

REMARKS.

By President GEORGE A. SMITH, Delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Saturday Morning, April 6th, 1872.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

OWING to a spirit of persecution and religious bigotry, alike disgraceful to the age, the enlightenment of the present generation and the nation in which we live, our First President is not permitted to be with us. While we regret such a state of affairs, we rejoice in the many liberties, privileges, blessings, and powers which are extended unto us. It is not by any means strange that, while the world has been plunged in ignorance upon matters of religion and morality, and broken up into factions, on the appearance in the midst of the whole, of a small body of men, illiterate in their character, proclaiming to the world that they are inspired of the Lord, and undertake to introduce system and principles calculated to elevate mankind from degradation and destruction, and exalt them to eternal glory and endless increase, they should be misunderstood; it has been so in all ages of the world. When our Savior visited the earth bringing the simple principles of salvation he was misunderstood, misapprehended, persecuted, imprisoned, crowned with thorns, tortured, as a man who was opposed to the religion of the age, and dangerous to the State. He was accused of a great variety of crimes, of being a pestilent fellow, and was finally put to death by a class of men a great number of whom were zealous professors of religion—elders, high priests, rabbis, doctors of the law and others claiming to be exceedingly holy. Jesus, in referring to the history of the past, said that the fathers of those who persecuted him had slain the prophets, and such was the case; and we find that, in every age, when God inspired a man to proclaim the gospel of salvation, all, or a large portion of mankind, were ready to denounce him and put him to death, to whip, imprison, annoy, lie about him, proclaim all manner of evil against him, and so on, until his influence should be annihilated from the earth. The same principle still exists, and the Latter-day Saints have had to contend with it. When Joseph Smith, in 1830, organized the church with six members, the war as it were commenced; a few hours only had passed away when he was arrested, taken before a magistrate and accused of prophesying. He was discharged, arrested again, taken before another magistrate, and finally a declaration was made that if the law could not reach him tar and feathers and mob power should. This is a very poor argument and shows the weakness of those who have recourse to it.

We live in an age of science, in an age when intelligence is being developed in a great many directions, and when the learning of man is vastly extended. The apostle Paul cautioned the Saints in his day to beware lest any spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit; yet the religion of Jesus Christ embraces every true and perfect principle, every correct science, every principle of philosophy—that is every true principle, and is calculated to benefit mankind in every way; and yet the laws of life as revealed, explained and developed in the organization of the human family are trampled under foot and very little understood. God has commenced a work in these last days to elevate mankind, to save them, to increase them, to place them on a footing of independence; to cause them to love one another and to lay a foundation for peace and harmony, that bloodshed and war, contention and devastation shall cease; that the power of the oppressor shall be broken and that the honest in heart may have the privilege of dwelling together and building up Zion in all the earth, and of continuing the blessings, and ordinances of exaltation for time and throughout all eternity.

There is no doubt but Satan stirs up the hearts of the children of men to disobedience to and to war against the principles of righteousness; but they are true. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, he was a minister of the Most High; he brought forth pure and holy principles, principles which are calculated to save and exalt mankind. He was slain, and those who received his testimony were robbed of all they possessed and driven into the wilderness under the influence of religious fanaticism and bigotry, which apprehended nothing but their utter destruction. God preserved them, blessed them, and they spread abroad in the midst of these valleys; they converted the desert into fruitful fields, and laid a foundation for the redemption of the human race, and thank God for these privileges.

