

tration of that deed to go without instant punishment?

Brigham Young—That was a matter that pertained to the law of the land. That alone inflicts punishment. There is no defect in the organization of the Church—the defect was in those who took part in the massacre. The laws of the land are good, but still men do not always keep them. The Saviour says that "the wheat and the tares will grow together until the harvest." If we had none but good men among us such sad experiences would never happen, but because we have some wicked men should we be blamed for their actions?

Correspondent—Were not some of the men who figured in the massacre chiefs in your Church?

Brigham Young—Lee was a farmer among the Indians, but held no presiding office. P. K. Smith, however, was an acting bishop.

In regard to the participation of the Indians in this affair, the following conversation took place—

President Young—When I was at St. George, General C. C. Rich, of Bear Lake, told me that he met part of this company in Salt Lake City; he had just come in from California, having traveled this southern route. And talking with me he told me that he advised them to go north, and he believed they went as far north as Bear River. They returned, saying they would take the southern road. They lay idle over six weeks, when they should have been traveling, and when they moved they moved slowly; and it was believed, for they said it themselves, that they were waiting for the arrival of the army. It was very noticeable that they did not hurry along like other emigrants.

Daniel H. Wells—And that company, remember, was not in the Territory when George A. Smith left Salt Lake to make his southern tour. How, then, could he, as has been said, kill the people by arousing a malicious feeling against the emigrants—saying they poisoned springs, &c.—at a time when the emigrants were hundreds of miles away, when he had not seen any of them, and no one knew any of their names, and when the emigrants themselves had not yet determined upon their route through Utah? Parties travelling to California either take the northern route, by way of Bear River, or the southern route, which they took. As for the advice about not selling grain, that was founded on a principle having no particular reference to individuals or classes. When he went back to the city Brother George A. Smith met these emigrants at Meadow Creek, as the President has stated. They were afraid of the Indians, and they came to him asking if he was not afraid of Indians, and he answered no, and then they turned out their horses too at Meadow Creek. He was informed of the conduct of these emigrants in Utah also; that one Indian had died from the effects of eating poisoned meat, and that they had tied one Indian to a wagon, kept him there some time and whipped him, which made them mad. If this be true, and I have no reason to doubt it, what could we do about it? We had all we could do ourselves to keep peace with the Indians at that time, in 1856 and 1857. Our crops failed, and from that time more or less until now have the people been counseled to care for their grain, and not dispose of it unless in case of necessity.

Brigham Young—The thousands of emigrants that have passed through here can testify that we have always sold food to them, even in times of over-scarcity. And although I have been offered \$1 a pound for flour, I have never taken from them more than the ordinary price.

Daniel H. Wells—The truth about this Mountain Meadows massacre, sir, is that it was the result of a combination of circumstances such as will probably never exist again in any country. Your people at the East cannot understand it in all its aspects, though they may be able to understand some of them. Even the people west of us who occupy a country similar to our own have blinded themselves in a great degree to everything which would give them an accurate view of the affair. Our previous history, the condition of our people and their crops at the time, our relations with the Indians and the extraordinary news and rumors which accompanied the simultaneous advance on Utah of Harney's United States

army and the Arkansas emigrants—these things ought to be looked at carefully, and examined before a great people are censured and a great church is prejudged according to the perjury of a few wicked members. The previous exoduses of our people had taught them what a threat from the United States government to drive them from any ground they had chosen might lead to. They had been expelled from Missouri and Illinois by thousands and from other States by hundreds within the recollection of the majority of adults then living, and forced to travel across the American desert under circumstances and against obstacles which would certainly have subdued the courage of communities whose members are not upheld by a religious faith or "fanaticism," superior selfishness or pride. Every one of those wagon trains and handcart trains and mule pack trains which brought the early Mormons, and the later, away up and over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific slope, brought those and only those who were anxious to escape from the dangers and unhappiness they had endured in the East and to find on the whole continent of America that solitary place for settlement which was never likely to be invaded by other peoples, while the surrounding and fairer portions offered so many advantages to agriculture, mining and other pioneer pursuits. We came here, in fact, because we believed nobody else would want to come here. We were willing to go through and we did go through weeks, months and years of privation and self-denial such as I honestly believe were never endured by a Christian community. But now we had made the desert to blossom; established ourselves, in fact. Our possessions were surveyed, known and understood to us. We had numerous settlements, thriving towns and villages, cities, even. Though the climate had caused us temporary disaster we were proud of our increase and of our improvement. At such a juncture we had heard news of Harney's advance upon us; that unauthorized advance which, as you know, was subsequently repudiated by the United States government. After the many years since we left the States mutual struggles, sufferings, helplessness, extending through the period of planting and forming Utah itself, all the settlements in the Territory had been informed that the United States army was again advancing to drive them out of it into some other place, perhaps to destroy them altogether. Many Eastern gentlemen well recollect the fury that flamed when that news entered Utah. Our folks were desperate. It seemed they had nowhere to turn; every one prepared to resist; there was not a man, woman or child who was not for resistance. Now, when it was whispered, and it soon began not only to be whispered, but asserted, that these Arkansas emigrants were leagued with the soldiers, and that some of them had been engaged in the murder of Joseph and Hiram Smith, at Nauvoo, the air might have seemed almost as heavy over Lower as it certainly was over Northern Utah. Everybody remembers how the people behaved when ordered out by President Young to prevent Johnson from entering the Territory, at what might have seemed to another man a most dismal moment of his career. The President issued an order which, while it obliged us to burn forage in advance, set fire to the grass at night, carry off animals and do various other things to hold back the enemy, absolutely forbade a single man to shed a drop of blood.

