

bourine, did their best to entertain the guests with songs and music. And let me say that the native music here, although very different from European compositions, and although running in minor keys to a great extent, has a sweetness of its own, which can be appreciated when understood. There is an air of melancholy about it, expressing in lovely language the present condition of country and people as compared to former greatness. While the music was playing, all the guests were liberally treated with various refreshments, nuts, confectionery, fresh pure water, coffee, cigarettes, etc. At last the whole company broke up in order to go out and meet the bridegroom. Outside the house a procession was arranged, care being taken that the rules of Oriental etiquette were not broken. The ladies close the *geu* or procession, and, all the way, filled the streets with joyful sounds. These sounds seem to be an essential part of the wedding festivities. They are not exactly singing and not really shouting. They resemble the thrills of the lark, blended with the singing of the nightingale. It is something indescribable. I think it comes as near expressing in sounds the emotion of joy as anything I ever heard. Some of the ladies here have also very pure, clear voices, which our professional singers might envy them. As soon as the procession had "met" the bridegroom he joined the crowd and they all went back to his house, where the ties of wedlock were knit and where bride and bridegroom will spend a happy time together. Heartly congratulations to the bride and the groom!

On this occasion there were no foolish virgins, as in the case of the parable of our Lord; nor was there need of any lamps or oil, as the whole was the work of the day. Yet the various incidents were all, to me, loudly speaking warnings of the coming "wedding" of the Lamb, and the necessity of having oil enough, so as to be prepared to enter with the bridegroom, not only to "meet" Him. For then, when the festivities commence, the door will be shut.

One of my amusements here (and a very innocent one, I should think) when the cool of the evening comes and I am tired from the heat of the day and from my attempts at mastering the difficulties of the Arabic language, is to sit down outside my room and look toward the western horizon where the sun sets in order to rise in glory upon dear Utah. And many a silent greeting I send with the sinking fire-ball as it vanishes before my eyes. In a contemplative mood, then, I see lots of things. Even the clouds assume shapes; for at this time the Nile is flowing over and masses of clouds ascend from Egypt and float over our horizon here influenced by currents of air and illuminated by the last rays of the sun or of the moon; these clouds are sometimes very fantastical and pretty too. One evening I was sitting and watching the sky; methought I saw a lion ascending out

of the sea, and in a moment there came a bear against it. A struggle followed. The mouths of the two gigantic beasts gaped and the bear locked the lion in its fearful jaws. A few minutes the two animals were one mass, but finally the bear was dissolved, and out of the remnant a weasel-shaped animal jumped lightly over the back of the lion, which had gained the victory over the bear. A few minutes more, and the lion had vanished too. The outlines of this monster panorama in the sky were very striking as I have here described them, although the minor details might have been improved. And it was certainly very entertaining.

Suppose the lion to represent England and the bear to represent Russia, which is the weasel?

J. M. S.

JAFFA, July 17, 1889.

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Sunday, August 18, Counselor Charles W. Penrose presiding.

The choir sang:

On the mountain's top appearing,
Lo! the sacred herald stands!

Prayer by Elder Charles W. Stayner.

The choir and congregation sang:

O, Lord of Hosts, we now invoke
Thy Spirit most divine.

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

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

was called to address the congregation. In the course of his remarks he said: I see before me this afternoon a very large congregation assembled together professedly for the purpose of worshiping God. On this day, which we usually term the Sabbath, it has become a custom throughout the world for religious denominations to gather, and for the rites and ceremonies of worship to be indulged in. It is well that we ask ourselves, "What is the moving cause of this custom? Why is it kept up and continued so universally?" I think it is owing to the operations of that instinct which is planted in the nature of man and woman, causing all human beings, who will not quench it within their souls, to desire to worship.

It is true there are many forms of worship. There are also many gods worshipped, and yet it is at present the practice amongst civilized as well as barbarous peoples to crave some being or object to whom or which they can render adoration and praise.

It is the belief of the Latter-day Saints that those who live now upon earth existed in a primeval condition before they came here. We do not think that the spirit of man originated when his body was born here below, but that all human beings lived in a condition of life preceding the present one, that they have basked in the sunshine of in-

nocent truth, and dwelt in the presence of their Maker, who is, in fact, the Father of their spirit. We believe that they have come upon earth in accordance with their own choice and with the plan which the Almighty had arranged for the salvation and exaltation of His children. We frequently hear the remark that man is in a fallen condition. That being so, he must once have occupied a condition from which he has fallen, in the sense of now being subject to death, surrounded by temptations, possessed by weaknesses and tendencies toward sin, but not fallen in the sense of being shut out eternally from the presence of his Maker. It is in accordance with the plan of our Father that His children should be surrounded by temptations, and that they should choose for themselves the influences of good or the tendencies toward evil, as they may see fit.

But man is tempted to do good as well as evil. He is surrounded by angels of light as well as powers of darkness; he is entitled to the ministrations of holy beings and has the right of free converse with them. Let us see that we never enter places that we should not, that we never commit deeds, conceive thoughts or utter words that could cause those holy personages to withdraw from us.

Unseen beings walk the earth by millions, unseen alike when we sleep and when we are awake. Because we hide ourselves at times from the gaze of men, because no human eye is fixed upon us, and no human mind is there to question the motives of our acts, we are too apt to think that we are unseen. How much wiser are we than the ostrich upon the African desert which when pursued thrusts its head in the sand, and because it can see, no man thinks that no man can see it.

There are very few sects of religious worshippers in the world who believe in a pre-existent state. It is the common belief among people that the spirits of men did not exist before they were ushered into this mortal condition of existence. Those who believe in the divinity of the mission of Jesus Christ know that He while dwelling upon the earth was in every respect a mortal being, that those traits of character which He possessed—fitting Him for His high and exalted condition, such as He now holds—did not rob Him of his condition of humanity or take away His state of mortality.

Our Savior stated on many occasions, without equivocation or modification, that He had come directly from His Father, and that when His work was done He would return unto Him. His spirit, then, must have existed with that of His Father and with that of the other spirits that were then existent in that primeval state.

We frequently hear it asserted that some men are predestined to a certain end. The idea of absolute predestination is repugnant to that of justice such as we hold with respect to the Almighty. No man has been predestined to do either good or ill