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AN OVERLAND JOURNEY.

XXI.

Two Hours with Brigham Young.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, July 13, 1859.

My friend Dr. Barnhisel, M. C., took me this afternoon, by appointment, to meet Brigham Young, President of the Mormon Church, who had expressed a willingness to receive me at 2 p. m. We were very cordially welcomed at the door by the President, who led us into the second story parlor of the largest of his houses (he has three), where I was introduced to Heber C. Kimball, Gen. Wells, Gen. Ferguson, Albert Carrington, Elias Smith, and several other leading men in the Church, with two full-grown sons of the President. After some unimportant conversation on general topics, I stated that I had come in quest of fuller knowledge respecting the doctrines and polity of the Mormon Church, and would like to ask some questions bearing directly on these, if there was no objection. President Young avowed his willingness to respond to all pertinent inquiries, the conversation proceeded substantially as follows:

H. G.—Am I to regard Mormonism (so-called) as a new religion, or as simply a new development of Christianity?

B. Y.—We hold that there can be no true Christian Church without a priesthood directly commissioned by and in immediate communication with the Son of God and Saviour of mankind. Such a church is that of the Latter Day Saints called by their enemies Mormons; we know no other that even pretends to have present and direct revelations of God's will.

H. G.—Then I am to understand that you regard all other churches professing to be Christian as the Church of Rome regards all churches not in communion with itself—as schismatic, heretical, and out of the way of salvation?

B. Y.—Yes, substantially.

H. G.—Apart from this, in what respect do your doctrines differ essentially from those of our Orthodox Protestant Churches—the Baptist or Methodist, for example?

B. Y.—We hold the doctrines of Christianity, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments—also in the Book of Mormon, which teaches the same cardinal truths, and those only.

H. G.—Do you believe in the doctrine of the Trinity?

B. Y.—We do; but not exactly as it is held by other churches. We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as equal, but not identical—not as one person (being). We believe in all the Bible teaches on this subject.

H. G.—Do you believe in a personal devil—a distinct, conscious, spiritual being, whose nature and acts are essentially malignant and evil?

B. Y.—We do.

H. G.—Do you hold the doctrine of Eternal Punishment?

B. Y.—We do; though perhaps not exactly as other churches do. We believe it as the Bible teaches it.

H. G.—I understand that you regard Baptism by Immersion as essential.

B. Y.—We do.

H. G.—Do you practice infant Baptism?

B. Y.—No.

H. G.—Do you make removal to these valleys obligatory on your converts?

B. Y.—They would consider themselves greatly aggrieved if they were not invited hither. We hold to such a gathering together of God's People as the Bible foretells, and that this is the place, and now is the time appointed for its consummation.

H. G.—The predictions to which you refer have usually, I think, been understood to indicate Jerusalem (or Judea) as the place of such gathering.

B. Y.—Yes, for the Jews—not for others.

H. G.—What is the position of your Church with respect to Slavery?

B. Y.—We consider it of Divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.

H. G.—Are any slaves now held in this Territory?

B. Y.—They are.

H. G.—Do your Territorial laws uphold Slavery?

B. Y.—Those laws are printed—you can read for yourself. If slaves are brought here by those who owned them in the States, we do not favor their escape from the service of those owners.

H. G.—Am I to infer that Utah, if admitted as a member of the Federal Union, will be a Slave State?

B. Y.—No; she will be a Free State.—Slavery here would prove useless and unprofitable. I regard it generally as a curse to the masters. I myself hire many laborers and pay them fair wages; I could not afford to own them. I can do better than subject myself to an obligation to feed and clothe their families, to provide and care for them in sickness and health. Utah is not adapted to Slave Labor.

H. G.—Let me now be enlightened with regard more especially to your Church polity; I understand that you require each member to pay over one-tenth of all he produces or earns to the Church.

B. Y.—That is a requirement of our faith. There is no compulsion as to the payment. Each member acts in the premises according to his pleasure, under the dictates of his own conscience.

