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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

MAY, 1844.

My brother Hyrum and Elder Lyman Wight also addressed the Saints.

My brother Hyrum received an anonymous letter supposed to have been written by Joseph H. Jackson, threatening his life and calling upon him to make his peace with God, for he would soon have to die.

At 3 p.m., I attended prayer meeting in the council room; William Smith and Almon W. Babbitt were present; the room was full, and we all prayed for deliverance from our enemies, and exaltation to such offices as will enable the servants of God to execute righteousness in the earth.

I copy the following from the Times and Seasons:

"FOR THE NEIGHBOR.

"MR. EDITOR:

Before taking my farewell of your beautiful and growing city, I avail myself of a few leisure moments in expressing some of my views and conclusions of the Prophet Joe and the Mormons. In the first place allow me to say that the Mormons as a people have been most woefully misrepresented and abused, and in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred by persons who know nothing of their principles and doctrines.

Before visiting this place my mind was very much prejudiced against the Mormons from reports which I had listened to in traveling through the different States; and I presume if I had never taken occasion to inform myself of their religion and views, my mind would have still remained in the same condition. There is not a city within my knowledge that can boast of a more enterprising and industrious people than can Nauvoo; her citizens are enlightened and possess many advantages in the arts and sciences of the day, which other cities of longer standing cannot boast; in a word, Nauvoo bids fair to soon out rival any city in the west.

General Smith is a man who understands the political history of his country, as well as the religious history of the world, as perfectly as any politician or religionist I have ever met with. He advances ideas, which, if carried into effect would greatly benefit the nation in point of commerce and finance, and while he maintains, and philosophically shows, that our country is approaching a fearful crisis, which if not arrested, will end in disgrace to the country, and cause our national banner to hug its mast in disgust and shame, clearly points out the remedy.

Shall the liberty which our fathers purchased at so dear a price be wrenched from the hands of their children? Shall our national banner, which floated so proudly in the breeze at the Declaration of Independence, be disgraced and refuse to show its motto? Shall we, as American citizens, fold our arms and look quietly on, while the shackles of slavery are being fastened upon our hands, and while men only seek office for the purpose of exalting themselves into power? I say, shall we still rush blindly on and hasten on our own destruction by placing men in power who neither regard the interests of the people, nor the prayers of the oppressed? Every American citizen will shout at the top of his voice, NO!

Mr. Smith's 'Views of the powers and policy of the Government' manifest a republican spirit, and if carried out would soon place the nation in a prosperous condition and brighten the prospects of those who now have to toil so incessantly to support the profligate expenditures and luxurious equipage of the present rulers and representatives of our nation.

Joseph Smith is a man who is in every way calculated to make a free people happy; he is liberal in his sentiments, and allows every man the free expression of his feeling on all subjects; he is sociable and easy in his manners, is conversant and familiar on all exciting topics, expresses himself freely and plainly, on the different methods of administering the government; while he is not ashamed to let the world know his views and criticize upon his opinions.

I am, sir, in no way connected with the Mormon church, but am disposed to listen to reason in all cases. I have heretofore been a warm advocate of the measures of the whig party; but considering General Smith's views and sentiments to be worthy the applause of every citizen of the United States, and especially the yeomanry of the country, I shall in every instance advocate his principles and use my utmost influence in his favor.—I am, sir, yours, in haste,
AN AMERICAN."

"Nauvoo Mansion, May 12th, 1844."

Monday, 13.—Heavy thunder showers during the night. At 10 a.m. went to my office and conversed with several of the brethren. Sold Ellis M. Sanders one hundred acres of land, received \$300 in cash, and his note for \$1000, and \$20 for the Temple. Paid Sisson Chase \$298, and took up a note of Young, Kimball & Taylor's, given for money they had borrowed for me, and gave \$10 to Heber C. Kimball.

At 2 p.m. attended meeting of the general council at which the following letter from Elder Orson Hyde was read:

"Washington, April 25th, 1844.

"Hon. Sir:

I take the liberty to transmit through you to the council of our church the result of my labors thus far. I arrived in this place on the 23d inst., by way of Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New Jersey.

I found Elder Orson Pratt here, Elder Page having been called home to Pittsburgh on account of his wife's ill health. Elder O. Pratt has been indefatigable in his exertions in prosecuting the business entrusted to his charge. His business has been before the senate and referred to the committee on the judiciary, and the report of said committee is not yet rendered, which is the cause of his delay in writing to you.

Yesterday we conversed with Messrs. Hoge, Hardin, Douglas, and Wentworth, and last evening we spent several hours with the Hon. Mr. Semple. They all appear deeply interested in the Oregon question, and received us with every demonstration of respect that we could desire. Mr. Hoge thought the bill would not pass, from the fact that there already exists between England and America a treaty for the joint occupancy of Oregon, and that any act of our government authorizing an armed force to be raised, and destined for that country, would be regarded by England as an infraction of that treaty, and a cause of her commencing hostilities against us.

But my reply was, these volunteers are not to be considered any part or portion of the army of the United States, neither acting under the direction or authority of the United States; and, said I, for men to go there and settle in the character of emigrants cannot be regarded by our government as deviating in the least degree from her plighted faith, unless she intends to tamely submit to British monopoly in that country.

