among the people of Palestine, telling
them that the kingdom of heaven was
at hand and calling upon all who enter-
tained faith in his mission to come and
be baptized—it appears that he created
quite a sensation among the people, in-
somuch that all they of Jerusalem and
Judea and the regions round about went
forth and were baptized by him in great
multitudes, as recorded in Mark, i, 8.
This had a political effect upon the rulers
of that day, and when John was followed
by Jesus and his wonderful works, they
began to say—"If we let him thus alone,
all men will believe on him: and the Ro-
mans will come and take away our place
and nation." It was very directly a mat-
ter of political significance and impor-
tance.
I recollect that some fifty years ago,
in the days of my youth, and in the
land of the Puritans, I used to hear
and to see aged matrons as well as rever-
en ministers wringing their hands
and lifting up their eyes with holy hor-
or, because there was a great evil in the
land called slavery. They could scarcely
eat or drink in peace, or worship God
with the spirit and understanding, by
reason of a terrible sense of condem-
nation resting on their consciences—
because their brethren in the South-
ern States believed in slavery. This
came to be worked up by the preach-
ers in the pulpits, by the politicians in
their stump speeches, by the parents of
households, and fulminated by the press,
until in nearly every class of society
there was a continual stir and sensation
about slavery in the Southern States.
This terrible evil had become one of
such vast importance that it must some
day bring a national scourge, and in
their great anxiety and horror over this,
and their determination to put it away,
they stirred up the fire until the North
were at enmity and hostility against the
South, and the South were at enmity and
hostility against the North. We well rec-
collect what were the consequences of the
recent terrible conflict that devastated
and demoralized so much of our beloved
country. While this fanaticism was rag-
ing in the North, and silent preparations
for defense were going on in the South,
one seemed to consider the cost of hun-
dreds of thousands of lives, or the taxa-
tion necessary to pay a few hundred mil-
lions of war debt, and still less the de-
moralizing influences thereby fastened
upon the country.

About the same time, or very soon
after, when the Elders began to preach
the Gospel in that region, I recollect that
there arose quite a sensation about this
people that professed to have new reve-
lation. It seemed to strike these same
conscientious, religious people with con-
sternation that anybody should dare to
say that God would now reveal himself
to the human family; that it was the
most impious blasphemy to preach that
the priesthood had been restored, or to
assert that the Holy Ghost was given in
the latter days, or that the gifts of the
Spirit were made to abound among the
children of men. No indeed; it was not
to be tolerated any more than the doc-
trine of slavery. There were here and
there a few, though but very few in pro-
portion to the general population, that
did receive this very alarming doctrine
among those professing religious belief
in the mission of our blessed Redeemer.
It will be borne in mind that at the time
I now speak of, the doctrine of plural-
ity of wives had not been heard of as a
doctrine of the Church in the last dis-
pensation; but it was the gifts of the