We want, while we are here at conference, to have our brethren collect in their minds—that is, leave their business out of doors. It is a good time to come to conference, a splendid time to do business and all that; but while the hours of conference are on, let us come to meeting, give strict attention to what is said and done, and call upon God in mighty prayer, that he will deliver Zion from her oppressors; that he will bless the efforts of his servants for the advancement of his work; that he will bless the missionaries that are sent abroad, and those who are abroad among the nations, and the missions of the native elders

in the various countries; that he will open the way that the poor may be gathered. And by the way, while we are doing this, let us reflect how much we can do to aid the Perpetual Emigration Fund, in bringing home the poor. Many of them have been scattered among the nations half a generation and more, and they are unable to gather home. Think of these things. Pray the Lord to give his servants wisdom; pray the Lord to strengthen the President of the church—Brigham Young, heal his body, make him strong, sound and healthy, deliver him from the power of the oppressor and those who seek to destroy him, that he may have wisdom, intelligence and power to preach to and teach the Saints, and to counsel and guide the affairs of the great work which God has entrusted to him. Let us devote a few days, as the case may be, to counsel, to instruction, to bearing testimony, to acquiring a knowledge of the things of God, speaking of those things that are for the welfare of Zion; taking counsel together as to the best course to pursue on the various subjects that are before us—forwarding the building of Temples &c.

After last conference President Young and myself made a journey to Saint George. His health was very poor and he was quite feeble when he left here. When he reached that mild climate, or rather, that even, dry climate, he seemed immediately to commence to recruit, and while we remained there—we were absent about ten weeks—he improved very much; but in consequence of the persecution which was inaugurated against the Latter-day Saints, aiming at him directly, it became necessary for him to return in the midst of a very cold and stormy season, and very muddy roads. While at Saint George he selected a spot, laid out the foundation and dedicated the ground and made a commencement, to build a temple, which is being continued under the direction of President Erastus Snow, that the ordinances of the holy priesthood, which should be administered only in a temple, may be attended to in that part of the Territory, in the neighborhood and vicinity of those settlements.

Our brethren can observe that a very handsome addition has been made to the foundation of the Temple here since the last annual Conference, and they can now begin to form some idea of how the work is going to look. When you realize that all the granite that is in that immense foundation has been hauled some seventeen miles with oxen, mules and horses, you must realize that a very great job has been accomplished. But at the present time we have a railroad almost into the quarry, and the result is that the labor has been greatly lessened, and the rock and the sand and other building material can be brought here at vastly less expense than formerly, and consequently we will be able to push the work forward more rapidly. We want the brethren and sisters—all of them, to feel an interest in the tithes and offerings for the temple, and in the labor upon it.

All must be aware that considerable expense and a great deal of time and disarrangement of business has been caused by the persecutions and prosecutions of the last year. But we are very glad to say that the co-operative associations for mercantile, manufacturing, agricultural, grazing and other purposes that have been forming in this City and throughout the Territory for several years past, have proved in an eminent degree successful, manifesting what wonderful results can be accomplished by the Latter-day Saints when united in the exercise of their several duties and in the performance of their labors. The want of unity and organization causes the loss of a great deal of time, and hence the necessity of organization and united effort.

The ladies relief societies in all the several settlements wherever they have existed have also been in many respects highly successful, and great blessings to the community—looking after the poor and introducing improvements, encouraging and enabling women to take charge of branches of business that are suited to their strength, knowledge and condition. It always did seem to me ridiculous to see a man six feet two and weighing two hundred and twenty measuring tape or ribbons in a store; and I shall be very thankful when I can see changes effected to such an extent that nimble fingers, suited to handle light goods will be permitted to follow that kind of employment, and so on throughout the whole organization of society. Let those great, big men go and dig the rock, handle the sawlog, or do something that their strength was made for, and not let their giant power wilt away in the shadow of the store. However, these are things yet to come. It is not my design to offer many remarks, but merely as an introduction to the conference, to express my faith. I know that this is the work of God, and that all the efforts of wicked men to trample it under foot will be vain. I know the Lord has commenced his great work of the latter days, and that Zion will triumph. This is my testimony. I am not talking what I guess at, what I imagine or what I think, but what I verily know—God has revealed it unto me. Brethren, if you have not this knowledge within yourselves, seek it of the Lord by obedience to his laws, by observing his counsel, by walking in his ordinances, by laboring for the upbuilding of Zion, and you will obtain it, and it will be like a well of water springing up in your hearts unto everlasting life. May the blessings of Israel's God be and abide upon you for ever and ever Amen.

