MORMONISM—TRUTH, PEACE AND PROGRESS

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(Reported by F. W. Otterstrom.)

An ancient proverb runs thus: "Words fitly spoken are as apples of gold in pictures of silver." Having been requested to address this assemblage, I sincerely hope that what I say shall answer to that description. I believe it to be the duty of a speaker to study, to ponder, and with a prayerful purpose endeavor to ascertain, with what measure of inspiration he can command, the things most suitable and appropriate for the occasion. I believe it to be the duty of the hearers to assist the speaker with their united faith, attention, and earnest desires in the same direction.

While searching my thoughts for a subject that would be appropriate at this time, I recalled an anecdote that is related of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was a time of trouble, and he was much harassed and threatened. It had been told him that his enemies, to use their own phrase, proposed "sending the Mormons to hell." The prophet quoted these words to some of his brethren, and added with a smile, "Never mind, brethren—if they do send us to hell, we'll turn the devils out, and make a heaven of it."

I cannot help contrasting this sentiment with things we sometimes hear said of us as a people, by those unfriendly to us, who, for their own purposes, circulate the statement that the Mormons are enemies to progress, that they do not believe in improvements, that they prefer stagnation to progression, and would rather things should remain at a standstill. Here we have, in this simple declaration of the founder of Mormonism, the true spirit and character of this work. Mormonism, so called, came into the world to move things, not to make them stand still. It represents progress and improvement—spiritual and temporal. It proposes to convert earth into a heaven, and to make of man a God. If I were to select three words that indicate clearly the character and mission of Mormonism, those three words would be: truth, peace, and progress.

A PROGRESSIVE PROPHET.

Joseph Smith believed in progress. Even as a boy he was dissatisfied with the condition of the religious world around him. He recognized the fact that things were comparatively stagnant, so far as religion was concerned; and it was the spirit of progress in him, a desire to improve existing conditions, that led him, in the first place, to inquire of the Lord. Bewildered upon the subject, he desired to know which of all the contending churches of Christendom was the true Church of Christ, and one day while reading the Scriptures, his eye fell upon this passage in the epistle of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Obedient to this injunction, he sought the Lord in humble prayer. God opened the heavens and revealed Himself to this earnest seeker after truth—this boy who desired to improve, who believed in and was an advocate all his life of the principle of progress. God revealed to him that the true Church of Christ and the true religion of Christ, which had been absent from the earth for centuries, were about to be restored, and that he had been chosen to perform a work that would accomplish a wonderful revolution in the religious world; that the time had arrived when the work of God, over which He had been watching all down the ages, must be consummated, the dispensation of the fulness of times ushered in, and a work done that would prepare the world for the second coming of the Son of God.

This in general terms, was the substance of the first revelation to Joseph Smith. In the early part of the year 1820, God, as he declares, the Father and His Son appeared to him and gave him instructions to this end. Subsequently he received visitations of angels; the ancient history of the American continent was revealed to him, and by the power and gift of God he translated the ancient record, publishing the same to the world as the Book of Mormon. He also declares that heavenly messengers ordained him, first to the Aaronic priesthood, and then to the Melchisedek priesthood, and under this divine authority he organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We testify that this religion, which the world calls Mormonism, is the restored religion of Jesus Christ, the gospel of eternal truth and of eternal progress.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT.

Joseph Smith, when he began his career, was unaught, uncultured. We freely admit that this was his condition at the inception of the work. When called upon to translate, by means of the Urim and Thummim, the Book of Mormon, he could scarcely write his name, and a scribe was provided for him—a man named Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal assistant in organizing the Church. But Joseph Smith, although chosen while an unlearned boy, did not propose to remain unlearned. From the beginning, he had a desire to progress, to improve; and among the great revelations that he received from the God of heaven, foreshadowing the future of this work and portraying its true character, were revelations along the lines of education and enlightenment. Joseph Smith was the first thinker and first speaker, that I ever heard of, to declare that salvation is a process of education. He said that a man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge; that the glory of God is intelligence; and that whatsoever principle of intelligence we attain to in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. He exhorted his people to improve themselves in every possible way, to advance both spiritually and temporally. One of the most frequently quoted of his sayings, or of God's revelations to him and through him, is one reading thus: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom. Seek learning, even by study, and also by faith." Joseph Smith taught that knowledge is not only power in this world, but, in all worlds. He said that if we do not get knowledge—eternal knowledge—evil spirits in the next world will know more than we do, and by reason of their superior intelligence, will have dominion over us, if we neglect our opportunities for acquiring knowledge and intelligence here. These are among the teachings of the Prophet.

