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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

MAY, 1844.

Judge Douglas has given me a map of Oregon, and also a Report on an exploration of the country lying between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains on the line of the Kansas and great Platte Rivers, by Lieut. J. C. Fremont, of the corps of Topographical Engineers. On receiving it, I expressed a wish that Mr. Smith could see it; Judge D. says it is a public document, and I will frank it to him. I accepted his offer, and the book will be forthcoming to him. The people are so eager for it here, that they have even stole it out of the library. The author is Mr. Benton's son-in-law; Judge D. borrowed it of Mr. B. I was not to tell any one in this city where I got it. The book is a most valuable document to any one contemplating a journey to Oregon. The directions which I have given may not be exactly correct, but the book will tell correctly. Judge D. says he can direct Mr. Smith to several gentlemen in California who will be able to give him any information on the state of affairs in that country; and when he returns to Illinois, he will visit Mr. Smith.

Bro. Pratt and myself drafted a bill this morning, and handed it into the committee on the judiciary from the Senate, asking an appropriation of two million dollars for the relief of the sufferers among our people in Missouri in 1838—9, to be deposited in the hands of the city council of Nauvoo, and by them dealt out to the sufferers in proportion to their loss. We intend to tease them until we either provoke them, or get them to do something for us. I have learned this much, that if we want Congress to do anything for us, in drawing up our memorial, we must not ask what is right in the matter, but we must ask what kind of a thing will Congress pass? Will it suit the politics of the majority? Will it be popular or unpopular? For you might as well drive a musket ball through a cotton bag, or the gospel of Christ through the heart of a priest, case-hardened by sectarianism, bigotry, and superstition, or a camel through the eye of a needle, as to drive anything through Congress that will operate against the popularity of politicians. I shall probably leave here in a few days, and bro. Pratt will remain. I go to get money to sustain ourselves with.

I shall write again soon, and let you know what restrictions, if any, are laid upon our citizens in relation to passing through the Indian territories. I shall communicate every thing that I think will benefit. In the mean time, if the council have any instructions to give us, we shall be happy to receive them here or at Philadelphia.

John Ross is here; we intend to see him. It is uncertain when Congress rises; it will be a long pull in my opinion.

As ever, I am yours sincerely ORSON HYDE.

Elder Pratt's best respects to the brethren.

Willard Richards was instructed to answer the above letters, and Elders Lyman Wight and Heber C. Kimball were instructed to carry the answers.

Council adjourned at 5 p.m.

The steamer "Maid of Iowa" returned from Rock River with 400 bushels of corn, and 200 bushels of wheat, which had been purchased for the Temple. At 8 p.m., I went on board with Dr. Willard Richards, and visited Captain Dan Jones.

I insert a letter which I received from Henry Clay, and my answer:—

"Ashland, Nov. 15, 1843.

Dear Sir:—

I have received your letter in behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, stating that you understand that I am a candidate for the Presidency, and enquiring what will be my rule of action relative to you as a people, should I be elected.

I am profoundly grateful for the numerous and strong expressions of the people in my behalf, as a candidate for President of the United States; but I do not so consider myself. That must depend upon future events, and upon my sense of duty.

Should I be a candidate, I can enter into no engagements, make no promises, give no pledges, to any particular portion of the people of the United States. If I ever enter into that high office, I must go into it free and unfettered, with no guarantees but such as are to be drawn from my whole life, character and conduct.

It is not inconsistent with this declaration to say, that I have viewed with a lively interest, the progress of the Latter Day Saints; that I

have sympathized in their sufferings under injustice, as it appeared to me, which has been inflicted upon them; and that I think, in common with all other religious communities, they ought to enjoy the security and protection of the constitution and the laws.

I am, with great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

H. CLAY.

To Joseph Smith, Esq.,

"Nauvoo, Ill., May 13th, 1844.

