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"MORMONISM,"
BY THE
REV. JOSIAH B. LOWE, M.A.,
INCUMBENT OF ST. JUDE'S,
DELIVERED AT THE CONCERT HALL, LIVERPOOL,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1851.

LIVERPOOL:
W. T. THOMPSON, 18, ELLIOT STREET.
LONDON: W. BEVBEIM AND MACINTOSH, PATERNOSTER ROW.
DUBLIN: P. DIXON HARDY AND SON, UPPER SACKVILLE STREET.
HER BANNERS MAY BE TERRIBLE UNTIL ALL NATIONS; THAT THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD MAY BE CONstrained TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE KINGDOM OF ZION IS IN VERY DEED THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD AND HIS CHRIST; THEREFORE, LET US BECOME SUBJECT UNTIL HER LAWS.

Now you see the design of the "prophet, seer, and revelator" at this time: to gather together an army as quietly and with as little ostentation as possible; to live as peacefully as they could till the army had arrived at a magnitude which would enable them to defy opposition: in the meantime to purchase lands, and then, by strength of arm, to hold possession. Their aim was by force to establish themselves in the country—(very like "the Former Day Saints" this!) This force was called the Danite Band, or the Destroying Angels. The consequence of the assembling of this army was bloodshed and confusion. Jackson county and Clay county were the scene of skirmishes between them and the county militia, who wished to expel them. The inhabitants, however, had only recourse to violence when they found they could not get rid of them quietly. I do not justify the violence; but remember it was not persecution on account of religion. No such thing. All religions are tolerated in the United States, and the gentlemen who petitioned against them said they had nothing to say to their religious gibberish: it was their political system, with its arrogant assumptions, that they opposed, and they were determined that it should not be tolerated, as there would be no peace till they were induced to leave the place.

Notwithstanding all Joseph Smith's revelations from 1830 to 1839, they were not able to retain their hold on Missouri; they were obliged, in the teeth of the declaration of "the prophet, seer, and revelator," to give up their hold on Jackson county, and to fly into Illinois, and endeavour to establish themselves there. Now in regard to their history in Missouri, one or two observations occur. 1st—It was very unlike "Saints" to organise an army, to muster a Danite Band, and to fill the country with disturbance and bloodshed, instead of blessing those that cursed them, and doing good to those that persecuted them. Thus did not "the Former Day Saints," as they call the primitive Christians, and with whom they are so fond of comparing themselves in their contro-

versial tracts. Even supposing they had succeeded in establishing themselves, by the aid of the sword, in Missouri, it would have been a rather inconsistent mode of commencing that kingdom which is not of this world—a phrase which, with wonderful effrontery, they are fond of applying to their secular and political system. 2ndly—Whether they were justified or not in their organised opposition, the failure of it was a signal proof of the falsehood of Joseph Smith's "revelations." For remember, it was all by revelation that they went to Independence; it was by revelation that, after they were driven from that, they purchased lands round about; it was by revelation they resorted to hostile force; and notwithstanding all this so-called revelation, the whole turned out a failure: a desperate effort to seize Missouri was utterly frustrated, and they were obliged to emigrate to Illinois. This of itself ought to have been sufficiently damaging to the prophet's claims.

But following them to Illinois, a new scene presents itself before us. They got on with wonderful prosperity in their new abode. They settled first in the village of Commerce. Their numbers were soon increased by immigration from the surrounding country. The village changed to a town, which was called Nauvoo, or "The Beautiful"; and a pretty town they appear to have made of it. Joseph was a great man in the midst of them, a new character. Before he was a banker and a prophet; now he became Mayor of Nauvoo and General of the Forces. He is called frequently after this time "General Joseph Smith!" Taught by their former history, they considered the muster of an army necessary for their self-defence, and the Nauvoo Legion was instituted. They boasted of the fine discipline of their army, and at its head was their "prophet, seer, and revelator," now consistently called General Joseph Smith. They laid the foundation of a temple in 1842. The ceremony was a very imposing one, as described by an eye-witness. Joseph was present at the head of his legion, and six ladies, dressed in black riding habits, on prancing horses, graced the ceremony in the prophet's train!
Here, however, his prosperity was short-lived as before. Warned by previous failures it was some time before he ventured upon another prophecy. But in January, 1841, there was a revelation given to the effect, that they were to build a temple and prepare a house for Joseph Smith, jun., where Joseph Smith and his family were to have a place and a name from generation to generation. Considering himself sufficiently secure at Nauvoo, and thinking "a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush," he prudently secured a house in Nauvoo for himself and his family from "generation to generation." These were the very expressions in the revelation of January, 1841. He preferred this to waiting for the fulfilment of his "revelations" concerning Jackson county and the town of Independence, and whatever view we may be inclined to take of the consistency of the prophet, we cannot but approve of the judgment of the man.