H. G.—What is done with the proceeds of this tithing?

B. Y.—Part of it is devoted to building temples and other places of worship; part to helping the poor and needy converts on their way to this country; and the largest portion to the support of the poor among the Saints.

H. G.—Is none of it paid to Bishops and other dignitaries of the Church?

B. Y.—Not one penny. No Bishop, no Elder, no Deacon, or other church officer, receives any compensation for his official services. A Bishop is often required to put his hand in his own pocket and provide therefrom for the poor of his charge; but he never receives anything for his services.

H. G.—How, then, do your ministers live?

B. Y.—By the labor of their own hands, like the first Apostles. Every Bishop, every Elder, may be daily seen at work in the field or the shop, like his neighbors; every minister of the Church has his proper calling by which he earns the bread of his family; he who cannot or will not do the Church's work for nothing is not wanted in her services; even our lawyers (pointing to Gen. Ferguson and another present, who are the regular lawyers of the Church), are paid nothing for their services; I am the only person in the Church who has not a regular calling apart from the Church's service, and I never received one farthing from her treasury; if I obtain anything from the tithing-house, I am charged with and pay for it, just as any one else would; the clerks in the tithing-store are paid like other clerks, but no one is ever paid for any service pertaining to the ministry.—We think a man who cannot make his living aside from the Ministry of Christ un-joined to that office. I am called rich, and consider myself worth \$250,000; but no dollar of it was ever paid me by the Church or for any service as a minister of the Everlasting Gospel. I lost nearly all I had when we were broken up in Missouri and driven from that State; I was nearly stripped again when Joseph Smith was murdered and we were driven from Illinois; but nothing was ever made up to me by the Church, nor by any one. I believe I know how to acquire property and how to take care of it.

H. G.—Can you give me any rational explanation of the aversion and hatred with which your people are generally regarded by those among whom they have lived and with whom they have been brought directly in contact?

B. Y.—No other explanation than is afforded by the crucifixion of Christ and the kindred treatment of God's ministers, prophets and saints in all ages.

H. G.—I know that a new sect is always derided and traduced—that it is hardly ever deemed respectable to belong to one—that the Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, Universalists, &c., have each in their turn been regarded in the infancy of their sect as the offspring of the earth; yet I cannot remember that either of them were ever generally represented and regarded by the older sects of their early days as thieves, robbers, murderers.

B. Y.—If you will consult the cotemporary Jewish accounts of the life and acts of Jesus Christ, you will find that he and his disciples were accused of every abominable deed and purpose—robbery and murder included. Such a work is still extant, and may be found by those who seek it.

H. G.—What do you say of the so-called Danites, or Destroying Angels, belonging to your Church?

B. Y.—What do you say? I know of no such band, no such persons or organization. I hear of them only in the slanders of our enemies.

H. G.—With regard, then, to the grave question on which your doctrines and practices are avowedly at war with those of the Christian world—that of a plurality of wives—is the system of your Church acceptable to the majority of its women?

B. Y.—They could not be more averse to it than I was when it was first revealed to us as the Divine will. I think they generally accept it, as I do, as the will of God.

H. G.—How general is polygamy among you?

B. Y.—I could not say. Some of those present [heads of the Church] have each but one wife; others have more; each determines what is his individual duty.

H. G.—What is the largest number of wives belonging to any one man?

B. Y.—I have fifteen; I know no one who has more; but some of those sealed to me are old ladies whom I regard rather as mothers than wives, but whom I have taken home to cherish and support.

H. G.—Does not the Apostle Paul say that a Bishop should be "the husband of one wife"?

B. Y.—So we hold. We do not regard any but a married man as fitted for the office of bishop. But the Apostle does not forbid a bishop having more wives than one.

H. G.—Does not Christ say that he who puts away his wife, or marries one whom another has put away commits adultery?

B. Y.—Yes; and I hold that no man should ever put away a wife except for adultery—not always even for that. Such is my individual view of the matter. I do not say that wives have never been put away in our Church, but that I do not approve of the practice.

