

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, March 27th, 1892, commencing at 2 p. m., President Joseph E. Taylor presiding.

The choir and congregation sang the hymn commencing:

Our God, we raise to Thee  
Thanks for Thy blessings free.

Prayer was offered by Counselor C. W. Penrose.

The choir sang the hymn:

Behold the great Redeemer,  
A broken law to satisfy.

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

ELDER WILLIAM O. LEE,

a returned missionary from the Samoan Islands, first addressed the congregation. He said that three and a half years had elapsed since he and his fellow-missionaries left their mountain home, and since they last had the privilege of meeting together with the Saints in this tabernacle. During that time many changes had taken place both at home and abroad. To himself and his fellow-laborers in the Samoan Islands it had been a most eventful period in their life, and he hoped the most profitable portion of it, for they had been through a school of experience which was accounted very valuable, and with which they would not part for all the wealth the world could afford.

The inhabitants of the Samoan Islands were, to use a term commonly applied to the Latter-day Saints, a peculiar people. They were not a bad people either. Of course they had their faults and failings like all others, but they had their virtues also, and the Elders had learned by experience to admire their good qualities. He himself had formed three impressions concerning the Samoans. When he first landed in Samoa he thought them one of the best people on the face of the earth, very religious and full of desire to praise and serve the Lord and keep His commandments. His second impression was not so pleasing, for he began to regard them as a small nation of hypocrites, liars, thieves, in fact, almost everything that was bad. The third impression was that, considering their circumstances, surroundings, and conditions, they would compare very favorably with the rest of the world.

Now as to why he changed his opinion in this way. The Samoans were in the habit of meeting together every night around their firesides, singing hymns and praying to God. He concluded that they must be a very good people to do that day after day and week after week, while on the Sabbath-day, almost without exception, they attend their meetings. But afterwards, in intercourse with them, the stranger found that, like the American Indians, some were addicted to thieving and lying—that, as a rule, their morals were bad. Indeed that was the failing of all the South Sea Islanders. But there were those among them who were honest in heart and desirous of doing the right. The missionaries realized, all the time, that they were naturally bright and intelligent, more so, in fact, than the world imagined; and, further, the Elders who labored among them as their shepherds had found it necessary to exercise love

and charity to a great extent, and when they did this they were well repaid by seeing the operations of the Spirit of God in their hearts.

The ways of living of the Samoans, their habits and customs, were entirely different from ours, and it was necessary, therefore, for the Elders to proceed gradually. It did not do to take one thing from them without giving something better in its place. He believed that was a correct principle. It was said "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," and idleness was the cause of a great deal of trouble in the Samoan Islands. The Samoans had so little to occupy their minds and turn their attention from things that were not good that, as a consequence, they were continually jarring or quarreling among themselves, holding council meetings and talking about wars and rumors of wars, having nothing better to do or talk about. Some would ask, "How is it they are not occupied in getting the necessities of life?" Well, Samoa had a tropical climate, everything in the vegetable kingdom grew very easily and rapidly, and so the natives had but little work to do in the raising of their products, such as their mode of living required. The rest of their time they spent in different ways.

The speaker referred to the erroneous sectarian doctrines taught among the Samoans before the Latter-day Saint missionaries entered this field of labor, and said their general belief until the Elders went among them was that God was a Being without body, parts or passions. The Elders, of course, taught something very different from that. The same might be said as to many principles promulgated by modern Christians, because they were not substantiated by the Holy Scriptures.

He was pleased to say that the Elders were treated with universal kindness and consideration by the natives, whether Protestant, Catholic or belonging to no church at all. As a people they were one of the most hospitable on the face of the globe. They had often been told on the Samoan Islands that their labors would be in vain, as there were too many churches there already. The invariable answer to this was that while the latter part of the statement might be true, the Elders had come there to stay as long as the Lord desired, and that they intended to do the very best they could in His cause. The Lord had assisted them, and through His blessing they had obtained a foothold on these islands. There were now about 200 baptized converts, although the mission had been organized about four years only. Elder Lee touched briefly upon the mission work in the islands adjacent. He then went on to relate a conversation which he had with the British Minister in Samoa a short time before his return home. Said the Minister to him: "Mr. Lee, there is one thing I cannot understand concerning you people. I do not understand how you can leave your homes, families and friends, and come here to Samoa and preach the Gospel without any salary. Why do you do it? Have you any natural reasons for objecting to receive payment; or why is it?" He endeavored to explain the reasons to him, one of them being that the Lord required it at their hands in order to prove their

sincerity in their belief; also that they took genuine delight in preaching the Gospel "without money and without price," so that all the world might know that they were not preaching for hire.

There were about 35,000 natives in Samoa and between 250 and 300 foreigners. The latter treated the Elders well, and they always received a warm welcome from them. They were engaged, as a rule, in trading among the natives and managing plantations. The speaker gave a brief but interesting account of the export trade of the Samoan Islands. The Germans predominate, he said, among the foreign element; next came the English, and then the Americans. The chief articles of food among the natives included the cocoa nut, the bread fruit, the banana, fish and various dishes made up from their own products. The natives were very cleanly in their habits and their hospitality was proverbial.

After expressing thanks to his Heavenly Father for permitting himself and fellow laborers to return in safety to their mountain home, Elder Lee concluded by reciting a long piece in the Samoan tongue.

ELDER R. URE,

recently returned from the Southern States mission, was next called upon to recount his experiences of the past two years in that field of labor, which he said had been of a most interesting and pleasurable nature. The people were very hospitable, and looked upon a preacher of the Gospel in the true light—as a servant of God, placing in him a great deal of confidence. The work of the Lord was making good progress, and the people were paying far more attention than formerly to the doctrines advocated by the Elders. They realized the fact that those who were among them professing to be ministers of the Gospel of Christ taught incorrect doctrines, and that their sole object seemed to be to get what they could in the way of money out of them.

The people in the Southern States were very poor, as a rule, and had to work very hard for a livelihood. Hence they had but little time, as it were, to devote to the Gospel. Still, they were quite religious in their way, and the Bible occupied a prominent place in every home which the Elders visited. They had the form of godliness, while denying the power thereof. For this, however, the people were not to blame, having been previously led astray by professing ministers of the Gospel of Christ. But it had been the duty of the Elders to lay before them the plan of salvation as taught by the Latter-day Saints. There were thousands there today who would acknowledge that the Gospel, as taught by the servants of God, was true and according to the scriptures, though only a few were brave and honest enough to come out and embrace it. In returning home he felt that the experience he had gained was worth more to him than all the world beside.

ELDER H. EMERY,

also a missionary from the Southern States, related briefly his experience, which was similar to that told by the preceding speaker. In many places, he said, where at one time it would have been almost dangerous for the