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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

MARCH, 1842.

Monday, 21.—I commenced a settlement with William Marks, who had loaned money and property to the church at various times.

Tuesday, 22.—I was at the general business office through the day, and at home in the evening.

The following is from the Advocate, printed at Columbus, the residence of Grand Master Jones:—

"NAUVOO AND THE MORMONS.—Mr. Editor: Having recently had occasion to visit the city of Nauvoo, I cannot permit the opportunity to pass without expressing the agreeable disappointment that awaited me there. I had supposed, from what I had previously heard, that I should witness an impoverished, ignorant and bigoted population, completely priest-ridden and tyrannized over by Joseph Smith, the great Prophet of these people.

On the contrary, to my surprise, I saw a people apparently happy, prosperous and intelligent. Every man appeared to be employed in some business or occupation. I saw no idleness, no intemperance, no noise, no riot—all appeared to be contented, with no desire to trouble themselves with anything except their own affairs. With the religion of these people I have nothing to do; if they can be satisfied with the doctrines of their new revelation, they have a right to be so. The Constitution of the country guarantees to them the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own conscience, and if that can be so easily satisfied, why should we who differ with them complain.

But I protest against the slanders and persecutions that are continually heaped on these people. I could see no disposition on their part to be otherwise than a peaceable and law-abiding people, and all they ask of the country is to permit them to live under the protection of the laws, and to be made amenable for their violations. They may have among their men of bad and desperate character, and what community has not? But I am satisfied, as a body, the Mormon people will never be the aggressors or violators of the law.

While at Nauvoo, I had a fine opportunity of seeing the people in a body. There was a Masonic celebration, and the Grand Master of the State was present for the purpose of publicly installing the officers of a new lodge. An immense number of persons assembled on the occasion, variously estimated from 5 to 10,000 persons, and never in my life did I witness a better dressed or a more orderly and well behaved assemblage; not a drunken or disorderly person to be seen, and the display of taste and beauty among the females could not well be surpassed anywhere.

During my stay of three days, I became well acquainted with their principal men, and more particularly with their Prophet, the celebrated "Old Jo Smith." I found them hospitable, polite, well-informed and liberal. With Joseph Smith, the hospitality of whose house I kindly received, I was well pleased; of course, on the subject of religion, we widely differed, but he appeared to be quite as willing to permit me to enjoy my right of opinion, as I think we all ought to be to let the Mormons enjoy theirs; but instead of the ignorant and tyrannical upstart, judge my surprise at finding him a sensible, intelligent, companionable and gentlemanly man. In frequent conversations with him, he gave me every information that I desired, and appeared to be only pleased at being able to do so. He appears to be much respected by all the people about him, and has their entire confidence. He is a fine-looking man, about 36 years of age, and has an interesting family.

The incorporated limits of Nauvoo contains, it is said, about 7,000 persons; the buildings are generally small and much scattered. The Temple and Nauvoo House, now building, will probably, in beauty of design, extent and durability, excel any public buildings in the State, and will both be enclosed before winter.

From all I saw and heard, I am led to believe that, before many years, the city of Nauvoo will be the largest and most beautiful city of the west, provided the Mormons are unmolested in the peaceable enjoyment of their rights and privileges, and why they should be troubled while acting as good citizens, I cannot imagine; and I hope and trust that the people of Illinois have no disposition to disturb unoffending people who have no disposition but to live peaceably under the laws of the country and to worship God under their own vine and fig tree."—[An Observer, Adams county.]

Extract of a letter from Elder E. P. Magian, Salem, Massachusetts:—

"I am on a visit to assist Elder E. Snow in his successful and extended field of labor in this branch. Sixty-five have been obedient to the faith of the gospel, and hundreds of others almost persuaded. In Boston, near 40 have obeyed through the faithful labors of Elder F. Nickerson. I have been absent from Peterborough two weeks; have preached three or four times in Boston, Salem, Marblehead, Chelsea, &c., and purpose returning to Peterborough next Sunday, where I have been laboring with good success. I have

obeyed since last fall; at New Salem, Massachusetts, 35 to 40 obeyed since August last; Leverett, 18 or 20; Gilsun, New Hampshire, 20 to 30. I have preached from 1 to 3 times almost every day, and cannot fill 1 to 20 of the calls for preaching; there is the greatest excitement in this country that I ever beheld during my travels since I left Nauvoo—a period of near 3 years, in which I have traveled through 18 States and British provinces."

Wednesday, 23.—In council with Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards and others at my office.

Thursday, 24.—I attended by request the Female Relief Society, whose object is, the relief of the poor, the destitute, the widow, and the orphan, and for the exercise of all benevolent purposes. Its organization was completed this day. Mrs. Emma Smith takes the presidential chair; Mrs. Elizabeth Anna Whitney and Mrs. Sarah M. Cleveland are their counselors; Miss Elvira Cole is treasurer, and our well known and talented poetess, Miss Eliza R. Snow, secretary. There was a very numerous attendance at the organization of the society, and also at their subsequent meetings, of some of our most intelligent, humane, philanthropic and respectable ladies; and we are well assured from a knowledge of those pure principles of benevolence that flow spontaneously from their humane and philanthropic bosoms, that with the resources they will have at command, they will fly to the relief of the stranger; they will pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; they will dry up the tear of the orphan, and make the widow's heart to rejoice.