And he was not merely a teacher of such principles; he was an exemplar of the same. He applied these instructions to himself, and made himself comparatively a learned man. There was as much difference between Joseph Smith who beheld the Father and the Son in the spring of 1820, and Joseph Smith who fell a martyr in the summer of 1844, as there is between an unlearned boy and a learned man. He studied history; studied laws and the principles of government. He had a passion for the dead languages, especially Hebrew and Greek. He founded schools, and attended them as a student. He had no sooner become the head of a growing people than he established schools at Kirtland, Ohio, and in the state of Missouri. Later he projected a great university at Nauvoo, Illinois. He set the example, by making himself an educated man, the example of what he desired his people to become. He saw the great future of the work that he had founded. God had shown him that it was the fulfilment of what the ancient prophets had predicted, one of whom, looking down the vista of time, and beholding the Zion of the last days, broke forth into this sublime rhapsody: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for behold darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Joseph Smith desired to be learned; and he sought learning, as God had commanded him, out of the best books—and be it understood that by the "best books" is meant, not only the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the book of Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, the four doctrinal standards of this Church. No, that revelation covered universal truth, as it has found expression not only through prophets and apostles, but through poets and philosophers, through scientists, discoverers, through statesmen and law givers—wise men who have taught the human race from the beginning. The Book of Mormon declares that God sends into every nation great teachers, to deliver unto the people that measure of truth which they are prepared to receive. Joseph Smith was commanded of God to make himself acquainted with the laws of nations, with their history, with the principles of government, with the languages of antiquity—to make himself thoroughly conversant with such things, in order that he might be the better equipped for his mission to the human race as a prophet of God and a teacher of truth and righteousness. But he was not limited to the study of books, the repositories of the learning of the past: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning"—Yes; but not only "by study." Seek it "also by faith." Seek it in humble prayer. If you lack wisdom "ask of God," and you will receive it from Him who "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." It was not only the learning that is in books that Joseph Smith was commanded to study; more than all else, it was that learning which comes from God through the exercise of faith, and by the revelations that pour from heaven to earth in response to the earnest prayers of good men and good women. It was by this dual process that Joseph became the learned man that he was when he laid down his life, sealing his testimony with his blood. He had been as good as his word; not only a hearer of the truth, but a doer of it also. He had not only taught others to study, to learn, to improve, to progress, but he had exemplified that teaching in his own life. Our great and growing Church school system—17 stake academies scattered through the stakes of Zion, from Canada to Mexico, crowned with the Brigham Young university at Provo, the Brigham Young college at Logan, and the Latter-day Saints university of Salt Lake City—the germ of this system was in the breast of the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Brigham Young and his successors have carried out the Prophet's plan in establishing these schools, with a view to educating the youth of Zion, not only in worldly knowledge, but in the learning and wisdom that comes directly from heaven by revelation, so that they might be prepared to perform their mission to all the world, and this work of our God, realize, eventually, the forecast of the prophet Isaiah: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." We fully expect that "Mormonism" at some time in its history, will realize that prediction to the uttermost for God's work and God's word cannot fail.

A PROGRESSIVE CHURCH AND PEOPLE.

