

## • DR. TALMAGE ON ATHEISM.

Elder J. E. Talmage spoke in the Twentieth ward meetinghouse on Sunday evening on the subject of Atheism. He began by describing the various divisions of heterodoxy-atheism, infidelity and materialism, then sketched briefly the systems opposed to this—Theism, Deism, Polytheism and Panteism. These were all made plain to every listener, and then the speaker proceeded to his subject proper, showing how the disposition to worship something—the sun, the hills, graven images, fire, anything where the mind has not been educated up to the Christian standard—is inherent in our species. He ridiculed the idea that idolatry belonged only to past ages and was confined to the untutored, showing how the golden calf in other forms is worshiped as much now as in the days of its creation, and even more. It was also shown that the worship of the calf that is not golden, in the shape of flocks and herds, is more prevalent now than ever it was; that for the sake of these idolized symbols men will swear falsely before their Maker and thrust the neck of an innocent fellow creature into the noose if need be to gain them or a portion of them. "Then," said he, "if the King of Terrors thrusts his hand into your family circle and takes away a loved one; if you see another lingering in the shadow and about to depart, call loudly upon this god you have created—this superior thing that you worship and adore—for aid and comfort, and it will not give them. Why, then, worship a thing having no power and unable to respond to your calls?" The speaker's illustrations were numerous and so apt as to make plain beyond controversy all his positions; so striking, indeed, were some of these that even to many of those who were prepared for them they seemed to be an awakening, the bursting forth in a new and striking form of more or less dormant facts. The most striking feature, perhaps, of Elder Talmage's reasoning is the leaving of nothing to the listener in the form of an ipse dixit. His last words were: "Let us ever keep before us the words spoken upon Sinai, amid the thunder's roar and the lightning's flash—'Thou shalt have none other Gods but Me.'"

## THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION.

Last evening, according to announcement, Elder B. H. Roberts, of the Presidency of the Seventies, delivered a lecture, in the Assembly Hall, under the auspices of the Y. M. M. I. A. The proceedings were conducted by President Joseph H. Felt, of the associations of the Salt Lake Stake. The audience was very large, the hall being filled.

Elder Roberts selected for his subject, "The Right of Succession to the Presidency of the Church." The introductory part of the lecture was devoted to an explanation of the nature, authority and duties of the Priesthood. The speaker quoted from the ancient scriptures and from modern revelation in support of his enunciations. He then plunged into the subject proper, and handled it in the most logical and convincing

manner. The main proposition in support of which his chief arguments were aimed was that at the death of Joseph Smith, the quorum of the First Presidency was temporarily destroyed and that, pending its organization anew, the Presidency of the Church devolved in the interim upon the quorum next, in point of authority—the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The historical fact of Joseph having, some time previous to his death, bestowed, according to his own declaration, all the keys and powers pertaining to this dispensation upon that quorum, coupled with the obligation on their part to build up and establish the work of God in all the world, was referred to by the speaker. Elder Roberts then exhibited with great clearness, by historical facts, quotations from the revelations and sound argument, the fallacious character of the claims of Sidney Rigdon, who wished to be appointed guardian of the Church at the death of Joseph; Gladden, Emmet and others who broke off from the main body. Finally he disposed of the claims of the so-called reorganized Church, which assumed definite shape in 1860, after the lapse of sixteen years from the death of the Prophet Joseph. He took up serially the arguments used by that sect in support of the claim of "Young Joseph"—son of the Prophet—to the right of succession and showed their absurdity. Numbers of quotations from revelations relied upon by those people as upholding the claim of lineal right to the Presidency were read and shown to be opposed to that proposition in place of sustaining it. Toward the conclusion of the lecture Elder Roberts depicted the magnitude of the achievements of the Church in which the oracles had existed from its organization in 1830, throwing into special relief the greatness of the work performed for the salvation of the dead as well as the living.

It is impossible to give anything like an adequate idea of the lecture in a brief allusion like this. Indeed it is unnecessary as we understand it to be the intention to publish it in full.

At the close, President Woodruff delivered a brief and exceedingly interesting address, in which he testified to the truth of the statements made by the lecturer, and related a number of incidents connected with his personal experience and observation during the taying ordeal through which the Church passed immediately following the martyrdom of its first President.

## MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT WORK.

We have received from Mrs. Ellen Jakeman a lengthy article written by her on the subject of the systematic lines of study marked out by the general superintendency of the Mutual Improvement Associations. On account of limited space we are unable to publish the introductory portion of it, but take pleasure in presenting the part which describes the practical working of the curriculum:

I hailed with joy an opportunity to see the system given a practical test, procured the text books for the first year's course, and joined the class.

Dr. Milton H. Hardy was our teacher, and we were formed into an M. I. Association or model working

class, of which he became president. The first day we were told why the system of study was gotten out, were given a detailed lecture on system and method, and the plan of study: "What is it?" "How is it done?" "Why?" were fully explained.

The mountain that had loomed up before us perpendicularly and impassable, removed to a distance, and looked down upon us benignly and encouragingly, while rolling hills of easy ascent stretched between the simple student and the heights to be finally attained.

Lessons were assigned under those terrible headings, and we found Theology a very simple, practical, rich little work of some 260 pages, written by B. H. Roberts, while the review questions of the Manual were of such a nature as to fix the points worth remembering in the reader's mind. For History we were assigned lessons in the Old and New Testaments, Book of Mormon and Dickens' "Child's History of England," which, with their review questions, proved to be very interesting and instructive studies. Many people are never able to approximate biblical events, or fix the books of the Bible in their historical order. This Manual has divided these studies into dispensations, and almost every student of the seventy enrolled gave voice to their approval and appreciation of this special feature.

Science gave us another surprise. It was a little First Book of Nature, bringing the kingdoms in their proper order, written by our own Talmage. He has divested truth of hyperbole and platitudes and all Greek and Latin names. It is as sweet and fresh as nature itself; and with that, as with the taste of "Literature" given us in this year's course (a few choice selections from Washington Irving) it is read with a relish by young people who have, heretofore, read only such works as "Jesse James" and dime novels, or nothing at all. There is one more little book in this M. I. reading course which comes under the head of History. It is a biographical sketch of the "Life of Nephi," written by President George Q. Cannon, and taken from the Book of Mormon. The story is so pleasantly and graphically told it can but create an appetite for what is left untold.

Every day these lessons, progressing step by step, were assigned to lectures from the class, while the review questions were distributed among other members, and every day we received the most practical instructions in officers' work. A few examples must do duty for a long list of subjects, as this article we fear is becoming too long: "The seating of congregations," "How to keep the roll and record," "Minutes," "The wisdom, discretion and courtesy necessary in answering questions," "Qualifications and duties of officers." The relations of the M. I. A. to the Church, to sanitary measures, to amusements, to finances, and politics. Creating appetites for those who have none, and how to feed the hungry and encourage the timid.

We had music lessons in a class capacity, civil government and parliamentary law classes, under the auspices of this model association, but not of it. They were officered distinctly, had their special instructors, minutes, etc.,