Our ladies have always been signalized for their acts of benevolence and kindness; but the cruel usage that they have received from the barbarians of Missouri, has hitherto prevented their extending the hand of charity in a conspicuous manner; yet in the midst of their persecutions, when the bread has been torn from their helpless offspring by their cruel oppressors, they have always been ready to open their doors to the weary traveler, to divide their scanty pittance with the hungry; and from their robbed and impoverished wardrobes, to divide with the more needy and destitute; and now that they are living in a more genial soil, and among a less barbarous people, and possess facilities that they have not heretofore enjoyed, we feel convinced that, with their concentrated efforts, the condition of the suffering poor, of the stranger and the fatherless, will be ameliorated.

We had the privilege of being present at their organization, and were much pleased with their *modus operandi*, and the good order that prevailed. They are strictly parliamentary in their proceedings.

An earthquake at Falmouth this morning.

Friday, 25.—Attending to a variety of business; counseling, &c.

Saturday, 26.—Elder John Snider received his final instructions from the President, and received his blessing from Elder Brigham Young, with the laying on of the hands of President Joseph, John E. Page, and Willard Richards, and started for England this day.

Sunday, 27.—After speaking to the saints for some time on the subject of baptism for the dead, I baptized 107 individuals.

The following brief extract is from Elder Woodruff's journal:—

"This was an interesting day. A large assembly met in the grove near the Temple. Brother Amasa Lyman addressed the people in a very interesting manner. He was followed by Joseph the Seer, who made some highly edifying and instructive remarks concerning baptism for the dead. He said the Bible supported the doctrine, quoting I. Cor. ch. 15, v. 29—'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?' If there is one word of the Lord that supports the doctrine of baptism for the dead, it is enough to establish it as a true doctrine. Again; if we can, by the authority of the priesthood of the Son of God, baptize a man in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent, and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred, who have not heard the gospel, or fulness of it.

After meeting closed, the congregation again assembled upon the bank of the river, and Joseph the Seer went into the river, and baptized all that came unto him."

I also witnessed the landing of 170 English brethren from the steamer Ariel, under the presidency of Elder Lyman Wight; also about \$2000 worth of goods for the Temple and Nauvoo House.

Monday, 28.—I was at the office. Received P. P. Pratt's donations from England, and attended to a variety of business; as also on the 29th and 30th.

The following extract is from a letter received from Elder Lorenzo Barnes:—

"Bristol, March 28, 1842.—Elder Pratt: Much Esteemed Brother—I am happy to be able to state to you that I arrived here in safety and in health on Saturday the 26th instant, after making a tour through a number of churches on my way from Cheltenham, which place I left in the evening of the 11th; visited the church at Lea; in the

neighborhood of which I preached twice. I then went to Garway, where I preached 5 times to overflowing congregations; from thence visited Abergavenny, and preached 3 times. The work appears to be upon the onward march in all these places. Many are enquiring after truth and embracing it. The brethren and friends appeared very anxious for me to tarry longer, but being desirous to commence my labors in this city, I took my leave on Saturday the 26th, and game, via Newport, by the packet to this city, and preached three times yesterday. There appears to be a good feeling manifested here at present. In the evening, our hall was quite full, and the people listened very attentively; persons of respectable appearance were present. We intended getting a large hall, and putting out bills shortly. Enclosed is an order for ten shillings, it being a donation for the building of the Temple in Nauvoo, mostly from the branch of the church at Frogmarsh. Yours, in the bonds of the new covenant, LORENZO BARNES."

Sunday, 30.—I met with the Female Relief Society, and gave them some instructions, of which the following brief sketch was reported by Miss E. R. Snow:—

"President Joseph Smith arose. Spoke of the organization of the Female Relief Society; said he was deeply interested that it might be built up to the Most High in an acceptable manner; that its rules must be observed; that none should be received into it but those who were worthy; proposed a close examination of every candidate; that the society was going too fast. It should grow up by degrees; should commence with a few individuals, thus have a select society of the virtuous, and those who would walk circumspectly; commended them for their zeal, but said sometimes their zeal was not according to knowledge. One principal object of the institution was, to purge out iniquity; said they must be extremely careful in all their examinations, or the consequences would be serious.

All difficulties which might and would cross our way must be surmounted, though the soul be tried, the heart faint, and hands hang down. Must not retrace our steps; there must be decision of character, aside from sympathy. When instructed, we must obey that voice, observe the laws of the kingdom of God, that the blessing of Heaven may rest down upon us. All must act in concert, or nothing can be done, and should move according to the ancient priesthood; hence the saints should be a select people, separate from all the evils of the world—choice, virtuous, and holy. The Lord was going to make of the Church of Jesus Christ a kingdom of priests, a holy people, a chosen generation, as in Enoch's day, having all the gifts as illustrated to the church in Paul's epistles and teachings to the churches in his day—that it is the privilege of each member to live long and enjoy health. He then blessed the saints."

