

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Dec. 14th, 1890, commencing at 2 p. m., President Charles W. Penrose presiding.

The choir sang:

How are thy servants blest, O Lord,
How sure is their defense.

Prayer by Elder Robert Morris.

The choir and congregation sang:

Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation,
No longer as strangers on earth need we roam.

ELDER CHARLES W. PENROSE

said since coming into the stand he had been requested to address the congregation. He hoped to have the faith and prayers of those present, that he might be able to touch upon such subjects as would edify and instruct them.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, he said, contains a great many truths, therefore the Elders need never be at a loss for a subject to speak upon. The Gospel is a message of glad tidings, and embraces everything that is true, whether it pertains to body or spirit; everything that tends to ennoble and exalt. It brings the gift of that Spirit which, according to the promise given to the first disciples of our Lord, is to lead into all truth. This is the office of the Holy Spirit and light to the mind is the result of its operations. By its aid we may see eye to eye and the things of God become inexpressibly plain to us. But to have the full benefit of this Spirit, as a congregation it is necessary that our minds shall be directed into one channel. When this Spirit was poured out upon the disciples in great power on the day of Pentecost it was because they were together with one accord in one place. They were all united. Therefore they were prepared to receive this great manifestation. So must we be united and cast aside our cares and everything that will distract our attention.

The Spirit of God is one of quietude and calmness and peace. When disturbances occur in worshiping congregations they may seem to be a small matter, yet they affect the assembly as a whole. It is therefore necessary to be quiet and to direct our thoughts to the speaker and follow him closely in his remarks. This is a great help to both the speaker and the hearers.

When the whole congregation turn their attention to the servant of God who is called to address them, there is an influence that goes with this that makes it easy for the speaker and beneficial to the hearers.

One of the topics of the times is an old subject revived—that of the second coming of the Lord. There has been held, recently, in the east a large assembly of divines for the purpose of discussing this matter. After Jesus Christ left the earth, the subject was agitated among the leading Elders of the

Church. They expected Him to return very soon, not to suffer and die as at His first coming, but to reign as King of kings; to bring reward to those who had suffered for His sake, and to fulfil the predictions relating to Messiah which had not already been fulfilled. They expected He would come to subdue all nations that would not serve Him and that He would make His Apostles princes to reign over the House of Israel. But this did not take place in their day. Their minds were evidently not enlightened as to the time for these events.

They had asked the Lord after His resurrection if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel, but He had told them that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons which the Father had reserved in His own power. He had told them before His death that the hour of His coming was not known to Him, nor to the angels, but only to the Father. To John, on Patmos, He declared that He would come in clouds and that every eye should see Him, and they also who had pierced Him; but He did not reveal the time when this should take place; only the fact that He would certainly come. This fact was proclaimed by His followers and it will be fulfilled in every particular in the due time of the Lord.

Peter told the people to whom he wrote that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness." He reminded them that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." What seems to be an immense period to us is only as the twinkling of an eye to Him who stands in the midst of eternity and beholds everything as it is, as it was and as it will be, whose course is one eternal round and who never changes.

Paul, also, when he had received more light upon this subject than at first, wrote to the Thessalonians: "Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first."

At first they looked upon the second advent of Christ as immediate, and this encouraged them in their work to preach the Gospel under many adverse circumstances. But after they had been laboring for a long time, and had become better acquainted with the operations of the Spirit, they were enabled to look forward and see many of the events that would intervene before His coming, and, among others, the great apostasy that was to take place. The fact remained a fact, although they found out that they had miscalculated the time. Let this be a warning to the Latter-day Saints. They also have been told to look forward to the coming of Christ, but have not been told the day nor the hour. Men are prone to add to or to take away from the Word of God, although they are expressly warned not to do it, in the following words of the Revelation by John: "If any man shall

add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, etc."

Our modern divines have interpreted this to mean that God never again would reveal himself to man. This is a great mistake. It does not say that God will not reveal His will, but that man must not take away anything from His word or add anything to it.

Since the days of Christ great excitements have at intervals been created by people who thought they could fix dates for the second advent of our Lord. Some of us here will remember the Millerite agitation. A certain day was fixed for the Lord's coming which was changed several times, until the Millerites found out their mistake. More recently others have made similar mistakes. The ministers before alluded to, although they have not set a certain date, have given as their opinion that Christ will come within a hundred years. I do not know any one who can tell the date when the Lord will come. I do know that He has said He will come, and that every word He has spoken will be fulfilled.

I will read the first four verses of the 3rd chapter of Malachi:

"Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold he shall come saith the Lord of hosts."

"But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."

"And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

"Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

Jesus testified that "not one jot or tittle of the words of the Prophets shall fall to the ground, but all shall be fulfilled." These words will, therefore, surely come to pass. I am aware that some think this prophecy was fulfilled in the first coming of Christ. But a little examination will show that to be an error. It says He will come as a purifier—that He will purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. When He first came it was as the babe of Bethlehem. He became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Instead of purifying the sons of Levi, He pronounced a woe upon them. He drove out of the temple those that bought and sold therein and overturned the tables of the money changers. He did not purge them and make them fit to offer offerings unto the Lord in righteousness. The Chief Priest and the Levites combined to put Him to death. They had condemned and sentenced Him for blasphemy,