

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, May 17th, 1891, commencing at 2 p.m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang the hymn beginning:

Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise Thy name, give thanks and sing.

Prayer was offered by Elder Rodney C. Badger.

The choir next sang the hymn:

Glory to God on high;
Let heaven and earth reply,
Praise ye His name.

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

APOSTLE ABRAHAM H. CANNON

was the first speaker. In the course of his remarks he said it had become a custom in the world for people to call Joseph Smith an impostor. But whatever might be the views entertained concerning him, and the position which he assumed among the children of men, the fact was still admitted that he was the organizer of a work which had attracted the eyes of all people and was a wonder to the human family. However much it might be thought that the Prophet Joseph was a deceiver, it must still be acknowledged that the work which he was instrumental in founding had been a phenomenon—a miracle wrought among the people. Had he been a deceiver, as was expressed by many persons, it seemed strange that he should have the audacity to make the numerous predictions which he did regarding his own divine calling and the future of this work. It would indeed be strange if a man, knowing he was practicing deception, should attempt to palm off upon mankind a record such as that which he gave us, and which had been published and spread broadcast throughout the world, namely, the Book of Mormon. It was wonderful that, even before founding this Church, he should have translated that work and found eleven men whom he could also deceive to such an extent as to induce them to attach their names to a paper announcing to the world that they also had seen the plates from which the record was taken, and that they were convinced that it was translated by the power of God.

Still more strange was this fact—which could easily be verified—that though afterwards apostatizing from the Church and considering that Joseph Smith himself had sinned and was a fallen prophet, these men's testimony in regard to the translation still remained in force, while in all their wanderings among the people in this land, and in their association with those who sought interviews with them, they never once denied the testimony which was written in the beginning of this work.

The speaker went on to say that a day or two ago he was conversing with a gentleman who informed him that he was present at the bedside of David Whitmer, the last of the three witnesses, just as he was about to pass away from this life and heard him with his latest breath state that he knew that the

translation of the Book of Mormon was correct, and that Joseph Smith had accomplished the work by the aid of God. David Whitmer did not rejoin the Church before his death, but Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, after years of separation from the Latter-day Saints, repented of their sins and were permitted to re-enter it by baptism and receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Yet their testimony was similar to that of the man who had but recently died.

It would appear to the natural mind that such testimonies as these would at least lead men to investigate the claims made by Joseph Smith. But it was not this which had convinced those who had gathered to these mountains of the divinity of his mission, or of the power which God was pouring out upon His children in these latter days. It would require far more than individual testimony as to the effect of Joseph Smith's calling to retain this people in a united capacity and to keep alive their faith in the Gospel of the Son of God; and it was pleasing to know that there was greater evidence within the reach of everyone relative to the origin of this work and the power which accompanied it and permitted it to survive through every trial and tribulation which was thrust upon it.

Our missionaries had gone into foreign lands, into every place where a door had been opened. They had been sent out, uninstructed in a measure, and told to bear the testimony which the Spirit within them should suggest. They were not to go for the purpose of displaying their wisdom or their oratory, but as messengers of Jesus Christ to call the people to repentance, and certain signs were to follow the believer. In the name of Christ they were to cast out devils, to speak with new tongues; and if they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them. They were not to go forth seeking remuneration or wealth for their services, but as they had freely received so should they also give. Did miracles follow their ministrations? Were the sick healed, the dead raised to life, the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb unloosed? The testimonies which hundreds and thousands of Elders in this Church bore proved that God had indeed been with them in their work.

In the earth today, as had ever been the case, there were two powers—one of God, the other of Satan; and we were told in the Scriptures that in such a wonderful manner should the power of Satan be exercised in the latter days, that it would even be capable of bringing down fire from heaven, and that many things should be done to deceive the children of men. But there was one thing which Satan had never yet been able to do—his power was limited in this—the conferring of the Holy Ghost upon the sons and daughters of God. He might deceive their sight or their hearing, he might work wonders round about; but he could never give them the testimony of the Holy Spirit. And this was where the Saints were superior to the powers of darkness, in that they had received the testimony of Jesus, the light of the Spirit.

This was the secret of the power which existed among the Latter-day

Saints. This same spirit had filled their hearts and made them strong and mighty in the faith of the everlasting gospel and if they would follow the teachings given to the world by Joseph Smith, and the instructions imparted through those whom God had authorized to proclaim His word, they would receive a similar testimony—a testimony which it was beyond the power of man to take from them.

God was working among His people. He had established His work on the earth; but as soon as the truth was revealed it met with opposition. Those who were inspired of Satan started a conflict between darkness and light. They were not content to permit a boy to go forth and announce that God himself had spoken from heaven, to allow him to work by peaceful means for the sake of that which he believed was from above. They set all their machinery in operation in order to oppose him and bring to naught the message which he gave to the world. But truth, like the sun, was beginning to shed its rays upon the earth, and would gradually spread until all the children of men would rejoice in the knowledge of God, which should cover the whole earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.

The object of our existence and calling here below was not to allow ourselves to be overcome by the world, or our minds to become engrossed by the accumulation of things which pass away, but by our precept and example to teach men the way of life and salvation. Many of us became blinded through the traditions of men and their association. On the other hand, our strength should increase daily through the exercise of faith and that humility which ought to characterize the Latter-day Saints. Those who have the Priesthood of Almighty God should go as ministering angels among the people, visit the homes of the sick, clothed with such a power that the destroyer would vanish from their presence and the sick be raised unto life. Consolation should be spread abroad in this way in our cities, villages and hamlets; and when they saw iniquity growing they should not hesitate, as watchmen standing upon the towers of Zion, to proclaim against it.

We were expected to benefit the world in which we lived, and such should be our condition that we could associate with it and still not partake of its evils. It was said Joseph Smith made the announcement that "though we were sent to hell we would turn the devils out and make a heaven of it." This should be the spirit of the Saints all the way through. They should be clad with such power, through the practice of virtue and of those gifts which God had placed within their reach, that they could not be contaminated by the world; they should be able to mingle among men and share in everything which tended to the advancement of the human family, and yet not be touched with the evils with which Babylon is laden. If this was not their position they had not lived up to the principles which had been so often taught them by those who had lived and died in the word of God. If we would exercise faith God would sustain us, make our