

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 26.—April, 1886.

I.

THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE A PROOF OF
ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

SILENCE is sometimes big with testimony. Evidence does not all get syllabled in speech. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language." The praise does not get spoken audibly to the ear of men; but the swinging worlds are forever testifying to the "eternal power and divinity" of Him who fashioned them in the past, and holds them still in his resistless and measureless leash. All the starry hosts of the sky are "moving their rounds in silent rhythm and inaudible song."

Robert Hall has a sermon on the text: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,"* in which he says it is difficult to determine whether the glory of God appears more in what He displays or in what He conceals. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself." Hiding, while yet revealing, He, in the very revelation, has given proof of the divinity that shaped it by the silences that thunder along the sacred text.

It would ill befit silence to claim for it everywhere the place of "Sir Oracle." Silence is not always a pearl of great price. It is not a pearl of any price when enforced by ignorance. It must be "cunning in dumbness"—not dumb from mere stupidity. Its worth lies in its withholding speech with a purpose, and for some high end. When it is of necessity, because of the utter paucity of its own

* Works of Robert Hall, London, 1845, vol. vi.

THE MORMON QUESTION.

THE question respecting Mormonism which just now most interests our people, is not as to the origin or history of the strange system practised and propagated in our country. It is rather as to the marked religious and political features of the system itself, and the duty of the Church and of the nation in regard to it. Whether Joseph Smith actually found the golden plates of the Book of Mormon and was divinely inspired to translate them, or its substance was taken from Spaulding's manuscript, or Smith and Rigdon manufactured it, are questions about which opinions will differ, and they are of comparatively small moment. Whether its ethics and general economy and way of salvation from the ruin of sin, as stated in direct and indirect language, do or do not correspond with the declarations of the Bible, may be affirmed or denied with very little practical significance. The fearful fact is that Mormonism is established on our soil. Its peculiarities and principles are distinctly announced, fully exhibited, exultant, and threatening. It demands that it be undisturbed, and asks that it may even be protected and favored in its advance. The simple, imperative, pressing question is, What shall be done about it?

That this question may be properly answered let us have clearly in mind its essential features.

1. Those features which mark its organization.

This could hardly be more complete or effective. The officers or leaders are of several grades, from the mass to the President, or supreme Head, who is absolute in both authority and teaching. All these leaders are spies, overseers, executives, expounders, more or less inspired, swearing fealty to the Head in everything, as being above any control or law save that of God, and of this he is the interpreter and judge. The Head is in direct communication with God, and at any time and concerning anything he may receive special revelations for the instruction and guidance of himself and the people. The right of private judgment respecting truth and duty is refused. Every man, woman, and child is included in the range of obligation to the Church, and the most heinous sin is disobedience to its authority or apostasy from the faith. In addition to the regularly prescribed economy, new orders of officers for the accomplishment of desired ends may at any time be created, to serve at the will of the Head and his immediate Council; such as the "Order of Enoch," the object of which is to bring all the real estate directly within the control of the Church; the "Danites," appointed specifically for the execution of vengeance or for the violent attainment of schemes involving property and life; and numberless more private and temporary officials, who, under fearful oaths of loyalty, at all hazards and at any cost, are sent on any errands that may be given them. For the purposes of government in the Church, which must ever be regarded as both religious and political in its structure; for efficiency in propagandism, which is a very large element of their success; for resistance of all opposition and the effectual removal of opposers; for the achievement, in short, of what

it avows to be its aim by the command of God—viz., the final supremacy of the Latter-Day Saints as a temporal and spiritual power ; there could not be a more unscrupulous, and rigorous, and perfect organization. It is often the occasion of marvel that such a system, having much in it which must be repellent to the taste and sensibilities and convictions of ordinary men and women, should have such influence with both men and women ; and that in so many lands proselytes in great numbers are won to the system, and are firm adherents after they are transferred into more direct connection with its working. The marvel diminishes greatly when it is remembered what overmastering power thorough organization has ever had in the prosecution of human schemes, wide or narrow—especially when of the very structure itself there have been elements in the almost unyielding conglomerate furnished by lust for power, conscience, intelligence, ignorance, will, superstition, money, hope for the future, and sensual indulgence. Of these elements Mormonism is conspicuously composed, and the cohesive force of the system is its organization.

