

Mobs were allowed to carry out their wicked designs against an innocent people. Law had no influence upon the community in which they lived to restrain men from acts of violence against the Latter-day Saints. Pure, innocent blood was shed because men in office did not have the courage to stand up in defense of an oppressed people. And therefore did this people leave their homes—homes which God will again restore to them as surely as He lives, and in a way, too, that will convince the world, if they will but open their eyes, that God is with this people.

Then it is claimed that when the people came here and looked down from these mountain heights, they saw spread before them a beautiful and fertile country, rich in gold, silver, copper, lead and other minerals; the soil so fruitful that it only needed the plow to turn its surface and the seed to be sown therein, and in a few months a bountiful harvest would reward the laborer. No wonder, says our slanderer, that the people in looking down from these heights, said with one voice, This is our promised land!

I suppose there are aged men and women in this congregation who know what this country was when the Pioneers entered it. So far as the eye could reach there was no verdure, excepting the little strip that bordered the few streams that found their way through this parched country. Nothing inviting! A land which seemed to have been deserted even by the wild animals, as it was by the Indians, excepting a few Diggers who sustained themselves by eating lizards and crickets, and the roots which they could dig from the soil! A country so unpromising that Bridger offered a thousand dollars for the first bushel of grain that could be raised here! It needs not our testimony alone to convince the world that this was the condition of Utah—or of California, as it was then called; for General John C. Fremont, in his report to the government, published in the year 1845, (two years before the Pioneers entered this valley) tells of the hardships of himself and companions in traversing this land. They came upon a few Indians located in some of the rushes along the lake shore or the river bank, and they were ready to trade anything they had to obtain from these Indians a few roots which they had gathered, so near starving were these men; and horse meat, he said in his report, was a luxury. His report was of such a character that it would not encourage anyone to come here with a prospect of living. Indeed, he said, those who ventured into these desolate wilds should carry sufficient provisions and have so careful a guide that they would not be lost. That was what the Pioneers found. When they came to turn with the plow the soil, which, it is now stated, was so fruitful, it seemed as though rain had not touched the surface for ages; it was like an immense ash-heap; and nothing but faith enabled these men and those who followed them to believe that God had indeed chosen this land for His people. It was only when Brigham Young said this was the place that God had designed that the people became contented to live here.

After they had settled in Salt Lake valley, President Young sent out parties in every direction, telling them to search out the country, but they would all re-

turn with the information that this was the place where the great city of the latter days was to be built—and they did so report. Well enough for people to say now that this was a glorious country! Well enough for men who came years afterwards, and who have lived here through the industry and the blessing of this people, to talk of the fertility of the soil, the richness of the land! But how was it with these poor men and women who for months and months were upon the verge of starvation, their flour rationed out to them almost by the thimbleful, so precious was it? They know what God hath wrought. They know what He has done for this people. They know that it was only through His blessing, through His care, through the faith He gave them, that Utah has been redeemed and made the garden spot of this great nation.

Then we are accused by this same man, after being reproached for leaving Illinois and the eastern states, of seeking isolation, because, forsooth, Mormonism could not thrive in civilized communities—could not grow in New York, in Chicago, and such places! Why does it not grow in such places? Because the majority of the people—and the testimony of reverend gentlemen elsewhere can be produced to prove it—are corrupt and irreligious, blasphemous and infidelic. Mormonism will thrive in the desert no better than in the city where there are good honest souls; for it reaches the hearts of the honest, it touches the souls of the pure, it appeals to everything that is grand and Godlike in men and women. It does not, however, appeal to the base passions of men and women; it does not appeal to their lusts; it does not thrive in corruption and in sin. This is the reason that Mormonism does not prosper in the cities named. But measure it with anything that has ever existed upon the earth and Mormonism, so-called, will shine brighter by the comparison. When you bring it side by side with man-made religions, why it is like the brightness of the sun as compared with the light of the most insignificant star that the human eye can detect.

Mormonism, it is said, is fed by its recruits from foreign lands. True, it has gathered many of the very best of its members—the very best men and women—from Scandinavia, from England, from Germany, and from other countries, and it has brought them together as no other system could have done, and made them one people, homogeneous in all their affairs. It is a marvel to many that such harmony among people of different nationalities could exist. Yet the charge is ill-founded when it is stated that from the ignorant we alone gain our strength. Take the leaders of the people, and you will find the majority of them are American-born citizens. The early strength of the Church was composed of what was called the best blood of the nation. New England, which has stood in the van of progress and in a love of liberty, yielded some of her best sons to swell the ranks of the Church. So go through the whole body of the people, and you will find that this Church, when we speak of it in that sense, is strictly an American church. Two of the First Presidency are American born and bred; nine of the Twelve Apostles were born in the

United States, also four of the Seven Presidents of Seventies; and so right through the Church. Thus you can see how poor a foundation this argument rests upon. Yet if we were foreign born, it is no disgrace, so long as we are honest; for a man is a man whether born in the South Sea Island, in the frigid regions of the north, or in this country of ours. If a man was born in the White House, and he is dishonest and impure, he brings reproach on his country to boast of his Americanism.

Mormonism, it is said, is a burnt out volcano, so far as spirituality is concerned; its strength is gone; it is assuming a materialistic position, and fails to exercise the spiritual influence over the people that a religious organization ought to do.

True, we have not that sanctimoniousness which characterizes some of our Christian friends; we do not have the long-faced piety of the ordinary Sabbath worshiper; we do not have the groans of some Christian people; but we have the religious conviction and sentiment deep in our hearts, and we are practicing, though doubtless imperfectly, true religion as it is defined by the Apostles, in that we visit the widows and the fatherless, and we keep a clear conscience before God. Mormonism a burnt out volcano! It may be a hidden one, but not burnt out. Its fires are burning, its strength is increasing; and though the world may seek to gloss over this work—this volcano—and may seek to heap refuse upon it to prevent its fires being discovered, yet it will come out in the full strength of its Godlike power, and will reach the position that God has designed it to fill in the earth for the salvation of the human family. No spirituality in the Church! Take its principles, take its practices, and compare them with the holy word of God as contained in King James' translation of the Bible, and you will find that we have the spirituality, we have the principles, we have the practices of the ancient saints who received the Gospel under the administration of Jesus Christ and His disciples. We do not have all the power that we ought to have. God knows we do not. We do not have the faith which we ought to exercise in the gifts of the Gospel and in the principles of our religion. But with all our weaknesses, with all our lack in this respect, we still stand at the head—God be praised!—of every organization upon the face of the earth; not through any merit of our own; not that I would boast of such blessings, only that my boasting shall be in praise of God for His goodness in giving us such choice blessings and in making us partakers of this glorious Gospel—a privilege that He has extended equally to every other man and woman who lives upon the face of the earth, and has not confined to these few people now gathered in these mountains. Is there any greater evidence of the divinity of this work than the very argument that is brought against it, that we have so perfect a Church organization? With its President, (who is the mouthpiece of God), with his counselors, and the various organizations of the Priesthood as they exist, this Church is so perfect that it commands the admiration of the world, who see that it is superior even to that old and long established church, the Roman Catholic. The very fact that these organizations