EARLY DAYS OF MORMONISM

PALMYRA, KIRTLAND, AND NAUVOO

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wrong may have been done upon either hand, the results were of a damaging and dangerous character to the church, and the feud had much to do with what afterward occurred. There was outward peace upon his departure, and the church and its organ spoke fair words concerning him; which were recalled and replaced with the most bitter denunciation when it was known that his purpose was to wage war upon Mormonism in all possible ways, at all times and in all places. His attacks were open and direct. He found ready entrance to the leading journals of the land, and for a time the Mormon Church filled a large share of public attention. He charged treason and treasonable purposes upon the Mormon leaders, made grave attacks upon the personal character of Smith and those directly associated with him, and cited so much of fact in his denunciation as to lead an excite and hostile community to accept his whole story as the truth. His charges were taken up and repeated in all corners of Missouri and Illinois, gaining in power and coloring as they went, until many honest and intelligent men began to believe that Nauvoo was a second Sodom, and a foul spot that it would be patriotism to blot out.

Not content with his letters and interviews in the public press, Bennett published a book, in which all his charges were repeated, with much from Howe and other anti-Mormon writers of the day. The mood in which these exposures were received by the public can be judged somewhat from the following, which appeared editorially in the New York Sun of August 5, 1842:

"We watch the further movements of the Mormon expounded, and the anti-Mormon expounder, with "

* "The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith, and Mormonism." By John C. Bennett; Leland & Whiting, Boston, 1842. This work is one of the curiosities of anti-Mormon literature. It contains full-page portraits of Generals Smith and Bennett in uniform, and is made up of a vast amount of documents and other material "pitchforked together in the most amazing confusion—a condition of things explained by its author in the declaration, "I have been more solicitous about the matter than the manner of it."
and its first and last number made its appearance on June 7th. Its motto was, "The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth"; and while it boldly attacked Smith and his immediate associates, it yet professed belief in the divine origin and essential truth of the Mormon creed.

This solitary issue was indeed a broadside. In addition to the recapitulation of charges already openly made in the general newspaper press, it contained the affidavits of sixteen women who charged Smith with immoral conduct, or attempts upon their virtue. The sheet was hardly upon the street before Smith and his friends were in motion to welcome it with such vengeance and punishment as his almost absolute power made possible. The City Council was summoned by fleet messengers, and upon its assembling the offending paper was read, and the course to be pursued discussed with such calmness as the feelings of those who had been attacked would permit.

the abuses of which he was claimed to be the cause. The paper was issued under date of June 7th. It had for its editor Sylvester Emmons, and the names of William Law, Wilson Law, Charles Ivins, Francis H. Higbee, Channey L. Higbee, Robert D. Foster, and Charles A. Foster as its publishers. In a literary point of view, it exhibited no decided talent. It had evidently been prepared in hurry and excitement, and with no attempt at artistic arrangement. About half its reading matter was selected. Of its original contents, five or six columns were occupied with a 'Preamble, Resolutions, and Affidavits of the seceders from the Church of Nau-voo,' giving reasons for their action, and making charges against Smith and his adherents. A number of editorial articles followed, couched in strong language, but not remarkable for ability or point. The confessed aim and purpose of this sheet were to expose the enormities practiced by the Prophet and his followers at Nauvo.
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make public any of the secrets of the order of Danites, was to be punished with death. And I can say of a truth, many have paid the penalty for failing to keep their covenants.” For more light upon this subject see the little work, “Brigham’s Destroying Angel; being the Life, Confessions, and Startling Disclosures of the Notorious Bill Hickman, the Danite Chief of Utah,” written by himself, with explanatory notes by J. H. Beadle, New York, 1872.

D.

POLYGAMY.

That the plural-wives system had no part in the Mormon doctrine of early days, is a matter of evidence and record, as it is commanded in a revelation that a man shall have only one wife, and cleave unto her. Polygamy may, therefore, be regarded as an outgrowth of the enlarged powers and opportunities of later days. When Bennett, the Higbees, and other members of the Mormon Church apostatized at Nauvoo, and made their furious attacks upon the whole Mormon scheme, one of their main points of argument was that the system of spiritual wifehood was already in secret practice, and that under the guise of celestial marriage, Smith and other leaders of the Church were living in adultery with scores of women. Addressing a public ready to believe that Mormonism was a cloak for the covering of any abomination known to man, they had no difficulty in securing belief for their charges; turning against the Church the whole moral and religious sentiment of the country. The revelation commanding polygamy was first published in the Deseret News Extra, of Salt Lake City, on September 24, 1852; although given, as the Church claimed, to Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, on July 12, 1843. “The sons of Smith, and the members of the Reorganized Church of Latter-Day Saints, deny not only the charges of Bennett et al., as to the Prophet’s immoral practices, but all reputed connection of his with the revelation itself; claiming that the latter was a device invented by Young to defend his own practices, and cunningly given on the authority of Smith; that it might carry greater weight with the Church.” “The Mormon historian relates,” says Mr. Beadle, in “Life in Utah,” p. 337, “that when the full force of the new covenant was perceived the Prophet was filled with astonishment and dread. All the traditions of his