2. Those features which mark its religion.

It teaches that the Bible is of divine authority, so far as it has been correctly translated ; but that whether this is true must be determined by the Church, and it may and must be supplemented. It is polytheistic, as much so as was the religion of the Greeks. The great God exists, but has little to do with affairs in any part of the universe. Adam was a god, and with him alone do we have any relations in this world. Any of us may become gods by complying with certain conditions. These conditions relate to a general kind of goodness, devotion to the Church and eminence in its councils, the possession of a large number of wives and children, and costly services in support of the kingdom of heaven. The gods are the fathers of all spirits in the spirit land, and these spirits are in great numbers waiting for opportunity to enter bodies that may be born on earth, without which they are incomplete, in both structure and bliss. Hence the duty and honor of doing all that can be done to multiply these bodies, within the limits of the Church, to be possessed by the children spirits of the multitude of gods. There cannot be too many.

Their religion is intensely and grossly sensual in their practice while in the flesh, and in their conception of the future life. This is seen not only in polygamous marriage, but in their representation of the heavenly state, its employments, its pleasures, its worship, its modes of life of all the grades of the inhabitants.

It is promoted by misrepresentation. Nothing can be reliably learned respecting what is taught as truth or duty by reading the Book of Mormon or the Bible, or by listening to the preaching in the mixed congregations of the Tabernacle. We are handed forms of doctrine as being the summary of Mormon faith, or we are told what the Saints accept as the rules of living in business and society. We are asked what objection we have to these doctrines and rules, and we are reproached for persecution of people whose sentiments and conduct may well be lessons for ourselves. The truth is, we know not what the Mormon reads between the lines of these statements, and accepts as behind

these displays of morals, until we have heard what meaning his leader puts on the words we are ready to admire. Not the teaching of the Tabernacle, but that of the Tithing House or the Ward Meeting gives us what Mormonism is. Taylor preaches on the Sabbath, then on Monday or Tuesday evening one of the Apostles meets with the faithful in one of their own companies, and says to them : " You heard what Brother Taylor said on the Sabbath ; that was for the general instruction of those then assembled, but they could not understand its hidden meaning ; they have nothing in common with us, who have the Spirit and the inspired teacher, and the privileges of the Church. To us what he said means this, and this, and this," including in all these particulars whatever it may suit the purposes of the leaders just then to teach. We must give a place to private instruction, to priestly authority, to blind faith, and a very wide place to special revelation, which may modify and even displace what has been written or said, before we learn what the Mormons to-day believe, or the acts they will feel at liberty to-day to perform. Ignorance opens the way for all this misrepresentation, and the power of the entire system renders it effective, till the standards go for little, and what the Apostles say is supreme. Just what might be expected as the result of such possibilities we actually find to be true. Their religion is constantly taking on new forms, changing with the wishes, or fancy, or plans of those who lead ; and all these changes are received with enthusiasm, all that enthusiasm that attends a fanatic's firm belief that what he receives is made known by God.

Another, and one of the most harmful of its features, is that their religion sets Christ aside as the Saviour of sinners. They teach that He is the Saviour, but some of their most prominent doctrines deny this. For example, the general instruction and belief respecting tithes make these to be conditions of salvation. Habitual refusal to pay is punished with excommunication, whatever as otherwise tested may be one's spiritual state. Constant fidelity in paying is sure of God's favor, however widely one may wander from other paths of devotion. Their view of " baptism for the dead " makes it the duty of the living to be baptized in place of those in a future state of probation, who would otherwise be without hope. No preaching of Christ to them is necessary. Some friend on earth, or some compassionate soul who knows of their state, may be their Saviour by receiving this sacrament in their behalf.

