

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT ANGUS M. CANNON.

AS RELATED BY HIMSELF IN THE FORM OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE, SALT LAKE CITY, MAY 3RD, 1885, TO AN AUDIENCE COMPOSED OF ABOUT EIGHT THOUSAND PEOPLE.

REPORTED BY JOHN IRVINE.

THE JOURNEY FROM ENGLAND TO NAUVOO.

I fear, my brethren and sisters, that unless great quiet is observed, I may not be able to make you hear. I had no idea of undertaking to address you in this Tabernacle, until I was informed that the Assembly Hall would be uncomfortable, or I would have declined the task. If you will pray for me I trust the Lord will enable me to express the thoughts of my heart that seem to crowd upon my memory upon this occasion. The scenes that have transpired within the last week have aroused within me a reflection of the circumstances and events that have occurred during my short life.

On the 11th day of February last, 45 years ago, President John Taylor baptized my parents into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the City of Liverpool, England. In the year 1842 we took passage upon the good ship Sidney. Notwithstanding our parents had been warned by dreams from the Almighty of the perils that we then undertook. A mother who was devoted to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by the testimony that He had conferred upon her, understood well that she imperilled her life in starting upon that hazardous passage; but fearful that she might end her days in England, she said she designed to take her children to a land of liberty. How well I remember her lifting her hand and saying: "I cannot consent to lay my bones down in this country; I want to take my children to a land of liberty, to the Zion of our God!" Her husband, my father, felt to undertake the journey with great reluctance, he having been warned by dreams also of the dangers that threatened her life, owing to the critical state of her health at that time; but when he remonstrated, she remarked, "I must take my children to the body of the Church, then I will be content to lay my life down." We had been at sea six weeks when it was our misfortune to lose that mother. Two weeks afterwards we reached New Orleans, where we took passage in a boat for the Upper Mississippi.

THE SAINTS ASSAILED BY MURDEROUS MOBS.

On arriving at Nauvoo we were blessed with the spirit and beheld the dealings of God made manifest among His people. Notwithstanding poverty was the lot of the Saints, there were happiness and contentment. Brother Joseph, as a prophet of God, was all that the Saints' fondest hearts could anticipate; he was a father to the people and sympathetic with those who came into a strange land. Mobs threatened the Saints in the borders of our settlements, and Brother Joseph was continually in danger by the attacks that were made upon him from time to time. Journeying with his wife by the river on one occasion, in the neighborhood of Dixon, he was arrested, kidnapped by two Missourians, and but for the interference of friends, would have been carried off clandestinely to Missouri. How my heart leaped with joy when I saw him mount upon the top of the well-house, as many of you will remember, and taking his hat in his hand, proclaimed to the people: "I am thankful to the God of Israel that He has delivered me out of the hands of the Missourians once more!"

The mobs continued to harass the Saints until they accomplished the prophet's assassination which was done under the pledge and protection of the State through the Governor. How well I remember the leave he took of us! Circumstances had been most trying. We were asked to give up the arms belonging to the State, which we did quietly, at his request. He went, using his own language, "like a lamb to the slaughter," and, as he said, the time would come that it should be said he had been "murdered in cold blood." Brother Willard Richards accompanied Hyrum and Joseph, and Elder John Taylor, our present President, accompanied them as their friend. On the 27th of June, 1844, the mob assembled around Carthage Jail. The Carthage Greys were placed there to protect him, but it was evident that they had conspired with the mob to assist in their assassination. Brother Hyrum and Brother Joseph were slain; brother John Taylor was shot with four balls and lay helpless upon the jail floor. Brother Willard Richards was the only one who survived without a hole in his garments. You can imagine the scenes of lamentation and sorrow that swelled the hearts of the people of God on the occasion of the return of the remains of those whose voices had gladdened our hearts, but were then hushed in death. The Twelve were principally abroad preaching the Gospel, filling the missions that had been assigned to them.

BETRAYED BY APOSTATES.

