PIONEER AND PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

1893
Marshalltown, Ia.
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by all. He died about 1856. Since then Cobb, Fuller, Tapp, Palmer, Bros-son, Redinger, Thompson and Dole have filled the pulpit. But the church for the last thirty or forty years has been decimated by death and removals till it is in a feebly condition, and requires help from the Home Missionary Society.

The Baptists have never been numerous in Kirtland. In 1830 they built a commodious church, and for a few years supported a minister, but death has called home most of their members, and those that are left join with a nonsectarian society who occupy their church and have been supplied with preachers from Chester, Cleveland and Willoughby for the last fourteen or fifteen years, without asking to what denomination they belonged. On my return from the South, in 1831, I found the Mormons located in Kirtland. Four or five of our prominent citizens had joined them—Isaac Morley, Thomas Bellingham, Neil Whitney, John M. Bark and Joshua Maynard. The two last I am not quite sure about. Bark had sold his farm some years before, and Maynard's went into the hands of a Mormon. I heard they had joined, but have no recollection of ever seeing them after my return. The minds of Morley and Bellingham had become somewhat unbalanced on religious subjects previous to the advent of Mormonism in Kirtland. I resolved to have an controversy of words with the Mormons on the subject of their belief; to deal with and treat them as I did the rest of the world. My dealings with them were quite large. I sold them some two hundred dollars worth of lumber, much of it for the Temple. I also sold them my farm, took $575 of it. Smith, signed by President Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, payable in thirty days. After demand, which they refused to pay. After I had exhausted all arguments with Rigdon, and given up all hope of success, Smith spoke for the first time and said: "President Rigdon, I have known Mr. Clark for some time, and I believe him to be straight and honorable, and I think we had better redeem his paper." Rigdon then paid the money without another word. Joseph Smith was said to be ignorant and illiterate, but contact with mankind and native ability had given him polished manner, and his language, so far as I was qualified to judge, was correct, forcible, right to the point, and convincing. From my acquaintance and dealings with him. I considered him far superior to the educated Rigdon in intellectual ability. But it would take very strong evidence to convince me that Joseph Smith was not the originator of polygamy in this country. His institution of celestial marriage was the initial, the germ, the bud that blossomed into lastsome polygamy when his followers arrived at Salt Lake, beyond the reach of law.

In the spring of 1831 there was much excitement over the murder of Sally Russell, daughter of Isaac Russell, a bright girl of some thirteen or fourteen years. She left her home at Brown's Corners to visit a neighbor, some half a mile or so west of Parks' Corners. Not returning home at night, and not arriving at the place of her destination, the near neighbors hunted for her during the night. The news spread rapidly during the night, and by nine o'clock the (controversy)

* For positive proof that he wrote, see Notes of
Church History, U. S. O. [Redman, Y. T] (copy),
pp. 62, 63. John M. Rigdon at Salt Lake City.
and had the misfortune to have his face considerably pitted with smallpox. The verse ran thus:

"His Sunday clothes looked like those
Unknown at the washer's tub,
And his grizzly face looked like the place
Whose woodchucks hasten for grub."

When the song was rendered at a large gathering it was amusing to see how different persons received their portion of it. Some seemed to enjoy having their short-comings and deformities of mind or body portrayed; others, on the contrary, found it an exhilarating experience. But the general feeling was that the song was not to be tolerated at the present time. But then the people were good-natured, had but few amusements, and no better way of passing the time. When they did get together for house-raising, logging-bee or training, calculated to have a good time and enjoy a good joke, they did so, even if it was at their own expense. Now all is changed, and social, irony, and ridicule are merged into politics, and people are careful not to injure the feelings or character of their neighbor, unless their neighbor happens to be a candidate for office. On the other side, all the vials of wrath, vituperation, calumny, falsehood, forgery and abuse are poured upon him with his teeth out.

I learned from this lady in Michigan the first verse of the song in reference to the raising of their wages by Congress—

"4. Would you hear what roaring cheer
They had at Uncle Sam's Congress, O!
How they gobbled no guy as they doubled their pay,
And doubled the people's taxes, O."

I regret that I could not obtain the whole song. It would apply so apoly to the city councils of New York, Chicago, and some other large cities, who double their pay— not openly, as Congress did, but by subterfuge and selling official patronage. I learned also in Michigan that the president of the day at our great 4th of July celebration, to which I once made reference, was Mr. Waite, grandfather of A. G. Waite, who has waited so long as agent at the Lake Shore depot in Willoughby.