Sir:—

Your answer to my inquiry, 'What would be your rule of action towards the Latter Day Saints, should you be elected President of the United States,' has been under consideration since last November, in the fond expectation that you would give (for every honest citizen has a right to demand it,) to the country, a manifesto of your views of the best method and means which would secure to the people, the whole people, the most freedom, the most happiness, the most union, the most wealth, the most fame, the most glory at home, and the most honor abroad, at the least expense; but I have waited in vain. So far as you have made public declarations, they have been made, like your answer to the above, soft to flatter, rather than solid to feed the people. You seem to abandon all former policy which may have actuated you in the discharge of a statesman's duty, when the vigor of intellect and the force of virtue should have sought out an everlasting habitation for liberty; when, as a wise man, a true patriot, and a friend to mankind, you should have resolved to ameliorate the awful condition of our bleeding country by a mighty plan of wisdom, righteousness, justice, goodness, and mercy, that would have brought back the golden days of our nation's youth, vigor, and vivacity, when prosperity crowned the efforts of a youthful Republic, when the gentle aspirations of the sons of liberty were, 'we are one.'

'In your answer to my questions last fall, that peculiar tact of modern politicians declaring 'if you ever enter into that high office, you must go into it free and unfettered, with no guarantees but such as are to be drawn from your whole life, character, and conduct,' so much resembles a lottery vender's sign, with the goddess of good luck sitting on the car of fortune, a straddle of the horn of plenty, and driving the merry steeds of beatitude, without reins or bridle, that I cannot help exclaiming; O frail man, what have you done that will exalt you? Can any thing be drawn from your life, character, or conduct that is worthy of being held up to the gaze of this nation as a model of virtue, charity, and wisdom? Are you not a lottery picture with more than two blanks to a prize? Leaving many things prior to your Ghent treaty, let the world look at that, and see where is the wisdom, honor, and patriotism, which ought to have characterized the plenipotentiary of the only free nation upon the earth? A quarter of a century's negotiation to obtain our rights on the north eastern boundary, and the motley manner in which Oregon tries to shine as American territory, coupled with your presidential race, and come-by-chance secretaryship in 1825, all go to convince the friends of freedom, the golden patriots of Jeffersonian democracy, free trade and sailor's rights, and the protectors of person and property, that an honorable war is better than a dishonorable peace.

But had you really wanted to have exhibited the wisdom, clemency, benevolence, and dignity, of a great man in this boasted Republic, when fifteen thousand free citizens were exiled from their own homes, lands and property, in the wonderful patriotic State of Missouri, and you then upon your oath and honor, occupying the exalted station of a senator of Congress from the noble hearted State of Kentucky; why did you not show the world your loyalty to law and order, by using all honorable means to restore the innocent to their rights and property? Why, sir, the more we search into your character and conduct, the more we must exclaim from holy writ, 'the tree is known by its fruit.'

Again, this is not all; rather than show yourself an honest man, by guaranteeing to the people what you will do in case you should be elected president, 'you can enter into no engagement, make no promises, and give no pledges,' as to what you will do. Well, it may be that some hot headed partisan would take such nothingarianism upon trust, but sensible men and even ladies would think themselves insulted by such an evasion of coming events! If a tempest is expected, why not prepare to meet it, and in the language of the poet, exclaim:—

'Then let the trial come; and witness thou,
If terror be upon me; if I shrink—
Or falter in my strength to meet the storm
When hardest it besets me.'

True greatness never wavers, but when the Missouri compromise was entered into by you for the benefit of slavery, there was a mighty shrinkage of western honor; and from that day, sir, the sterling Yankee, the struggling Abolitionist, and the staunch Democrat, with a large number of the liberal minded Whigs, have marked you as a black-leg in politics, begging for a chance to shuffle yourself into the Presidential chair, where you might deal out the destinies of our beloved country for a game of brag that would end in: 'Hark from the tombs a doleful sound.' Start not at this picture; for your 'whole life, character, and conduct' have

