

ly blight on individuals, and it would have the same effect on a community, if they fell into it. But while the people remain Latter-day Saints and steadfastly pursue the path in which they have trod for the past forty years, they cannot remain unnoticed. However modest and unassuming they may be, their works will give them fame.

The *Republican* assumes two things: first, the inhabitants of Salt Lake are not going to abandon the central feature of their social system under compulsion; and second, they do not intend to fight. If the Cullom Bill should, therefore, be carried to its logical conclusion, there is only the alternative of voluntary expatriation, it thinks, left. On this point we give the *Republican's* own words:

For the easy accomplishment of this the sign Mexico offers every desirable facility. The journey from Utah to that republic is comparatively short and could be made without the one hundredth part of the danger and suffering endured by the Mormon pioneers in their memorable pilgrimage from the Mississippi to their present abode; and once arrived they would be amply rewarded for the transit. The soil, climate and the vast mineral resources of Mexico are too well known to require comment; nothing but industry, energy and capital are needed to make the ancient realm of the Aztecs an earthly paradise, and these elements the Mormons will bring with them. The chronic anarchy which prevails there would have no unfavorable effect upon the emigrants, from the fact that they will go in such large numbers as to form a community of their own, not only self-supporting but self-protecting, and, in case the emergency should arise, Young could muster an army strong enough to sweep the country from the Rio Grande to the frontiers of California. But there is little danger of any trouble. The Juarez government would willingly cede lands to a brave and industrious people who only ask to be let alone, and whose persecutions by the United States will naturally lead them to resist to the last extremity that absorption into the Federal Union which the Mexican leaders so much dread. What that religion would become in fifty years, with an infusion of two or three hundred thousand Anglo-Saxons, who have already changed the barren valley of Salt Lake into a fruitful garden, and achieved, in the language of Mr. Seward, "a marvel of civilization," we leave our readers to imagine. Certain it is, however, that Mexico opens a door of escape for the Mormons, and through that door they will surely go if our government is insane enough to attempt their conversion by the Cullom method.

PRESIDENT SMITH ON POLYGAMY.

At the Tabernacle, in the morning Elder N. H. Felt occupied a portion of the time in relating his experience during his mission in the East, from which he has just returned.

He was followed by President George A. Smith, who briefly described the organization of the Church, the early history of the Church, the drivings, privations of the Saints and their settlement and progress in these valleys.

Referring to the repugnance the world professes to entertain for polygamy, President Smith said:

There is one doctrine, however, that the Latter-day Saints have that there are objections made to. I believe we are all right with the exception of one principle, that is, pretty much right with the world. I know that when our folks were driven from Jackson county, Mo., by the mob, in 1833, one of the principal charges against us was that we anointed the sick with holy oil and laid hands on them: that was declared to be blasphemy. But I believe that our Christian friends have got so that many of them are willing that we should do that, without the least objection in the world. But the great and terrible objection now is that the "Mormons" believe in a plurality of wives under certain circumstances. That is the great objection now, and the nation being entirely moral, every man being strictly in obedience to the laws of monogamy; and every woman in the nation strictly observing her vows; and the city of Washington being a place of true purity (?) why the idea of the people of Utah believing in a plurality of wives produces a horrible sensation and an awful stink.

Now the misfortune in relation to us is that we believe the Bible,—that good old sacred book. And we not only believe the Old Testament but the New, as well as the revelations which have been given through Joseph Smith in the present age. We do not practice plurality of wives because the ancients did; but the circumstances under which we are placed and the revelations which God has given to us as a people make it necessary. It is required of us under certain circumstances. If every man in the United States will live strictly according to his vows, and step forward and marry every woman that wants to marry in the United States, we are

willing to do the same; and if there is a few women left that can't get husbands we will give them to the best men we can find, and it will be all right. We are perfectly willing to arrange it in this way. But as long as half the men refuse to marry at all, and half the women, for want of a suitable opportunity, are compelled to live in single blessedness, in open violation of the command of God to the human family to multiply and replenish the earth, we claim the privilege of having more than one wife, and we think we have good examples. For instance, our Father Jacob, the man who wrestled with God, whose name God changed from Jacob to Israel, and who was made by God the father of many nations, had four wives. Was God displeased with that man for it? Certainly not, for it is recorded by the Apostle John that the names of his twelve sons,—the sons of four wives, the sons of a polygamist, are inscribed on the gates of the New Jerusalem. How are we going to get in there without acknowledging polygamy? A man says "I will not go where a polygamist goes." If so you must not pass these gates, you must stop outside.

But must every man get a plurality of wives? I do not think there is an opportunity: we are not all good looking; but every woman on the face of the earth should have a chance to marry. And if a portion of the men are too corrupt, wicked, selfish and full of hell to perform the duty of husband and father it should not deprive woman of the opportunity of filling the measure of her creation. That is what I have to say on the subject.

