

## RELIGIOUS.

## Sunday Services.

Religious services were held in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, July 3d, 1892, commencing at 2 p. m. President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

"Praise ye the Lord, my heart shall join  
In words so pleasant, so divine."

Prayer was offered by Elder J. C. Woods.

The choir sang the hymn:

"Behold the Great Redeemer die,  
A broken law to satisfy."

The Priesthood of the Nineteenth Ward administered in the ordinance of the Sacrament.

BISHOP ORSON F. WHITNEY

was the speaker. It was a requirement, he said, made of the Latter-day Saints by the God whom they served that they should meet together often and partake of the Sacrament and be instructed regarding the things of salvation. He trusted that all present could partake worthily of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord; moreover, that those who were called upon to speak to that congregation would have the spirit of instruction upon them, that all present might be edified and blessed in meeting together.

When we partook of the Sacrament we bore witness unto the heavens that we were willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that we were willing always to remember Him and keep His commandments, that we might always have His Spirit to be with us.

We were required to have no hatred in our hearts, no ill-feeling against our brethren or our sisters. We were required to have pure hearts and humble spirits, thereby manifesting that we were in earnest in remembering Him who was pure and humble before all men, and worthy to bear His name.

The truth as it came from God was generally, if not always, distasteful to the natural man. It was contrary to the natural spirit of man, because it required him to make sacrifices of his opinions, his notions, his passions and predilections, and he rebelled instinctively against such things. The natural man loved to gratify self, to give way to his natural inclinations, to pursue those things which afforded him pleasure; and anything which required him to deny the indulgence of these was liable to be hated by him and opposed.

When Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives teaching the multitude, it was said they were astonished at His doctrine. He taught them things to which their ears were strangers, as Israel had been schooled and disciplined for fifteen hundred years under what is known as the lesser law and under the dominion of the lesser Priesthood. Moses, in his time, had striven earnestly to sanctify his people by means of the higher law—the Gospel—and by the power of the Melchisedec Priesthood. He fain would have brought them to that condition where they could have gazed, as he gazed, upon the face of their Maker, talked with Him as friend with friend, as he conversed

with Him upon the Mount. But it seemed that they were unwilling, unprepared, at that time to receive the higher truth, the higher law, and the powers of the higher Priesthood. So these were taken from them, and they were left with the Aaronic Priesthood and the law of carnal commandments. For fifteen centuries, then, they had been schooled under such a law, which permitted retaliation, revenge, the exacting of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—the application of the strict principle of justice which made every man answer to man for the wrong that he committed. So that when Jesus came, restoring the higher law, the gospel of mercy, and enjoined upon men that they should forgive their enemies and not seek to avenge their wrongs, they were astonished at what He said. And no wonder, when we consider after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, during which the world had basked, as it claimed, in the fulness of the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, how hard it is for the humblest and best of Christians to magnify this higher law, to learn to return good for evil.

He had heard men cast discredit upon this teaching of the Savior; he had known Latter-day Saints to argue, to strive to convince themselves and others, that the Lord did not mean what He said when He made this requirement of His people. He did not think, however, that this was a safe position to assume. It was more becoming in us to take the fault upon ourselves, to acknowledge that it was God's law, nevertheless, though we might not always be ready, willing, or able to keep it. We should forgive as we hoped to be forgiven; and this, he took it, was the love that the Lord meant—to be broad enough in our hearts to make allowance for the weaknesses of others and not sit in harsh judgment upon them. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

It often happened that we only saw the outward manifestations. We saw that a man stumbled, fell, and committed a mistake, but we did not know how he struggled ere he fell; we did not know the weaknesses that men inherit, the burdens which they bore; and yet we brought them to judgment before the tribunal of our minds and hearts, and made them responsible, perhaps, for things inherited from their ancestors. We had only to measure the distance between the perfect law of God and our inability to keep it to see the chasm that we were expected to bridge, the journey we were required to make before we had accomplished that which God called for at our hands. The speaker was thankful to say he was not one of those who believed that God did not mean what He said, who would cast discredit on a law which required him to do unto others as he would they should do unto him, though he did not claim the power to keep such a law at all times.

He thought it might be stated, as a truth, that most, if not all, the wickedness and wrong doing and sinfulness of man was the result of ignorance. He made all due allowance for what was termed wilful wickedness, and that desperation which impelled some men forward into the very jaws of damnation, when they knew where they were going, to some extent at

least; but if we analyzed this as far as we were capable, could we not recognize that those feelings of wilfulness and desperation which prompted some men to do wrong were the results of dense ignorance, which, as Shakespeare says, is the only darkness that is. "There is no darkness but ignorance," says the immortal bard.

The Latter-day Saints did not believe that we sprang into existence in an instant, suddenly, but that we existed before we came upon this earth, and that we were reaping here, to a great extent, the results of our deeds in a previous life. This principle was recognized in the days of Jesus, who was asked by His disciples concerning a certain man who was born blind, and whom He healed. "Lord, did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?" they asked—showing that He had been teaching them that it was possible for man to sin before he came upon the earth, and that here he might be made to answer for it by being born lame, or blind, or wanting in some other respect. But in this instance, it seems, it was not so, and we were not to infer that such always was the case. Because Jesus said that it was neither the man nor his parents who had sinned; but he was born blind that the Son of God might have the opportunity of showing forth His power in the restoration of the man's sight. The Scriptures were, however, replete with doctrine touching the pre-existence of the spirit—that this is not the first life man has lived. The Latter-day Saints believed that we had before lived in the spirit and looked upon the face of God, and that it was because we were faithful in keeping that estate that we were permitted, with all men who have tabernacled in the flesh, or ever would, to come here and take up mortal bodies, having been given the privilege of passing through a probation—a school—that should develop us and make us stronger, brighter and better.

But there was a third of the spirits which were not faithful enough to be permitted to take bodies upon the earth, and they, following after Satan, who rebelled against God, were cast out from heaven and were permitted for a wise purpose to wander up and down the earth as seducing spirits, tempting the children of men to go astray and neglect the things which God required at their hands. Misery loves company and fallen spirits fain drag after them the souls of the children of God who were on the highway leading to salvation. In that pre-existent life we walked by sight, we saw God face to face; and the speaker presumed we knew many things that were hidden from us now. But a third fell away, unable to endure the test of walking by sight, while all the children of men who dwelt herein the flesh stood the test, and earned the privilege of coming here to be schooled and disciplined.

For a wise purpose a knowledge of the past was shut out. We no longer saw God face to face, and were called upon to undergo a higher test—to believe things which we do not see, things which we do not hear, which were not to be apprehended by means of our grosser senses. Our spiritual vision was called into play, that vision which pierced the clouds which shut us in,