REMARKS.

By President GEORGE A. SMITH, Delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday morning, April 7th, 1872.

[REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS]

WE are again assembled this morning to continue the duties and services of our Conference, and I am requested by President Young to state that he is in the enjoyment of comfortable health and in excellent spirits. He regrets very much the circumstances which render it inexpedient for him to meet with you this morning, and hopes the time may soon come when he will again enjoy that privilege, also the privilege of bearing testimony to the glorious work of the last days in the public congregation. He desires and appreciates the prayers and faith of the Saints; he thinks that it is quite proper that any man, before he is thoroughly qualified to rule, shall learn to be ruled, that he shall learn to obey before he learns to command. All these lessons in their time and in their season are proper for us to learn.

When we realize the malignity of the spirit of persecution which is aimed at the Latter-day Saints in these valleys, we need not wonder that we have to contend with vexatious lawsuits and with illegal and unjustifiable prosecutions, for the influence of the pulpit and the press, when controlled by the spirit of lying, is very great for evil, but God is greater—his power is more omnipotent; and although thousands of prophets, priests and wise men in the earth have been compelled to lay down their lives for the cause of Zion, and for the sake of the principles of the gospel of peace, and in doing so they have acquired honors that could not be attained in any other way; their reward is certain, eternal and sure.

I wish to call the attention of the elders who have been, in years past, on missions, to one important item of duty. It is well known that our emigration annually brings some thousands of person among whom our missionaries have labored and with whom they are acquainted and among whom are many who still look to them for fatherly advice and encouragement, but many of the elders who return immediately forget that they have been missionaries. When they reach home they perhaps find their affairs a little deranged, business having stopped in their absence, money making or procuring the means of living having gone rather behind hand, they drop right into a groove, as it were, to catch up, and they forget their duties, and the people whom they have been acquainted with and who have treated them with kindness and generosity are also frequently forgotten and neglected. The emigrants come into these valleys and fall perhaps under influences that are wrong and wicked, for men inspired with a spirit of hostility to the work of God will take more pains to poison their minds than those who feel all right do to give them correct information. I wish to say to all such elders and to all the brethren, that when they get home their mission is not consummated, and that when new comers arrive we should take pains to look after their welfare, give them counsel and instruction, aid and comfort, and realize that we are missionaries all our lives, and that it is our duty to instruct such in the things of the kingdom, to encourage them and set before them principles of intelligence, such as will be for their benefit.

I wish further to say to the Elders and to the brethren who have emigrated, that they should remember their friends they visited before they came here, or when they were on missions in the old world. Remember the poor family that went without their provision, perhaps, to give you a feast; or the family that, to make you warm and comfortable, gave up their beds to you, themselves enduring cold, discomfort and inconvenience to do so; or the family that opened their doors to shelter you from the storm when their neighbors hooted and scouted them, as it were, for entertaining a stranger. You missionaries in your experience have all met with such families, and many of them are there yet without the means to get here. Perhaps they have said to you, "Will you help me when you get home?" and you may have given them a look of encouragement, a half promise, or expressed a hope that you might be able to do so. Have you forgotten it? Perhaps a little effort on your part and on the part of your neighbors might bring these families to this country and place them in a position to acquire lots, farms, and homes of their own, redeem them from thralldom and bondage worse than slavery, and place them in a position of independence on their own soil, enjoy the fruits of their own labors and help to build up and develop the rising, spreading glory of Zion.