Mormonism's entire history is a history of progress and improvement. When this Church was organized on the 6th of April, 1830, it had only six members, although there were 36 persons who believed in its principles. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery gathered the little flock together upon that day, and presented their names to them, to see whether they would sustain them as their spiritual presiding officers. Yes, Joseph Smith, who had broken up on the face of God—the Father and the Son; Joseph and Oliver, who had been ordained, under the hands of holy angels; to the Aaronic and Melchisedek priesthoods—the authority under which they now organized the Church—were required to present their names to that little congregation to see whether or not they would receive and sustain them as their teachers and spiritual guides; for in the Church of God the consent of the governed must be obtained in matters of this kind. The Lord will not ask any man's permission when He chooses a prophet and sends him into the world; but neither will He foist upon any people, upon any congregation, a president, an officer that that people or congregation are not willing to receive and sustain. The great principle of the consent of the governed which underlies the fabrics of the government of the United States, and enters into all the electoral concerns of the American people, when they are righteously administered and conducted, underlies also the government of the Church of Christ. There is no room for coercion, or compulsion; all things are done by common consent. It is God and His people—not God alone, nor the people alone. God and the people—this is the dual source of power in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Six members organized the Church 77 years ago last April. Today, if we should take the census of the Latter-day Saints, we would have to reckon them by hundreds of thousands. Instead of one stake of Zion, or at the utmost two stakes, organized in the year 1831, at Kirtland, Ohio, and at Independence, Missouri—when the Church had about 2,000 members—now there are 55 or 56 stakes, and they extend along the Rocky Mountain region, from Canada to Mexico. Thus we see how Mormonism has progressed, how the Church has grown, numerically, educationally and otherwise. Mormonism, I tell you, stands for progress; it came into the world to make bad things good, to make goods things better, and to make better things best.

A GREAT OBJECT LESSON.

One would think that the great work done by the Mormon people, here in western America, would amply testify and abundantly prove that they believe in progress; and it does so testify and so prove to every honest soul, that wants the truth, and is not interested in denying or distorting it. Wherever Mormonism has planted its feet, it has improved existing conditions. I could point you to Kirtland, to Independence, to those counties in Missouri from which our people were driven. What are they today, as compared with what they might have been, had the Latter-day Saints remained there. The people now inhabiting those parts recognize that there has been retrogression as the result of the driving of the Mormon people—at least, there has not been the growth and progress that would have been witnessed in those places, had the saints been let alone. And what do we witness—what do we hear today? People whose ancestors, with fire and sword, drove the Latter-day Saints from Missouri and Illinois, are now inviting them to return, recognizing this people as the exponents and exemplars of progress and prosperity. And I declare, as my earnest conviction, that if the Latter-day Saints should again be driven, or for any reason were compelled to leave the Rocky mountains, where they have become a mighty people in fulfilment of the words of their martyred prophet, you would find history repeating itself; retrogression would set in from the moment of their departure; and ere long the intolerant fanatics who would fain drive them and cast them forth, would be among the most clamorous for their return.

Seventy years ago, or more, the Latter-day Saints were expelled from Jackson county, Missouri, and at that time it was as much as a Mormon's life was worth to be found within the confines of the state. Today the people there are friendly, and desire that the Latter-day Saints should return. I had the honor of accompanying the First Presidency and the tabernacle choir, when they went to the great exposition at Chicago, in the autumn of 1893, where the choir sang in the great choral contest, competing with the trained singers of Wales, winning the first prize, but only being permitted to carry off the second. I myself was a witness of the kind treatment accorded to the First Presidency of the Church and their party, especially at Independence, Jackson county, Missouri. Why, the mayor of the town, if I remember, came out to meet the Mormon leaders, extended to them the freedom of the city, and honored them with a speech of welcome. It was amazing to contemplate. For, from that very spot, the Mormons had been ruthlessly driven, robbed of all their earthly possessions, just 70 years before! This is but a sample of the changes that come over the hearts of men, when angry passions have cooled, and they are able to take calm and correct views of the Latter-day Saints, their principles and purposes; and it would be the same here, in Salt Lake City, where so much hatred and bitterness is manifested at the present time. If our people were to be driven, either these same men who now seem to desire that consummation, or their descendants, would be more than anxious for their return.