been spotted with deeds that cause a blush upon the face of a virtuous patriot. So you must be contented in your lot, while crime, cowardice, cupidity, or low cunning, have handed you down from the high tower of a statesman to the black hole of a gambler. A man that accepts a challenge or fights a duel is nothing more nor less than a murderer; for holy writ declares that 'whoso sheds man's blood by man shall his blood be shed;' and when in the renowned city of Washington the notorious Henry Clay dropped from the summit of a senator to the sink of a scoundrel to shoot at that chalk line of a Randolph, he not only disgraced his own fame, family, and friends, but he polluted the sanctum sanctorum of American glory; and the kingly blackguards throughout the whole world are pointing the finger of scorn at the boasted 'asylum of the oppressed,' and hissing at American statesmen as gentlemen ragabonds and murderers, holding the olive branch of peace in one hand and a pistol for death in the other! Well might the Savior rebuke the heads of this nation with *wo unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites*, for the United States government and Congress, with a few honorable exceptions, have gone the way of Cain, and must perish in their gainsayings like Korah and his wicked host. And honest men of every clime, and the innocent, poor, and oppressed, as well as heathens, pagans, and Indians, every where, who could but hope that the tree of liberty would yield some precious fruit for the hungry human race, and shed some balm leaves for the healing of nations, have long since given up all hopes of equal rights, of justice and judgment, and of truth and virtue, when such polluted, vain, heaven daring, bogus patriots, are forced or flung into the front rank of government to guide the destinies of millions. Crape the heavens with weeds of woe, gird the earth with sackcloth, and let hell mitter one melody in commemoration of fallen splendor! for the glory of America has departed, and God will set a flaming sword to guard the tree of liberty, while such mint-tithing Herods as Van Buren, Boggs, Benton, Calhoun, and Clay, are thrust out of the realms of virtue as fit subjects for the kingdom of fallen greatness; *vox reprobi, vox Diaboli!*

In your late addresses to the people of South Carolina, where rebellion budded but could not blossom, you 'renounced ultraism,' 'high tariff,' and almost banished your 'banking systems' for the more certain standard of 'public opinion.' This is all very well, and marks the intention of a politician, the calculations of a demagogue, and the allowance for feelings of a shrewd manager, just as truly as the weather cock does the wind when it turns upon the spire. Hustings for the south, barbecues for the west, confidential letters for the north, and 'American system' for the east:—

'Lull-a-bye baby upon the tree top,
And when the wind blows the cradle will rock.'

Suppose you should also, taking your 'whole life, character, and conduct' into consideration, and, as many hands make light work, stir up the old 'Clay party,' the 'National Republican party,' the 'High Protective Tariff party,' and the late coon skin party, with all their paraphernalia, ultraism, *ne plus ultraism*,—*sine qua non*, which have grown with your growth, strengthened with your strength, and shrunk with your shrinkage, and ask the people of this enlightened Republic what they think of your powers and policy as a statesman; for verily it would seem, from all past remains of parties, politics, projects, and pictures, that you are the Clay and the people the potter; and as some vessels are marred in the hands of the potter, the natural conclusion is, that you are a vessel of dishonor.

You may complain that a close examination of your 'whole life, character, and conduct,' places you as a Kentuckian would pleasantly term it 'in a bad fix'; but, sir, when the nation has sunk deeper and deeper in the mud at every turn of the great wheels of the Union, while you have acted as one of the principal drivers, it becomes the bounden duty of the whole community, as one man, to whisper you on every point of government to uncover every act of your life, and inquire what mighty acts you have done to benefit the nation, how much you have tithed the mint to gratify your lust, and why the fragments of your raiment hang upon the thorns by the path as signals to beware!

But your shrinkage is truly wonderful! Not only your banking system, and high tariff project, have vanished from your mind 'like the baseless fabric of a vision,' but the annexation of Texas has touched your pathetic sensibilities of national pride so acutely, that the poor Texans, your own brethren, may fall back into the ferocity of Mexico, or be sold at auction to British stock jobbers, and all is well, for 'I,' the old senator from Kentucky, am fearful it would militate against my interest in the north to enlarge the borders of the union in the south. Truly 'a poor wise child is better than an old foolish king who will be no longer admonished.' Who ever heard of a nation that had too much territory? Was it ever bad policy to make friends? Has any people ever become too good to do good? No, never; but the ambition and vanity of some men have flown away with their wisdom and judgment, and left a creaking skeleton to occupy the place of a noble soul.

