

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Aug. 14, 1892, commencing at 2 p. m.; Counselor Charles W. Penrose presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

Prayer was offered by Elder Theodore Curtis.

The choir next sang the hymn:

He died, the great Redeemer died,
And Israel's daughters wept around.

The Priesthood of the Second Ward administered in the ordinance of the Sacrament.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

was the speaker. He referred, in the outset, to the fact that the Elders of this Church are called upon to speak on occasions like the present without any previous notice, so that no time for preparation of what they had to say was afforded them. Hence it followed that they could not as a rule demonstrate to the congregation assembled great powers of oratory as the result of careful study and a critical selection of topics, words and sentiments. Yet he himself could call to mind many instances when he had heard men stand up and speak, in their weakness, words of mighty strength. It had been his fortune to go into a number of the greatest and grandest edifices of worship which had been erected by man, and there listen to sermons the outcome of men's most earnest and profound study of theological matters, and religious music by trained choirs. He offered no criticism upon any special form of worship or upon the grandeur of some of the buildings in which services were conducted; he would only say such ceremonies as were observed therein had been known under the name of the worship of God.

It was not necessary in order to worship our Father acceptably that we should assemble in buildings erected at great cost. As the people of old offered their sacrifices, their prayers and devotions unto Him in the wilderness, upon the desert sand, and they were acceptable in His sight, so in modern times His people had gathered in holy convocation in the woods and upon the prairies of this great land. He had there met with them, as every true heart knew, and His blessing rested upon them. Need we doubt, therefore, in a congregation of this kind, if we put away from our hearts all things that were worldly and wicked, that the same blessings were within our reach?

This one day of the week upon which we assembled together should suggest unto us holy things. Its very name—the Sabbath day—indicated such. Upon this particular day, throughout the length and breadth of the whole and inhabited by professing Christians, we found congregations gathered together for the acknowledged and avowed purpose of worshipping God. Yet there was a growing disposition among the people of the world to disregard, to a very great extent, the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Let them ask themselves for what purpose was the Sabbath instituted and why had they been called upon to meet

together on that day, to offer their prayers and supplications unto God in humility and singleness of heart? The first reference he knew of regarding the institution of this day was by the Creator himself, after having spent six days in making the world and bringing it into a condition in which it could be occupied by man. We were told that He rested upon the seventh day and hallowed it. So careful was the Lord of this day that He himself had set apart, that even down to the time in which we live He had given unto His people laws in language that could not be misunderstood relative to its holy observance. The longest of all the commandments which the Lord gave to Moses, and the one which in our translation occupied the greatest space, was the one beginning with the words "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." This command the speaker read in full. Remarking upon the words "hallowed it," he asked what was meant by that? To hallow a day or time was to sanctify it, to render it holy, to set it apart for some special service in the Almighty's cause. Here, then, was the Lord's own mighty declaration that the Sabbath was the day to be hallowed unto His service. On many occasions did He speak unto His people in Israel telling them His purpose in establishing this day, explaining to them the benefits which would result from a conscientious observance of this day, and also the penalties which would follow the wilful disregard and neglect of His requirements thereon.

Elder Talmage quoted the thirteenth verse of Exodus, xxxi:

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.

What did the Lord mean by declaring that the observance of the Sabbath day was a sign between Him and His people? He had ever delighted in giving signs whereby His people would be distinguished from all others. What He said in comparatively modern times compared with this day—the day when the Savior Himself stood upon the earth and gave instructions to His disciples to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature—"and these signs shall follow them that believe"—thus establishing certain symbols by which the observer could recognize between the true and the false churches. Here, then, was a sign established from very early days that His people should observe the seventh day and keep it holy. The great Creator himself, after making the world in six days, rested on the seventh day; and did we find in all the writings that detailed the doings of God with men a single instance in which our Heavenly Father had asked us to do one thing which He himself had not set the example in? Before establishing the Sabbath for His people He observed it himself, sanctified it, and gave it as a pattern to the world and all who should live upon it.

This keeping holy the Sabbath day became something more than a mere form; we knew this from the terrible penalties that God established by way

of punishment for those of His recreant children who would not obey His commandment.

Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

This law was not to be a dead letter, not given simply to be placed on the statute book and know no enforcement. While the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day; they brought him unto Moses and Aaron and all the congregation; he was stoned without the camp, and died, as the Lord commanded Moses. The Sabbath breaker then, was in those days deemed worthy of death.

The speaker cited various other passages from Holy Writ bearing on the subject of hallowing the Sabbath day, and went on to remark that many persons who did not understand the principles upon which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded found fault with their professions that they could receive continual revelation. These people asserted that continued revelation might, in many instances, contradict and set at naught revelations which had been received before. All such criticism should be always answered by the request that they would point out one single instance in which the Lord had ever given a revelation contrary to necessity. Elder Talmage read (from the revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in Jackson County, Missouri, August 7th, 1831. (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 59, verses 9 to 13.)

And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go up to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day:

For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High.

Nevertheless, thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

But remember that on this the Lord's day thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart, that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.

Let the Latter-day Saints hear and understand this for their own benefit. The Great Lawgiver had thus re-enacted or re-stated that law of hallowing the Sabbath, lest some of them might now say that it pertained only to the days of the Israelites—to former times. If they failed now to observe that law, the signs which had been established between God and His people would depart.

But upon looking abroad in the world we saw that the people had come to regard the Sabbath day as one of pleasure. Theatres, opera houses, and many places of far worse repute were kept glaringly open on that day in