

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, June 12th, 1892, commencing at 2 p.m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

Come, Come ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear,
But with joy wend your way;

Prayer was offered by Elder Samuel Friday.

The choir sang:

Jesus, once of humble birth,
Now in glory comes to earth.

The Sacrament was administered by the Priesthood of the Sixteenth ward.

ELDER DAVID M'KENZIE

then was called upon to address the congregation.

The speaker said he felt weak, but relied on the sympathy and prayers of the Saints. This expression was not merely a matter of form, but it was founded on the firm assurance that blessings would be bestowed in answer to prayers.

It is necessary for the Saints to deal with facts rather than theories, to make themselves acquainted with their obligations to their Creator. For we are here on this earth on a probation. We are placed here, that we may obtain an exaltation by proving ourselves worthy of it. This makes it necessary for us to practice a religion which can elevate us and help us to progress in every direction. Speaking of progress, the speaker remarked that there was no record of savages ever having risen from a condition of savagery to that of civilization by their own power without aid from civilized races. Yet civilization exists. Where did it come from, if savages cannot civilize themselves, unless we admit the instruction by the Almighty of the first progenitors of the human race? We see that people who are excluded from civilization live in stagnant state. The inference is that without divine aid no progress can be made.

If it be true that the earliest inventions of our race are the greatest, who suggested these inventions? That man could not have made himself is held to be a proof of the agency of a Divine Creator; and that mankind could not in the first instance have civilized themselves is equally a proof of the agency of a Divine Instructor.

The Latter-day Saints would never have, of themselves, created the commonwealth we see today without aid from God. What man could by his own wisdom have invented a religion in perfect accordance with the Word of God. Our religion not only is in perfect harmony with the Word of God, but it has been antagonized in the same manner as the first Gospel. These things the Latter-day Saints can account for. We say God sent His messenger to preach the everlasting Gospel and proclaim it to all men and carry it to all nations preparatory to the coming of the Son of Man. This is what we say and have proved that we believe, under all circumstances.

The skeptic may be asked, How was this work brought about? Fanaticism is no explanation of it; nor is imposture, inasmuch as thousands have testified that God has again spoken, and this testimony has been abundantly confirmed in this day by accompanying signs as in former days. Joseph Smith was only a weak instrument. How can you imagine him an impostor? He placed himself in antagonism to all the world. His message contained the same truths, the same Gospel, the same morality as the Gospel of former days. How could he tell of his own learning that all the sects of the world had gone astray? His statement was practically an intimation that he was at fifteen years of age in a position to correct their errors. And in the organization that he was the instrument of effecting, we see the same arrangement of Apostles, Prophets, etc., as was instituted in the first Church of Christ.

The speaker pointed to the fact that the Church now is not making converts by the hundreds and the thousands as in the early days of the Church. Are, then, he asked, our Elders less capable than our early preachers?

If this work was the work of man, there would be as many chances to make converts today as formerly. It was not the preaching of man that had such marvelous results, but the Spirit of God working through them, and drawing thousands into the Church. This is the only intelligible explanation. The Elders today are more learned, but do not make more converts.

This work could not have been introduced and maintained on the earth, unless God had operated on His children so as to embrace the Gospel and gather here. The Gospel is free to all who will comply with the commandments of God, but only by the power of the Almighty can they be gathered into the fold.

It is evident that God had a purpose in the establishment of this work, and this was to prepare the world for the second appearance of the Son of Man. But we do not say that this preparation is the work of the Latter-day Saints alone. God uses all people in different ways to accomplish this grand purpose. But to His people His voice is, "Come out of Babylon!" Just as sure as in the days of Noah, He directed the preparation of an ark as a refuge for the faithful, so sure, in this day, He raised up the Prophet Joseph to prepare a place of refuge from the coming destruction. One of the principles of the revelation given was to prove to the world that our acts here have some bearing on a future state, that what we sow here, we shall reap there. This is in direct harmony with revelation. Some people have an idea that the limit of their obligation is to lead a moral life, whereas the truth is, that when God is represented as speaking, every one is under obligation to investigate the message and, if found to be what is claimed for it, to listen and obey it. The sense of obedience to the will of legitimate authority is inherent within all. But we can either conform to it, or rebel against it. Herein is man's agency. The promise is that those who will do the will of God shall know for

themselves. The fulfillment of this promise is an evidence of the truth of the message. Learning of man was not the characteristic of the Gospel as preached by Jesus. Our Lord proved himself a true Messiah by sacrificing Himself, and His followers did not go forth for the temporal rewards they received. They knew that they had to suffer for their faithfulness to the Master. Yet Christianity took a firm hold in the early centuries, notwithstanding the facts that its doctrines were obnoxious to the Romans. It is clear, if Jesus had been a mere man, His work would have been impossible. It was the Spirit of God that was working, and the result was the triumph of the Church.

This led the speaker to a comparison between the primitive Church and the Christian churches of today. Christianity of today, he said, is no more than a picture of the first system. The resemblance may be there more or less, but it is only a picture after all. That is the difference between Christianity then and now. Morality alone does not constitute Christianity. It is part of it, but not all. And a moral obligation is not more binding because it is part of Christianity. Truth is truth wherever found.

The speaker then said he was proud to be among the Latter-day Saints. He knew the day would come when the Lord would reward them for their faithfulness to Him. He wished to be taught the will of God and be enabled to do it, in order to be worthy to associate with noble beings in a celestial world.

It had always seemed peculiar to him, how anybody could believe that God had a people on earth but not a Church. Many think that the various sects are churches, but it is clear that the Church cannot exist without divine sanction. Where can we find the principles that Christ preached? He said, "Except a man be born again by water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." No sect admits this except the Latter-day Saints. The speaker briefly explained what it is to be born of water and spirit, viz.: the immersion in water for the remission of sins and reception of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. This is the condition, without which none can enter the Church.

Again, who has Apostles and Prophets except the Latter-day Saints? The names some may possibly have, but where is the power of their authority to be found? Further, the promise was that certain miracles should follow in confirmation of the preaching of the Gospel. These are among the Saints, and this is another testimony which none can gainsay, that we are the living Church of God.

The speaker closed by expressing the earnest wish that those who had been able to see this and to embrace the principles of the Gospel might be faithful and obtain the promises which are made to all who live according to the principles revealed.

The choir sang the anthem, "God be Merciful unto Us and Bless Us."

Benediction by Elder J. M. Sjodahl.