

Saints were guided by the leaders, but I have often stated that it is impossible for any authorities to lead the people, unless they proclaim the truth. Half of the quorum of the first Twelve fell, but they could not carry with them any considerable number. No man will be permitted to lead this people astray.

We have a testimony because we have put the words of the Lord to a practical test. We know therefore for ourselves, as Peter did, when he testified that Jesus was the Christ. So the Saints can testify through the light of the Spirit that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff were and are the servants of the living God. And they can bear witness of this with no uncertain voice, for they know it from the manifestations and wonderful works that have accompanied the Gospel. I testify that these gifts, graces and power of the plan of salvation are among us.

The world know that we are willing to acknowledge the hand of God in all things. Even when laws are pending against us, the Saints thank the Lord whether they be passed or not. You cannot discourage a true Saint, because he knows that all that takes place will accrue for his good and lead him to eternal exaltation, eternal life—the greatest of God's gifts to man.

The Saints are not guilty of the abominable crimes that are prevalent in the world and which will damn them, body and soul. The first commandment of God is being fearfully disregarded. People are polluting and perverting the fountains of human life. The old slock are dying out and foreigners are filling their places. It is clear from this very fact that a time will come when the Saints will have to step in and perpetuate the country and its glowing institutions.

May we live to be upright and honest, that there may be no such crimes known among us, but we will have the Spirit of the Lord to lead us continually.

A solo, "Suffer little children to come unto me," was rendered, and the choir sang:

Mighty Jehovah!

Benediction was pronounced by President Charles W. Penrose.

#### WHAT THE PAPERS SAY.

SCARCELY a paper of any prominence in the United States fails to comment on the action of the General Conference on the Declaration made by President Woodruff. Of course their views are various. Some of them manifest much disturbance of mind and considerable rancor. Others assume a waiting attitude, desiring to see what the "Mormons" do before offering any opinion. Quite a number, however, accept the Declaration and its enforcement in the spirit in which they were made, and claim for the "Mormon" people that liber-

ty and those rights to which they are entitled, and which have been endangered by the general opposition to polygamy.

The *New York Times*, which has been a strong antagonist and has rarely had a good word for the "Mormons," devotes considerable space to a discussion of the subject. On the 3rd instant it said, editorially:

"The proclamation recently put forth by the octogenarian President of the Mormon Church admits that the days of polygamy are already numbered. It is true that the Utah Commission, in its report to the Interior Department, questions the sincerity of the professed abandonment by the Mormons of plural marriages. It holds that the penalties of the law alone induce them to profess obedience to it, and that there is no change in the ordinances of the Church or in its doctrines. It obtained the names of forty-one persons who, it is believed, have entered into the polygamous relation since June, 1889. But this last statement, which, on its face, is merely a matter of opinion, is controverted by the Mormon President, who speaks of a report of one such instance that occurred last year, but says that if the ceremony was really performed it was without his knowledge. He goes on to declare that 'we are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice.' He asserts that he and his associates now teach 'nothing which can reasonably be construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy, and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey such teachings he has been promptly reprov'd.'"

"Such language hardly justifies Governor Thomas' description of it as studiously indefinite."

Some papers complain because the Declaration did not come sooner and immediately after the Supreme Court first passed upon the constitutionality of the law of 1862, but the *Times* says:

"While the operation of the law has broken up the practice of polygamy, a special occasion has been furnished during the present year for the issue by President Wilford Woodruff's proclamation. This is the decision recently rendered by the Supreme court of the United States, which declares in effect that polygamy cannot find shelter under any claim of freedom of religious belief, since it is simply a crime. The Mormons were awaiting with much anxiety the announcement of the opinions of the Supreme Court, both in the Idaho test-oath case and in the suit growing out of the seizure and confiscation of real estate belonging to the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City, under the Edmunds act passed by the Forty-ninth Congress.

"What the Mormon President has now accordingly done is to declare that the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States will be submitted to by his community."

On the subject of the present belief of the Latter-day Saints which some professedly Christian fanatics insist must be changed, the *Times* says:

"It may be said that there is no indication in this manifesto of an abandonment of the belief that polygamy

is right. But that is something that no law could secure. Men in other communities may hold destructive religious, political, or social beliefs which would bring the law upon them if put into practice; what the highest individual authority in the Mormon Church declares is that, whereas polygamy was once practiced and taught by that Church, it is no longer inculcated. Had he gone further, into a general renunciation of beliefs held for many years, the suspicion of hypocrisy would have been much greater than under his present yielding to the law because an interpretation of it has been made by the highest tribunal in the land."

The *Times* concludes, its very temperate and well considered article with the following:

"The Mormon leaders themselves estimated half a dozen years ago that not more than one in sixteen of the people practiced polygamy, so that it is really a mercy to the other fifteen to destroy an institution which concerns them little personally, except as it prevents their community from entering on the career it otherwise would surely attain."

These remarks were made before the Conference. Since then the *New York Times* has again taken up the subject. From a lengthy editorial on the 10th inst., we clip the annexed paragraphs:

"There is not much reason for distrusting the sincerity of the renunciation of polygamy by the Mormons. The declaration made at their General Conference in Salt Lake yesterday is as comprehensive as it is explicit. The official prohibition by Brigham Young's successor of any marriages in violation of the law of the land was ratified by a unanimous vote. To prevent any misunderstanding it was explained that 'plural marriages' had been declared illegal by the Supreme Court of the United States, and thus made contrary to the law of the land. There is really no room for doubt that hereafter polygamy will be discontinued as much by the Mormons as by the Gentiles."

The class of fanatics before mentioned object because a wholesale renunciation and casting off of dependent plural wives, married many years ago did not accompany the action against future marriages in violation of law. The *Times* says:

"There are a very considerable number of women polygamously married in Utah already, in whose cases it would be cruel and inhuman to execute the law that would turn them out on the world as beggars, and the Mormons who have married them would be less than men if they consented to abandon them to such a fate. It is neither likely nor desirable that the law shall be strictly enforced *ex post facto*, provided it is obeyed in future, and provided polygamy is really and in good faith given up."

Another paragraph is deserving of reproduction, as it touches on facts which, though they strike sharply at some of our local opponents, are undeniably true. The *Times* remarks:

"Doubtless the renunciation of polygamy has come a little in advance of the overwhelming pressure of the westward movement of population. The Mormons might have hung on for a few years longer. But the longer they clung to their peculiar institution the more they would have been regarded as alien enemies by the people of the United States, and the less disposition there would have been to concede anything to them when the Gentiles became the majority in Utah and the Territory was admitted as a State. Moreover, they were already beset by Gentile politicians of the same character as Territorial politicians in