But they were soon driven from Nauvoo. The cause of their downfall was two-fold, partly external and partly internal. There were the old Missouri jealousies, law-suits in consequence of outrages mutually committed in the long skirmishes from 1838 to 1839, between the Latter Day Saints and the population: besides which the people were jealous of "the saints," feeling, as the people of Missouri had felt, that they were a nuisance in the midst of them. In addition to this, the internal state of society at Nauvoo was anything but a prelude to millennial harmony and blessedness. Some parties broached the spiritual wife doctrine. Smith himself was not implicated in this. He had discernment enough to see how damaging it would be to his cause. Sidney Rigdon however maintained the doctrine, but he was too powerful to rebuke. He was in the prophet's secrets, and it would not do to offend him. But there were parties expelled for manifest and open adulteries and immoralities of the grossest kind. We have only to go to their own records to see the gross state of immorality that prevailed among the Latter Day Saints who were assembled together in this place. However, the parties who were accused by Joseph, and expelled from the church, strange to say, retorted upon himself. I do not say they did so with truth; I am only giving you the history. There was one Dr. Foster, in particular, who was prevailed upon to believe that Joseph Smith had endeavoured to seduce his wife into the spiritual wife doctrine, and an affidavit was made that he was found in very suspicious circumstances in the house in the absence of the doctor. I do not say, I repeat, that the statement was justified: I am only giving the facts as I find them. Dr. Foster however, believed this charge, and he took the bold step of commencing a newspaper in Nauvoo called the Expositor, on Anti-Mormon principles. The first number contained an affidavit from sixteen women, charging Joseph Smith with attempting to seduce them. This foul libel could not be endured, and two hundred of Joseph's partisans razed the office of the paper to the ground, and thus "abated the nuisance of a hostile newspaper." Foster escaped for his life into a neighbouring county, where he took proceedings against poor Joseph, and got a warrant for the damage done to his property. It was resisted by the Mayor at the time, and Nauvoo was actually fortified in order to protect the person of Joseph Smith. Governor Ford had to get the military together; and such was the hostility excited —I do not justify it, God forbid—by their monstrous assumptions and arrogant pretensions, that Ford declared that if once matters came to war, he could not answer for the consequences, for that there was amongst his soldiers a spirit that would be satisfied with nothing short of levelling the city to the ground. Joseph thought that discretion was the better part of valour. He surrendered himself prisoner. The consequence was, I regret to say, the murder of the miserable man. He was put into prison with his brother Hyrum; and in the absence of a sufficient guard upon the prison, the multitude made a violent attack, broke through the door, and murdered Hyrum and Joseph in their apartment. Joseph was endeavouring to make his escape by the window: his body was half out when he fell, pierced by four musket balls. Thus ended the career of "the prophet, seer, and revelator," money digger, miner, banker, mayor, and general Joseph Smith, jun., on the 27th of June, 1844.
Here I will just make a few observations. 1st.—How very unlike the spirit of Christianity, or what we might expect from the Latter Day Saints, gathered to wait the coming of the Lord, was this hostile array, and appeal to the arm of flesh! How inconsistent with the principles of the Scriptures which they acknowledged, this attempt to disobey the law of the land! 2nd.—How ignominious and unlike that of the “former day” martyrs, the death of the prophet! I do not taunt him with the absence of angelic interference on his behalf, though now was the time for an angel to have interfered, when he was surrounded by enemies and endeavouring to escape for his life. But not to taunt him with this—we might at least have expected that the end of this great man, “second only to Christ,” would have been stamped with dignity; that we should have heard of his kneeling down, and praying, like Stephen, that God would forgive his murderers and change their hearts. But no such thing. He was hurrying out of the window, when, without a moment to pray for himself or others he went to his account. 3rd.—Whatever may be the truth as to the moral state of Nauvoo, whether Smith was implicated in the immoralities practised there, (which I do not believe after giving the matter my best attention,) or not, it is equally damaging to the system. Who were these men among whom were committed these abominations, which led to this schism and the murder of the prophet? The Latter Day Saints—God’s chosen people, gathered from all nations!! Those who had been baptized with water, and by baptism had obtained forgiveness and regeneration, and on whom the elders had laid their hands giving them the Holy Ghost!! It will not do to tell us of the immoralities practised by Christians. We have no Christianity at all, according to them. Theirs is the revival of true Christianity, the word with power. Here the Lord was to be manifested, and his people, his own, his chosen ones, especially gathered out from among the nations in a secure place from desolating judgments. Yet among these chosen people, so gathered out by revelation from God, the state of morality was such as you have heard, leading to the breaking up of the community and the murder of the prophet and general.

The breaking up of the community, I say, because two years afterwards the people were obliged to leave Nauvoo. They chose another leader, Brigham Young, whom, however, Sydney Rigdon refused to acknowledge, and set up for prophet himself. He also had his revelations, but he only got himself dreadfully abused. Such a character was given to him by those who ought to have known him best as I would not venture to give to any one; and certainly, if we may judge of these people from their account of one another, we need go no further for recommendation. In the end Rigdon was expelled, and Young became paramount; he only continued in Nauvoo about two years after. The people from nine surrounding counties met together, and demanded that the Mormons should leave the State of Illinois as an intolerable nuisance. They could not stand against the opposition, but were obliged to evacuate the place, and thus afford one more instance of the failure of Joseph’s revelations, (that you remember of January, 1841), in which he directed in the name of God, the Lord Jesus speaking by him, that a house should be built there for “my servant Joseph Smith, jun., from generation to generation.” Since then the people have been in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, to which they have given the name of Deseret, but which is named Utah by the United States’ government. Nothing discouraged or daunted by misfortune or failure, they have discovered in these things a great fulfilment of prophecy! for they found themselves surrounded by lofty mountains; and what was this but a fulfilment of the words, “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up to the high mountains?” According to Orson Pratt, one of the twelve apostles, (a very clever man, and a very respectable one for anything I know but for his religious opinions,) if Joseph Smith had succeeded at this time, it would have been contrary to the mind of God as revealed in the book of Mormon. Mr. Pratt gives us an extract from a revelation made by Jesus Christ to the people of America, declaring that the saints were to be gathered out into the high mountains, and that thus the Gospel was to be taken from the Gentiles in judgment upon their unbelief. So that there was a fulfilment of prophecy in all this! But if this is