

"How do your missions succeed?"

"Very well, I think," replied the president. "Our preachers are doing much good. We have, all told, about 150,000 converts and emigrants who have come here as the direct result of our labors, and there are Mormon colonies in many parts of the world. However, you must not think that the most of the Mormons are foreigners. The truth is that the grand majority of our people are Americans. Nearly all of our leading men are and have been Americans. Many of us are from New England and descendants of Pilgrim fathers."

"How many Mormons are there now in the world?"

"About 300,000."

"Where are they?"

"There are nearly 200,000 in this state. Then we have colonies in Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona and New and Old Mexico. There are colonies in Great Britain, Germany and other parts of Europe. There are large colonies in Australia, Samoa and the Hawaii Islands."

"How about your colony in Old Mexico?"

"It is doing very well. The silver basis acts as a protective tariff as to bringing in goods from the outside to compete with them, and they can send their cattle and other products here and get a sale for them. They are well liked by the Mexicans and the government. Their towns there bear a stronger resemblance to American cities than any other places in Mexico."

"Do you believe that the world will eventually all become Mormon?"

"No, I do not. I believe there will always be different religions. I think all religions must have some good in them or they would not be believed. The Mormon is the best and the true religion. We tolerate and respect all religions, you know. In our tabernacle every man can have entrance, whether he be Protestant, Catholic, Mormon or Gentile. Not long ago a Presbyterian divine was offered the chance of preaching in the tabernacle. He was one of a party who were passing through Salt Lake. He refused, saying the party preferred to hear a Mormon. Ministers of all the leading denominations have preached in our tabernacle. Our people come out and listen to them. This often happens."

"How about the manifesto lately proclaimed. It is charged that the Mormons are trying to run Utah politically?"

"That is not true," said President Woodruff. "We do not pretend to tell you people how to vote. We try to separate church and state. Brigham Young taught this and all of our teachings have been in this direction. We have Mormon Democrats and Mormon Republicans. The so called manifesto to which you refer was merely a declaration of principles which have been a part of the church since its foundation. It is nothing new, no revelation, nor new promulgation of any kind. Our principles provide that when a man is an officer of the church he should ask the advice and accept the decisions of his fellow officers of the church as to whether he shall engage in outside business or politics. If these things are to effect his work we should know it. One of our twelve apostles, for instance, has lately been engaging in real estate speculations in Canada. His business has kept him away for six months at a

time. He could not go where he was sent among the church branches or states and subordinate organizations in to which the church is divided. There is much for our Elders to do, and it is necessary that such action should not be interfered with by outside matters. Another apostle was paying attention to politics. He wanted to be a candidate for the Senate. How could he perform his duties here and be away at Washington six months of the year? Our principles are that such matters should be referred to the apostles in council and that the action taken should be for the good of the church. Another thing is as to the wards or districts in which the members live. We provide that no Mormon can leave one ward or church and be received into another one without he has letters or can show he was in good standing in the ward he left. These things are spiritual, however, and not political."

"But the church does attend to temporal things, does it not? You have your own courts?"

"Yes," was the reply, "we believe that it is better for our brethren to come together before the Elders, their friends, and settle their difficulties rather than go and pay the lawyers to settle them for them. We have local church courts and there is a court of appeal. In these most of the difficulties which arise between members are amicably settled. In some cases the people go to law, but not many. In the few cases where the people go from the higher church courts to the civil courts the civil courts have usually sustained the action of the higher church court."

"How is the Mormon Church supported, Mr. Woodruff?" I asked.

"It is sustained almost entirely by tithes," was the reply. "According to our religion every man is expected to give one-tenth of what he makes every year to the church. As to the amount, this is left to the man's conscience. Some men give more and some less than they should. This tenth is in kind. The farmer brings one-tenth of the eggs which his chickens lay, one-tenth of the butter which he produces, one-tenth of his cattle and one-tenth of all his products to the church. During the days of Brigham Young we had a great pasture here at Salt Lake, upon which many thousands of the sheep and cattle so collected for the church were fed. Of course, the increase of such stock belonged to the church, and the land which was set aside for the church also increased in value."

"You had a great deal of such stuff at the time the government confiscated your property, did you not?"

"Yes," replied the president. "We had at this time about \$300,000 worth of such property in hand. It represented the offerings of the rich and poor alike. The government agents claimed a right to it and they took all of our cattle and sheep. Under the Mormons the stock was doing well, but the government agents could not manage it. They had to sell it, and it brought very little. This was a direct loss to the church, for the value of the stock was never refunded. At this same time the government took about \$50,000 worth of the personal property of the church. This was returned, however. They also took our church buildings and charged us \$50,000 a year rent for them. We were oppressed in other ways, but I trust that such

actions are now done away with forever."

"How about polygamy? Is it not still secretly practiced?"

"No, not in any shape. The church does not recognize it, and the man who would so live would be acting in violation of church discipline. The manifesto issued by the church some years ago absolutely forbids the practice of polygamy."

"Will it ever be practiced again?"

"I do not know. I think not."

"But you had more than one wife, President Woodruff, had you not?"

"Yes, I had three. One is dead. The other two are alive. I live, of course, only with one."

"How about the other?"

"I support her, of course," was the emphatic reply. "I would be less than human if I did not. My wives were all good wives to me. They are now old women, as I am an old man, and I would be a brute if I did not take care of them."

"Is this the case with other Mormons who were polygamists?"

"Yes, it is so with nearly every one. Shortly after the passage of the Edmunds law forbidding the practice of polygamy there was a great deal of talk as to what was to become of the so-called abandoned wives, and Congress was induced to appropriate \$500,000 to build a home for them. I believe the institution never had but one family, and that this was gotten at the special request of the officers."

"I suppose they were afraid they would lose their job if they had none," said I.

"I do not know as to that," was the reply. "I only know that they did not have any applications, and that there was no reason for establishing such an institution. The Mormon Church is amply able to take care of its own people. It does not ask charity. It takes care of its own poor and gives a great deal to outsiders as well."

I here asked Mr. Woodruff to tell me something about Brigham Young. He was, you know, associated with the prophet during the whole of his career. Mr. Woodruff replied:

"I was with Brigham Young when he first entered this valley of Salt Lake. He rode into the valley in my wagon. He was not well at the time, and my vehicle, which was a sort of a box on springs, was easier for him than the ordinary wagon. When he first came here he was met by a Mormon from California, who wanted him to go further west. Brigham Young refused and as he looked up the valley he said, 'Here I will found a great city and will build up a home for our people.' Brigham Young was a broad-gauge man. He was far-sighted, and he laid out his schemes along the broadest lines. Take the tabernacle. It will hold 10,000 people. Still it was built when the church was very small, and Brigham Young was criticised at the time for its size. He said that the church would soon overflow it, and today this is the case. Take the temple which we have been forty years in building. Brigham Young designed the plan for it. He laid out the Salt Lake City of today, and he evidently saw fifty years ago that this town was to be one of the greatest cities of the United States. He organized our farming regions in the same way. He was the first to investigate the possibilities of irrigation for this country and he may