"We think it is immoral" say some. I do not think it is. I think the system enforced upon the Christian world by ancient Rome laid the foundation of degradation and immorality that the Christian system would have avoided if it had not been for the institution of monogamy. That is my impression about it. And when you pass a law that enforces such a system you go astray.

Some will compare the system of plural marriage as practiced in Utah with the bigamy of different States. That is to say a man marries two wives clandestinely, deceiving them, in violation of law, in violation of custom and in violation of his honor. I am of the opinion that it is difficult to commit a higher crime than this. If a man have a plurality of wives it should be in accordance with the law of God and the wishes of his family, and the association should be agreeable and natural.

It is not my intention, of course, to say a great deal on this subject; but as this is a great point, I wish our Christian friends to understand that the Savior descended from David,—David the polygamist. I wish them to understand that He descended from the House of Jacob, the polygamist. I wish them to understand that if they ever get into Abraham's bosom they get to the bosom of a polygamist. I wish them also to understand that if they ever enter the gates of the New Jerusalem they will have to pass by gates where the names of the twelve sons of Jacob the polygamist are recorded; and if they are offensive and disagreeable to them they are expected to stay outside, and that when they fight against these things they fight against light and knowledge.

"But," says one, "does not the New Testament condemn polygamy?" Where? In what place? In what definite passage? I have not been able to find it. In the days of the Savior, plurality of wives was a custom among the Jews to a certain extent. Josephus says that King Herod had several wives. Now, if the Savior had been disposed to do away with this and to introduce a new system, how easy he could have done it among His followers, by simply saying so in plain words. He said "you shall not commit adultery." He discountenanced divorces, and proclaimed in the loudest and most positive terms against all sins, but what did He say about plurality? Not a syllable. How easy it would have been for Him to say to His disciples, "You must have but one wife." But He never said it.

"But," says one, "didn't the Apostle Paul say that a bishop should be the husband of one wife?" I remember when Elias Smith was elected bishop of the stake of Zion in Iowa, a grave objection was raised in the conference. Said they, "a bishop should be the husband of one wife," but he had none, and they admitted him on the ground that he would get married pretty soon. Now suppose he had had two wives, under the law of God, would it have been any objection? Not the least. I understand Paul to mean that a bishop should be a married man, without reference to the number of his wives.

My faith on this subject is that if the laws of Great Britain and the laws of the United States were made to correspond with the laws of God on this subject that nine-tenths of the prostitution, infanticide, bastardy and corruption now in existence, would be done away in fifty years by a simple change of institutions. This is my faith and I have a right to believe it and at the same time I have a right to be a citizen of the United States. This Bible must be burnt, annihilated, repealed or declared worthless, and everybody become infidel or the doctrine of plurality of wives has got to stand.

May the peace of God be upon you and all Israel, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

In the afternoon, President D. H. Wells occupied the time. His discourse was reported.

REMARKS

By President GEORGE A. SMITH,
delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt
Lake City, May 5th, 1870.

[REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.]

It is a great pleasure to meet with the brethren again in Conference, and it is certainly very gratifying to see the people so comfortably seated, with a prospect of enjoying the benefits and blessings of the Conference; even should the elements not be favorable we have a shelter and a shade. It has been the fortune of the Latter-day Saints never to stay in any place long enough to build a house sufficiently large to hold the people; but with the blessing of the Lord and the united efforts of the brethren we have room sufficient to hold a very large audience, though no doubt occasions will still occur when we shall cry out "more room," and probably before our Conference closes. I think, however, that we need not ask any of our brethren who reside in this city, as we have had to do, to stay at home to make room for those who may be in from a distance; all may come and be accommodated. The acoustic properties of the Tabernacle are evidently improved by the erection of the gallery, and if all who attend Conference will leave their coughing at home, sit still while here and omit shuffling their feet, they may have an opportunity of hearing pretty much everything that may be said. It will certainly require, even when all these conditions are complied with, considerable effort to fill so large a house with one voice, and that effort must be met by a corresponding effort on the part of the audience to preserve perfect stillness.

It was forty years ago on the 6th of last month since the organization of the Church took place, in the chamber of Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, New York, with six members. The history of that forty years would require volumes to record. The institution, as it then commenced, was in its infancy; yet the Lord revealed to His servant that He had laid the foundation of a great work; the truth of that saying has been realized by the progress of events. The changes that have transpired in connection with this people have been very remarkable. The work commenced, by preaching faith in the Lord Jesus, repentance and the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was an innovation upon the creeds and practices of every other religious sect; I am not aware that any one denomination believed in and practiced all the principles that were introduced at the organization of this Church. The first three of these principles were faith in the Lord Jesus, repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. The next principle was the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, precisely as it was pointed out by the Savior and practiced by His disciples in Judea.