There is no sense, no reason, in the hatred and antagonism that exists. We are not understood, and we are grossly misrepresented. Our mission is to the Gentiles, as well as to the house of Israel. And we want to do them good. We want to preach to them the principle of truth, peace and progress. There is no reason why they should hate us for these things, and no reason why we should hate them. I hope to God the day is near when this hatred and bitterness will cease, when we can respect each other's motives and desires, in so far as they are honest and pure, and be kind and charitable to one another. I know this is the spirit of our religion, and I know it is in the hearts of our leaders toward the people not of us with whom we mingle. I repeat, and I am not afraid of successful contradiction, that Mormonism stands for peace, and wherever it has established itself redemption and progress, spiritually and temporally, have resulted. The whole history of this people is a testimony written in letters of light to that effect.

MORMONS AND ARID AMERICA.

Sixty years ago, or more, a remarkable scene was witnessed in the senate of the United States. A great orator and statesman, the greatest of his time, arose and addressed the senate in words which I shall quote. A proposition had been made to establish a mail route from Independence, Mo., to the mouth of the Columbia river. At that time Missouri river was the frontier of the nation. West of it was a great belt of country known as the Louisiana purchase, now containing the prosperous states of Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Colorado, Wyoming, and other states, but at that time a vast prairie and plain, unoccupied save by roving bands of redmen, buffalo herds, wild beasts, and poisonous reptiles. Farther west lay a region designated upon the maps and in the school books of that period as the "Great American Desert." Surrounding a salt sea was a vast arid intermountain plateau, extending four or five hundred miles from east to west, and about the same distance from north to south. The eastern rim of this plateau, called by Fremont, the explorer, the "Great Basin," is the Wasatch mountain range, and the western rim is the Sierra Nevada range. It was a land of desolation. It had no white inhabitants, except here and there a lonely mountaineer, living in a log fort with his Indian wife and half-breed children. The now existing states of Utah, Nevada, and California, were a Mexican province, called California, and it was a part of the Republic of Mexico. Another Mexican province, New Mexico, included Arizona. To the north was the territory of Oregon, comprising the present states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and other parts. Oregon was claimed by Great Britain, who also coveted California. Since the year 1841 a thin stream of emigration, with ox teams, requiring four or five months to make the journey, had been creeping over the plains and mountains, and settling, a few thousand souls, upon the Pacific coast, mostly in Oregon, but some of them in California. None settled here. This was a barren land, a forbidding and desolate land, coveted by none; shunned by all. Its only white inhabitants were a few wandering hunters and trappers, who baited the bear, trapped the beaver and affiliated with the savage. Occasionally they acted as guides to the plodding emigrant train, pushing on to the Pacific coast. This was the situation when Daniel Webster arose in the United States senate, and speaking against a proposition to establish a mail route for the accommodation of those few straggling settlers away off in the territory of Oregon, he uttered these remarkable words:

"What do we want with this vast worthless area, this region of savages and wild beast, of deserts, shifting sands, whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts, or those endless mountain ranges, impenetrable, and covered to their very base with eternal snow? Mr. President, I will never vote one cent from the public treasury to place the Pacific coast one inch nearer to Boston than it now is."

That was what Daniel Webster thought of the Great West, early in the decade of the "forties," a few years before the vanguard of the migrating Mormon people founded, on the desolate shores of the Great Salt Lake, a nucleus for western civilization.

Mormonism's westward movement was almost simultaneous with that event in American history known as the Mexican war. The war broke out in April, 1846, and the exodus of the Latter-day Saints from Illinois into the western wilderness began in February of that year. President Brigham Young was then the leading man of the Church, having succeeded the martyred prophet, Joseph Smith, and he sent an agent to the city of Washington, to solicit governmental aid for the Mormon people in their exodus. They did not ask for money, or any other gift; but merely for employment, in opening roads, and freighting military stores to Oregon or some point on the Pacific; for it was supposed at that time that Great Britain and the United States would ere long be embroiled in war over the Oregon question. Joseph Smith had declared, before his death, that the Latter-day Saints would be driven westward, and would become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains, and now President Young and his associates were about to fulfil the prediction, were about to carry out the prophet's plan and move their people into the tops of the mountains, where they might worship God unmolested. Hence, the request made of the government for the work of freighting military stores to the far west, for the defense of the country. It is said that President Polk, when the Mexican war became a probability, contemplated at first the seizure of the two Mexican provinces, California and New Mexico, by means of the migrating people, but that this plan was changed through the influence of Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri, who was an implacable foe to the Mormons.

