

their wives, would confer a far higher honor upon a nation, and would perform better service to the country than a Congress composed of monogamic, unreliable husbands.

Virtue is the foundation of the prosperity of any nation; and this sacred principle of plural marriage tends to virtue, purity and holiness. And those who represent the women of Utah as ignorant and degraded, are either aiming to bring evil upon us, or they know not what they are doing; and I feel that although I deprecate the false and odious representations of our condition, and the vilification of our characters, I view with pity and with commiseration those who have banded together in our midst, to work up a crusade that is calculated and designed to subvert and to sever the most sacred ties existing between man and woman—to separate husbands and wives, to put the reproach of bastardy upon their children, and trample upon the holiest affections of the human heart. I say I look upon them with sympathy and commiseration. They are trying to measure arms with the Almighty, they know not what they do. Do I feel a spirit of revenge towards them? No, my sisters, I do not. They are in the hands of God; we are in the hands of God, and to him we submit all these matters. Yet it is our duty, as far as we have the privilege, to plead our own cause, realizing fully that it is better to represent ourselves than to be mis-represented, and leave vengeance unto God who has said, "vengeance is mine, and I will repay." For this purpose, my sisters, we have met together to express our feelings and to plead our cause.

The following address was then read by Mrs. Bathsheba W. Smith:

It is somewhat surprising that we, who are the true representatives of the women of Utah, having, in connection with our husbands, assisted in redeeming these once desert valleys, should be called to assemble to vindicate ourselves against misrepresentations made by our Christian sisters, those who have arrived here at so late a date and for so different an object. We were driven from our homes to seek refuge somewhere else, for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God. They know why we are here. We came because we loved God and the principles of righteousness, "counting all things as dross for the excellency of the knowledge of God," who had revealed himself in our day; hoping that far away from a professed Christianity we might live in peace and worship Him who had so highly favored us, and live in accordance with those principles which alone lead to endless lives. As a legal citizen of this great republic, I enter my most fervent protest against this unlawful and unhallowed crusade founded on misrepresentations. Congress has no right to interfere with our most sacred religion. As well might that honorable body legislate against baptism by immersion as against plurality of wives. God has revealed these principles and they must be sustained. With our own free consent our husbands take more wives, and when children crown our joy, around our sacred family altars we bow the knee and supplicate our Heavenly Father's blessing on our household, and rejoice in his divine favor as legitimate wives with honorable children. We regard our husbands as men of true virtue and integrity, who take upon themselves so great a responsibility in honoring the laws of God, and we bear them up in our faith and secret prayers. Let our sisters in the United States know this, and instead of seeking special legislation to infringe upon our liberties, let them rather take the honorable part and protect us in our rights, and thus make for themselves a nobler record.

Sister Zina D. Young delivered the following extemporaneous speech:

The ladies of Utah, whose intelligent faces I now look upon! Could I have had a vision of so grand a spectacle 40 years ago, when as a church, few in numbers, we were struggling for an existence on the earth, I question whether I then could have believed my eyes, nor could I then have thought that God had prepared so great a blessing, that I should behold so goodly a number of intelligent ladies who have had the privilege of being

baptized into Christ, of putting on Christ, counting it no robbery with God to be heirs and joint heirs with his Son Jesus. It was for this purpose you and I found a resting place in these valleys of the mountains, which, as has been remarked, was not then United States soil. The incidents of our coming here in the manner we did—the fatigue, the suffering from cold and hunger as well as the heart-rending scenes through which we passed, have often been penned. But Oh! none can realize them, or appreciate fully our feelings when contemplating those early experiences, but those who passed through them. Those scenes have passed; but we are sometimes reminded of them, especially when croppings of the same spirit are witnessed in those who oppose us in our rights, which prompted those who forced upon us our sufferings.