I will conclude this article with a short story which ends in poetry. In an early day dancing parties were not uncommon, for the want of a good violinist that liked to play for hire, until after Samuel Force came to Kirtland, when he went and supplied the void and held social gatherings all the same. There was a New Year's party at Esq. Moss' house, and James Bradley went up the road after a girl. Some mischievous person, after he had gone, filled a small sapling across the road, leaving the butt on the stump so high that he could neither go over or under it; but he managed to get around it, and thought it best to keep dark and say nothing about it. In the sports of the evening, for some delinquency or bad guessing, many of the company had to be judged. The sentence of a lady and gentleman were that they should stand in opposite corners of the room and compose a verse. The gentleman led off—

"James Bradley did on New Year's Day
Go up the hill in a clipper sleigh.
To which the lady replied—"

"When coming back he found a note
He could not cross to save his soul."

I gave you a short time ago some items from the life and confessions of John D. Lee, but omitted many of the most horrible and disgusting details. The doctrines and practices that he claimed the Mormonos of Salt Lake held, correspond so closely to those practiced and promulgated more than fifty years ago, and the truth of the statements can hardly be doubted. The doctrine that they were the chosen people of God, but were to inherit the earth, that the gentiles had forfeited the right to respect them, that it was God's will to despoil them of their property, and even of life, was then thought necessary for the advancement of the Mormon church. The practice of these doctrines at Kirtland were not fully carried out. The doctrine of celestial marriage, carefully and rather secretly advocated in Kirtland, was practiced openly at Nauvoo, and at Salt Lake became the most prominent feature of the Mormon church. Lee says that he was instructed in the doctrine of celestial marriage by Hyrum Smith, who said that it was according to revelation received direct from God. Lee says that the doctrine accords with his view of scripture, and that he never took his second wife, and had married ten before leaving Nauvoo, three at Council Bluffs, on his way to Salt Lake, and five after he got there. He took his eighteenth wife by order of Brigham Young, the ceremony performed by Amasa Lyman. He claimed but eighteen wives, but says he was sealed to old Mrs. Woolsey. She was sixty years old, the mother of three of his wives—for her soul's sake, for her salvation in the eternal life, he married her. He never really considered her his wife, but treated her well. He was the father of sixty-four children, ten had died and fifty-four were then living. Lee mentions but two women as sealed to Joseph Smith, but says that he tried to have a woman sealed to him—the wife of a wealthy man from Canada. Also the daughter of another wealthy man, whose interest them very much, and they are called "The Exposition," in which, as Lee expresses it, they set Smith up without mercy. This quarrel finally culminated in the death of Joseph Smith and Hyrum by a mob headed by men who had been taught how to dispose of enemies and seceders from the Mormon faith. A short time before Smith's death he was nominated for president of the United States, and a large force went in all directions to electioneer for him. About a week or two after, he went to Nauvoo, where they separated. Lee, with ten assistants, went to Kentucky to convert that State, but the death of Joseph blasted all their bright hopes of having a prophet of the Lord for president.
I mentioned in a former letter that many prosecutions were pending over Mormons at the time they left for Missouri in 1838. I will mention one—that is rather amusing. Patriarch Smith, Joseph's father, was arrested a few weeks before the camp started, for performing the marriage ceremony without authority from the State of Ohio to do so. He was brought before a magistrate, and a number of lawyers and pettifoggers assembled—mostly ex-Mormons—ready to prosecute and defend. But all expressed much sympathy for the old man, and urged the prosecutor to drop the suit; that the old man did not know that he was violating the law; that he meant no harm; that he would soon leave the country, and that it would save the county much expense to let him go. But the prosecutor was firm; he would not let the laws of Ohio be violated with impunity. When they could not move the prosecutor, Smith's lawyer took him into the consultation room to prepare the case for defense. The room was small, had one window and no outside door. They remained an unreasonable length of time. When the patience of the court and lawyers became exhausted, they opened the door, and there sat the lawyer; the window was shoved up, and Smith was gone, and kept secreted until the camp left. He was often called "Seven-by-nine" after this. The seceding Mormons had very expressive names for many of the Mormons, such as "Bagel," "Gravy Eye," "Cold Christ," and others equally as expressive.

