

A few Mormon voters and a good many Gentiles declined to be registered on such conditions; but the great mass of the voters among the Mormons took the oath and voted. The next important step in the direction of reform was the holding of a constitutional convention on June 30, 1887, with delegates from all the counties in the Territory. The Gentiles having declined to participate, the convention was composed entirely of Mormons. The constitution thus formulated contained a provision prohibiting polygamy and making it a crime, with a severe penalty; and at the August election following, 95 per cent of all the Mormon voters in the Territory voted for the ratification of this constitution.

Following up the reform movement thus inaugurated, the legislative assembly, composed of 31 Mormons and 5 Gentiles, which met in Salt Lake City in January, 1888, enacted a very well considered marriage law, declaring, among other things, all plural marriages to be illegal and void, and making it a crime with a heavy penalty for any clerk of a probate court to issue a license for a plural marriage; and also providing for the punishment of any minister, preacher of the gospel, or any officer or other person who solemnizes any such marriage.

The same legislative assembly passed a concurrent resolution in favor of the enforcement of the laws against polygamy and unlawful cohabitation as well as fornication and adultery, "to the end that all such offenses may be prohibited."

From these facts, as well as official information and personal observation, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Mormons have wisely resolved on the discontinuance of polygamy, and that during the last three years new polygamous marriages in Utah have been very rare, probably not more numerous in proportion to population than bigamous marriages in any of the States.

It is true that some non-Mormons say they have no confidence in the good faith of the Saints, and claim to believe that their movements for reform are all a sham; that "nothing good can come out of Nazareth," and that they are so obstinate, stiff-necked and fanatical that they are incorrigible and their reformation utterly hopeless. But it should be borne in mind that churches and creeds are subject to the laws of evolution, of which many illustrations can be given from ecclesiastical history, and of which notable instances were furnished by a very respectable religious organization in New York and Chicago early in February of this year, favoring radical changes in their confession of faith.

Utah is not now and never can be again what it was in the days of Brigham Young, who, with all his faults, was as brave, wise and able a leader of men as ever led his hosts into the "startled solitudes of an unpeopled land."

As a born leader of men, and esteemed by his followers a prophet, seer and revelator, he dominated with almost absolute authority over

his people, isolated for many years, from all the world in the secluded valleys of the Rocky Mountains. But all this is changed. The railroad, the telegraph, free speech, a free press, schools, colleges, churches of many denominations, and last, but not least, the real estate boomers are there now. Polygamy cannot stand up before modern civilization. The Mormons are wise enough to see this and to act upon it.

The practice of polygamy, which has so long been the reproach of the Mormon people, and has been the cause of so much suffering and distress, should be abandoned in good faith and forever. This being accomplished, no just ground will remain for pursuing them with further hostile legislation. Any further discrimination against them should then be indignantly resented by all American citizens who are imbued with the true principles of civil and religious liberty. In Utah there are persons of multifarious religious creeds, and some with no religious belief at all. There we find perfect religious freedom for the Catholic, the Jew, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Campbellite and the Congregationalist, all of whom have churches or houses of worship there. Besides, there are many infidels, skeptics and spiritualists. Shall we allow to all these freedom of religious opinion and worship and deny it to the Mormons, those who, for the rights of conscience, sought a home in the wilderness, which they have made to "blossom as the rose?"

Shall we, now, in the most enlightened age of all the centuries, invoke legal coercion over the consciences of men in the matters of religion; and resort to the thumb-screw and the rack, political proscription and disfranchisement, as modes of religious instruction and persuasion?

SALT LAKE STAKE CONFERENCE.

Following is a continuation of the minutes from the point of breaking off in our issue of Saturday, September 13th.

Monday, 2 p. m.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH E. TAYLOR said he had been requested to draw attention to the following items of importance in which we all should be interested: There is quite a disposition among the young people to engage in amusements of various kinds without seeking council or advice from those who have been appointed to regulate these matters. Young people are often invited to attend amusements of a character, which, a few years ago, would not have been permitted. In assemblages of this kind where all classes meet, our young people are thrown into temptation and often lead them to sorrow and to ends that result in their downfall.

In each ward the Bishops and Counselors are to some extent responsible for the people in their wards. They should labor to throw around the young a mantle of protection from the evils of the times,

lift a warning voice against iniquity. They should labor with the Priesthood of their wards, draw them, instruct them and send them as teachers to visit the houses and teach the people their duties. In some of the wards there is enough work to occupy the whole time of a Bishop. But they must do all they can, be diligent in ministering to the people and see to it that all the various organizations are in a healthy condition.

For a long time after people came to these valleys, a young lady could go out at any hour in the night on an errand and feel perfectly safe, but now, what a change! I fear we have allowed evils to grow in our midst and have not been sufficiently energetic in checking evil, as the people of God should stand forth in boldness and oppose everything that leads to temptation and sin. There is a tendency among some to become lukewarm and draw off from the things of God. It is this class that especially needs laboring with. The mantle of the Priesthood should be thrown around them and an influence brought to bear to lead them in the ways of life.

The Word of Wisdom has been given for our good, our present salvation, our eternal glory. It should be laid before the people by the Teachers as they go around from house to house, in simplicity and plainness, and the Saints should be warned of the evils which follow the use of those things which are forbidden.

The principle of tithing should not be neglected. Though the wicked might take from us the means devoted to sacred uses, yet it is an obligation resting upon each Elder and member of this Church to render to the Lord His tenth, and when that duty is faithfully performed, no matter what may become of the means, we have done our part, and can claim the blessings promised on obedience to the law.

President Taylor strongly urged upon the Bishops and Teachers to be faithful in their callings, and exhorted the Saints to diligence, that no claim of disobedience and slothfulness may be laid at their door, but that they may stand as a light set upon a hill, and be prepared for the great events that await us.

ELDER JOHN MORGAN

said: The circumstances by which we are surrounded require that the spirit of counsel and admonition should be in the hearts of the servants of God, and that the Saints should be in a position that will enable them to merit the inspiration of the Almighty at all times. The Elders must lift up their warning voice and warn the people in regard to the shoals and quicksands by which they are at present times surrounded.

The history of the Latter-day Saints from the inception of this work, has been a series of trials to their faith. When the sound of the Gospel fell on the ears of those who embraced it, it was unpopular, and he who embraced the truth did so in opposition to popular sentiment,