THE BATTALION EPISODE.

Then came the call for the Mormon battalion. At this time our people were encamped on the Missouri, and along the prairies of Iowa. The first intimation they received of the call, for they had heard no word from their agent at Washington, was the presence of a government recruiting officer at Mount Pisgah, calling for five hundred men to assist the United States in its war with Mexico. This was in June, and the war was then two months along. The original cause of the conflict was the annexation of Texas, which had been a province of Mexico. So many American settlers had gone into Texas that they desired to be annexed to the Union, but Mexico was opposed to the project, and declared that she would regard it as an act of hostility. Joseph Smith, whose last act politically, was to become a candidate for the presidency of the United States, had favored the annexation of Texas. He foresaw the extension of the Union from sea to sea. He desired the glory of his country, and favored the annexation not only of Texas, but also of Mexico and Canada, as soon as their people should desire annexation. Texas, desiring to be annexed, was admitted into the Union as a state and her admission was the original cause of the Mexican war. In May, Gen. Zachary Taylor fought two battles with the Mexicans, the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—driving the Mexicans across the Rio Grande; and there, in the opinion of many Americans, the war should have ended. But the sentiment in the south was for the continuation of the conflict, in the hope of securing more territory, to preserve the equilibrium between slave states and free states; that being the burning question of the hour; and so the war went on. The plan was to strike Mexico in three places. Gen. Taylor would continue operations along the Rio Grande; Gen. Scott, the commander-in-chief, would invade Mexico from the gulf coast; while Gen. Stephen P. Kearney, with a third army, would march overland and capture California and New Mexico. The Mormon Battalion, mustered into service in July, 1846, became a portion of Kearney's command. They marched to Santa Fe, and then pushed on, through New Mexico and Arizona, into southern California. By that time the war was practically over, but the battalion, after marching 2,000 miles—the greatest infantry march on record—was used to garrison the captured towns on the Pacific coast. They served their year's term of enlistment, and were honorably discharged at Los Angeles. Many of them re-enlisted, but some of them, starting homeward, obtained employment at Sutter's Fort, about where the city of Sacramento now stands, and it was they who dug up the first gold of California, January, 1848. They were constructing a mill race for Capt. Sutter, whose foreman was a non-Mormon named James W. Marshall. Having constructed the race they turned the water in, and a washout occurred. Mr. Marshall walked along the flume to ascertain the extent of the damage and saw shining in the bottom of the flume a few yellow metallic particles about the size of wheat grains. He picked them up, had them assayed, and they were pronounced gold. That was the famous gold discovery which set on fire the civilized world, which created the state of California, and revolutionized the commerce of the nation; and while it was a non-Mormon who pronounced the metal gold, it was the picks and shovels of Mormon Battalion boys that brought that gold to the surface. Call it accident, incident, or what you will, they were the instruments, of Providence, and were among the pioneers of progress in the Golden State.

THE PIONEERS OF UTAH.

Meantime, the Utah pioneers, under President Brigham Young, set out from the Missouri river, in April, 1847. Their departure had been postponed nine months by the call for the Battalion. Some of our non-Mormon neighbors take umbrage at this statement; they declare that the government had the good of the Mormon people at heart; and that in taking from them 500 able-bodied men for the war, they were conferring a benefit, bestowing a blessing, rather than receiving one; and when we state the fact that the departure of the pioneers was postponed on account of the enlistment of the battalion, they take umbrage at it and regard it as an unfriendly utterance. I see no reason why this deduction should be drawn. The statement of a fact is not necessarily unfriendly. I would not dispute, indeed would prefer to believe, that the government felt sympathy for the homeless exiles, and that among the nation's leaders there were men who wished the Mormons well; but all did not feel friendly, and with some it was a matter of very little concern what became of the mobbed, plundered and expatriated community then on the borders of the wilderness. Some doubtless hoped that the Indians would destroy them, or that the Mormons would refuse to fight for the country they were leaving, and thus furnish an excuse for the sending of an army to intercept them and prevent them from joining the enemy—a thing they never dreamed of doing. But there were false rumors afloat to that effect, at the time the call came for the battalion.