Mr. H. said he would present the memorial if we desired it; I thanked him for his kind offer, but observed that I was not yet prepared for the bill to be submitted, but wished to elicit all the facts relative to the condition of Oregon, and also advise with many other members relative to the matter; and we could better determine then how the bill should be introduced. We do not want it presented and referred to a standing committee, and stuck away with five or ten cords of petitions, and that be the last of it; but we want the memorial read, a move made to suspend the rules of the house, and the bill printed, &c.

Mr. Wentworth said, 'I am for Oregon any how; you may set me down on your list, and I will go for you if you will go for Oregon.' Judge Douglas has been quite ill, but is just recovered; he will help all he can; Mr. Hardin likewise. But Major Semple says that he does not believe anything will be done about Texas or the Oregon this session; for it might have a very important effect upon the Presidential election, and politicians are slow to move when such doubtful and important matters are likely to be affected by it. He says that there are already two bills before the house for establishing a territorial government in Oregon, and to protect the emigrants there; and now he says, were your bill to be introduced it might be looked upon that you claimed the sole right of emigrating to and settling that new country to the exclusion of others. He was in favor of the Oregon being settled, and he thought the bills already before the house would extend equal protection to us; and equal protection to every class of citizens was what the government could rightly do, but particular privileges to any one class they could not rightly do.

I observed that the bill asked for no exclusive rights; it asks not for exclusive rights in Oregon, neither do we wish it. Other people might make a move to Oregon, and no prejudices bar their way, and their motives would not be mis-interpreted.

But said I, Missouri knows her guilt, and should we attempt to march to Oregon without the government throwing a protective shield over us, Missouri's crimes would lead her first to misinterpret our intentions, to fan the flame of popular excitement against us, and scatter the firebrands of a misguided zeal among the combustible materials of other places, creating a flame too hot for us to encounter, too desolating for us to indulge the hope of successfully prosecuting the grand and benevolent enterprise which we have conceived. We have been compelled to relinquish our rights in Missouri; we have been forcibly driven from our homes, leaving our property and inheritances as spoil to the oppressor; and more or less in Illinois we have been subject to the whims and chimeras of illiberal men, and to threats, to vexatious prosecutions and law suits.

Our government profess to have no power to help us, or to redress the wrongs which we have suffered, and we now ask the government

to protect us while raising our volunteers; and when we get into Oregon we will protect ourselves, and all others who wish our protection. And after subduing a new country, encountering all its difficulties and hardships, and sustaining the just claims of our nation to its soil, we believe that the generosity of our government towards us will be equal to our enterprise and patriotism; and that they will allow us a grant or territory of land, which will be both honorable in them and satisfactory to us.

This, he says, is all very just and reasonable. But still he thinks that Congress will take no step in relation to Oregon, from the fact that his resolution requesting the President of the United States to give notice to the British government for the abolition of the treaty of joint occupation, was voted down; and while that treaty is in force, our government dare do nothing in relation to that country. This resolution was introduced by Mr. Semple to pave the way for the passage of those bills in relation to a territorial government in Oregon.

All our members join in the acknowledgment that you now have an undoubted right to go to Oregon with all the emigrants you can raise. They say the existing laws protect you as much as law can protect you; and should Congress pass an additional law it would not prevent wicked men from shooting you down as they did in Missouri. All the Oregon men in Congress would be glad we would go to that country and settle it.

I will now give you my opinion in relation to this matter; it is made up from the spirit of the times in a hasty manner; nevertheless I think time will prove it to be correct.—That Congress will pass no act in relation to Texas or Oregon at present. She is afraid of England, afraid of Mexico, and afraid the Presidential election will be twisted by it. The members all appear like unskilful players at checkers—afraid to move, for they see not which way to move advantageously. All are figuring and playing round the grand and important questions. In the days of our Lord the people neglected the weightier matters of the law, but tithed mint, rue, annis, and cummin; but I think here in Washington they do little else than tithe the mint.

A member of Congress is in no enviable situation; if he will boldly advocate true principles, he loses his influence and becomes unpopular; and whoever is committed, and has lost his influence, has no power to benefit his constituents; so they all go to figuring and playing round the great points.

Mr. Semple said that Mr. Smith could not constitutionally be constituted a member of the army by law; and this, if nothing else, would prevent its passage. I observed that I would in that case strike out that clause. Perhaps I took an unwarrantable responsibility upon myself; but where I get into a strait place, I can do no better than act according to what appears most correct.

I do not intend the opinion that I have hastily given shall abate my zeal to drive the matter through, but I have given the opinion for your benefit; that your indulgence of the hope that Congress will do something for us may not cause you to delay any important action.

There is already a government established in Oregon to some extent; magistrates have been chosen by the people, &c. This on the south of the Columbia; north of that river the Hudson Bay Company occupy. There is some good country in Oregon, but a great deal of sandy barren desert. I have seen a gentleman who has been there, and also in California.