H. G.—How do you regard what is commonly termed the Christian Sabbath?

B. Y.—As a divinely appointed day of rest. We enjoy all to rest from secular labor on that day. We would have no man enslaved to the Sabbath, but we enjoy all to respect and enjoy it.

—Such is, as nearly as I can recollect, the substance of nearly two hours' conversation, wherein much was said incidentally that would not be worth reporting, even if I could remember and reproduce it, and wherein others here a part; but, as President Young is the first minister of the Mormon Church, and bore the principal part in the conversation, I have reported his answers alone to my questions and observations. The others appeared uniformly to defer to his views, and to acquiesce fully in his responses and explanations. He spoke readily, but with no appearance of hesitation or reserve, and with no apparent desire to conceal anything, nor did he repel any of my questions as impertinent. He was very plainly dressed in this summer clothing, and with no air of sanctimony or fanaticism. In appearance, he is a portly, frank, good-natured, rather thick-set man of fifty-five, seeming to enjoy life, and to be in no particular hurry to get to heaven. His associates are plain men, evidently born and reared to a life of labor, and looking as little like crafty hypocrites or swindlers as any body of men I ever met. The absence of cant or snuff from their manner was marked and general, yet, I think I may fairly say that their Mormonism has not impoverished them—that they were generally poor men when they embraced it, and are now in very comfortable circumstances—as men averaging three or four wives apiece certainly need to be.

If I hazard any criticisms on Mormonism generally, I reserve them for a separate letter, being determined to make this a fair and full exposure of the doctrine and polity, in the very words of its Prophet, and so far as I can recall them. I do not believe President Young himself could present them in terms calculated to render them less obnoxious to the Gentile world than the above. But I have a right to add here, because I said it to the assembled chiefs at the close of the above colloquy, that the degradation (or, if you please, the restriction) of Woman to the single office of child-bearing and its accessories, is an inevitable consequence of the system here paramount. I have not observed a sign in the streets, an advertisement in the journals of this Mormon metropolis, whereby a woman proposes to do anything whatever. No Mormon has ever cited to me his wife's or any woman's opinion on any subject; no Mormon woman has been introduced or has spoken to me; and, though I have been asked to visit Mormons in their houses, no one has spoken of his wife (or wives) desiring to see me, or his desiring me to make her (or their) acquaintance, or voluntarily indicated the existence of such a being or beings. I will not attempt to report our talk on this subject, because, unlike what I have above given, it assumed somewhat the character of a disputation, and I could hardly give it impartially; but one remark made by President Young I think I can give accurately and it may serve as a sample of all that was offered on that side. It was in these words, I think exactly: "If I did not consider myself competent to transact a certain business without taking my wife's or my woman's counsel with regard to it, I think I ought to let that business alone." The spirit with regard to Woman, of the entire Mormon, as of all other polygamic systems, is fairly displayed in this avowal. Let any such system become established and prevalent, and Woman will soon be confined to the harem, and her appearance in the street with unveiled face will be accounted immodest. I joyfully trust that the genius of the Nineteenth Century tends to a solution of the problem of Woman's sphere and destiny radically different from this.

XXII.

The Mormons and Mormonism.

SALT LAKE CITY, July 18, 1859.

Since my interview with Brigham Young, I have enjoyed opportunities for studying the Mormons in their social or festive and in their devotional assemblies. Of private social intercourse—that is, in