As to the question of postponement, it is a recorded fact that at Mount Pisgah, in the spring of 1846, soon after the exodus from Nauvoo began, the apostles of the Church met in council and decided to send a picked band of pioneers across the plains that season. This council is referred to in the biography of Orson Pratt, one of the leading pioneers. That was the plan, but when the call came for the battalion, the pioneer journey had to be postponed. The camps could not spare any more of their able-bodied men. Ever since the people left Nauvoo, dragging their slow going, heavily loaded ox wagons across snow covered, spring-flooded Iowa, old men, delicate women, and even children, had been driving team and tending stock, owing to the limited number of able-bodied men in the camps. Many had been compelled to leave their wives and children on the bleak prairies, while they went down into Missouri to earn a little bread for their families. The scarcity of able-bodied men at that time is a matter of history, and it did breed some consternation when the call came for the battalion.

There was no intention to refuse the call. The patriotic people did not even hesitate. Said Brigham Young to Capt. Allen, the recruiting officer, "You shall have your battalion. If there are not young men enough, we will take the old men, and if they are not enough, we will take the women." Col. Thomas L. Kane, a fair and truthful historian, summarizes the result in these words: "A central mass meeting for council, some harangues at the more remotely scattered camps, an American flag brought out from the storehouse of things rescued, and hoisted to the top of a tree mast, and in three days the force was mustered, reported, organized, and ready to march." But it did postpone the departure of the pioneers, and it was not until the following spring that Brigham Young and his little company set out from the Missouri river to "spy out the land," and seek a home for their homeless people, in the midst of the Rocky mountains.

THE GENTILES CAN "APPLY."

It is a noteworthy fact that some non-Mormons came with our people into this western country; a rather remarkable fact, in view of all the stories of Mormon intolerance and our alleged hatred of the Gentiles. Even in the pioneer band, which numbered only 143 men, there were a few non-Mormons. The pioneers did not hang out a banner reading: "No Gentile need apply." We are anxious, and always have been, to be at peace with the Gentiles, recognizing that our mission is to them and not from them. The Book of Mormon shows that the Gentiles have a part, and a very important part, in this great work of God. Isaiah the prophet, speaking of the gathering of Israel in the last days, says: "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west." Mormonism recognizes as the shoulders of the Philistines, bearing the chosen people to their promised land, the railroads and steamships of the Gentiles—the wonderful facilities for travel, commerce, and the transmission of intelligence, for which this age of wonders is noted. These agencies, which our Gentile friends have been so conspicuous in establishing and promoting, are helping, not hindering, the accomplishment of God's purposes. There is room in the great scheme of the latter-day work, for Gentiles as well as Mormons.

BRIDGER AND BRANNAN.

Three months from the time that the pioneers set out for the west, they pitched their tents upon the desert shores of America's Dead sea. They had no sooner crossed the Rocky mountains than they were confronted with unfavorable reports regarding this land. Col. Bridger met them at South Pass. He was one of those lonely mountaineers whom I have mentioned, living in a log fort, now in southwestern Wyoming. This so-called fort was nothing more than two log houses joined together and surrounded by a stockade of logs driven into the ground. There Bridger and a few other "squaw men" lived with their Indian wives. This man urged the pioneer leader not to think of planting a colony in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. "Mr. Young," he said, "I would give $1,000 if I knew that an ear of corn could ripen in Salt Lake valley." Mr. Moses Harris, another scout, met the pioneers a little later. He also advised against settling here. Cache valley, he said, was the only spot in all this region that was habitable—"a fine place for wintering cattle." It was called "Cache" valley because the hunters and trappers were in the habit of caching their furs and effects there to hide them from the Indians. At Green river the pioneers were joined by one of their co-religionists, a Mormon elder, who came to hold up a glittering prize, and advise them not to settle in this desert region, but to push on to the fertile slopes of the Pacific. Samuel Brannan, at the head of a Mormon colony, on the ship Brooklyn, had sailed from New York about the same time that President Young with the main body of the people left Nauvoo. Brannan had doubled Cape Horn and landed at the bay of San Francisco. A little settlement there bore the name of Yerba Buena. He set his colony to plowing and planting in the San Joaquin valley. They established a newspaper, the second one published in California. Then he left them and came in haste across the mountains to meet President Young and persuade him if possible to go on to the Pacific coast. But the president said, No. When he viewed this valley from yonder bench-land, on the 24th of July, 1847, he said:

"THIS IS THE PLACE."

