

RELIGIOUS.

Sunday Services.

Religious services were held at the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday, June 21st, 1891, commencing at 2 p. m., President Angus M. Cannon presiding.

The choir sang the hymn commencing:

Praise ye the Lord! my heart shall join
In work so pleasant, so divine.

Prayer was offered by Counselor Joseph E. Taylor.

The choir and congregation sang:

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning,
The latter-day glory begins to come forth.

The Priesthood of the Eighth ward officiated in the administration of the Sacrament.

BISHOP ORSON F. WHITNEY

was then called upon to address the congregation. He spoke, in substance, as follows:

It is not usual for the Elders of Israel, called from the midst of the congregation to address the people assembled to worship God, to select a text upon which to build a discourse. As a general rule, the Elders depend entirely on the Holy Spirit who gives them at the very moment what is most suitable to be said. I also desire to be dependent on that Spirit, and on the faith and prayers of the Saints. Nevertheless, I wish to take a text this afternoon, one that I clipped from a newspaper a few days ago to read again and ponder upon at my leisure. I will read it:

The Rev. Dr. Richter conducted the funeral services of Count Moltke, and concluded by reading the following passage from a letter written by the old soldier on his eightieth birthday:

"My path in life is well-nigh ended. But what a different standard will be applied to our earthly work in a future world. Not the splendor of success, but the purity of endeavor and faithful perseverance in duty, even when the thing done was hardly visible, will decide the value of human life. What a strange reassortment of high and low will take place at the 'Great Assize.' We know not whatever we shall have to assign to ourselves, to others, or to a higher will. It will be well not to lay too much weight on outward appearances." "These," said the preacher, "are the thoughts of a sage, the words of a man, the confession of a Christian. He who dies thus, dies well."

"These"—said the preacher—"are the thoughts of a Christian," and we may add with all propriety the thoughts of a Latter-day Saint; by which I mean, that the philosophy is such that it might well have emanated from a Saint, a disciple of what is termed "Mormonism." For "Mormonism"—certainly inculcates this truth that we must not judge men and things by outward appearances; not allow ourselves to be deceived by the false glamour that covers both the temporal and spiritual surroundings of man in this fallen world. We cannot judge fully of men's works by what we see, or what is said and thought of them; for man is prone to depreciate that which is really important, and to exact and extol what is trivial and of little worth. Many things which are hidden and unrecognized of

human wisdom are nevertheless valuable and vitally important.

Over seventy-one years ago, a young boy then living in the backwoods of western New York, went out into the woods to pray unto the Lord for light and knowledge upon the subject of his soul's salvation. His mind was exercised as to which of the many Christian churches was the true one. He was desirous of knowing what path to tread, for he was bewildered by the adverse claims of the creeds; Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians etc., each claiming to be the true church, yet all differing among themselves. Having read the words of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not," etc., he placed implicit confidence in them, and went out to seek for wisdom. This was in the spring of 1820. It was an event which seemed very small at the time. There was no ostentation about it. Any boy might have done the same thing. No one saw him go out to pray except God. But this event, although "hardly visible," was one of vast moment to the whole human family.

Joseph Smith declared that he had no sooner commenced to pray than he was seized upon by a power which paralyzed his tongue and threatened him with utter destruction. But he continued to call upon the Lord in his thoughts, until he saw a pillar of light descending from heaven. It gradually fell until he found himself delivered from the evil power and confronted by two glorious beings, one of whom, pointing to the other, said: "This is my beloved Son. Hear him." As soon as Joseph recovered his speech, he asked which of all the churches was the true one, and received the astonishing reply that none was right, and that he should not unite with any; that they taught for doctrine the commandments of men and drew near to the Lord with their lips, while their hearts were far from him. The heavenly beings then withdrew and Joseph found himself lying upon his back, gazing up to heaven.

This is his testimony of an event which happened when he was only fourteen years of age. Although he regarded this vision as of divine origination, and thousands after him have so regarded it, yet it was witnessed by only a young boy, and the world generally scoffed at and derided him for testifying to its truth.

After this Joseph received visits from an angel who gave him names as Moroni and who proclaimed himself the last of a line of prophets who had ministered to the Nephites, ancient inhabitants of this continent. The mission of this angel was to show Joseph where some ancient records were deposited, containing a history of this continent and its people. He came thrice during the same night, and instructed the youth with regard to the Lord's great latter-day work which was about to commence. He told him of great judgments that were coming upon the world on account of their transgression. He stated that thefulness of the gentiles was soon to come in, and that Zion was to be built up and Israel gathered—Joseph to this land and the remnant of Judah to Pales-

tine—to prepare themselves for the second coming of the Lord.

Yet, this angel appeared in the night. No one saw him except the boy, Joseph. This was his testimony, and is in part the testimony of the Saints to-day.

On another occasion, later, we are told of a glorious manifestation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who were then engaged in translating the Book of Mormon. On the fifteenth day of May, 1829, the translators went out into the woods to pray for light upon the subject of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, of which they were reading in the work they had been translating. The doctrine was more or less a strange one. Some Christians, it is true, practiced baptism by immersion, but not for the remission of sins; others sprinkled or poured water upon the candidates for baptism. But it was not regarded as essential to salvation. Yet here was mentioned baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and they desired to be enlightened on this important subject. Joseph remembered how God had answered his previous supplications and he resolved to go to the same source for information. While the two youths were praying, a heavenly messenger descended and placing his hands upon their head, spake these words: "Upon you my fellow servants in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never again be taken from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering to the Lord in righteousness."

This angel said his name was John, the same who in ancient days, while on earth, was known as the Baptist. He said he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Melchisedek Priesthood which should in due time be conferred upon them.

From this hour these two young men were ministers of Christ, with authority to preach and to baptize for the remission of sins, and they were the only men living who held the keys of this ministry. It was a very important event, the keys of the salvation of the human race being placed in the hands of these two youths, and yet, who saw it except these two? Surely, the importance of an event does not depend upon the number of its witnesses.

On another occasion Peter, James and John came and ordained Joseph and Oliver to the Melchisedek Priesthood, empowering them to lay on hands and bestow the Holy Ghost, which lights up the soul and imparts a testimony of the Gospel. Yet the world was not notified of the approach of these heavenly messengers.

The doctrine of angelic visitations was to all Christendom a strange one, and not only strange, but false and blasphemous. They could not comprehend the possibility of God's coming down in person and appearing to so humble a person as young "Joe" Smith, as he was called in derision. The world did not conceive of God as a personage, but as a spirit, everywhere diffused, which

"Warms in the sun, retreshes in the breeze,
Glews in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
etc."