Monday, 31.—In council at my office with Elders Young, Taylor, Richards, &c., and wrote an epistle to the Female Relief Society, and spoke to the society in the afternoon.

Friday, April 1, 1842.—I was engaged in the general business office.

"Try the Spirits." Recent occurrences that have transpired amongst us render it an imperative duty devolving upon me to say something in relation to the spirits by which men are actuated.

It is evident from the apostles' writings that many false spirits existed in their day, and had "gone forth into the world," and that it needed intelligence, which God alone could impart to detect false spirits, and to prove what spirits were of God. The world in general have been grossly ignorant in regard to this one thing, and why should they be otherwise—for no man knows the things of God, but by the Spirit of God."

The Egyptians were not able to discover the difference between the miracles of Moses and those of the magicians until they came to be tested together; and if Moses had not appeared in their midst, they would unquestionably have thought that the miracles of the magicians were performed through the mighty power of God, for they were great miracles that were performed by them—a supernatural agency was developed, and great power manifested.

The witch of Endor is no less singular a personage; clothed with a powerful agency she raised the Prophet Samuel from his grave, and he appeared before the astonished king and revealed unto him his future destiny. Who is to tell whether this woman is of God, and a righteous woman—or whether the power she possessed was of the devil, and her a witch as represented by the Bible? It is easy for us to say now, but if we had lived in her day, which of us could have unravelled the mystery?

It would have been equally as difficult for us to tell by what spirit the apostles prophesied, or by what power the apostles spoke and worked miracles. Who could have told whether the power of Simon, the sorcerer, was of God or of the devil?

There always did, in every age, seem to be a lack of intelligence pertaining to this subject. Spirits of all kinds have been manifested, in every age, and almost amongst all people. If we go among the Pagans, they have their spirits; the Mahomedans, the Jews, the Christians, the Indians—all have their spirits. All have a supernatural agency, and all contend that their spirits

are of God. Who shall solve the mystery? "Try the spirits," says John, but who is to do it? The learned, the eloquent, the philosopher, the sage, the divine—all are ignorant. The heathens will boast of their gods, and of the great things that have been unfolded by their oracles. The Mussulman will boast of his Koran, and of the divine communications that his progenitors have received, and are receiving. The Jews have had numerous instances, both ancient and modern, among them of men who have professed to be inspired, and sent to bring about great events, and the Christian world has not been slow in making up the number.

"Try the spirits," but what by? Are we to try them by the creeds of men? What preposterous folly—what sheer ignorance—what madness! Try the motions and actions of an eternal being (for I contend that all spirits are such) by a thing that was conceived in ignorance, and brought forth in folly—a cobweb of yesterday. Angels would hide their faces, and devils would be ashamed and insulted, and would say, "Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are ye?" Let each man or society make a creed and try evil spirits by it, and the devil would shake his sides; it is all that he would ask—all that he would desire. Yet many of them do this, and hence "many spirits are abroad in the world."

One great evil is, that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence, &c., and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that it must be of God. Hence the Methodists, Presbyterians and others, frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lay down, and during its operation, animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God; a manifestation of what? Is there any intelligence communicated? Are the curtains of heaven withdrawn—or the purposes of God developed? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of "glory," or "hallelujah," or some incoherent expression; but they have had "the power."

The Shaker will whirl around on his heel, impelled by a supernatural agency or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God; and the Jumper will jump and enter into all kinds of extravagances. A Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved, as they think, by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does he recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Every one of these professes to be competent to try his neighbor's spirit, but no one can try his own, and what is the reason? Because they have not a key to unlock, no rule wherewith to measure, and no criterion whereby they can test it. Could any one tell the length, breadth, or height of a building without a rule? Test the quality of metals without a criterion, or point out the movements of the planetary systems without a knowledge of astronomy? Certainly not; and if such ignorance as this is manifested about a spirit of this kind, who can describe an angel of light? If Satan should appear as one in glory, who can tell his color, his signs, his appearance, his glory?—or what is the manner of his manifestation? Who can detect the spirit of the French prophets, with their revelations and visions, and power and manifestations? Or, who can point out the spirit of the Irvingites, with their apostles and prophets, and visions, and tongues and interpretations, &c., &c.? Or, who can drag into daylight and develop the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter Day Saints? We answer, that no man can do this without the priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which spirits are governed; for as "no man knows the things of God but by the Spirit of God," so no man knows the spirit of the devil, and his power and influence, but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God, together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb, which are so characteristic of his proceedings, and his mysterious windings.

A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors; for nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit, when they think they have the spirit of God. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power and baneful effects. Long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endured, and pain, misery and ruin have followed in their train: nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overturned, provinces laid waste, and blood, carnage and desolation are the habitations in which it has been clothed.