I have heard there is an Elder who, when on a mission, borrowed some money of a widow that had not means enough to get away, but had a little she could spare until she could acquire enough to bring her family here; and that Elder, peradventure, has forgotten to pay it. I have heard there is such an Elder in Utah. Shame on him if there is! Under such circumstances we should not only pay, punctually and faithfully, what we owe, with good and reasonable interest,

but all of us European missionaries should be prepared to do something handsome annually to help those from the bondage and thralldom in which we found them, and where they must remain until means are obtained to deliver them. I am calling now for the donation to the Perpetual Emigration Fund. A hundred thousand Latter-day Saints in Utah, and can we not help a few thousand that yet remain in the old missions, and bring them here? "Well," some may say, "they will apostatize if they come." That is all right, they must have the privilege. I understand that we have brought some men here with the Fund that have apostatized, betrayed the Saints and done all in their power to stain their garments in the blood of the prophets; but that is not our fault, it is theirs. We should gather the Saints and they, themselves, are responsible for the use they make of the blessings which God bestows upon them, even if they come through our hands and exertions. Look at the tens of thousands of families now in Utah in comfortable circumstances, with houses, farms, wagons, cattle and horses of their own, many of them with carriages, and these families, taken, by the contributions of the Latter-day Saints, from the most abject servitude and poverty, from the bowels of the earth, from within the walls of factories, where but for this fund they must have remained for their lives; but now they are in comparative independence and enjoying the blessings of freemen.

After President Young returned from St. George, for the purpose of voluntarily placing himself in the custody of United States officers, as is well known, I received a letter from an eminent gentleman in the State of Massachusetts, who said that the prosecution against him could be nothing more nor less than a put-up job, and that the people of the country understood it as such; "and the fact is," said he, "Brigham Young has done more for the benefit of large bodies of people than any other living man on the earth." That is true. By the inspiration of Almighty God through his servant Brigham Young this Fund was organized, and he has been the President of it and through his energy and enterprise and the aid of the Latter-day Saints—his friends, he has gathered tens of thousands that could never have owned a rod of ground or a house, as long as they lived, but would have been at the mercy of employers who looked upon them only as a portion of their property, and the question with them has been how much of this man's labor can I get for the smallest pittance; but through the exertions and counsels of President Young and his brethren they have been delivered from this bondage and placed in comparative independence. I say God bless such a man, (Congregation said Amen) and God bless every man and every woman who will contribute to carry out this glorious purpose.

I am very anxious to wake up the elders to labor at home, to keep alive in the hearts of the Saints the spirit of truth. While all those who so desire are free to apostatize, it should not be for the want of proper information, care and instruction, or in consequence of the neglect of the elders to do their duty. I exhort the Latter-day Saints to unite in carrying on the work of gathering. A few years ago we thought that we would gather them all. When we had raised what means we could, and had expended it we found the Elders were baptizing about as fast as we were bringing the Saints away. That is all right. Let us get the old and faithful Latter-day Saints away, and keep baptizing all that desire to be baptized. In the Scandinavian mission the number of baptisms keep up, and some years a little more than keep up, with the emigration. There are families from year to year that can be brought away by a little assistance they have part means, and only need a little more to emigrate. I do think that the history of the Perpetual Emigration Fund is a wonderful one. The Latter-day Saints in Utah sent from here two hundred wagons one year, three hundred another year, four hundred the next, and for two years, five hundred wagons, each year, each wagon having four yoke of oxen or their equivalent in mules and horses, and bore all the expenses consequent upon bringing people across the Plains, bringing from one to four thousand persons a season. This is certainly creditable and it has been done through the influence of Brigham Young and the united efforts of a free-hearted and noble people. We have got a railroad now and do not have to send the wagons; the business assumes another shape. The emigration is brought here with less labor and in less time, but with more outlay.

I have now laid before you my views on the emigration of the poor Saints from abroad. Consider upon and think about them. Make your calculations, and feel in your pockets and contribute to help on the work, and carry with you to all the settlements of the Saints a spirit that shall bring home to Zion the brethren and sisters from abroad. In that way the work can continue. May God bless all who aid in this glorious work is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

CORRECTION.—In the list of home missionaries called at Conference on Tuesday, and published in Wednesday's News, instead of William Black, Summit Co., it should have been Joseph H. Black, of Parley's Park.