

[The following interesting article, under the head of "Church History," is from the pen of President Joseph Smith, and was written by him in 1842 for publication in the *Chicago Democrat*. We copy it from the *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, page 706. It is the intention to incorporate it in the continued article—"An Answer to Several Questions in relation to the History and Doctrine of the Latter-day Saints and the Settlement and Progress of Utah Territory"—from the pen of President Geo. A. Smith.]

#### CHURCH HISTORY.

At the request of Mr. John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the *Chicago Democrat*, I have written the following sketch of the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints, of which I have the honor, under God, of being the founder. Mr. Wentworth says, that he wishes to furnish Mr. Bastow, a friend of his, who is writing the history of New Hampshire, with this document. As Mr. Bastow has taken the proper steps to obtain correct information, all that I shall ask at his hands is, that he publish the account entire, ungarbled, and without misrepresentation.

I was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, Vermont, on the 23rd of December, A. D., 1805. When ten years old my parents removed to Palmyra, New York, where we resided about four years, and from thence we removed to the town of Manchester.

My father was a farmer and taught me the art of husbandry. When about fourteen years of age I began to reflect upon the importance of being prepared for a future state, and, upon enquiring the plan of salvation I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment; if I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another; each one pointing to his own particular creed as the *summum bonum* of perfection. Considering that all could not be right, and that God could not be the author of so much confusion, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that if God had a church it would not be split up into factions, and that if he taught one society to worship in one way, and administer in one set of ordinances, he would not teach another principles which were diametrically opposed. Believing the word of God I had confidence in the declaration of James, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." I retired to a secret place in a grove and began to call upon the Lord. While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enraptured in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon-day. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom. And I was expressly commanded to "go not after them;" at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me.

On the evening of the 21st of September, A. D. 1823, while I was praying unto God, and endeavoring to exercise faith in the precious promises of scripture, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a far purer and more glorious appearance, and brightness burst into the room, indeed the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire; the appearance produced a shock that affected the whole body; in a moment a personage stood before me surrounded with a glory yet greater than that with which I was already surrounded. This messenger proclaimed himself to be an angel of God sent to bring the joyful tidings, that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel was at hand to be fulfilled, that the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel, in all its fullness to be preached in power unto all nations, that a people might be prepared for the millennial reign.

I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes in this glorious dispensation.

I was also informed concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of

their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people was made known unto me. I was also told where there was deposited some plates on which were engraven an abridgement of the records of the ancient prophets that had existed on this continent. The angel appeared to me three times the same night and unfolded the same things. After having received many visits from the angels of God unfolding the majesty, and glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22d of September, A. D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands.

These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters and bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction and much skill in the art of engraving. With the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called "Urim and Thummim," which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breast-plate.

Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record, by the gift and power of God.

In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the tower of Babel at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times had been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians, that now inhabit this country. This book also tells us that our Saviour made his appearance upon this continent after his resurrection, that he planted the gospel here in all its fullness, and richness, and power, and blessing; that they had apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings as were enjoyed on the eastern continent; that the people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions, that the last of their prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgement of their prophecies, history &c., and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days. For a more particular account I would refer to the Book of Mormon, which can be purchased at Nauvoo, or from any of our traveling elders.

As soon as the news of this discovery was made known, false reports, misrepresentations and slander flew, as on the wings of the wind, in every direction; the house was frequently beset by mobs, and evil designing persons. Several times I was shot at, and very narrowly escaped, and every device was made use of to get the plates away from me, but the power and blessing of God attended me, and several began to believe my testimony.

On the 6th of April, 1830, the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" was first organized in the town of Fayette, Seneca co., State of New York. Some few were called and ordained by the spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach as the spirit gave them utterance, and though weak, yet were they strengthened by the power of God, and many were brought to repentance, were immersed in the water, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They saw visions and prophesied, devils were cast out and the sick healed by the laying on of hands. From that time the work rolled forth with astonishing rapidity, and churches were soon formed in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri; in the last named State a considerable settlement

was formed in Jackson co.; numbers joined the church and we were increasing rapidly; we made large purchases of land, our farms teemed with plenty, and peace and happiness was enjoyed in our domestic circle and throughout our neighborhood; but as we could not associate with our neighbors, who were many of them of the basest of men and had fled from the face of civilized society to the frontier country, to escape the hand of justice, in their midnight revels, their Sabbath breaking, horse racing and gambling, they commenced first to ridicule, then to persecute, and finally an organized mob assembled and burned our houses, tarred, and feathered, and whipped many of our brethren, and finally drove them from their habitations, who, houseless and homeless, contrary to law, justice and humanity, had to wander on the bleak prairies till the children left the tracks of their blood on the prairie. This took place in the month of November, and they had no other covering but the canopy of heaven, in this inclement season of the year; this proceeding was winked at by the government, and although we had warrant deeds for our land, and had violated no law, we could obtain no redress.

There were many sick, who were thus inhumanly driven from their houses, and had to endure all this abuse and to seek homes where they could be found. The result was, that a great many of them, being deprived of the comforts of life, and the necessary attendance, died; many children were left orphans; wives, widows; and husbands, widowers. Our farms were taken possession of by the mob, many thousands of cattle, sheep, horses, and hogs, were taken and our household goods, store goods, and printing press, and type were broken, taken or otherwise destroyed.

Many of our brethren removed to Clay where they continued until 1836, three years; there was no violence offered but there was threatenings of violence. But in the summer of 1836, those threatenings began to assume a more serious form; from threats, public meetings were called, resolutions were passed, vengeance and destruction were threatened, and affairs again assumed a fearful attitude, Jackson county was a sufficient precedent, and as the authorities in that county did not interfere, they boasted that they would not in this, which on application to the authorities we found to be too true, and after much violence, privation and loss of property we were again driven from our homes.

