

mountain region. Unless a check was put upon the growing disposition toward pride and over-indulgence in worldly pleasure it was easy to understand what the development would lead to. Classes would grow up on the basis of wealth, and there would consequently be a decline in the strength of the common bond of sympathy, without which no community can be essentially Christian.

As a means of checking the growing tendency opposed to the real genius of the community of Saints, organizations were formed under the title of retrenchment societies. A leading object of these associations, as implied by the name, was to use an influence against extravagance in methods of living, and in favor of dress reform, etc. They finally merged into what have been for a long time known as Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Associations. It is not improbable that with the change of title the leading original objects of those initiative societies have been to some extent lost sight of. If this be so, then the present is a time when they could be again brought to the front with profit.

The reason why we urge the necessity of this subject receiving attention, as a demand of the times, is because there never was an era in the history of the Saints when there was a larger percentage of them disposed to divide into distinctive classes. Among many, worldly pride projects conspicuously in their social conduct so glaringly, that an observer can see it without effort. Display and glitter is with them the order of the day, hence the necessity of some movement that will turn the tide in favor of retrenchment. It would be a great boon, financially, morally, and religiously.

We have named finance as among the three interests affected by the prevailing spirit of the times. The situation of the money market is such that almost everybody is complaining about it. Of course there are numbers who are always flush of means, and they can perhaps best afford to take the initial steps in the desired direction. Not perhaps that they should expend less, but they might in many instances make a less ostentatious display of their social doings, and thus cease to feed the spirit of vanity and emulation in people less able to afford luxurious exhibits and living. Every person who makes glaring manifestations of costly and fashionable expenditures works an injury upon and is a menace to the welfare and peace of his poorer neighbors. Every man by his example, be it good or bad, begets his likeness in others who imitate his course.

Speaking from a moral standpoint, it is merely necessary to state that history has proved, beyond successful contradiction, that when a people run extravagantly in the direction of pride and pleasure-seeking, they ultimately lose that finer and higher estimate of exalted virtue which characterizes a great community or nation. A strong tendency toward the frivolous is a dangerous indication. The present increasing disposition in the direction of devotion to pleasure and extravagance has a disrupting effect in families. Wise and conservative parents see its rapid development in their children, they warn them against it; the admo-

nitions are resisted. The result is too frequently estrangement and flagrant disobedience of children toward parents. Of course, these things only assume an aspect of importance to those who observe, reflect and reason. But their weight can scarcely be overestimated.

From a religious standpoint, the effects of the increasing tendency of the times, cannot be consistently viewed otherwise than with the deepest concern. Some of the social features now growing in the community are directly anti-Christian. The spirit of pride, undue worldliness, frivolity simply means proportionate decay of the spirit of the Gospel. Any person who is in any degree familiar with the genius of the plan of salvation understands the correctness of this proposition. It is impossible "to serve two masters" antagonistic to each other.

We are in line with the wishes of a large number of thoughtful and observant Latter-day Saints when we express a desire to see inaugurated a resolute movement against pride and extravagance.

#### COMMENDABLE WORK.

THE St. Joseph, Mo., *Gazette* moralizes about the influence of "Mormon" proselyters and repeats the old and stupid story about their going to the poorer classes in Europe and promising luxury to people to whom "plenty has been a far off dream." And we are told that "the ignorant flock in droves to the land of promise." However, the *Gazette* admits that "they find abundance at length," and says:

"The Mormons are always prosperous wherever they are. This much is to be said in their favor. They will take the most unpromising soil and turn it into a garden by thrift, hard work and good management. Shrewdness and industry would accomplish the same results for the Mormon victims anywhere else if they had these qualities."

Would not a little consistency be a good thing for the *Gazette* and other papers in touching on this question? What kind of "victims" are they to whom plenty has always been "a far off dream," and who are induced to "flock in droves" from poverty to places where they prosper and find abundance? And if they reach it by "thrift, hard work and good management," is not that far better than the pauper system which encourages idleness and promotes moral decay?

There are no "droves" of ignorant people flocking to Utah, but every year a few hundreds of Latter-day Saints who believe this is their proper gathering place, come here from religious motives, temporal advantages, if anything, being entirely of a secondary inducement to them. They work hard, have many trials at first, but if they remain and persevere they are "always prosperous" and gain "abundance at length." They do "take unpromising soil and turn it into a garden." And is not all this praiseworthy? Is it not of advantage both to the country and to the new comers? And if so, who are the "victims?" Who is injured? Who is deceived?

Does it not strike those editors what "fill up" every now and then with some hasty expressions of ill will to these "Mormon" proselyters, that they

contradict their own conclusions by their own admissions? A religion that takes the "ignorant poor" from helplessness in the Old World, and transforms them to thrifty, hardworking and prosperous citizens of the New World, seems to us a pretty good kind of religion. It is practical, elevating and beneficial to all parties concerned. It helps the land from which the converts come, it builds up the country where they settle, and it raises the individuals to a higher and more independent plane and secures to them the plenty which they never had before except in dreams.

But, after all, there is a good deal of exaggeration in these statements about "Mormon" methods, and the cold facts bear little resemblance to them. "Mormon" proselyters do not make these rosy promises, but they preach the Gospel of Christ, and the converts, when they are able, voluntarily gather with their fellow Church members and help to "build up Zion." They are free agents, but their religion teaches them industry, economy and unity, and they succeed in colonizing and in self support. Therefore the work that is done by the "Mormon" proselyters is deserving rather of the commendation than the sneers of the press of the United States.

#### INJUSTICE TO THE MORMONS.

THE New York *Truth Seeker*, in a recent editorial, couples the decision of Judge Zane in the Church property case and his article in the *Forum* on the "Mormon" question. It endorses the latter and disagrees with the former. It thinks the *Forum* article "shows conclusively that applying the law to the Mormons and not to other Christian sects is an act of infamous injustice."

This may be quite true, but a judge on the bench has to administer the law as he finds it and cannot change it in the interests of justice. His Honor expressed his opinion as to the impropriety of escheating the parsonage known as the Gardo House, but had to comply with the decision of a higher court in reference to the case.

The *Truth Seeker* makes some quotations from the *Forum* article and says:

"The only reason that the authorities can give for breaking up the Mormon Church is that its members were immoral in practicing polygamy. With any other doctrine of the Church the state has admittedly nothing to do. But this institution has been abandoned, and the Mormons are now like other sects, except that they are a little better morally than most Christians."

"These are the people whose property is taken away from them, while the other sects, not a whit more virtuous, may keep theirs in peace. The Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodists each own several hundred dollars' worth of property in Salt Lake City alone, but no effort is made to confiscate it by the prosecuting attorneys."

"This treatment of the Mormons shows conclusively that polygamy was not their only sin. They opposed the Christian church by being more Christian than the Christians, and they had to be put down. Polygamy was a good club to beat them down with, but now that it has been removed the Mormons ought to be given the same chance that other sects have."