The principle of our holy religion that is assailed is one that lies deep in my heart. Could I ask the hearers to listen; could I beseech the earth to be still, and the brave men who possess the spirit of a Washington to hear what I am about to say! I am the daughter of a Master Mason; I am the widow of a Master Mason, who, when leaping from the windows of Carthage jail pierced with bullets, made the Masonic sign of distress; but, gentlemen (addressing the representatives of the press that were present) those signs were not heeded except by the God of heaven. That man, the prophet of the Almighty, massacred without mercy! He is now with those who are crying, "Wait a little longer, until the blood of your brethren, the martyrs, is shed." [Applause] Sisters, this is the first time in my life that I have dared to give utterance to this fact, but I thought I could trust my soul to say it on this occasion, and I say it now in the fear of Israel's God, and I say it in the presence of these gentlemen, and I wish my voice could be heard by the whole brotherhood of Masons throughout our proud land. That institution I honor. If its principles were practised and strictly adhered to, would there be a trespass upon virtue? No indeed. Would the honorable wife or daughter be intruded on with impunity? Nay verily. Would that the ladies of America, with the honorable Mrs. Hayes at their head; would that the Congress of the United States, the law-makers of our nation, could produce a balm for the many evils which exist in our land through the abuse of virtue, or could so legislate that virtue could be protected, and cherished as the life which heaven has given us! We, in common with many a woman throughout our broad land, would hail with joy the approach of such deliverance, for such is the deliverance that woman needs.

The principle of plural marriage is honorable, it is a principle of the Gods—it is heaven-born. God revealed it to us, among other things, as a saving principle; we have accepted it as such, and we know it is of him for the fruits of it are holy. Worthy men and women of old practised it, even the Savior himself traces his lineage back to polygamic parents. We are proud of the principle because we understand its true worth, and we want our children to practise it, that through us a race of men and women may grow up possessing sound minds in sound bodies, who shall "live to the age of a tree."

Some of the ladies who have so recently come among us have thought fit to band together, for what? If they truly want to benefit and bless their sex, let them direct their labors among the many unfortunate women of the towns and cities from whence they came. They cannot help us, God alone can do that. And we are already blessed with comfortable and happy homes, with rights and privileges which they can neither give nor take from us. And we are blessed with husbands whom we have confidence in, and we honor them as they honor their God. And let me tell you, my sisters, there are many good and intelligent women in our land to-day who wish their husbands were as honorable as ours, and that they could tie to theirs, as we can to ours. We love our husbands, we love our children, and we love our religion, and there is abundance of proof in what we have done that we are sincere.

The next speaker was Mrs. Hannah T. King, who read the following written by herself:

