

## RELIGIOUS.

## Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, March 20, 1892, commencing at 2 p. m., Counselor Joseph E. Taylor presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

Zion stands with hills surrounded,  
Zion, kept by power divine.

Prayer was offered by Elder Joseph H. Dean.

The choir next sang the hymn:

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

The Priesthood of the Third ward administered the sacrament.

## ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

was the speaker. He presumed it might be taken for granted that in a congregation so large as the one present on that occasion there were more or less of those not of the faith of the Latter-day Saints. Probably some of them came out of curiosity, and hence it would be well, perhaps, for him to expound the fundamental principles and doctrines of their Church for the instruction of those strangers, that they might not come there in vain, but be made acquainted with some of the great principles in which the Latter-day Saints believed. Such instruction, he took it, would prove equally profitable for the Saints, since it would, at least, refresh their minds, even if nothing new was taught. Indeed, it would be extremely difficult to teach anything new to the Latter-day Saints. At any rate, he felt his own inability to do so. In his researches and Gospel studies he had often been surprised to find that when he thought he had discovered some new idea it would not be a great while before he learned the fact that it had been known long ago by Elders who were laboring in the ministry before he was born. But perhaps, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, one might be fortunate enough to make new combinations with the known facts, and teach the old things in a little different manner from what others had taught, and thus create new impressions on the minds of those who heard.

Among the people of the world the Latter-day Saints were regarded as a very bigoted class, very narrow-minded and very exclusive in their ideas of religion. He supposed that this impression had gone abroad in consequence of the very peculiar position that the Church of Jesus Christ had taken in relation to the revelations of God. Nearly all modern sects or denominations might refer their origin to the researches, to the genius of organization of some man who left the older forms of religion and established something new, to which doubtless he gave his own name or some name descriptive of the circumstances surrounding the sect when it came into existence. Thus the Methodists, followers of John Wesley, received their name because of the precise methods adopted in the worship described by this great reformer; the Lutherans took their name in the same way from Martin Luther; the Calvinists, usually known as Presby-

terians, took their name from the style of church government inaugurated by John Calvin and his followers; and so from some circumstance or other of this kind the religious sects of the day had become known.

In the Church of Jesus Christ it was quite different. This Church referred its origin not to any man or to the labors of any men, but claimed to have been founded by direct revelation from God; and in that first revelation which might be regarded as the source from whence the Church sprang, it was announced to the youthful Prophet Joseph Smith that the creeds and religions of men were not acceptable to God, were not recognized as His Church or His kingdom; but, on the contrary, that those creeds were an abomination in His sight; that they had reduced religion to a "form of godliness," lacking the power thereof. Because the Latter-day Saints gave this account of their origin they were looked upon as bigoted and narrow-minded, because they esteemed all other religions to be wrong and their own alone to be right.

He for one confessed there was very much in that position that should excuse their friends for looking upon them as bigots, as egotists, and in a measure even as the enemies of all other religious sects and denominations. It was a position, indeed, which needed explanation in order to take away from it that appearance of bigotry which those who looked only upon the surface of things were very liable to attribute to them. Yet he thought it came with an ill-grace from the Christian world to speak of bigotry, especially if based upon the ground that the Latter-day Saints were so few in number in comparison with the great body of the Christian people in the world.

The task he proposed to set himself that afternoon was to show, if he could, that "Mormon" theology was more liberal and broader than the general conceptions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that while there might be a seeming ground for the charge of bigotry against the Latter-day Saints, it was only in seeming. In proof of this he desired to call attention to a passage of scripture recorded in the Book of Mormon—a book held by this people to be of equal authority with the Jewish scriptures. Hence it was the word of the Lord to them. It contained the inspired utterances of the prophets who inhabited this continent in ancient times. The circumstances connected with the passage which he would now read were very interesting. One Alma had been traveling for some years among the heathen of the land—by this he meant those who refused to believe in Christ, the Lamanites, from whom the American Indians were the direct descendants. He had been blessed in his ministry and the Lord had given to him souls for his hire. Yet when this good man compared the few whom he had convinced of the truth with the great bulk who remained unconverted he seemed very dissatisfied with his labors, and wished in his heart that he had the voice of an angel that he might go from land to land, from people to people, and cry out with a voice that would make the earth to tremble, teaching the glorious prin-

ciples of salvation to his fellow-men. After expressing the desire that he had described, this ancient Nephtite prophet reproved himself for the very thoughts of his heart, and he said:

Why should I desire that I was an angel, that I could speak unto all the ends of the earth?

For, behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word; yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true.—Alma xxix, 7-8.

The speaker said he believed in that doctrine and so did the Latter-day Saints, who believed in the book of Mormon. To him it was a most glorious truth and swept away the charge of narrow-mindedness against them, as well as being destructive to the theory of bigotry. Suppose they tested this by reference to the men who had arisen in the various nations of the world who had been teachers of their fellows—the founders of religion and systems of philosophy. In their lives would then be discovered an exemplification of those great doctrines contained in the Book of Mormon.

Elder Roberts first took up the course of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, who he said succeeded in founding a system of philosophy rather than religion. This great teacher of the Chinese race described the relationship existing among men under three heads—the relation between sovereign and subject, between husband and wife, and between parents and children. Say what we would about the wisdom of Chinamen, it transpired that China had had fewer civil strifes than any western nation. He taught that the virtues might be crystalized into five—first, universal charity; second, impartial justice; third, adherence to and respect for ancient customs and usages; fourth, rectitude of heart and mind; and last, but not least, pure sincerity. It was not admitted that this philosophy of Confucius was a religion, because it said nothing about the relationship between God and man; but he (the speaker) maintained that an adherence to those five cardinal virtues stood in very good stead of a religion and incorporated nearly all the virtues that religion enjoined. A man who could arise six hundred years before Christ and give such a system of philosophy to so great a people had a mind of no ordinary character. He believed it was a work altogether incompetent for natural intelligence to perform, and his religion led him to recognize Confucius as one of the prophets, or wise men, spoken of by Alma who taught to his people the decree of God's laws. They might call this man a heathen if they pleased, but his religion taught him to recognize in him a brother and a benefactor of his race, one inspired of God to lead men to greater light rather than to drag them down to lower depths.

What Confucius was to the Chinese Lycurgus was to the State of Sparta. He, too, was a remarkable character and one who improved his race for ages with the doctrines which he taught. Solon of Athens created reforms very much after the pattern of those established by Lycurgus and very much improved the condition of his