I remember when a young officer of my command was captured by one of your troops, a wallet found on him contained an order to him, signed by me, on the back of which was the usual inscription, "Shed no blood." That order was taken first to Johnston, and was afterwards taken to Washington, and brought out in the famous debate of the next session. When the Arkansas emigrant company passed through Utah, and were in many parts forgotten almost as soon as reported, there seems no doubt that much of the disgusting and blasphemous braggadocio with which many of the men were charged must have been very aggravating at the time. This impression I receive, of course, from what I heard long years after. There may have been some settlement scuffles on the route—profanity and ribaldry arrayed against

each other, perhaps; and the emigrant's greater height and strength warranted him in almost any kind of domineering. But I don't believe that even a man like Lee—old, crafty, experienced and sympathetic as he was—could have got together a force of Mormons in all Utah to do deliberately, knowing that they went to do it, the deed that John D. Lee, perhaps a crony or two and a lot of dupes and thieves and savages under his command, are actually proven to have done in that dark valley.

General Wells, having spoken for some ten minutes as vehemently and forcibly, some one said, as he ever did in his life, your correspondent found, by a nod from President Young, that he was at liberty to proceed.

Correspondent—Do foreigners generally admire your system of organization?

Brigham Young—Yes; only excepting their surprise that each man is responsible for his own acts. A gentleman from Pennsylvania who greatly admired our organization, when he was about to leave asked me if I believed the Mormons were perfect. The question was so absurd that I had to laugh. If we were perfect we could not remain here on the earth; while we ourselves are imperfect the doctrines we teach are perfect.

Correspondent—Could the Church ever have accepted from John D. Lee the explanation that he murdered the emigrants at Mountain Meadows to shed their blood for the remission of their sins?

Brigham Young—No; that expresses the same old folly of our enemies. Many men do wrong, and afterward repent and become, perhaps, even better men than they were before. Peter did wrong in denying the Saviour, but still he repented and became a great and good man. Anybody may learn over church walls after thorough repentance and forsaking their sins, may return to membership.

Correspondent—After the faces I have seen and the hospitality I have experienced in Utah, Mr. President, I don't think I need inquire particularly at this late hour about your present system of polygamy.

Brigham Young—I do not believe in polygamy—the definition of which means a plurality of wives and husbands; but I do believe in polygyny, which means a plurality of wives.

Correspondent—What is there to warrant the saying that the system of polygamy has a tendency to check the growth of intelligence?

Brigham Young—The most satisfactory proof that such a saying is untrue would be to attend either day or Sunday schools. Look at one particular effect of it—see how it assists child-bearing women. A woman in child-bearing should not cohabit with her husband, and neither should she exhaust her strength in any other way. This order of marriage, when carried out according to its laws, is the very highest order of marriage. Scientific men who have visited us say that if we adhere faithfully to our order of marriage there can be no question that we can have the finest race of people on the earth. We believe, too, in all learning to work and being industrious; and that every man and woman should have the opportunity of developing themselves mentally as well as physically. In the present condition of the world this privilege is only accorded to a few.

Correspondent—Do you know anything about the origin of what is called the Spaulding story, which is said to be in reality the origin of the Book of Mormon?

Brigham Young—I will tell you all I know about it. Joseph Smith and I were born in the same State, and though unacquainted we lived near each other. And years before I was a "Mormon" I read in the newspapers, before persecution arose against him, that a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, living near Palmyra, had it revealed to him by an angel where there was a record concealed of the aborigines of our country. And who knows (it said) but what the Indians will have a bible as well as the Jews in Palestine? This was in 1819, long before the Spaulding story arose, which has often been proven false, and eleven years before the Church was organized.

Correspondent—The people of the East are anxious to know something of the agreement with the women in polygamy.

Brigham Young—It is none of their business, no more than it is our business to inquire of them

what agreement they make. I have been a protector of virtue all the days of my life.

Correspondent—How could the women consent in their hearts to share the same husbands?

Brigham Young—We believe that the plural order of marriage is true, and the truth is just as applicable for woman as man. I dare say there are men to-day, who wish they had another wife; and there are single women who wish they were married to such and such a man. This is without any regard to divinity. And if the law of the land did not prevent men from marrying more than one wife there would not be to-day so many thousand old maids in the State of Massachusetts. Plural marriage appeals to our noblest feelings because we regard it as a divine principle. It is not for any carnal gratification; if it were we need not go to the expense of keeping and educating several families, for we might adopt the cheaper and more popular way. It is the highest state of social moral society, and will sooner or later be recognized as such.—*New York Herald, May 6.*

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