Their doctrine concerning the relation of the wife to a husband, which makes the fact that she has been " sealed " to him by Church authority and rite the sole title to heaven for her, places her beyond all need of any other Saviour. She is sure of eternal life, without reference to character or conduct while here, if the sealing has been made sure.

Their theory of " blood atonement," or the necessity that certain sins—apostasy, for example—must be expiated by the death of him who has committed them if he is to be saved, leaves entirely out of view any other atonement. If such a sinner can be murdered by authority of the Church he will go to heaven.

These and other beliefs which might be mentioned are marked methods of

showing contempt for Jesus as the only Redeemer of men. The entire system is an exhibition of man's ways of salvation, not of God's way. Some of the worst features of some of the worst forms of religion the world has known have been engrafted upon this monstrous delusion, and the very announcement of these as sufficient, with all the accompanying consequences, is well-nigh blasphemous.

3. Those features which mark its life.

It permits and practices the most gross deception. Many do not hesitate to declare that they were entirely deceived by the statements and promises which influenced them to join the Church and remove to the Territory. I heard at a meeting in Salt Lake City reports from a number of missionaries who had been sent forth for recruits, and their assertions were notoriously untrue. They said that the common people in Massachusetts were accepting the faith of the Saints in great numbers, notwithstanding the ministers were spending a large part of their time in preaching against this faith, and that within a little time the orthodox churches there would be abandoned and the people would come in crowds to Utah. Similar declarations were made respecting the Southern States and the nations of Europe, and the thousands of hearers praised the Lord, and evidently felt confirmed by the lies wholesaled to them for this purpose.

Their doctrine respecting special revelation is a device by which to take advantage of ignorance, and in its exercise it is laden with imposition as to both doctrine and requirements. Indeed, the entire system cheats, and flourishes through deception.

It unblushingly violates law. The means employed for the getting of property into the hands of the Church, to which I have referred, are in flagrant disregard of the right of property.

The practice of polygamy and the crimes associated with it are in flagrant disregard of all laws for the protection of virtue and the family.

The appointment of companies and individuals for the execution of orders involving the removal of those in the way of the leaders; the infamous doctrine of blood atonement; the claim that the Church has jurisdiction over the lives of men, whether members or not, are in direct contempt of the law against murder; and there is abounding proof that actual instances of such violation of the law have been frequent.

It abases and abuses woman. The theory is that she is inferior to man, and that in many particulars she is to be subject to his pleasure. In her physical life she is to contribute to his supposed advantage or elevation. She is to stifle and crush all her natural instincts and tastes and wishes. She must live as man lists. She must bear as many children as possible, and become a slave for their support, instead of a wife and mother. In her eternal life she is saved only because sealed to some man; she is honored only because she has supplied so many child bodies for the child spirits of the gods. She is terrorized with the decree that if she shrinks from any of this degradation and outrage she will be eternally lost. There are thousands of women in Utah who suffer in their hearts, in their humiliation, beyond all description, because they really believe

that their salvation depends on this shameless trampling down of their rights, and their silent endurance of the torture.

It teaches treason and flaunts treason against the Government. Its political features are perpetual evidence of this, and its history and repeated declarations leave no opportunity to doubt it. It is by no means content with assertions respecting spiritual triumph and supremacy as a church. More and more distinct has been the claim of political authority and the prediction of national control. Within a few weeks one of the Mormon leaders boasted of their purpose to overthrow our Government, and announced the number of years within which the Latter-Day Saints will be the rulers of the nation. They resist our authority under their claim of independence. They have made repeated and dreadful threats under the same claim. They commit outrages upon our citizens, and can be restrained from more extreme violence only by the guns of Fort Douglas, because they deny our jurisdiction and vow that they will be avenged of the compulsion that obliges them to live as other citizens live.