to support the heads of the Church in all things that they say or do, whether right or wrong.” To this Orson Hyde, at that time at way with the Church, added his testimony, in a like faith, in which he said: “The most of the statements in the foregoing disclosure I know to be true; the remainder I believe to be true.” John Hyde, also an apostate Mormon, in his “Mormonism,” p. 304, says: “When the citizens of Carroll and Davis Counties, Missouri, began to threaten the Mormons with expulsion in 1838, a death society was organized, under the direction of Sidney Rigdon, and with the sanction of Smith. Its first captain was Captain ‘Fearnot’ alias David Patten, an apostle. Its object was the punishment of the obnoxious. Some time elapsed before finding a suitable name. They desired one that should seem to combine spiritual authority with a suitable sound. Micah iv. 17 furnishes the first name, ‘Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.’ This furnished them with a pretext; it accurately described their intentions, and they called themselves the ‘Daughters of Zion.’ Some ridicule was made at these bearded and bloody ‘daughters,’ and the name did not sit easily. ‘Destroying Angels,’ came next; the ‘Big Fan’ of the brethren that ‘should thoroughly purge the floor,’ was tried and dropped. Genesis xlix. 17 furnished the name, that they finally assumed. The verse is quite significant: ‘Din shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.’ The ‘Sons of Dan’ was the style they adopted; and many have been the times that they have been adders in the path, and many a man has fallen backward, and has been seen no more. At Salt Lake, among themselves, they, ferociously exult in these things, rather than seek to deny or extenuate them.” Were testimony needed to prove the existence of this body, it could be produced in abundance. John D. Lee, the Mormon bishop, in his Confessions, on p. 57, says: “At the same conference (that of 1858) another organization was perfected, or then formed—it was called the Danites.” The members of this order were placed under the most sacred obligations that language could invent. They were sworn to stand by and sustain each other. Sustain, protect, defend, and keep, the leaders of the Church under any and all circumstances unto death; and to disobey the orders of the leaders of the Church; or divulge the name of a Danite to an outsider, or to
early education were overthrown, and yet he felt that it was the work of the Lord. In vain he sought to be released from the burden of communicating the new doctrine to the world, and at length obtained permission to keep it secret, as yet, from all but the Twelve Apostles, and a few other leading men. As the hour approached when he was to meet them in council, horror and fear of what might be the result, overcame him, and he hastily mounted his horse and fled from the city. But a mighty angel met him on the road, stood in the way with a drawn sword, and with awful voice and offended men, bade him return. Whether the work of Smith or Young, the revelation was not announced to the Church until on August 29, 1852, when Brigham made it public, and preached a sermon commanding obedience to its requirements—paving the way for others by himself becoming eventually the possessor of nineteen wives. The effect upon the people of Utah was not marked, as they only now saw the open doing of what they had long known in secret, but elsewhere it became an immediate damage to the Church, and the forerunner of many ills in the future—of which the recently passed Edmunds law, and the prosecutions and convictions thereunder are not the least. "In England, especially," says Mr. Beadle, in continuation of the above, "the demoralization was fearful; hundreds after hundreds apostatized, whole churches and conferences dissolved; talented knaves in many instances, finding in this the excuse for going off without surrendering the money-bags which they held. The missions entirely disappeared in many parts of Europe, and even in America, thousands of new converts who had not gone to Zion turned away and joined the Josephites, Gladdenites, Strangites, and other sects of recusant Mormons." The practical and theological sides of the system are thus briefly condensed by the same author—who has resided in Salt Lake City for a number of years, and made of Utah Mormonism a practical study: "Of their theology as it relates to polygamy, but little need be added. It is so thoroughly grafted into and interwoven with their whole system, that at no point can one be touched without attacking the other. Polygamy is not, as recusant Mormons assert, a mere addition by Brigham Young to the original faith; it is a necessary and logical outgrowth of the system. If Mormonism be true, their polygamy is right; for, 'pre-existence of the soul,' 'progression of the gods,' and all other peculiarities of the system, depend by a thousand combinations and inter-relations upon the plurality system. A man's or wom-

an's glory in eternity, is to depend upon the size of the family for a woman to remain childless is a sin and calamity, and she cannot secure 'exaltation' as the wife of a Gentile or an apostate; her husband's rank in eternity must greatly depend upon the number of his wives, and she will share in that glory whatever it is. All this points unerringly to polygamy. Hence, also, the last feature of this complex and unnatural relationship known as 'spiritual wives,' which is to be understood as follows: Any woman, having an earthly husband of whose final exaltation she is in doubt, may be 'sealed for eternity' to some prominent Mormon, who will raise her and make her a part of his final kingdom. . . . By 'marriage for the dead,' living women are sealed to dead men, and vice versa, some one standing proxy for the deceased. . . . So a man may have a wife 'for time,' who belongs to some man already dead 'for eternity,' in which case all the children will belong to the latter in eternity, the living man merely 'raising up seed unto his dead brother.' To such lengths of vain imaginings may a credulous people be led by arfiful impostors."

E.

THE MORMONS OF SALT LAKE.

There were many claimants for the position of prophet and president made vacant by the death of Joseph Smith, but, as in many other cases, he who was wise enough to claim the least, eventually received the most. William Smith claimed the succession because he was the prophet's brother; Sidney Rigdon began to have visions and dream dreams, and announced himself as the chosen one; James Jesse Strang advanced his right, under special commission from Joseph; while Lyman Wight, Gladden Bishop, John E. Page, and others, began to feel the spirit of prophecy, and announced themselves as ready to take the lead. But Brigham Young, advancing no special plea of spiritual direction, and depending upon that strong common-sense that aided him in so many emergencies, came home to Nauvoo as rapidly as possible, took matters into his own hands, and by his courage and address saved the society and the Church from going to pieces. He caused the Twelve Apostles, of whom he was head, to issue on August 15th an "Encyclical letter to all the Saints in the world," and on October 7th a general