Why, sir, the condition of the whole earth is lamentable. Texas dreads the teeth and toe nails of Mexico. Oregon has the rheumatism, brought on by a horrid exposure to the heat

and cold of British and American trappers; Canada has caught a bad cold from extreme fatigue in the patriot war; South America has the headache, caused by bumps against the beams of Catholicity and Spanish sovereignty; Spain has the gripes from age and inquisition; France trembles and wastes under the effects of contagious diseases; England groans with the gout, and wiggles with wine; Italy and the German states are pale with the consumption; Prussia, Poland, and the little contiguous dynasties, duchies, and domains, have the mumps so severely, that 'the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint;' Russia has the cramp by lineage; Turkey has the numb palsy; Africa, from the curse of God, has lost the use of her limbs; China is ruined by the Queen's evil, and the rest of Asia fearfully exposed to the small pox the natural way from British pedlars; the islands of the sea are almost dead with the scurvy; the Indians are blind and lame; and the United States, which ought to be the good physician with 'balm from Gilead,' and an 'asylum for the oppressed,' has boosted and is boosting up into the council chamber of the government, a clique of political gamblers, to play for the old clothes and old shoes of a sick world, and 'no pledge, no promise to any particular portion of the people,' that the rightful heirs will ever receive a cent of their Father's legacy! Away with such self-important, self-aggrandizing and self-willed demagogues! their friendship is colder than polar ice; and their professions meaner than the damnation of hell.

Oh man! when such a great dilemma of the globe, such a tremendous convulsion of kingdoms, shakes the earth from center to circumference; when castles, prison houses, and cells, raise a cry to God against the cruelty of man; when the mourning of the fatherless and the widow causes anguish in heaven; when the poor among all nations cry day and night for bread and a shelter from the heat and storm; and when the degraded black slave holds up his manacled hands to the great statesmen of the United States, and sings,

'O liberty, where are thy charms,
That sages have told me were sweet!'

And when fifteen thousand free citizens of the high blooded Republic of North America are robbed and driven from one state to another without redress or redemption, it is not only time for a candidate for the presidency to pledge himself to execute judgment and justice in righteousness, law or no law, but it is his bounden duty as a man, for the honor of a disgraced country, and for the salvation of a once virtuous people, to call for a union of all honest men, and appease the wrath of God by acts of wisdom, holiness, and virtue! 'The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

Perhaps you may think I go too far with my strictures and innuendoes, because in your concluding paragraph you say: 'It is not inconsistent with your declarations to say, that you have viewed with a lively interest the progress of the Latter Day Saints, that you have sympathized in their sufferings under injustice, as it appeared to you, which has been inflicted upon them; and that you think, in common with all other religious communities they ought to enjoy the security and protection of the constitution and the laws.' If words were not wind, and imagination not a vapor, such 'views' 'with a lively interest' might coax out a few Mormon votes; such 'sympathy' for their suffering under injustice, might heal some of the sick, yet lingering amongst them, raise some of the dead, and recover some of their property from Missouri; and finally, if thought was not a phantom, we might, in common with other religious communities, 'you think, enjoy the security and protection of the constitution and laws!' But during ten years, while the Latter Day Saints have bled, been robbed, driven from their own lands, paid oceans of money into the Treasury to pay your renowned self and others for legislating and dealing out equal rights and privileges to those in common with all other religious communities, they have waited and expected in vain! If you have possessed any patriotism it has been veiled by your popularity for fear the Saints would fall in love with its charms. Blind charity and dumb justice never do much towards alleviating the wants of the needy, but straws show which way the wind blows. It is currently rumored that your dernier resort for the Latter Day Saints is to emigrate to Oregon or California. Such cruel humanity, such noble injustice, such honorable cowardice, such foolish wisdom, and such vicious virtue, could only emanate from Clay. After the Saints have been plundered of three or four millions of land and property by the people and powers of the sovereign state of Missouri; after they have sought for redress and redemption from the county court to Congress, and been denied through religious prejudice and sacerdotal dignity; after they have builded a city and two temples at an immense expense of labor and treasure; after they have increased from hundreds to hundreds of thousands; and after they have sent missionaries to the various nations of the earth to gather Israel according to the predictions of all the holy prophets since the world began, that great plenipotentiary the renowned Secretary of State, the ignoble duelist, the gambling Senator, and Whig candidate for the presidency, Henry Clay, the wise Kentucky lawyer, advises the Latter Day Saints to go to Oregon to obtain justice and set up a government of their own.