This exhibition of what Mormonism is, and what it proposes, renders it unnecessary to say much concerning the other part of the question before us—viz., What should be done about it? Manifestly,

1. Good people, or the Church as the representative of good people, should use all proper means to show Mormons the errors they accept, and thus disintegrate and destroy the system. Christian missionaries, Christian teachers, Christian influences, borne among them by the channels of intercourse, of business, of general communication, should be multiplied and vigorously maintained. The ignorance of these people is well known, and upon this the leaders build their hopes. They are kept away from contact with all whom they call Gentiles. Changes that all have noted have resulted from the influence of earnest missionaries and schools and tract colporteurs; and they were never doing so much as now, especially among the children and youth, with whom such changes are always most effective and rapid.

2. The Government should protect all citizens, Mormons and others, among Mormons and everywhere, in the proper enjoyment of all their rights.

These rights relate to the person, property, and life. There can be no doubt that all these are endangered, if not violated, in Utah. The methods of protection, and the wise use of these methods, of course are not to be dictated to Congress or the President, but some efficient methods all have the privilege of demanding. The ignorant and defrauded Mormons ought to be shielded and cared for by the Government. The men and women who go among them to teach, or preach, or do business, or seek pleasure, should be made safe by national authority; and there should be no delay or doubt about this.

3. The laws should be executed in that Territory exactly as they are executed in any other part of the land. The Mormons claim the right to violate law because of their religion. But a man has no more license to commit crime, prompted by his religion, than he has prompted by his business, or his associations, or his inclination. No citizen should be made superior to another by his religion, and none should be imperilled by another's religion. The only

safety for any is in the certainty that laws will be universally and vigorously and impartially executed.

4. The nation should vindicate its dignity, and subdue all avowed enemies, by any proper means which their threats may render necessary.

No nation is safe while it trifles with declared foes. No plea for release from responsibility can justify open assaults upon the nation's life. No citizen or band of citizens should be permitted with impunity to proclaim to the world the purpose to destroy the government of which they are a part, and on which a great people depend. No interests are more sacred and important than the interests of a nation with whose welfare the world itself is involved.

JAMES EELLS.

Cincinnati.

THE RELATIONS OF THE THREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF SCOTLAND.

PROFESSORS CALDERWOOD and FLINT having expressed their views on this subject in previous numbers of this REVIEW, the editors are good enough to call upon me now to have my say. It is a subject which one feels a great difficulty in approaching; but as the situation has changed in important respects since Dr. Flint wrote last autumn, it seems reasonable that another endeavour should be made to describe it.

Dr. Flint's view of the relations of the three churches was avowedly pessimist; he could see no reasonable ground for expecting that they all would, or for that matter could, take the conciliatory attitude which Dr. Calderwood recommended; there seemed no prospect but that of drifting more and more into an attitude of antagonism. The United Presbyterian Church was using its whole political influence for disestablishment and disendowment; a large majority of the Free Church had joined them in this demand; only a minority of that church retained their disruption ground; by taking this attitude, these churches refused every shred of compromise; how, then, was it possible for the Established Church to maintain an attitude of conciliation? Nobody would take a calm view of anything that might be proposed.

Yet Dr. Flint, in the progress of his paper, let it appear that he was not so hopelessly pessimist as he seemed. He went on to give an outline of a *modus vivendi* that might embrace all the three churches without any of them having to surrender what it deemed matter of principle. What has since emerged has shown that not Dr. Flint, the pessimist, but Dr. Flint hoping against hope, was nearest the truth; and though his scheme is exposed to difficulties apparently insuperable, it seems possible (though not at present probable) that it will prove the basis of a comprehensive union.

Since Dr. Flint wrote "many things have happened," particularly these three: first, we have had a general election; second, a bill designed to promote the union of churches, introduced into Parliament by Mr. Finlay, M.P.; and, third, a scheme of union, pretty much on the lines of Dr. Flint, formu-