I heard in my youth of the perfect freedom and the glorious liberty of America; of the uncanted wealth of her citizens; that there were no poor in America; that fraternity and equality walked hand in hand; that her constitution was the most faultless thing on earth; that the finger of God was palpable in its formation; that the country produced almost spontaneously, its prospects grand and glorious; that her hills were mountains and her rivers seas; that the worship of the great Creator was free and unbiased to all, without any restrictions, even though it were absurd, or thought to be so, still it was free, and all respected! For this very freedom the *Mayflower* bore her precious freight of souls across the mighty Atlantic. Yes, the one grand idea, that here they might worship God according to the dictates of their own individual creed and conscience. I was born free, and was an earnest, deep thinking girl, and the glory of this description became degenerated on my young mind till the dream of my youth became a desire to visit this Eldorado, and see for myself this glorious Young America! This far renowned republic! But years passed, and the way did not open. I was married early in life, and peace and plenty surrounded my habitation, my cup became full to overflowing, of good things. When I heard of a people who had risen up in this land which I had so poetized in my own mind, and that they were called Latter-day Saints. My mind was brought to a focus upon the principles they advanced; I consulted no one but my God. I took my Bible, and compared them with the teachings of Jesus, and found they corresponded in every particular. The elders told me that an angel had come and restored the everlasting gospel in its purity again to the earth, that revelations had been given for the re-organization of God's church upon the earth, the door being that by which Christ himself entered when he was baptized by John the Baptist before entering upon his mission, &c., &c. I listened and obeyed; there were no inducements held out of ecclesiastical honors, or of a high position in society. No! but that probably my name would be cast out as evil when I took upon myself the name of a disciple of Jesus, whose life was suffering and obedience! The love of truth and the spirit of God showed me that this church was according to the pattern, in every particular, that Christ had laid down and established by his own example; I embraced it, passing through the door of baptism for the remission of my sins. And now the way was open for me to realize the dream of my youth, and become an inhabitant of this free and glorious country, that I had so often heard spoken of as the refuge of the destitute, and the land of the free! Then came the astounding news that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Church of Christ had been massacred for his principles! as also his brother Hyrum with him! It came like a thunderbolt! What, in America? the land of religious freedom? that land whose constitution guaranteed to all of every clime among her people "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!" It could not be! I exclaimed. Alas! I awakened from my early dream! My eyes were opened and I saw, and knew that light had come into the world, but darkness was preferred. To me, it acted only as a testimony that this was indeed the church of Jesus Christ, re-established upon the earth, and hence the persecution. Gathering was and is one of our principles and I had the spirit of it as soon as I had been baptized; my good and beautiful children embraced it also and we rose and left our beloved home laying all upon the altar, if need be, for the Gospel in its fulness; and embracing all its principles and of course plurality among the rest. I had been educated in the strictest principles of morality and refinement, yet when I heard that this was one of the tenets of the Church, given by revelation, I was by no means staggered, but pondered it in my heart like Mary of old! I knew it was the order of the ancient Saints, and great blessings had been conferred upon the human family by obeying it, even the Savior coming to earth through that lineage. Viewing it also philosophically, I felt that its laws coincided with the law of my nature; my daughters entered into the order in all their youth and beauty—edu-

cated as they had been in all the refinements of the world, and have ever honored it, and been an honor to it, and to the church, whose principles they left their home and all its attractions to obey; and if my husband did not enter into it, he was of course free to follow his own mind, he was a man of the purest, most refined morals, and I never heard him say or hint one word against the order, even when his young daughters entered into it. "Verily, 'To the pure, all things are pure.' I have now been in the Church 28 years, and my path has not been one of roses by any means, but I have no regrets; I would not return to former things, for Queen Victoria's crown and all its appendages. The Lord being my helper, I will live and die where I have cast my lot. Its principles will feed and sustain all who desire to live them, and are full of glory and immortality. This is, indeed, a mere synopsis of my Church history, but a hint to the wise and good is sufficient for them. I would like to have an interview with the first lady of our country at the present time; I have heard much of her goodness, her love of honesty and truth, and should love to see her take steps to investigate our principles, and us as a people, we court investigation, and never feel afraid. For perfect love casteth out fear. We love the honest, the wise and the good of every land and clime, for one touch of the gospel makes the whole world kin, when they embrace it. If there are strangers present I would respectfully ask them to investigate our principles—not the characters of men and women indiscriminately, the truth of God is not dependent on human action or human judgment. Among what churches on earth are there no imperfect ones? We must first be perfect ourselves before we throw down the gauntlet. This is a probation, and imperfection is at present the law of our being; by this "we make the whips that scourge us," and by this we get our schooling and increase in knowledge, wisdom and understanding, and then we can make all things work for our good in time and eternity.

Mrs. Margaret T. Smoot made the following impromptu speech:

I am thankful, am proud of the privilege of standing before my sisters in the new and everlasting covenant, many of whom know me and have known me for many years. I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints forty-four years; I have trodden paths strewn with thorns, and I have trodden paths strewn with roses. I have enjoyed my life and my religion all the days I have spent in it. I know for myself that we are engaged in the work of the living God, and that I am numbered among his people.

With regard to the principle of plural marriage, I wish to say, that I have had experience in its practice for nearly forty years. I am the wife of a polygamist, I believe in the principle, and I know it to be pure and chaste; and I know that those who practise it in the spirit of the Gospel of which it is a part, are pure and virtuous. And I know, too, that purer men and women do not live upon God's footstool than those who live in this order of marriage.