There were denominations who believed in baptism by immersion, but not for the remission of sins, they believed that remission of sins was necessary previous to baptism; but they were ignorant of the possibility of the reception of the Holy Ghost, and, consequently, of the doctrine of the laying on of hands. The Church of England, it is true, would confirm by the laying on of the hand of the bishops, but not for confirming the gift of the Holy Ghost on the heads of the believers; and while all the professed believers in the doctrine of Christ had some portions or fragments of His gospel as revealed and established by Him and His Apostles, it was the church of Latter-day Saints which introduced and established, complete, the principles of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance towards God, baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. These principles were all important, and the moment the Bible was brought forth everybody could find that they coincided exactly with the principles set forth by the Savior, and it required to be spiritualized and changed to make it appear otherwise. But the Christian world had gone astray from these things, and when they were restored they rejected them. There were, however, honest persons in all of the denominations, and God has respect to every man who is honest of heart and purpose, though he may be deceived, and in error as to principle and doctrine; yet so far as that error is the result of their being deceived by the cunning craftiness of men, or of circumstances over which such have no control, the Lord in His abundant mercy looks with allowance thereon, and in His great economy He has provided different glories and ordained that all persons shall be judged according to the knowledge they possess and the use they make of that knowledge, and according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil.

"And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differ from that of the church of the first born, who have received the fullness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from that of the sun in the firmament. Behold, these are they who died without law, and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the

flesh, who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of His glory, but not of His fullness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father; wherefore they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God."

In opening this Conference it would be well for us individually to ask ourselves, Have we received the first principles of the gospel of Christ, and have we continued in those principles which were first taught unto us; or is it necessary for us again to lay the foundation of repentance from dead works? It is very singular that when the principles of the gospel, as I have stated them, were presented to the different sects, they were disposed to reject them and to persecute those who preached them in their fullness. Such, however, was the fact, and it is owing to this that the Latter-day Saints are now in the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains, in the heart of the American continent, in the enjoyment of political and religious liberty and freedom, for which they have sacrificed, more perhaps, than any other people on the face of the earth. And we have the greatest reason of all people to be thankful to God for these blessings.

Then let us ask ourselves, Are we prepared for the great blessings which God has bestowed upon us? Are we living up to our callings and magnifying the same? Do we observe the duties which are imposed upon us by our holy religion? Or are we foolish enough, while recognizing its truth, and professing to be Latter-day Saints, to treat it with carelessness and neglect, and failing to live up to our high and holy calling?

From the earliest days of the preaching of the gospel by Joseph Smith men were tried and tempted and led astray by false spirits and doctrines of devils. We find at the commencement of Joseph's mission that many who entered into covenant turned away, and some became very bitter enemies. It was necessary from the very beginning that there should be a sifting, for the Lord declared unto His people that He would sift them as with a sieve. This sifting had to continue, and hence, every time the Latter-day Saints were driven, scattered or otherwise persecuted, it caused those who could not abide in the faith to pass quietly away, or to make their wickedness manifest unto the church and unto the world. But while this was going on the strength of Zion was increasing. It is said, and I presume correctly, that Oliver Cowdery remarked at one time to Joseph Smith, "If I should apostatize and leave the Church, the Church would be broken up." The answer of the Prophet was, "What and who are you? This is the work of God, and if you turn against it and withdraw from it, it will still roll on and you will not be missed." It was not long until Oliver turned away, but the work continued. God raised up men from obscurity to step forth and shoulder the burdens, and it was hardly known when and where he went. In about ten years he came back again, came before a local conference at Mosquito Creek, Pottawatomie Co., Iowa, October, 1848, and acknowledged his faults. He bore testimony of the mission of the Prophet, Joseph Smith, and of the truth of the Book of Mormon; he exhorted the Saints to follow the authority of the Holy Priesthood which he assured them was with the Twelve Apostles. He said, "When the Saints follow the main channel of the stream they find themselves in deep water and always right, pursuing their journey with safety; but when they turned aside into sloughs and bayous, they are left to flounder in the mud and are lost, for the Angel of God said unto Joseph in my hearing that this priesthood shall remain on the earth unto the end."

Oliver declared he took pleasure in bearing this testimony to the largest congregation of Saints he had ever seen together. He was re-baptized and made arrangements to come to the mountains, but died soon after, while on a visit to the Whitmer's, in Missouri.

This circumstance shows how little God depends upon man to carry on his work. He does it by His own power, His own majesty, by His own mighty hand and for the accomplishment of His own glorious purposes.

It was thought and felt throughout the world, about the year 1844, that if Joseph Smith, the Prophet, could be destroyed, that would be the end of the Latter-day Saints. Men conspired together to shed his blood; they sought occasion against him; they made him an offender for a word; they swore falsely against him, and some who had been his friends turned traitors and conspired with the wicked and shed his blood. It was generally believed by the enemies of the Saints that that was the end of the work of the Lord. The pulpit resounded with thanks to God that the great arch-impostor, Joseph Smith, was slain. The priests rejoiced over it; and though there was a feeling, tolerably wide-spread, that it was barbarous to kill him, under the plighted faith of Illinois, yet the general feeling was that it was a good thing that he was dead. But God had a work to perform, and it did not