tercourse between family and family—I judge that there is comparatively little here; between Mormons and Gentiles or strangers, of course still less. Their religious services are much like those that may be shared or witnessed in the churches of most of our popular sects; the music rather better than you will hear in an average worshipping assemblage in the States; the prayers pertinent and full of unctious; the sermons adapted to tastes or needs different from mine. They seemed to me rambling, dogmatic, and ill-digested; in fact, Elder Orson Pratt, who preached in the morning, prefaced his harangue by a statement that he had been hard at work on his farm throughout the week, and labored under consequent physical exhaustion. Elder John Taylor (I believe he is one of the Twelve; at all events he is a high dignitary in the Church, and a man of decided natural ability) spoke likewise in the afternoon with little or no premeditation. Now, I believe that every preacher should be also a worker; I like to see one mowing or pitching hay in his shirt-sleeves; and I hear with edification an unlettered but devout and earnest evangelist who, having worked a part of the week for the subsistence of his family, devotes the rest of it to preaching the gospel to small school-house or wayside gatherings of hearers, simply for the good of their souls. Let him only be sure to talk good sense, and I will excuse some bad grammar. But when a preacher is to address a congregation of one to three thousand persons, like that which assembles twice each Sabbath in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, I insist that a due regard to the economy of time requires that he should prepare himself, by study and reflection, if not by writing, to speak directly to the point. This mortal life is too short and precious to be wasted in listening to rambling, loose jointed harangues, or even those which severally consume an hour in the utterance, when they might be boiled down and clarified until they were brought within the compass of half an hour each. A thousand half-hours, Rev. Sir! have you ever pondered their value? Suppose your time to be worth ten times that of an average hearer; still, to take an extra half hour from a thousand hearers in order to save yourself one or fifteen hours' labor in the due and careful preparation of a sermon, is a scandalous waste, which I see not how to justify. Be entertained to repent and amend!

The discourses to which I listened were both intensely and exclusively Mormon. That is, they assumed that the Mormons were God's peculiar, chosen, beloved people, and that all the rest of mankind are out of the ark of safety and floundering in heathen darkness. I am not edified by this sort of preaching. It reminds me forcibly of the Pharisee's prayer: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,—unjust, extortioners," &c. I do not think good men delight in this assumption of an exclusive patent for the grace of God, and I am quite sure it is not well adapted to the transformation of bad men into good. It is too well calculated to puff up its disciples with self-conceit and spiritual pride. That Jesus Christ is about to reappear on the earth in all the pomp and splendor of a mighty conqueror—that he will then proceed to take vengeance on his enemies (mankind in general, whether heathen or nominally Christian) and to glorify his elect (the Latter-Day Saints or Mormons) were treated by the Tabernacle preachers as propositions too self-evident to need demonstration. Having thus enthused his enemies and "gathered his elect from the four winds of Heaven," the Saviour is to reign over them here on earth for a thousand years; at the end of which period, they are together to be transferred to heaven. Of course, I had heard the like of this before, but it always seems to me a very gross and wooden perversion of the magnificent imagery whereby the Bible foreshadows great spiritual transformation. But the spirit of the Mormon religion appears to me Judaic rather than Christian; and I really believe that Heber Kimball, or at any rate one of the great lights of the Church, once said in conversation with a Gentile—"I do pray for my enemies; I pray that they may all go to hell." Neither from the pulpit nor elsewhere have I heard from a Mormon one spontaneous, hearty recognition of the essential brotherhood of the entire Human Race—one generous prayer for the enlightenment and salvation of all mankind. On the other hand, I have been distinctly given to understand that my interlocutors expect to sit on thrones and to bear rule over multitudes in the approaching kingdom of God. In fact, one sincere, devout man has to-day assigned that to me as a reason for polygamy; he wants to qualify himself, by ruling a large and diversified family here, for bearing rule over his principality in the "new earth," that he knows to be at hand. I think he might far better devote a few years to pondering Christ's saying to this effect, "He who would be least in the kingdom of Heaven, the same shall be greatest."

I was undeceived with regard to the Book of Mormon. I had understood that it is now virtually discarded, or at least neglected, by the Church in its services and ministrations. But Elder Pratt gave us a synopsis of its contents and treated it throughout as of equal authority and importance with the Old and New Testaments. He did not read from it, however, but from Malachi, and quoted text

after text from the Prophets, which he cited as predictions of the writing and discovery of this book.

The congregation consisted at either service of some fifteen hundred to two thousand persons—more in the morning than in the afternoon. A large majority of them (not including the Elders and chief men, of whom a dozen or so were present) were evidently of European birth; I think a majority of the males were past the meridian of life. All gave earnest heed to the exercises throughout; in fact, I have seldom seen a more devout and intent assemblage. I had been told that the Mormons were remarkably ignorant, superstitious and brutalized; but the aspect of these congregations did not sustain that assertion. Very few rural congregations would exhibit more heads evincing decided ability; and I doubt whether any assemblage so largely European in its composition would make a better appearance. Not that Europeans are less intellectual or comely than Americans; but our immigrants are mainly of the poorer classes; and poverty, privation, and rugged toil plow hard, forbidding lines in the human countenance elsewhere than in Utah.—Brigham Young was not present at either service.