I have seen the Prophet Joseph through whom this principle was revealed; I have listened to his teachings, I have known for myself of his virtue, of his purity, of his goodness, of his desire to elevate and bless the human family, and what I say, many of you, my sisters, can bear witness of. I know too that virtue and goodness and purity is the watchword of our brethren; I say I know, I do not say I believe it, but I do know for myself that what I say is true. I know it by the revelations of the Spirit of the living God—the Comforter that was promised by the Saviour, and it is confirmed by my long experience. I have lived now nearly 70 years on this earth, and 44 of them have been spent serving my God in this new and everlasting covenant.

My husband, as I have intimated, is a polygamist; his other wives and his children by those are just as much a part of his family as me and mine, I being his first wife; and his other wives are just as lawful and honorable in the sight of God as I am, and his children I consider to be just as lawful and honorable as any children born in wedlock. These are not only my feelings,

but I know them to be the feelings of many others who occupy a position like that which I occupy, and I believe them to be the feelings of this whole community who would, if they had the privilege, speak in their own defense. We are not a degraded community; we are not in abject slavery. We have our privileges and rights—just as many as I want, and as many as I know how to use. Let me repeat—we are not "degraded," neither are our children. We have the noblest of children and the happiest of homes. I would be willing to compare my husband's family with anybody's family, to see what defect can be found in them. Our sisters, ladies of other persuasions, have spoken of us as being "degraded." They do not know us, we are not understood, our principles are not understood, neither are our motives known. We have never attempted to interfere with any of their privileges. On the contrary, we have made them welcome to our land after making it what it is. We are they who came here when the place was a desert wilderness; who have subdued the arid soil, built the cities and planted the gardens and vineyards, and made the place beautiful and desirable. We, I say, have done this; under the blessing of Almighty God, for without his blessing upon our labors we could not have endured the toil. But let me say, that as far as our situation is concerned, we are in the hands of God, and, as has often been said, so I say, if this work is of God it will stand, despite all efforts to the contrary; and if of man, it must fail. But I do not use the word "if" as though in doubt about it, because I know, and you know, my sisters, that it is of God; and we know, too, of the purity, the virtues and the integrity that fill the bosoms of our sisters belonging to this Church. We do not profess to be perfect, but we can say, that those who live the religion we profess, who live up to all their privileges, are blessed and owned of God. We are in his hands, and he will take care of his people.

Mrs. Dr. Roumania Pratt read the following address:

Mrs. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

To get the proper understanding of a subject about which there is a difference of opinion, and especially in an element where right and wrong are so intricately intermingled—wrong displacing right at every presented opportunity, we must eliminate the facts, which are the stern and indisputable rounds in the ladder of ascent by which we climb slowly, but surely, to the true solution of the difficulty. Suddenly there has arisen in our midst a new variety of opposition, the object of which is to tread into the dust, without stint or distinction, that which we hold most sacred. It is an element that, in the search for evil, has skimmed from the surface the floating ills with which (magnified and recolored by their own perverted imagination into absolute misrepresentation) they have sought to arouse in the public mind, sentiments as bitter as their own, with this object—that we may be swept out of existence without our cause being investigated or considered. They have entirely overlooked the fact that truth is heavy and often lies hidden in the depths of unspoken words and deeds.

The first question in the process of analysis of this matter is, who are these opposers? and second, Who are the opposed? The latter are they who, by glancing back through the vista of thirty years, may be seen in their westward journey as a little handful of husbands, wives and children, slowly wending their way toward the wilderness, with the cheerful hope treasured deeply in their hearts that there, buried in its depths, they might worship God according as he revealed his will and commandments. Thus the weary miles were crept over, patiently overcoming the obstacles of nature, braving dangers from wild men and beasts, until the Lord whispered to his anointed Prophet: "Here in the barren valley of the Great Salt Lake is the resting place of my people."

Diligently the pitching of tents went on, followed by busy preparations for the approaching untold winter, without a single misgiving as to the result, for their hearts were filled with the sustaining and glowing influence of the Holy Spirit, inspiring them with the assur-

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