

## DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BY

ELDER CHARLES W. PENROSE,

*At the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday afternoon, June 25th, 1893.*

(REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.)

I am pleased to see so many people gathered in this house today to worship the Lord our God. While many are seeking pleasure in different directions, it is gratifying to think that so many of the Saints have regard for the day which has been set apart for rest and for the worship of God, and are gathered in this Tabernacle to partake of the Sacrament, and to manifest their faith in the Gospel by their presence and their veneration of this day, which has been held sacred by the worshippers of the true and living God for many hundreds of years. It may be said, however, that for several centuries the seventh day was regarded as the Sabbath. This is the first day of the week. I do not know that it matters so much which day is observed so that we keep a sabbath—one day out of seven—as a day of rest and of worship. That is the spirit of the matter, and it is the spirit that "giveth life;" the letter, we are told, "killeth."

I had no expectation whatever of addressing you; in fact, I had invited some others to speak this afternoon; but received a request from those whom we all respect that I should address the congregation. I have no subject prepared, have nothing outlined in my mind to speak to you about; but, responding to this request, I ask you to help me by your attention and your faith and prayers, that I may be inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring forth something which will be profitable for us to reflect upon. As I said to you just now, the Spirit is the life. It is the Spirit that gives life to all animated things. Without it there would be no life. And it is the same in natural things as it is in spiritual things. We need the Holy Spirit this afternoon to quicken our understandings and to enable us to comprehend the things of God. No man knoweth them, we are told in the Scriptures, but the Spirit of God, and that Spirit "searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." It is the Spirit which enlightens as well as gives life, and we need it this afternoon in our worship, because we are told that "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

As to the day, however, when the people should assemble specially to worship God, we Latter-day Saints are not left in any doubt. God has revealed to us in the age in which we live that the first day of the week—Sunday—is the day on which we should assemble and offer up our sacraments before Him and pay our vows to the Most High; "And on this day thou shalt do no other thing, only let thy food be prepared in singleness of heart, that thy feasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full." He has told us that if we will keep this day and make it holy unto Him, and also observe the other

commandments which He has given unto us, the good things of the earth shall be ours, as well as the blessings of heaven. Let us remember this, my brethren and sisters, and always observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy; and as God has set apart this first day of the week for the Latter-day Saints to observe as a Sabbath, let us observe it in the spirit of it, and we shall receive the blessing which pertains to the observance of that day; for all the blessings of God are predicated upon certain laws, and he who keeps the law receives the blessing, and he who breaks the law receives not the blessing, but is liable to the penalty which attaches to every law that God gives. We do not, however, wish to observe the Sabbath after the puritanical order. God uses not desire to bring us into bondage. He has not told us that we may not smile on the Sabbath day, nor even laugh, if there is something to laugh at. It is proper to sing, if we sing proper songs. If there are any songs that might not be termed spiritual exactly, if they are pure and contain good sentiment, and are enlightening to the mind and enlivening to the heart, they are all right. There is a time and place for everything. In our meetings of worship we should join in the hymn, in the psalm, and in the spiritual song, as well as in the prayer, and partake of the sacrament, and rejoice before the Lord. And we should not do this with a mournful countenance, but with a joyful heart and a glad countenance; for God delights in this. This idea of mourning, and sorrow, and a long face as a part of religion is all wrong. It never was a part of the religion of Jesus Christ, but is an invention of man.

In connection with the idea that came to my mind when I arose to speak to you, that the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life, I will read to you a passage of Scripture from the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, 3rd chapter, 15-17 verses:

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

I read this to you this afternoon because my mind was turned to a topic of public discussion in the day in which we live, and one which has caused the expulsion of some eminent preachers of various denominations from the societies to which they belonged. The idea embodied in the creeds of the various orthodox denominations is that the Bible, containing the Old and New Testament, as translated in the time of King James, contains the very word of God; that all the books in the Bible are inspired books; that all the chapters in each of these Books are inspired chapters; that all the verses are inspired, and that all the words are inspired, and some go as far as to say that every letter is inspired. That is the old idea that is contained in a number of the creeds as they now exist in written form. This idea is still entertained—that is, it is said to be entertained, and I suppose

we must give credit for sincerity to those who utter it, although it is rather hard to believe—by a great many men who are learned, eloquent, trained in the understanding of the Scriptures after the manner of men, and educated to deliver their ideas to the public, and they wield a great influence in what is called Christendom. They say they believe that this book, and all the verses in it, and all the expressions in those verses, are inspired of God—the very words of God Almighty. When pressed to a very close point on this, some of them will admit, however, that what we have is simply a human translation of the words that men wrote when they were inspired of God. They go back to the idea that the original Scriptures were inspired; that those things that were written by the prophets, the translation of which we have in this book, were the very words of God, the same as though God had spoken them Himself to the people, and that they have been handed down to us and translated for our benefit into the English language. But these gentlemen I have been speaking about, some of whom have been excommunicated from their churches, and others stand in a state of suspension, say they do not believe that the Bible is literally the word of God. They do believe that holy men of old were inspired; they do believe that some of their words have been handed down to us in their original purity; but they believe that those men were but men, and that they wrote to the best of their ability, although they were assisted by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. They think, too, that a great many interpolations have been made, and that a great many things have been omitted from the ancient books. They think that some books were not altogether written by inspiration, but men wrote them according to the best knowledge and understanding that they had. And while they endeavor to cling as closely as they can, in order to be as orthodox as possible, to the old ideas of the creeds, yet they show by their expressions that they discard that idea, or, as they say, they have grown out of it; their minds have expanded; they are not tied down by the rules, ceremonies and ordinances of their church, but they have been led to think for themselves, apart from their creeds, and they have formed more advanced ideas.

Now, what do the Latter-day Saints hold in regard to the Scriptures? As far as the text that I have just read to you is concerned, they understand it as it is written. The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, said that "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." That is taken as evidence by some of our learned Christian friends that this Bible is inspired, because it goes on to say "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," etc. But let us look into this text a little. When Timothy was a child, what scriptures did he have? He certainly did not have the New Testament—it was not written. He certainly did not have this book that is called the Bible, for it was not compiled; in fact, the Bible was not com-