It was found that men who had been intimately associated with Brother Joseph had been the chief conspirators in bringing about his arrest and final betrayal and death. Who did they con-

sist of? Why, the Laws, one of whom had been Joseph's Counselor, the Higbees the Fosters, and other apostates. This is not to be wondered at. Who betrayed Joseph and Hyrum to Liberty Jail? George M. Hinkle, Joseph's bosom friend. Who betrayed the Lord and our Redeemer? A Judas and an Apostle of the Lamb. Who to-day are engaged in conspiring against the lives and liberties of the people of God? Men and women who have been recognized as the anointed of God and hold places and situations in our midst to-day.

THE TWELVE AT THE HEAD OF AFFAIRS

The Twelve returned and reorganized the Priesthood officiating in their several offices, situations and callings. The Temple of our God was completed. In that endowments could be given, and the Saints rejoiced in the blessings they received under the hands of the officiating Priesthood in the Temple. In the Temple which they had labored in their poverty to erect, they received endowments. Brother Joseph, before his departure, in a house dedicated for that purpose, endowed a number of the Apostles and told the Twelve that he placed upon them the responsibility of bearing off the Kingdom, realizing his time was short that he had to stay. It reminds me very much of the circumstances that transpired here in the construction of the St. George Temple, wherein President Young felt the burden weighing upon him of the responsibility of transmitting to his associates in the Priesthood the keys that he held; and when it was apparent that this (Salt Lake) Temple could not be finished in time for him to lay upon them the mantle of his authority, he repaired to St. George and completed that Temple, and there endowed his brethren with power to bear off the work of God.

THE EXODUS.

Early in the spring of 1846 the Saints in Nauvoo, having been harassed and driven from their homes in the surrounding country, their houses burned, their stacks consumed and their farms made desolate, crowded around the President and his associates and enquired what they should do to protect their lives. The mob continuing to annoy our people, a form of treaty was entered into. We had petitioned the several States asking for an asylum from the red hand of this cruel oppression. I think only one State out of the whole number thought proper to reply to the appeal of the distressed people of God, and that was, I believe, the Governor of the State of Arkansas, and we were recommended to go to Oregon, if I remember correctly, where we probably would find a country that we could occupy and be secure from our enemies. Under the inspiration of God our leaders proposed to vacate our beautiful city, our homes, and betake ourselves to the western wilds, making an agreement that the mob should suspend all hostilities, and leave the poor, the infirm, with a few strong hands that were left to put the finishing touches upon the Temple. I remember very well the coldness and severity of the atmosphere when they commenced their exodus from Nauvoo, crossing the river upon the ice, many of them. They sojourned upon Sugar Creek—frequently returning before they could make up their companies, provide means of transport, etc.—in that inclement season, and finally commenced their weary march through the State of Iowa, a distance of 300 miles. Companies were organized and sent into Missouri to obtain supplies for the families; teams were doubled to drag through the mud; bridges were constructed; streams were forded; finally they reached the Missouri River, having located on the way two settlements called Pisgah and Garden Grove, colonizing these districts as resting places—places of recruit for those who were weary and had not the means to continue their journey.

THE MORMON BATTALION.

On their arrival at the Missouri River, emissaries met our leaders and proclaimed the necessity of our contributing a battalion of men to the number of 500 to go and maintain the cause of the United States in Mexico. The men were furnished, as we heard related yesterday, to the number of 520.

HEARTRENDING SCENES.

And while these men were being mustered into service how shall I describe the scenes that were transacted in the beautiful city of Nauvoo? Without a gun to defend ourselves larger than a rifle; without any fortifications, we were assailed by a numerous mob and threatened with extermination unless we immediately vacated the city. There were a number of men—not Latter-day Saints—who had bought property in that city, and they felt that it was a most tyrannical and oppressive measure. I remember very well on that occasion President Daniel H. Wells—as we are now pleased to call him—who now presides over the British Mission—he was then a man outside of our faith. When he saw the disposition of men to rob us of everything we possessed, he embraced the faith, being immersed by baptism in the Mississippi River, and identified his interest with ours. He gave his property into the hands of his wife, who had borne him one son, placed himself in the saddle, and commenced the defence of our city, with the aid of a few citizens, a few brethren who had been left to finish the Temple of our God. This was the commence-

