

## RELIGIOUS.

## Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Sept. 15, 1889, commencing at 2 p.m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang:

Great God, attend while Zion sings,  
The joy that from Thy presence springs.

Prayer by Elder Elias Morris.

The choir sang:

Ye children of our God,  
Ye Saints of latter days.

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

## ELDER DAVID M'KENZIE

addressed the congregation. He said that an Elder of Israel should be ready at all times and under all circumstances to be able to bear testimony to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which has been restored to the earth in this age.

Our Father in heaven has sent forth His Gospel to prepare the way for the second coming of the Son of Man. How did He proceed in this instance? He introduced His work in the very manner that would recommend itself to the intelligence of the most ignorant, if they were only honest in heart, susceptible of receiving the impressions of the truth, and anxious to find out that truth.

In 1820, in New York, a young peasant boy, only in his fifteenth year, was anxious to ascertain the truth in order that he might embrace the Christian religion. By reading the Apostle James he learned that "if any man lacks wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Joseph Smith, in the simplicity of his heart, believed the Bible to be the word of God. He believed the words of the Apostle. He went to inquire of the Lord. What for? Not to find out whether Christianity was true or not, for he apprehended there was no doubt about it; but there existed a difference among the sects of that day, and his object in going to the Almighty was to endeavor to discover which sect he should join, in order that he might be acceptable unto Him. What was the result? While praying on a bright spring day, in the woods, he received a visit from the Father and the Son, and the Father, pointing to the Son, said, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him."

Here is something to arrest the attention of the world. While men have thrown out dark and deadly insinuations even against the existence of the Supreme Being, right here in the present age we have a youth, innocent, straightforward, unsophisticated, bearing testimony that the Father and the Son live, for he saw them.

Now this is bringing things down to the comprehension of the most illiterate, always provided that they have sufficient evidence that this

boy was sincere—that he actually beheld what he declared. During a career of 24 years of unparalleled persecution, Joseph Smith sustained his testimony by finally laying down his life for the same. What stronger evidence could he have given of his sincerity? The great Pascal says: "I believe in witnesses who give the testimony of their blood," and who that is honest and sincere would not? When a man lays down his life for his testimony, what more can be expected of him?

Archdeacon Paley, the great Christian commentator—the man who, perhaps, more than any other, has done a noble work in establishing the evidences of Christianity—says there are satisfactory evidences that the original witnesses to the Christian miracles passed their lives in labor, dangers, and suffering, voluntarily undergone in attestation of those accounts which they delivered. What accounts did those early Apostles of Christ deliver? They testified that they saw Jesus—that He rose from the dead; that they conversed with Him, and were instructed of Him, and finally some of them saw Him ascend into heaven, with this assurance from an angel standing by: that in like manner this same Jesus should descend again to the earth. Thus His crucifixion and ascension into heaven were the conclusion of only one act in the great drama; and those who shut their eyes to the fact that Jesus is to re-appear on earth in like manner are not likely to receive the message that in this generation, at this very hour, the way is being prepared for the return of the Savior to reign here below.

But, some people will say, if Christianity was upon the earth, what need of having it restored? If the evidence of Peter, James, and John, of the Apostles and disciples of old, is to be taken, as Archdeacon Paley puts it, in vindication of the truth of Christianity, where is the need of restoration? The question is a very natural one, because if Christianity was upon the earth, if any of the various sects or religious bodies in any part of the world had the true Gospel and were officiating under the power of the Priesthood, that restoration of the Gospel from heaven would be supererogatory. When Joseph Smith asked the heavenly messenger which of the sects he should join, he was told not to join any of them. For those professors of religion were an abomination in the sight of the Lord, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. They teach for doctrines the commandments of men; and that boy Joseph was sure that in the time which was shortly to come he would be employed as an agent to restore the everlasting gospel in all its ancient fulness.

I would like to call attention to a prominent illusion which it is not difficult to get rid of—that of regarding Joseph Smith in the light of an impostor. But to prove him such it would be necessary to admit that he had in himself sufficient wisdom and discernment, even at that

early age, to be able to see that all the denominations of Christianity had gone astray. Is not that asking a great deal of a peasant boy not fifteen years of age, brought up in a country district, hardly able to read and write? I have often thought, when calmly reflecting upon the principles of the Gospel, that it requires far greater credulity to believe that Joseph Smith was an impostor than that he was sent of God.

It is a staggering thought to those who profess Christianity that all the denominations of the Christian world had gone astray. On the other hand, it is nothing more than the ancient prophets foretold. Indeed if the church had not fallen into universal apostacy, the Bible could not possibly be true. You may take up any of the great commentators, notably Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Bacon, Bishop Newton, and a hundred others, who point out distinctly that Daniel foretold the apostacy of the Church, as did also John the Revelator. Indeed they went so far as to show conclusively that the Church should be taken from the children of men and banished from the earth for a period of 1260 years, and that they should be left without the gospel. It fell to the lot of the boy Joseph Smith, in these latter days, to reveal the grand plan of salvation in all its purity.

Having answered some of the assertions of Ingersoll in regard to certain doctrinal matters, Elder McKenzie pointed out that in spite of the judgment and expressions of such men as Ingersoll we have a revelation today from Jesus Christ that He did send forth His ancient Apostles to "preach the Gospel to every creature."

Hundreds, yea thousands, of Elders, their wives and children, have lost their lives, directly or indirectly, in consequence of the Gospel which they had espoused. "Well," says one, "Have not numbers of Protestants and of Catholics suffered in the past for their religion, laying down their lives rather than deny it?" I am glad to see men conscientious, and the best that can be said of the matter is that they were conscientious in their belief as far as it went, and gave their lives for what they believed. But Peter, James and John did not do this; they gave their lives for what they knew to be true. So it was with Joseph Smith and his brethren; they were willing to die, if necessary, for their testimony; and this Gospel, when it goes to the nations meets with a responsive cry in all honest hearts.

History tells us that the persecutions instigated against this Church have chiefly emanated from professing Christians; but Jesus told Joseph Smith to have nothing to do with any of them; for their professions were corrupt. The essence of Christianity is the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth.

After speaking upon the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins, Elder McKenzie besought his hearers to put their trust in the Lord, even though the wicked might rage and try to rob them of