

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, August 23rd, 1891, commencing at 2 p. m., Counselor Charles W. Penrose presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

How are Thy servants blest! O, Lord,
How sure is their defense.

Prayer was offered by Apostle Abraham H. Cannon.

The choir next sang the hymn:

Come, thou glorious day of promise,
Come and spread thy cheerful ray.

The Priesthood of the Seventeenth Ward officiated in the administration of the Sacrament.

ELDER JAMES F. TALMAGE

addressed the congregation. He said he was grateful for the opportunity of meeting once again with the Saints for the purpose of worship. They had assembled there in the Lord's name and doubtless had some expectations of realizing the fulfillment of His great promises, that whenever people met together in His name, there He was in the midst of them through the medium of His Holy Spirit, and would bless them.

Speaking of the mighty changes which took place in the world day by day, the speaker said that in all these, if we would, we could distinguish the tones of the voice of God, and could read in the telegraphic dispatches as they daily came to us, if we had the power of inspiration and were guided by the spirit of prayer, the signs of the times, which when understood by men gave unto them true wisdom. Yet there were some whose ears were deaf, whose eyes were blind, whose hearts were so stubborn that in all these matters they described nothing out of the regular order; and so would it be, according to the words of the prophet, "until the great and terrible day." Men would continue to chase their favorite phantoms, giving themselves up to pleasure, perchance seeking gain, the poor in many instances praying and hoping for wealth, the rich craving more riches. Day after day the influences of men would assert themselves, and only those who had the power of humility and the inspiration of the Spirit of God with them would see aught else than the continuation of what had gone on before. But there was an evident plan and purpose in the work of God. That work today was not in the same stage that it was yesterday. We were not traveling exactly the same road, according to the great and mighty plan of salvation, and the purposes of the Deity respecting His servants here were not the same as with our forefathers years ago. We were nearer the end than were they. We must be living under circumstances and conditions somewhat different, though the ordinary order of things would continue. It was well, therefore, on stated occasions, when the Saints met together as they had that afternoon, to shut out the noise and bustle of worldly life and strive to understand better the words of God which came to us day by day. All of us were child-

ren before the Lord, though some were younger in experience and spiritual growth than others. Consequently, we could not all depend upon our experience in this life for guidance. The voice of God would come unto them if their hearts were open, if their ears were unstopped, and give them peace, comfort, and happiness which in the midst of strife would assert itself as superior to all else upon earth. Did gold, silver, or precious stones ever give to a man one iota of release from pain, one exemption at any time from the attacks of adversaries? The man who had the inspiration of the Spirit of God within him, possessed to some extent at least the power of banishing pain, sickness, disease, and all those ills which were given unto men as trials and for the purpose of testing their strength by being no longer subject to their thrall. Surely this was a power worth striving after. It had been promised unto the humble and those who would seek to do the will of God. How, then, should we strive to gain this inspiration, so that we might not be misled by the affairs of life, or deceived by the machinations of Satan.

Among other things against which we should struggle was the growing and besetting sin of indifference. It was a matter of great congratulation and joy that so many assembled together in that and their other places of worship, from time to time. He dared not judge as to their motives; he had to take it for granted, however, until shown otherwise, that they met for purposes of true worship, that their minds were sincere; and if this were so, they were blessed above all others. But the sin of indifference was growing in the world at the present time and men were becoming more and more subject unto it.

It required no argument, he thought, to convince all believers in the scriptures that there was today in progress a great battle and strife going on between the principles of light and those of darkness, between the spirit of virtue and the elements of vice. This being so, we must confess that there were two opposing factions, and that every man and woman on the earth, by his or her actions in life, showed to which of these parties he or she belonged. Satan, the commander-in-chief of the armies of darkness, had proved himself to be a very wary general. He had made a great study of human nature, he was acquainted with our individual nature perhaps better than we knew it ourselves; he knew our weak points and our strong ones, and made his plans accordingly. There was a time when he endeavored to stir up his emissaries to the pitch of unrighteous enthusiasm, which exhibited itself in bloodshed and cruelty, and terrible were the sins then enacted. There was less of that kind of persecution in the world today than there had been during certain periods of the past; yet the adversary was none the less energetic, and it seemed at least to be one of his tactics to implant within the hearts of all to whom he had access the seeds of indifference and to inculcate within them a spirit of evil, causing men to feel that all things were right, and they cared not for matters of

religion. He believed that the same adversary would be fully as successful in this conflict as he had been in his violent courses in the past, knowing full well, however, that his triumph would be of but short duration. Against this spirit we should struggle, and strive to be awake to all that passed round about us, so that we might be properly impressed by that which we saw and heard; and in this way we should distinguish the working out of the great purposes of the Almighty, and witness the unfolding of the buds and the bursting forth of the blossoms upon the great fig tree planted by the Deity—that we might know the seasons when we glanced at that tree and control our lives accordingly.

Those who believed not in the words of revelation scoffed at the idea that the end was near, and that the second coming of the Son of man was to be looked for in the immediate future, though the word of the Almighty had gone forth that that day was at hand. The exact time He had revealed to none, as far as we were informed. Indeed we were told that even the angels in heaven knew not the day and hour of the Son of Man's coming; yet we were commanded to watch and pray, and read if we could the handwriting of the Almighty as He was tracing it upon the schedule of history today as he had traced it in the past.

There existed in the world at this time a spirit of uneasiness in political circles, and doubtless his hearers had read quite recently of the visits which were being made by the warlike organizations of one country to another—parading, as it were, their engines and powers of destruction in the eyes of each other. He himself was not an interpreter of mysteries, he was not a prophet unto the people, and therefore sought not to explain in detail what was meant by these happenings; but he did say that they were in accordance with the prophecies which had been uttered, when it was told by the words of inspired men that the spirit of strife should grow in the world and there should be war and rumors of war, one nation rising up against another.

It had been his good fortune to make a series of visits during the past few months to several of the countries of Europe, and among many other things which impressed him there, he noted with great interest the significant signs of warlike preparations to be found everywhere. The tramp of armed men was so common in the streets of the great cities as to excite no great wonder. At night they were heard passing the door, and in the daytime battalions were to be seen moving from place to place; the railroads were hurdled with the traffic of carrying men, armed for fighting, from one part to another. All Europe was today one camp under arms. Boys were being pressed into the service, and scores of them could be seen in the ranks with scarce a bearded face among them. "Sham battles," for practice in arms, were the order of the day, the rattle of musketry had a familiar sound, and mothers took out their sons to watch those contests, that they might be imbued with a desire to emulate those who took part in them.