ment of his history with us as a people—that is, within the pale of the Gospel. There were some old steamboat shafts lying down about the Mississippi river. They were procured and placed in position in the grove west of the Temple. They were cut in lengths, plugged up at one end, and formed into rude cannon, mounted upon wheels and placed in position of defense. We endured a siege of several weeks, and three days of continued fighting. At the expiration of this time the enemy had grown in numbers; we had diminished. Some of our men were found to be fainthearted then as now, and with different pretenses and excuses they left the city. The result was a compromise was effected. We were promised that if we would go across the river into the bleak, barren prairie (to what is known as the island above Montrose); that if we would deliver up our arms as a pledge that we would not use them to their harm—with the promise that we should have our arms returned to us—hostilities would cease. We had, however, to leave our property. I was then a lad of twelve years. Our father had invested what means he had left, after having emigrated several families that had apostatized from the Church because they were not fed and provided for after they had gathered—I say he had invested what little means he had left in land adjacent to Nauvoo, and a little cottage house in which his motherless children might find shelter. On the giving up of our arms, among the rest was a rifle, the only relic I had of my deceased father. This Christian civilization that we have heard spoken of so much within the past week—glorified as it has been in contrast with the professions of the Latter-day Saints—came in and took possession of our city and our arms, as per agreement, and promised to return the latter, that we might have a means of defence, and something with which to procure game on which to subsist—when we had left our homes and everything we possessed. One of the Christian mobocrats who prated of Christian civilization, drew his sword and, brandishing it, exclaimed: I have a mind to cut every one of you G—d—Mormon throats. Brother Charles Lambert, who had acted like a father to our family, and continued a true guardian to us, was taken forcibly, while attempting to get some of our remaining effects, and was subjected to an outrage. He was, after a consultation of professed Christians, seized by a man of large stature and, in mockery of the sacred ordinance of baptism, immersed in the river three times, "by order of the commander of the Temple."

I very well remember, over the river; the uninviting scene that met our eyes. There was a prairie it was true; but the rains that were then descending in that country put us, with nothing dry to cover us, in a very pitiable condition. Here is Father Haines, who sits here before me. I remember well his carrying his sick wife and placing her upon a trundle bed, and over her emaciated body—for she had been sick for some sixteen weeks—they had to place tin pans to catch the drippings of the water from falling upon her person, as it came from a quilt stretched upon forked sticks. I remember well that scene. I remember her expiring moments. It was a Christian officer that commanded the mob, and I remember Brother Haines going to this officer after his wife had expired and as she lay on that saturated bed—I recollect him going to the officer and saying to him—"Here is a specimen of your Christianity. Now, sir, I will hold that against you in the day of judgment."

I speak of this incident, because that old lady was like a mother to me in my motherless condition; I speak of it because it created an impression upon my young heart that I never can forget. I was then, as I have said, 12 years of age. I was ten years of age at the death of our father, who departed this life just after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the summer of 1844. I did not then belong to this community by baptism; but I had heard my mother say that her ambition was to get her children to the Church of God, trusting to His guidance and His care. I felt I should be baptized, and went to the foot of Main Street, upon the Mississippi, and asked an Elder there, one Sunday afternoon, to baptize me that I might at least fulfil my departed mother and father's hopes.

Upon the entrance of the mob within our city we were told that if we would forsake the faith of our parents we could remain in peace. What was the faith of our parents? Their faith consisted in the belief that Jesus was the Christ; the necessity of men repenting of their sins and turning unto God with a full purpose of heart and being baptized for a remission of them; the laying on of hands by one holding the Melchisedec Priesthood for the imparting of the Holy Ghost; that God had restored the everlasting covenant and established His Priesthood again among men. This was their faith.

PLURAL MARRIAGE NOT THE CAUSE OF PERSECUTION.

