

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, Nov. 17, 1889, commencing at 2 p.m., Counselor Chas. W. Penrose presiding.

The choir and congregation sang:

Come, listen to a Prophet's voice,
And hear the word of God.

Prayer by Elder S. A. Woolley.

The choir sang:

"Come, follow Me," the Savior said;
Then let us in His footsteps tread.

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

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

addressed the congregation. I fully believe, he said, that an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is entitled to the Spirit of God at all times when in the discharge of his duty, and whenever it devolves upon us to perform any duty connected with our calling, we have a right to expect at the hands of our Heavenly Father His divine assistance. The history of the past demonstrates that He is fully able to inspire even the weakest and most inexperienced among us when it pleases Him, and that He will enable weak vessels to carry mighty portions of His Spirit and distribute them at times unto such as listen unto their words.

We recognize faith as the first principle of our religion, and we are taught that without it it is impossible that we can serve God acceptably, honestly and sincerely. In order that we may exercise faith in God it is absolutely necessary that we should in some degree become acquainted with Him, learn His attributes, and know what kind of a Being He is. For surely we can put no confidence in a stranger whose works we know not, with whose disposition and nature we are unfamiliar. God has revealed Himself on many occasions and in many different ways to His sons and daughters on earth. We do not remember the conditions under which we existed before we came here. This doubtless is wise. If we but knew what transpired concerning us in our primeval state of innocence—when we dwelt in the presence of our God—I fear that many of us would be so eager to terminate this earthly existence as to forget the wishes and desires of our Father, and even the plans He has laid for us while here. The more we can learn with respect to our Heavenly Father the more we can know in regard to His attributes, His nature and disposition, the better we will be able to serve Him, the greater will be our faith and confidence in Him.

My attention was drawn a few months ago to a lecture delivered a long time previous by a noted philosopher, John Stuart Mill. He was discussing in his usual vigorous and emphatic way the characteristics of many of the religious dogmas and teachings of the day, and declared his independence of any

being who was not capacitated to judge injustice and equity as to the bad or good deeds of his sons and daughters by actual experience. He said that the God whom many Christians worshiped was a being possessed of no definite shape or parts, who had no desires or passions within His nature, a being who seemed to act under many circumstances and conditions arbitrarily, a being who not alone permitted but at times actually caused suffering and pain, distress and trouble in the world, a being, in short, who, according to his idea, did not act according to the highest principles of brotherly love and humanity as understood by men. "And," said he, "such a being as that may have absolute power; He may have the right to condemn me to punishment; and if so, I will bear my fate as I can." Going further in his radical way, he declared that such a being could never compel him to worship Him, because he could put no confidence in Him.

Now I think myself that unless I can put trust and confidence and exercise faith in Him whom I am permitted to call the Father of my spirit, the Author of my being, I cannot believe His words. But the history of the past and the authentic accounts we have of His dealings with His sons and daughters cannot fail to satisfy us in this respect. I find that He is a Being of power, and when He sees fit, according to the principles of eternal justice, to permit one nation to destroy another, one people to shed the blood of another, war to be waged, pestilence or famine to stalk through the land, he does not allow any improper desire for mercy or any un-Fatherly love toward His children to suspend His chastening hand. He has been always willing to show mercy unto the penitent and kindness unto those of His children who will come before Him nothing doubting. Surely a God who can suspend His judgment and restrain the angels of His wrath, who are standing about His Throne eager to go forth and bring destruction upon the wicked, is One in whom we may freely and properly place all confidence and trust. There is no excuse for our being ignorant of the qualities and attributes of our Maker; but no man can study those attributes faithfully, sincerely and profitably unless he does so prayerfully and has the Spirit of God resting upon him at the time.

I do not believe that any man has ever yet succeeded in making his way into the celestial kingdom because of his logic, learning and knowledge. As the heavens are above the earth, so are the ways of God above those of man, and we can only understand His nature and attributes from those revelations and manifestations which He has given us. As Latter-day Saints we believe that we have been created in His image, that He is a perfect and glorified Being in whom there are centered all characteristics that are good—a Being who possesses power and yet long-suffering and mercy.

An incident took place in Eng-

land a few years ago. We all remember the great controversy which occurred between the infidel member, Mr. Bradlaugh, and other members of that House. Mr. Bradlaugh refused to take the oath, because he had no confidence in a God who seemed to act according to principles that were arbitrary and who was controlled by caprice, a Being without body, heart or feeling. Knowing not what kind of a Being He was, Bradlaugh refused to acknowledge his allegiance to Him. The House of Commons declined to let Bradlaugh take his seat, considering that such a man was not fit to associate with them. In the course of one of his lectures, previous to his election to the House of Commons, Bradlaugh became defiant and very reckless in his language. Taking his watch from his pocket, he called upon that Being whom men worship to manifest Himself—saying that he would give Him just five minutes to demonstrate His power—that if He actually existed and possessed the power which was claimed He should take vengeance upon him for his blasphemy; but the Lord did not show His vengeance upon that occasion. I have asked myself since then "Who is Mr. Bradlaugh, that he should call out to Jehovah upon His throne, and command Him to do anything within a specified time." "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord, and He will repay; but He has always done so at the time that suits Him best. On occasions He has taken summary vengeance upon those who have offended Him; towards others He has exercised long-suffering and forbearance for years and years, giving the sinner every opportunity for repentance and penitence. I believe that Bradlaugh will yet have to admit that that Being whose name he blasphemed is a Being of power and the Father of all flesh, and that Jesus Christ is His son; for the decree has gone forth, "The day will come when every knee must bow and men acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ."

In these days some of us Latter-day Saints are very apt to arrive at the conclusion that certain events are to happen within a specified period. I have listened to many declarations in this regard, but have never heard one of those upon whom we look as inspired men and Prophets, who lead and direct us, make any such assertions.

All things are in the hands of the Lord. Let us pray that He will bring to pass all the prophecies uttered through the mouth of His holy Prophets, that His people will be protected, that purity will grow in our hearts, that our testimony shall be made stronger, and that in His own due time He will come unto His own and find them prepared to receive Him. May we be awake to the signs of the times and keep down within our hearts any desire to take vengeance into our own hands. I pray that we may be humble, sincere, and willing to suffer both little and great things, for the work of God; above all, keeping our eyes upon the destiny which we