My recollections of Kirtland would not be complete without mentioning a few of the followers of Joseph Smith. Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, witnesses to the Mormon book, or, rather, testified that they saw and "held" the plates on which the book was transcribed. I believe they all admitted that the plates were covered with a cloth, and they only saw them by the eye of faith. I do not recollect of ever seeing Whitmer, but believe that both he and Cowdery left Kirtland before the camp left, and did not follow Smith to Nauvoo or Missouri. Martin Harris remained in Kirtland twenty-five or thirty years after the Mormons left. His mind, always unbalanced on the subject of Mormonism, had become so destitute of that he thought himself a better man than Smith, or even Christ, and believed that the most of the prophecies in the Old Testament referred directly to him. One day, when working for me, he handed me a leaflet that he had just printed, taken from some of the prophets, touting of a wonderful person that should appear and draw all men after him. I looked it over and returned it to him. He said, "Who do you think it refers to?" I said, "Why, of course, it refers to you." He looked very much pleased, and said, "I see you understand the scriptures." In 1867 or 1868, while acting as township trustee, complaint was made to me that Martin Harris was destitute of a home, poorly clothed, feeble, burdensome to friends, and that he ought to be taken to the poor-house. I went down to the flat to investigate, and found him at a house near the Temple, with a family lately moved in, strangers to me. He seemed to dread the poor-house very much. The lady of the house said she would take care of him while their means lasted, and I was quite willing to postpone the unpleasant task of taking him to the poor-house. Everybody felt sympathetic to him. He was willing to work and make himself useful as far as his age and ability would admit. Soon after that he was sent for and taken to Salt Lake, which was the only act of sympathy I ever knew of the Mormons bestowing on any of their debtors who had been ruined by them.

One day I met John Tanner coming out of the bank. I saw that he was feeling bad, and spoke to him rather sympathetically. He said he wanted to tell me how he had been used. We stepped to one side, and he said that he had put all his money into the bank, and when he wanted to draw a few dollars to support his family, they refused to let him have a dollar, and abused and threatened and insulted him for asking. Subsequently he had some articles of property, which he took into Portage county and traded for cheese. He brought to Kirtland and traded for other provisions. This was violating Mormon rules—that all marketing should be done through the market-master. He was brought up before the church. It happened down there and went into the Temple to hear the trial. The market-master stated his case, and Joseph Smith made a speech showing the necessity of strictly obeying the rules. He was convicted, but I do not recollect much of the trial. Yet John Tanner stuck to his faith, and left for Nauvoo with the camp, though he was a man of good ability, strict integrity, and respected by all who knew him. It was marvelous to see with what tenacity they held to their faith in the prophet, when they knew they had been robbed, abused, and insulted.

I will mention one more instance of strong faith. Oliver Snow was an old neighbor of both my father and father-in-law in Massachusetts. He was of more than ordinary ability and unbounded integrity. He removed to Nauvoo, Portage county, and with the family became followers of Alexander Campbell, under Rigdon's preaching, and followed him in the Mormon priesthood, and a daughter became infatuated with Smith, and was reported to have been sealed to him as his spiritual wife. She was quite a literary person with much poetic talent. Her poetry was superior to that of our early Kirtland poets. A poem of hers of some four or five verses, the last one only remembered, read thus:

We thank thee for a prophet's verse,
It is pleasing, pure and terse,
In him we do and will rejoice,
Though all the world deride.

Mr. Snow came to Kirtland in 1839, and purchased the farm at the Center now owned by David Traver. He decided not to go with the camp, but to remain in Kirtland. He was quite intimate at our home. I then lived with my father-in-law. After the Mormons had got settled at Nauvoo, Joseph Smith had a revelation that Snow must turn out his farm to pay a debt that he (Smith) owed at the Geauga Bank and take an order on the bishop at Nauvoo, where the amount would be made up to him. The old man hesitated. He did not like to go, but as he had
people. To some of their proceedings there I have alluded in my recollections of that township, and will not repeat at this time, suffice it to say, that with God within call to advise and direct they saw themselves completely agreed, and had to leave from the folly of their own acts without much outside pressure.

Feeling themselves now strong enough to assert their rights in Missouri, they went back again there, but soon got in difficulty with the Missourians and after considerable blood-letting were again driven out of Missouri. They then took refuge at Nauvoo, Ill.; here they quarreled among themselves and also with the Gentiles around them. According to Lee, the quarrel among themselves led to the murder of Joseph and Hyrum. Whether Mormons or Gentiles were guilty will probably never be known. I think no one was ever brought to justice for the crime. Their religion is an aggressive one. They are the true Saints. The Gentiles are to be destroyed and the end justifies the means.