The most of the settlers in Oregon and Texas are our old enemies the mobocrats of Missouri. If, however, the settlement of Oregon or Texas be determined upon, the sooner the move is made the better; and I would not advise any delay for the action of our government, for there is such a jealousy of our rising power already, that government will do nothing to favor us. If the Saints possess the kingdom, I think they will have to take it; and the sooner it is done, the more easily it is accomplished.

Your superior wisdom must determine whether to go to Oregon, to Texas, or to remain within these United States, and send forth the most efficient men to build up churches, and let them remain for the time being; and in the meantime send some wise men among the Indians, and teach them civilization and religion, to cultivate the soil, to live in peace with one another and with all men. But whatever you do, don't be deluded with the hope that government will foster us, and thus delay an action which the present perhaps is the most proper time that ever will be.

Oregon is becoming a popular question; the fever of emigration begins to rage; if the Mormons become the early majority, others will not come; if the Mormons do not become an early majority, the others will not allow us to come.

Elder Pratt is faithful, useful, and true; he has got the run of matters here very well, and is with me in all my deliberations, visitings, &c.

Major Semple goes with us this evening to introduce us to the President, and to view the White House.

My heart and hand are with you. May Heaven bless you and me.—As ever, I am
ORSON HYDE."

To the Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

Also the following letter:

"Washington, April 26, 1844.

"Dear Sir:

To-day I trouble you with another communication which you will please have the goodness to lay before our council.

We were last evening introduced to the President at the White House by the politeness of Major Semple, where we spent an hour very agreeably. The President is a very plain, homespun, familiar, farmer-like man. He spoke of our troubles in Missouri, and regretted that we had met with such treatment; he asked us how we were getting along in Illinois. I told him that we were contending with the difficulties of a new country, and laboring under the disadvantageous consequences of being driven from our property and homes in Missouri.

We have this day had a long conversation with Judge Douglas. He is ripe for Oregon and the California. He said he would resign his seat in Congress if he could command the force that Mr. Smith could, and would be on the march to that country in a month.

I learn that the eyes of many aspiring politicians in this place are upon that country; and that there is so much jealousy between them that they will probably pass no bill in relation to it. Now all these politicians rely upon the arm of our government to protect them there; and if government were to pass an act establishing a territorial government west of the Rocky Mountains, there would be at once a tremendous rush of emigration; but if government pass no act in relation to it, these men have not stamina or sufficient confidence in themselves and their own resources to hazard the enterprise.

The northern whig members are almost to a man against Texas and Oregon; but should the present administration succeed in annexing Texas, then all the whigs would turn round in favor of Oregon; for if Texas be admitted, slavery is extended to the south; then free states must be added to the west to keep up a balance of power between the slave and the free states.

Should Texas be admitted war with Mexico is looked upon as inevitable. The senate have been in secret session on the ratification of the treaty of annexation, but what they did we cannot say. General Gaines, who was boarding at the same house with Judge Douglas, was secretly ordered to repair to the Texan frontier four days ago, and left immediately. I asked Judge D. if that did not speak loud for annexation. He says, no! Santa Anna being a jealous hot headed pate, might be suspicious the treaty would be ratified by the senate, and upon mere suspicion might attempt some hostilities, and Gaines has been ordered there to be on the alert and ready for action if necessary. Probably our navy will in a few days be mostly in the Gulf of Mexico.

There are many powerful checks upon our government, preventing her from moving in any of these important matters; and for aught I know these checks are permitted to prevent our government from extending her jurisdiction over that territory which God designs to give to his Saints. Judge Douglas says he would equally as soon go to that country without an act of Congress as with; and that in five years a noble State might be formed, and then if they would not receive us into the Union we would have a government of our own. He is decidedly of the opinion that Congress will pass no act in favor of any particular man going there; but he says if any man will go, and desires that privilege, and has confidence in his own ability to perform it, he already has the right, and the sooner he is off the better for his scheme.

It is the opinion here among politicians, that it will be extremely difficult to have any bill pass in relation to the encouragement of emigration to Oregon; but much more difficult to get a bill passed designating any particular man to go; but all concur in the opinion that we are authorized already.

In case of a removal to that country, Nauvoo is the place of general rendezvous; our course from thence would be westward through Iowa, bearing a little north until we come to the Missouri river, leaving the State of Missouri on the left, thence onward till we come to the Platte, thence up the north fork of the Platte to the mouth of Sweetwater river in Longitude 107° 45' W., and thence up said Sweetwater river to the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains about eleven hundred miles from Nauvoo, and from said South Pass in latitude 42° 28' north to the Unpqua and Klamet valleys in Oregon, bordering on California is about 600 miles, making the distance from Nauvoo to the best portions of Oregon 1700 miles.

There is no government established here, and it is so near California that when a government shall be established there, it may readily embrace that country likewise. There is much barren country, rocks and mountains, in Oregon, but the valleys are very fertile. I am persuaded that Congress will pass no act in relation to that country, from the fact that the resolution requesting the President to give notice to the British government for the discontinuance of the treaty of joint occupation of Oregon, was voted down with a rush; and this notice must be given before any action can be had unless Congress violates the treaty; at least so say the politicians here.