Did we know anything of polygamy or celestial marriage at that time? No. My parents knew nothing of it, and I never thought of such a thing. But we were told we must go. The people were not guilty of having a plurality of wives, or of having violated the laws of the State of Illinois. No such accusations were brought against them. But they were told they must go. Some of the people were not so meek as some of us are. I will confess I

did not know then that this was the Gospel of Christ I had embraced; the power of God unto salvation; but I knew my mother was a devoted Saint, and that my father had said his sons would do a greater work than he had; for they would not be traditioned with the false doctrines and ideas that he had inherited from his ancestry, and I looked forward for the knowledge that should dawn upon my understanding in due time. To lay aside the faith of my father and my mother—to crouch and beg and supplicate before man—I could not do it. Hence I took my departure with my little brother and sister, and identified my interests with the people of God. Did I ever obtain the only relic I had of my departed father? No. The scoundrels stole it, Christians though they professed to be; and these men prate about Christianity, the beauty and glory of Christianity, contrasted with the faith of the "Mormons," and hence my lip curled when I heard them prate about their Christian civilization. I remember very well that we were famishing; but the Lord sent myriads of quills with which to appease our hunger. We went into Iowa and toiled and labored and obtained supplies to carry us on our journey. We had a few head of stock that we were able to take across the river with us. We journeyed through Iowa, after obtaining supplies, in the cold month of December. The next spring upon the Missouri the Indians came in upon us and killed everything we possessed except one little cow.

PREPARATORY STRUGLES FOR THE WESTWARD JOURNEY.

The Saints journeyed from there in the spring of '47. Our brother—George Q. Cannon—and one sister, two years older than myself, came through here with President Taylor to these valleys. We dwelt on the Missouri, and in the spring of '48 we came up to the Bluffs and undertook to cross the river. The ice broke and our wagon went in, carrying all the supplies to the bottom of the river. We took shelter in a house that we had constructed in the winter of '46-7. But later in the spring of '48 we were told by the Indian Commissioner that we must vacate that land as it was Indian Territory. We accordingly had taken to ourselves back to Iowa and thence to Missouri, and the last cow we had was driven into the Bayou lake and killed by the wolves. We went again to Missouri. A boy of 13, I went and chopped wood for 25 cents a cord to help make an outfit; and in the spring of '49 we again commenced our journey to these mountains. Our clothing was diminished; but we were glad to have sufficient stock to afford us milk, with a little bread to help sustain us while crossing these wild plains. I was then 15 years of age, very slight in stature—in fact being so delicate that my parents once despaired of rearing me. But after becoming inured to hardship, fatigue and hunger, I trod these weary plains barefooted—walked every step, and carried a gun and hunted game for our subsistence.

ARRIVAL IN THE VALLEY—A BROTHER'S CARE.

We entered this valley in the fall of '49, when we found Brother George Q. had been sent on a mission to California, preparatory to obtaining means to plant the mission upon the Sandwich Islands. He had gone one day before we arrived. In a letter he left for us he stated that he had made sufficient adobies on the ground now occupied by the Denver & Rio Grande railroad depot to build a house. He had raised a crop of corn on a piece of ground belonging to him, and he told us that that would bread us, and that the adobies would build us a house in which we could shelter. We obtained a shelter by the kind providence of God and the kindness of an elder brother, who, by the way, was only 15 years of age at the death of his mother, and 17 at the death of his father, and he the oldest of six children.

Well I remember not having sufficient grease to grease the skillets to make this corn, that George had raised, into bread. We had to sprinkle dry meal into the skillet to keep it from sticking. I remember the feeling I experienced as we ascended these cedar cliffs, the blood from the worn out oxen's feet staining the tracks as we climbed these mountain heights. A little brother eleven years of age, poorly shod, crying with the cold, eating his "corn dodger" in the cold north wind, touched my heart, and I felt to vow that if God was God I would never cease to petition Him to avenge our wrongs and redress our grievances. To say that I knew the gospel to be true I could not. They wanted me to renew my covenants. I was anything but fit to renew a covenant with God. I had no spirit of meekness, or humility. I was filled with rancor and hatred towards everything that proclaimed itself Christian civilization. I remembered that while dwelling upon the Missouri River, day after day, I dug from the frozen land artichokes and wild onions to sustain our lives, while men, who professed to be Christian in their character, were occupying our homes, from which we had been driven.

A MISSION TO SOUTHERN UTAH—A TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH.