We next settled in Caldwell, and Davies counties, where we made large and extensive settlements, thinking to free ourselves from the power of oppression, by settling in new counties, with very few inhabitants in them, but here we were not allowed to live in peace, but in 1838 we were again attacked by mobs; an exterminating order was issued by Gov. Boggs, and under the sanction of law an organized banditti ranged through the country, robbed us of our cattle, sheep, horses, hogs &c., many of our people were murdered in cold blood, the chastity of our women was violated, and we were forced to sign away our property at the point of the sword, and after enduring every indignity that could be heaped upon us by an inhuman, ungodly band of marauders, from twelve to fifteen thousand souls, men, women, and children, were driven from their own firesides, and from lands that they had warrant deeds of, houseless, friendless, and homeless (in the depth of winter,) to wander as exiles on the earth or to seek an asylum in a more genial clime, and among a less barbarous people.

(To be continued.)

#### EDITORIAL SUMMARY.

The *Daily Safeguard*, of Virginia, entertains glowing hopes of Nevada. It says that when "the Southern Pacific Railroad shall have been completed and the connection made with the Central, via Reese River, from Calville, Nevada will become a formidable rival to California in the production of cereals and fruit." While they are shivering around Virginia before the chilly blasts of winter, the valley of South-eastern Nevada are redolent, it says, with the breath of flowers whose petals seldom droop from the touch of frost. Following up, it says, "the Rio Virgen River from Calville to the mouth of Beaver dam creek, a distance of about eighty miles, is a valley from three to nine miles in width, of as productive land as that of San Bernardino valley, with the high dividing ridge between the Virgen and Colorado on the east covered with the finest timber, while to the west table land rises with a gentle ascent back

to the Wasatch mountains, a distance, in some places, of some thirty miles. This bench has numerous streams crossing it from the mountain cañons, and is covered with the richest grass, but no timber. The Muddy, a stream which rises from hot springs in the mountains about twenty-five miles west of the point where the Beaver dam joins the Rio Virgen, also flows through a broad and beautiful valley. The Piute Indians, under the guidance of Mormon missionaries, have been farming in this valley for years, and the yield of wheat, corn, potatoes, etc., is astonishingly large. The water of this stream remains warm until it pours into the Rio Virgen.

Forty miles to the south-west along this table land, brings one to Las Vegas, the trellised conduit of myriad cool springs and a few warm ones. Here, mesquet and wild grape vines cover the valley proper, while the table land is dotted with clumps of cottonwood, willows, and wild flowers—indicating the points where water bubbles up. The vines in the valley bear grapes of the largest and most luscious kind, and have the appearance of having descended from the Spanish or English grape. The head of this valley is about forty miles from Calville, and at the summit of the low range of hills which separates it from a sagebrush desert to the west, is an extensive deposit of lead, which is perhaps nearer pure than has ever been found elsewhere. The mountains in this region are of granite formation, with here and there ledges of yellow marble, similar to that found near Cedar City, in Utah.

It thinks that with "a railroad through that region to furnish supplies, every foot of this land would soon be occupied, and Nevada would become one of the leading agricultural States of the Pacific."

A medical writer in the *Virginia Enterprise* thinks that the negligence of the doctors in not changing their clothing after visiting patients who have the small-pox, is due, in part, the present spread of that loathsome disease in San Francisco.

The *San Francisco Times*, in a leading article, loudly complains of the happy-go-lucky recklessness which prevails in that city in relation to small-pox. It says, "the epidemic is increasing rapidly. Last week [previous to Nov. 30,] a hundred and forty cases were reported, and twenty-nine deaths resulted from the disease. This number is nearly thirty per cent. more than has occurred in any previous week, and the total number of deaths last week was more than double that of the corresponding week of 1867. In spite of these terrible facts, no stringent measures have yet been taken toward stopping the disease. The very commonest precautions are habitually neglected, and after the small-pox has been scourging us for six months, we find people acting every day as though it was a new disease, whose dissemination was not to be dreaded, and whose attacks were mild and harmless." It finds fault with the Health officer and the Board of Health, and says that though people wonder that the disease is on the increase, in point of fact nothing has yet been gone to retard it.

Our neighbors in Nevada and California are beginning to awake to the necessity of adopting thorough measures to prevent the further spread of this dreadful scourge.

#### Died:

Yesterday morning, at half past 6 o'clock of inflammation of the brain, aged two years, three months and five days Ama Frances, daughter of Theodore A. and Ama D. Smith. The funeral took place to-day from the residence of Bro. L. S. Hemenway, 4th Ward.

We sincerely sympathize with Brother and Sister Smith in this afflictive dispensation of Providence; but, while we feel to mourn with them over their great loss, we trust that they will enjoy the comforting influences of the Holy Spirit to that extent that they may be able to feel that He, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, "doeth all things well."

At Alpine City on the 4th inst. of childbirth, Alice, wife of George Freestone, aged 33 years, 1 month and 24 days. Deceased was the daughter of Richard and Jane Carlisle. She was born in Lincolnshire, England. She has been a good daughter, wife, mother and saint. Her husband and seven children mourn her loss.—Com.

At Willard, Box Elder Co. Dec. 4, of teething and diarrhoea, Eliza Ann, daughter of George and Mary Jones Harding, aged 15 months. *Mill. Star*, please copy.

In this City, after three weeks' illness, Dec. 9th, Mary Rebecca, daughter of Charles and Eliza West, aged 2 years and 11 months. *Mill. Star* please copy;

At 20 minutes past 7 o'clock, this morning of pneumonia, at her residence in this City, Leona, wife of Elder John Taylor, aged 72 years, 2 months and 3 days. Her funeral obsequies will take place to-morrow at the 14th Ward School House, at 12 o'clock.