Do I regard the great body of these Mormons as knaves and hypocrites? Assuredly not. I do not believe there was ever a religion whereof the great mass of the adherents were not honest and sincere. Hypocrites and knaves there are in all sects; it is quite possible that some of the magnates of the Mormon Church regard this so-called religion (with all others) as a contrivance for the enslavement and fleecing of the many and the aggrandizement of the few; but I cannot believe that a sect so considerable and so vigorous as the Mormon was ever founded in conscious imposture or built up on any other basis than that of earnest conviction. If the projector and two or three of his chief confederates were knaves, the great body of their followers were dupes.

Nor do I accept the current Gentile presumption that the Mormons are an organized banditti—a horde of robbers and assassins. Thieves and murderers mainly haunt the purlieus of great cities or hide in caverns and forests adjacent to the great routes of travel. But when the Mormon leaders decided to set up their Zion in these parched mountain vales and canons, the said valleys were utterly secluded and remote from all Gentile approach—away from any mail-route or channel of emigration. That the Mormons wished to escape Gentile control, scrutiny, jurisprudence, is evident; that they meant to abuse their inaccessibility, to the detriment and plunder of wayfarers is not credible.

Do I, then, discredit the tales of Mormon outrage and crime—the murder of the Parishes, the Mountain Meadow massacre, &c., &c.—where with the general ear has recently been shocked? No, I do not. Some of these may have been fabricated by Gentile malice—others, are doubtless exaggerated—but there is some basis of truth for the current Gentile conviction that *Mormons have robbed, maimed, and even killed persons in this Territory, under circumstances which should subject the perpetrators to condign punishment, but that Mormon witnesses, grand jurors, petit jurors and magistrates determinedly screen the guilty.* I deeply regret the necessity of believing this; but the facts are incontestable. That a large party of emigrants—not less than eighty—from Arkansas to California, were foully massacred at Mountain Meadows in September, 1857, more immediately by Indians, but under the direct inspiration and direction of the Mormon settlers in that vicinity—to whom, and not to the savages, the emigrants had surrendered, after a siege, on the strength of assurances that their lives at least should be spared—is established by evidence that cannot (I think) be invalidated—the evidence of conscience-smitten partakers in the crime, both Indian and ex-mormon, and of children of the slaughtered emigrants, who were spared as too young to be dangerous even as witnesses, and of whom the great majority have been sent down to the States as unable to give testimony; but two boys are retained here as witnesses, who distinctly remember that their parents surrendered to white men, and that these white men did not attempt to prevent their perfidious massacre. These children, moreover, were all found in the possession of Mormons—not one of them in the hands of Indians; and, though the Mormons say they ransomed them from the hands of Indians, the children deny it, saying that they never lived with nor were in the keeping of savages; and the Indians bear concurrent testimony. So in the Parish case: The family had been Mormons, but had apostatized—and undertook to return to the States; they were warned that they would be killed if they persisted in that resolution; they did persist, and were killed. Of course, nobody will ever be convicted of their murder; but those who warned them of their fate on which they were rushing know why they were killed, and could discover, if they would, who killed them. The vital fact in the case is just this: The great mass of these people, as a body, mean to be honest, just, and humane; but they are, before and above all things else, Latter-day Saints, or Mormons. They devoutly believe that they are God's peculiar and especial people, doing His work—up-building His kingdom, and basking in