Spring dawned upon us, and with the genial warmth our hearts became more mild and kind, and in the fall of '50 I found myself assigned to take a mission with Brother George A. Smith

to help form a colony 250 miles south, at a place now known as Parowan, to establish and organize the County of Iron, and a representative to the first Legislature was sent from there.

Returning to the city I began to seek unto God for a knowledge. I knew what my father had predicted, and what my mother's hopes had been. I wanted to know for myself that God was God and that my parents had been His true disciples. And as an assurance of my fidelity I covenanted with God in secret, fasting and praying, unknown to my friends, that if He would give me a knowledge that this was His work, that Joseph indeed was His Prophet, I would never hesitate to proclaim it in any land under any circumstances. And God revealed unto me that my parents' faith was true; that Jesus was the Christ, and by the Holy Ghost I was enabled to say that I knew that God was my Father.

AN EASTERN MISSION.

In 1854 I journeyed east with President Taylor, recommended by the Governor and Secretary of the Territory as a cadet from Utah, with instructions to apply, through Dr. Bernhisel, for admission to the military academy at West Point, but to preach the Gospel until such time as I entered that academy. President Taylor, after having investigated matters, after I had commenced my labors as a missionary, wrote me to Connecticut, saying that he thought it would be nearly a year before I would enter; that four years would form the term of study, and after having concluded this the country would expect me to serve six or eight years under a small commission as recompense for the education that I so much desired; suggesting at the same time that if I engaged in this, the probabilities were that my position and station would be most undesirable, for the Spirit indicated there was going to be trouble, and his counsel was to abandon my project. Of course it was a blow to my ambition. I sat down and wept, but arose and went forth proclaiming the gospel of the Lord. It fell to my lot to be on this mission when Johnston's army was fitted out as an expedition to bring the "Mormons," who were stated to be in rebellion, into subjection. The 7th of March, 1858, I left my home in Philadelphia, and journeyed westward, coming around the army, and entering this valley to find it deserted and forsaken. My relatives had journeyed south to Provo. I found our President and was able to report my mission.

In my journeyings to and fro for four years I had learned that God did support me in doing those things He had assigned unto me.

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE AT FIRST PROPOSED AND AFTERWARDS ACCEPTED.

In 1851, in these mountains, I had occasion to be tried with the practice of the Saints in the principle of celestial marriage, vulgarly termed by the world polygamy. I remember on one occasion telling a brother who was paying addresses to a sister of mine two years my senior, that if she married him I would disown her. "Why?" asked he. "Because it is a principle that I do not know anything about, and my sister has neither father nor mother to counsel her," said I. "You will think better of this, Angus, hereafter," he replied. And in the fall of '52 the revelation on celestial marriage was read, and I was made familiar with its truths. I endeavored to controvert it by the Scriptures that I had demonstrated through the testimony of the Lord Jesus to be true. I failed. While I expressed myself as regretting that God should have revealed such a principle, I asserted that while I wanted to curtail no other person's liberty, I never expected to practice it.

In my journeyings in the eastern land I saw the squalid misery and wretchedness that prevailed in society there. I saw the dens of infamy and degradation in New York, Philadelphia and other cities that I visited. I felt to look unto God and say: "Grant that I may never leave progeny upon the earth to inherit the misery and wretchedness that exists here in the absence of a knowledge of a God and of revelation." But I realized that God was God. I saw that while men with their Christian civilization had wives that they pampered with dresses and luxury till they made them idle—till many of them, fearful that their income was not sufficient to keep them in luxury, if they had a number of children, patronized abortionists to prevent them having offspring. I knew that God had said these evils should exist—that women would be guilty of the most unnatural crimes, destroying their own offspring. Reflecting upon this subject, knowing that it was God that had revealed this revelation to His people, I felt in my heart that I never would marry a woman to make her idle. If I married it would be to a woman that would consent to share her comforts with her sister, and that they should raise two families instead of one, supplying their children with the common necessities of life and putting away a desire for luxury, feeling that God designed to raise a posterity that should be pure, that should be exalted in their ideas, aspiring to call God their Father, to do His will on earth that it might be done here as His will is done in heaven.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS, ETC.

On my return in '58, with the approval of our Prophet, President Young, I proposed and was accepted by Sarah