Erastus Snow, one of the pioneers, declared from this stand on a certain occasion, that Brigham Young had a vision of Salt Lake valley while crossing the plains. He had never seen it until he beheld it in that vision. He saw a tent here settling down from heaven, and heard a voice declare: "This is the place where my people Israel shall pitch their tents." He also bore in mind, no doubt, the prediction of the martyred prophet, that the Latter-day Saints should become a mighty people—not in Oregon, not on the Pacific coast, not on the islands of the sea, but in the midst of the Rocky mountains; and Brigham Young was not the man to deviate, knowingly, by the breadth of a hair, from the plan laid down by the prophet of God. He was the executor of that plan; he fulfilled the prediction, and Salt Lake valley became the central gathering place and the first stake of Zion in the Rocky mountains. This region was then known as "Upper California." President Young said to his explorers in Salt Lake valley: "You may go to the north, to the south, to the west, and you will come back and say that this is the place for our central city." And here they established Salt Lake City, from which has radiated the genius, the energy, and the industry that has built up the State of Utah and laid the foundations of other commonwealths. They explored the surrounding country, planted the savage tribes, introduced irrigation, enlarged the poor, established mills and factories, and made the whole land hum with the whirring wheels of industry.

PREMATURE MINING DISCOURAGED.

There was but one enterprise that they did not encourage from the very start—it was mining. Brigham Young said: "We cannot eat gold and silver; cultivate the soil, develop the agricultural resources, establish manufactories, those enterprises that lie at the basis of a state's prosperity. Let the gold and silver remain in the mountains until the due time of the Lord." This wise counsel has been distorted into a hostile expression, an unfriendly utterance toward the gentiles, because the Mormon leader set his face against the premature opening of the mines. President Young had seen the effects of such things in other parts. Just as he foresaw that if his people went to the Pacific coast they would be overwhelmed by unfriendly emigration that was filling up that land, and therefore preferred to stay here, in a barren region that nobody wanted and that everybody shunned; so likewise he foresaw that if the mines were opened too soon, and the people went crazy after gold and silver, they would die of starvation in the desert. Hence he advised them to let the gold and silver alone until the proper time came for the opening and development of the mines. The people mainly took his advice, and the strength and stability of the State of Utah vindicates his sagacity and foresight.

TO THE "AMERICANS."

I want you to understand that the Mormon people stand for progress, and for improvement, and that they are ready to join hands with their gentile neighbors in carrying on any and every enterprise that will benefit this land, this state, and its people. But they do not believe in bankrupting themselves, and beggaring the community, by spending more than they earn, by running faster than they have strength. All they ask of the gentiles is that they will stand shoulder to shoulder with them, and go hand in hand with them, in peace, in progress, and in friendship, while developing the rich resources of this land. All we ask of you, the party now in power in Salt Lake City, is that you will give us a clean and an honest government. Do that, and we will not complain. Hoist the American flag as high as you will; you cannot place it any higher than we have placed it, nor honor it more than we do. But tear down that piratical pennant reading: "No Mormon need apply." Be Americans in deed—in spirit as well as in name; and we will honor you; we will befriend you; will help you, and will stand with you. A real American is broad, liberal, generous, and magnanimous. The Stars and Stripes are the symbol of equal rights to all and special privileges to none. That flag does not stand for bigotry, intolerance and oppression. Neither does Mormonism—thank God! It represents peace, progress and enlightenment; this is its history, and this is its destiny. It is God's eternal truth—the gospel of Christ, the plan of salvation and endless progression, and it will not complete its mission upon this planet until universal peace is an accomplished fact, and the earth is prepared for its exaltation to celestial glory. Amen.

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