the sunshine of His peculiar favor. Whoever obstructs or impedes them in this work, then, is God's enemy, who must be made to get out of the way of the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth—made to do so by lawful and peaceful means if possible, but by any means that may ultimately be found necessary. The Parishes were apostles; had they been allowed to pursue their journey to the States, they would have met many Saints coming up the road, whose minds they would have troubled if not poisoned; and they would have told stories after reaching their destination which would have deepened the general prejudices against the Saints; so the up-building and well being of Christ's kingdom required that they should die. The Arkansas emigrants had in some way abused the Saints, or interposed obstacles to the progress of God's work, and they were consequently given over to destruction. Far be it from me to hint that one-fifth, one-tenth, one-twentieth, of the Mormons ever bore any part in these bloody deeds, or even knew to this day that they were perpetrated.—The great body of the Saints undoubtedly believe all the current imputations of Mormon homicide and outrage to be abominable calumnies. Many of the highest dignitaries of the church may be included in this number. But there are men in the Church who know that they are not calumnies—who know that Gentiles and apostates have been killed for the Church's and for Christ's sake, and who firmly believe that they ought to have been. I grieve to say it, but I hold these more consistent and logical Mormons than their innocent and unsuspecting brethren. For if I were a Latter-Day Saint, undoubtedly believing all opposers of the Mormon Church to be God's enemies, obnoxious to His wrath and curse, and powerfully obstructing the rescue of souls from eternal perdition and torture, I should be strongly impelled to help put those opposers of God's purposes out of the way of sending more immortal souls to everlasting fire. I should feel it my duty so to act, as a lover of God and Man. And I confidently predict that not one Mormon who has killed a Gentile or apostate under a like view of his duty will ever be fairly convicted in this Territory. No jury can be drawn here, unless in flagrant defiance of the Territorial laws, which is not mainly composed of Mormons; and no such jury will convict a Mormon of crime for any act done in behalf of God's kingdom—that is of the Mormon Church.

I ask, then, the advocates of "Popular Sovereignty" in the Territories to say what they propose to do in the premises. How do they intend to adapt their principle to the existing state of facts? They have superseded Brigham Young, with a full knowledge that at least nine-tenths of the People of Utah earnestly desired his retention as Governor. They have sent hither a batch of Judges, who would like to earn their salaries; but the Mormon Legislature devotes its sessions principally to the work of crippling and fettering these Judges so that they shall remain here as mere dummies or be driven into resignation. Their juries are all drawn for them by mormon officials, under regulations which virtually exclude all but Mormons from each panel; it is a violation of the laws of Utah to cite in argument before any Judge or jury here the decisions of any court—even the Supreme Court of the United States—but the Courts of Utah; so that even the Dred Scott decision could not lawfully be cited here in a Fugitive Slave case; in short, the Federal Judiciary, the Federal Executive, and the Federal Army, as now existing in Utah, are three transparent shams—three egregious farces; they are costing the Treasury very large sums to no purpose; and the sooner the Governor, Marshal, Judges, &c., resign, and the Army is withdrawn, the better for all but a handful of contractors. "Popular Sovereignty" has such full swing here that Brigham Young carries the Territory in his breeches pocket without a shadow of opposition; he governs without responsibility to either law or public opinion; for there is no real power here but that of "the Church," and he is practically the Church. The Church is rich, and is hourly increasing in wealth; the Church settles all civil controversies which elsewhere cause lawsuits; the Church spends little or nothing, yet rules everything; while the Federal Government, though spending Two or Three Millions per annum here, and keeping up a fussy parade of authority, is powerless and despised. If, then, we are to have "Popular Sovereignty" in the Territories, let us have it pure and without shams. Let Brigham be reappointed Governor; withdraw the present Federal office holders and Army, open shorter and better roads to California through the country north of Bridger, and notify the emigrants that, if they choose to pass through Utah, they will do so at their own risk. Let the Mormons have the Territory to themselves—it is worth very little to others, but reduce its area by cutting off Carson Valley on the one side, and making a Rocky Mountain Territory on the other, and then let them go on their way rejoicing. I believe this is not only by far the cheapest but the safest and best mode of dealing with the difficulties already developed and daily developing here, unless the notion of "Popular Sovereignty" in the Territories is to be utterly exploded and given up. "Popular Sovereignty" in a Ter-