lord, in the seventy-sixth section and fifth paragraph. Speaking of those who shall inherit celestial glory,—and if we notice what they do in order to obtain that glory we shall learn the law called the celestial law, and Zion cannot be redeemed, says God, unless it is by the principles of the celestial law,—it says: “They

are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name, and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given, that, by keeping the commandments, they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; and who overcome [those who overcome, mark it, not those who are overcome with evil, but those who overcome] by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all who are just and true [those who are just and true. Will not those words sink down into the great archives of your hearts and abide there?]; they are they who are the church of the firstborn; they are they into whose hands the Father has given all things; they are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory, and are priests of the Most High after the order of Melchisedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the only begotten Son; wherefore as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God; wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's; and they shall overcome all things; wherefore let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet; these shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever: these are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to reign on the earth over his people; these are they who shall have part in the first resurrection; these are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just; these are they who are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all; these are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and the church of Enoch, and of the firstborn; these are they whose names are written in heaven,

where God and Christ are the judge of all; these are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood; these are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God the highest of all; whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical."

They have come to all the glory that Paul speaks of in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews as characterizing the church of the firstborn, "To an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven," etc. They are come unto this union, into this covenant; they have arisen to this exalted sphere by virtue of their obedience to the celestial law, and hence he says it is these whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God the highest of all. Here we have in perfect review the general outline of the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom. God has told us that unless Zion is thus builded up, he cannot receive her unto himself. In fact he says, Zion cannot be builded up except by this law. It is said to the Saints everywhere, Cease to find fault one with another, let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me. This is a latter-day injunction, "Let every man esteem his brother as himself."

Again, it is said in this same volume (Book of Covenants) that "If ye are not one, ye are not mine." If ye are not one, ye are not mine! We could not expect to be the Lord's children, to be accepted of him in a state of division. The Lord, in that memorable prayer recorded in the seventeenth of John, prayed that all who believed on him through the apostles' words might be one, as he and the Father were one. He prayed that we thus might be united; that our unity might convince the world that Jesus was the Christ. "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me," is the language of the Savior. Now, the fruits of this law summed up by the Savior in the fifth of Matthew are

something like this: If a man ask you to go with him a mile go; if he sue you at the law and take away your coat, let him have it; if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; pray for those who spitefully use you, and persecute you, and cast out your name as evil; bless those who curse you. These are some of the fruits growing out of the celestial law, and only by doing that way can we be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.

He is perfect in his sphere, let us as children be perfect in our spheres. If we love only those who love us, only bless them that bless us, do good to those only who do good to us, etc., we are no better than the sinner. But when this celestial law that cometh down from God, that divine and holy one, is planted in the heart, by obedience to its precepts we become perfect in our spheres as he is perfect in his sphere—like our heavenly Father, who sends his rain on the unjust as well as the just, and causes the sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good, and does not limit his blessings just to his friends.

The Savior illustrates by these sayings what we ought to do. They are a portion of the celestial law as it re-

lates to individual life in the keeping of God's commandments. By keeping the commandments we overcome, and by a failure to keep his law we do not overcome.

This law illustrates to us what kind of material God will build up Zion with. The question with me is, am I to be found of the right kind of mortar or material? Can the Lord take me as a piece of dust, so to speak, create me from these various elements, and transform me into a living stone? If the seed coming from the divine source falls into the heart, it begins to swell and germinate, and we are developed and born of God, then are we new creatures in Christ Jesus, and if you will allow me a homely expression, the seed always grows from the inside, just like a cabbage head, the old humanity, Adamic nature, like the old leaves, falls off, and perishes, and Christ is formed in us the hope of glory. May the Lord, the Christ, be formed in us, may we be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of God, that we may be found able to dwell in the temple of the Lord; be able to abide the day of his coming, is my prayer in Christ's name. Amen.

"AND THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF."

THIS is a part of a statement made by Jesus, in answer to one of the lawyers, as stated in St. Luke 10: 27. It occurs in a little different form in Leviticus 19: 18: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord."

We lately heard the preacher on this text in connection with the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind, and strength."

From what the preacher said one hearer at least gathered the idea that the preacher was of the opinion that this commandment to love one's neighbor was the duty of man, equally

binding and inexorable, as the one, to love God; because it was an "immutable law of God;" and that he who failed in this duty was inexcusable, and guilty before God of breaking his law.

The question arose in the mind of this one hearer, whether he rightly understood the saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? and whether he read it and understood it as the preacher did.

The word "as" seems to carry with it the meaning "in like manner;" which in the instance under examination would mean that in the same degree and to the same extent that a man loved himself, so, to the same extent