

AMNESTY.

On December 18, 1891, there was placed in my hands the following petition for amnesty, signed by the president of the Mormon Church and his two counselors and all the apostles of the church in this country at the time.

It seemed to me it was the most important document which the Government had received from the officers of the Mormon Church. It was a distinct, unqualified pledge that for the future the Mormon Church and people would loyally observe and uphold the law. After consultation with Chief Justice Zane we agreed to transmit the petition to Washington with the letter that follows the petition. Subsequently Judges Miner, Blackburn, and Anderson, of the Territorial supreme court, Secretary Elijah Sells, and Utah Commissioners Godfrey, Saunders, and Robertson joined in the recommendation.

We, the first presidency and apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, beg respectfully to represent to your excellency the following facts:

We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or celestial marriage, as commanded by God through Joseph Smith, was right; that it was a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come.

That doctrine was publicly promulgated by our president, the late Brigham Young, forty years ago, and was steadily taught and impressed upon the Latter-Day Saints up to a short time before September, 1890. Our people are devout and sincere, and they accepted the doctrine and many personally embraced and practiced polygamy.

When the Government sought to stamp the practice out, our people, almost without exception, remained firm, for they, while having no desire to oppose the Government in anything, still felt that their lives and their honor as men were pledged to a vindication of their faith, and that their duty towards those whose lives were a part of their own was a paramount one, to fulfill which they had no right to count anything, not even their own lives, as standing in the way. Following this conviction, hundreds endured arrest, trial, fine, and imprisonment, and the immeasurable suffering borne by the faithful people no language can describe. That suffering, in abated form, still continues.

More, the Government added disfranchisement to its other punishments for those who clung to their faith and fulfilled its covenants.

According to our faith the head of our church receives, from time to time, revelations for the religious guidance of his people.

In September, 1890, the present head of the church, in anguish and prayer, cried to God for help for his flock, and received the permission to advise the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints that the law commanding polygamy was henceforth suspended.

At the great semiannual conference which was held a few days later this was submitted to the people, numbering many thousands and representing every community of the people in Utah, and was by them in the most solemn manner accepted as the future rule of their lives.

They have since been faithful to the covenant made that day.

At the late October conference, after a year had passed by, the matter was once more submitted to the thousands of people gathered together, and they again, in the most potential manner, ratified the solemn covenant.

This being the true situation and believing that the object of the Government was simply the vindication of its own authority and to compel obedience to its laws, and that it takes no pleasure in persecution, we respectfully pray that full amnesty may be extended to all who are under disabilities because of the operation of the so-called Edmunds and Edmunds-Tucker law. Our people are scattered; homes are made desolate; many are still imprisoned; others are banished or in hiding. Our hearts bleed for these. In the past they followed our counsels, and while they are thus afflicted our souls are in sackcloth and ashes.

We believe there is nowhere in the Union a more loyal people than the Latter-Day Saints. They know no other country except this. They expect to live and die on this soil.

When the men of the South, who were in rebellion against the Government in 1865, threw down their arms and asked for recognition along their old lines of citizenship, the Government hastened to grant their prayers.

To be at peace with the Government and in harmony with their fellow-citizens who are not of their faith, and to share in the confidence of the Government and

people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle.

Have they not the right to ask for such clemency as comes when the claims of both law and justice have been fully liquidated?

As shepherds of a patient and suffering people we ask amnesty for them and pledge our faith and honor for their future.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

WILFORD WOODRUFF.
 GEORGE Q. CANNON.
 JOSEPH F. SMITH.
 LORENZO SNOW.
 FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS.
 MOSES THATCHER.
 FRANCIS M. LYMAN.

H. J. GRANT.
 JOHN HENRY SMITH.
 JOHN W. TAYLOR.
 M. W. MERRILL.
 ANTHON H. LUND.
 ABRAHAM H. CANNON.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, December 19, 1891.

To the President:

We have the honor to forward herewith a petition signed by the president and most influential members of the Mormon Church. We have no doubt of its sincerity and no doubt that it is tendered in absolute good faith. The signers include some who were most determined in adhering to their religious faith while polygamy, either mandatory or permissive, was one of its tenets, and they are men who would not lightly pledge their faith and honor to the Government or subscribe to such a document without having fully resolved to make their words good in letter and spirit.

We warmly recommend a favorable consideration of this petition, and if your excellency shall find it consistent with your public duties to grant the relief asked, we believe it would be graciously received by the Mormon people, and tend to evince to them, what has always been asserted, that the Government is beneficent in its intentions, only asks obedience to its laws, and desires all law-abiding citizens to enjoy all the benefits and privileges of citizenship. We think it will be better for the future if the Mormon people should now receive this mark of confidence.

As to the form and scope of a reprieve or pardon, granted in the exercise of your constitutional prerogative, we make no suggestions. You and your law advisers will best know how to grant what you may think should be granted. We are, very respectfully,

ARTHUR L. THOMAS,
Governor of Utah.
 CHARLES S. ZANE,
Chief Justice of Utah Territory.

POLYGAMY.

In my last report, referring to the action of the president of the Mormon Church in issuing the so-called manifesto on September 25, 1890, in which he said: "And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-Day Saints is to refrain from continuing any marriage forbidden by the laws of the land," and the action of the Mormon people in their general conference of October 6, 1890, and again on October 6, 1891, in adopting, by a unanimous vote, a resolution declaring that "we consider him (Wilford Woodruff) fully authorized, by virtue of his position, to issue the manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 6, 1890, and that, as a church in general conference assembled, we accept the declaration concerning plural marriage as authoritative and binding," I said that I had "no doubt that, as they (the Mormon people) have been led to believe it (the manifesto) was put forth by divine sanction, it will be received by the members of the Mormon Church as an authoritative rule of conduct, and that, in effect, the practice of polygamy has been formally renounced by the people."

I know of nothing which has transpired during the past year to lead me to qualify the opinions above expressed, so far as the Mormon leaders and the Mormon people, as a whole, are concerned. I do not be-