

deadly animosity that was so severely directed against us a few years ago. God can do a wonderful work when He pours out His Spirit upon the people. He can soften the hearts of the hardest hearted men and women, and He can remove blindness from their eyes and cause them to see the truth. The Elders are feeling the benefit of this. When we think that there are 1,300 Elders sent out from this land to these various countries, laboring indefatigably, without purse and scrip, and testing the world, we can form some idea of how great the work of God is and how it is spreading. And we have scarcely touched the Indian races. There is an immense field spreading out before the Elders of this Church in the redemption of these poor remnants of the house of Israel. The Elders now are laboring among nations of our own blood, excepting in the Polynesian Islands. But here stretches out before us this immense continent on the south, peopled with descendants of the house of Israel, and there is scarcely an Elder among them. When we think of these millions of people who are awaiting the glad tidings of salvation, and concerning whom so many precious promises have been made, we can imagine what an immense labor devolves upon us as the servants of God. This should incite us to renewed diligence. It should fill the hearts of our young men with burning zeal and a determination to qualify themselves for the great work of redeeming the human family which rests upon us as the people of God.

So far as our own surroundings are concerned, we have every reason to be thankful for that which the Lord has done and is doing. There was a probability that we should have division in the church at home, in consequence of false doctrine that was taught and false statements that were made. It looked for a while as though a great many of our people would be misled and come to wrong conclusions concerning the authority and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. But from all parts of the Church in these mountains the intelligence comes that the members of the Church are having their minds enlightened, and error is being removed, and misconceptions which have been industriously propagated are now being understood in their true light. This is the representation that comes from all the Stakes of Zion, and it is most gratifying, because the Church of Christ cannot prosper on the earth unless there is union. If there be divisions, or schisms, if error prevail, if false doctrine be believed, they will inevitably retard the progress of the work of God. I am thankful myself that the issue has been raised among us. Some have found fault with the Declaration that was made here a year ago. Some have thought it unnecessary, and that it was framed for the purpose of entrapping somebody. Now I wish to say to this Conference that no such purpose ever entered into the hearts of the men who signed that. There was no snare, nor no trap prepared; but it was felt that there should be a declaration of principle made at that time in consequence of the statements which had been made concerning these matters, and the misconceptions and division of sentiment which had arisen therefrom—so that our views concerning the Church of Christ and its government might be thoroughly understood. Every

man that signed that paper felt that it was opportune, and that it was needed. The very fact that there should be differences of views on such important questions furnishes all the proof necessary that it was an appropriate and necessary document to issue to the Church, and all Latter-day Saints will see how appropriate it is if they will read it in the light of the Spirit of God. It was not issued for the purpose of encroaching upon the privileges or liberty of the Latter-day Saints. I have said it, and I repeat it here, that there is no freer people upon the face of the earth than the Latter-day Saints. There is no people that enjoys fuller liberty than we do. There is no people who are interfered with less by their religious teachers than are the Latter-day Saints. I am willing to risk that statement and have it examined in the light of that which has been and is being done among us. There has been no interference with human rights. In fact, we have refrained from saying and doing that which I have sometimes thought we ought to do; but in our anxiety to avoid giving the least color to the charges that have been made against us, we have refrained from expressing ourselves when it was really needed. The leading men of this Church—and I speak this with out boasting—are the men who have helped lay the foundation of this commonwealth. All there is that is looked upon as admirable in our State is due, in part at least, to them.

But I need not dwell on this. I need only announce to you that to-day all the signs are favorable to a correct comprehension of the duties of the Priesthood and of the members of the Church in all parts of the land. I am happy to be able to say this. I know that God our Eternal Father will enlighten the minds of this people; I know He will pour out His Spirit upon us, when we seek for it. He will dissipate darkness, and will show us the truth. He will give us strength in temptation and trial, and He will deliver us from snares. If we are true to Him, and put our trust in Him, He will not suffer us to be led astray by false and delusive spirits. I look back to the years of trial through which we have passed, and I recall with great satisfaction and pleasure how the Lord assisted and sustained His servants and people. When everything was dark, and it looked as though the powers of darkness would prevail over the Church of Christ, He sustained His servants and His people. Through the blessing of the Lord our sisters were filled with a strength that was almost superhuman, and the whole people felt the sustaining hand of our God. And He will continue to do this for us if we will put our trust in Him. When we pass through the deep waters, He will be there to guide and sustain us; when we go through the fiery furnace, He will be with us as He was with the three Hebrew children.

The Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations have received quite an impetus of late, and increased interest is being manifested in them. The prospect is that they will do a great amount of good among the people. We have not the statistics at hand concerning them as we have of other institutions.

I find that the Sunday schools are growing. There has been an increase of nearly six thousand during the past year. We number now in our Sunday schools about one hundred and five

thousand, officers, teachers and pupils. This is an exceedingly gratifying showing. In the missions abroad, where there is opportunity, Sunday schools are established, and many people who are not members of the Church send their children to them, because they see that they are taught the word of God and the principles of righteousness and true morality. It is very encouraging to know that through this humble instrumentality so much good is being done. We ought to be diligent in like manner at home, and seek after the souls of our own offspring, who certainly ought to be as dear to us and as worthy of sacrifice on our part as the offspring of strangers.

There has also been a great increase in the Primary associations. They show a membership of 33,600. Besides these, there are 2770 officers. No doubt, if every Stake reported with care, there would be found to be a much larger number. It is estimated that there are at least 38,000.

Then there are the religion classes. You are aware, no doubt, that it was deemed proper to have religion classes established in some settlements, so that if there should be any tendency on the part of some of the pupils of the district schools to drift into unbelief, these classes would have the effect to check that tendency. We do not want to say one word disrespectful to the district schools. We have excellent schools in our State. But there appears to be a natural tendency in the human heart towards unbelief. I remember when I was Chancellor of the Deseret University, the charge was made several times that the teachers of that institution were disposed to implant skeptical thoughts and suggestions in the minds of the students. We investigated the matter, and we found that this was not correct. We learned, however, that the text books and the general drift in such an institution, where not counteracted by religious teaching, was in favor of unbelief. The text books in all our universities and colleges have a tendency to unsettle faith in the Bible. To counteract this tendency in our district schools, it was deemed wise to establish religion classes. The statement is made that there are at least seventy classes now in operation, with over three hundred instructors, and an estimated attendance of nearly four thousand pupils. These classes should increase. There are places, no doubt, where they are needed, and they should receive attention, because it is when the children are young, and when their minds are plastic, that lasting impressions can be made upon them.

I pray God to bless us in our Conference, and that His Holy Spirit may be poured out in power upon all who shall speak. That this may be the case, we all should pray in our hearts for the Elders who shall address this Conference, that they may be inspired, and that each of us may be filled with the Spirit to receive their instructions and to be profited by attending this Conference. God bless you. Amen.

#### TRAILING INDIAN THIEVES.

In the summer of 1852 word came to Parowan that Indians had stolen stock from Fort Johnson the previous night, and help was asked to recover it, as Fort Johnson was too weak to retake it alone and at the same time leave men