Kelley says: “If he (C. G. C.) will get the publications of Frank and Jesse James and the Cleveland fur robbers, they will prove another valuable addition to his theological library.” The meaning of the sentence is to me rather obscure. I can see no theology in the crimes of Blinkie Morgan, Frank and Jesse James. They were not committed under the cloak of religion—did not throw the responsibility upon God and claim him as a partner; and wherever the James boys and Blinkie Morgan may be placed in the hereafter, it seems to me in justice that Rigdon, Smith, and Young should have assigned to them much the hottest corner.

In Kelley’s examination he makes many insinuations and slights that I shall not notice. Neither his quotations from Isaacson and others, or from the Scriptures and Book of Covensants. We read of those who put on the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. Kelley seems the most disturbed at my quotations from Lee, the warm friend and firm believer in Joseph Smith, because it proves Smith to be the author of polygamy. I think I have proved conclusively, independent of Lee, that Smith taught and practiced the doctrine of celestial marriage in Kirtland, and that Kelley’s strong effort to make out a distinction between the early Saints and those of Salt Lake City like the lady that upset her churn in a certain portion of the house where the children were, but in gathering up the contents and rejected that which smelt bad and thus succeeded in saving most of the butter. So Kelley, with his acute olfactories and sophistical education may select out of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Covensants, the proceedings of the Saints in Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo and Salt Lake, with the numerous off-shoots of Mormonists, and from his theological friends, Jesse and Frank James, quite a palatable dish for his depraved appetite, but an intelligent community cannot make a distinction and will consider the whole an unseemly, disgusting, filthy matter for truth and veracity the Salt Lake Saints, who act according to their belief and the consequences, stand much higher than those quibbling and shirking Saints who, through fear of law and public sentiment, deny much of the teachings and practices of Joseph Smith.

The subject of Mormonism is not a pleasant one to write about. Many of my own family are connected with those having relatives in the Mormon faith and my valued friends; in fact, nearly all families in Kirtland are more or less connected with Mormons. Though I have not said half that the subject demands or that I would like to say, yet I will drop it and say no more about it unless forced to do so in self-defense.

And now Mr. Editor, I feel that an apology is due from me to you and my readers for pressing upon their attention such a subject. It has been to me a subject of Mormonism. I am aware that I shall be likened to the boy that rubbed assatfied under his grandmother’s nose, saying Granny, see how nasty it is.

I wrote the foregoing some two weeks ago, but forgot to mail it before I left for a visit in northern Iowa. I find this morning another blast from Kelley, but will only refer to two or three of his statements. He says: “I now introduce the testimony of I. P. Astell, a well known Lake County man, published on the 15th of March, 1830. He was for seven years a director in the first National Bank of Plaisteville. “My father moved here, with his family in the year 1830. He was a Baptist minister.” The testimony is very long but not a word of truth in it. Silas Astell was not a Baptist preacher—was not a professed minister, but a professor of religion—belonged to no church, and never lived in Plaisteville. I. P. Astell’s wife is a cousin of mine, his father’s widow is a sister-in-law of mine, and I am satisfied from my acquaintance with the family, that that whole article is nothing but gossip, with I. P. Astell’s name forged; if it is attached. In regard to the theft of the plow, when the young man was converted and embraced religion he felt it his duty to confess the theft and make restitution. Did any saint ever confess and make restitution? As for an innocent Saint having to pay for that plow I think it is a Latter Day Saint gossip and detestable truth. I never heard of Hine’s tooth chest. It was found in possession of a preacher of a popular denomination. I think it must have been a Latter Day Saint preacher, as they were numerous and popular at that time. Kelley wants proof. I append hereunto three affidavits of Latter Day Saints, showing that Smith not only instigated celestial marriage in Kirtland, but polygamy in Nauvoo. Kelley shows ignorance about the early Saints if he does not know that the first stake of Zion was to be in Missouri.

AFFIDAVITS:

“I hereby certify that Hyrum Smith did, in his office, read to me certain written documents which he said was a revelation from God; he said he was with Joseph Smith when it was received. He afterwards gave me the document to read, and I read it to my house and read it and returned it next day. The revelation, so-called, authorized certain men to have more wives than one at a time; in this world and the world to come. I said this was the law and commanded Joseph to enter into the law, and also that he should administer to others. Several other items were in the revelation, supporting the above doctrines.

WILLIAM LAW.
The first thing I did, I felt the presence of the Lord. I had been up all night, not knowing what to do. The saints rejoiced. I preached from Romans 9:6.

January 6th, 1842

January 6th, 1842

B. Young Journal

January 15th, 1842

This evening I am with my wife alone by my fire. I rode for the first time for three days, and feel to praise the Lord.