

HELEN MAR WHITNEY REMINISCENCES
(PART FOUR)

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

As Helen Mar Whitney recalled the past in her articles published in the Woman's Exponent, she took the time to write about plural marriage--a very public issue in the 1880s. The story started in Nauvoo, however, not Salt Lake City.

The Church in Nauvoo was significantly different from the Church as it had been in New York when it had only a few members. Even the name was changed in 1838 from the Church of Christ to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In New York, the Saints used the Bible and the Book of Mormon as their canon of scripture. By 1835, an early edition of the Doctrine and Covenants had been published as additional scripture.

During the early period of the Church's existence, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery acted as the first and second elders, the only general Church organization. As the Church increased in membership, a complex leadership organization developed, including a Church First Presidency (three presiding high priests), Twelve Apostles, Seventies, and a Church Patriarch. In Nauvoo, the development continued, both doctrinally and administratively.

For many disciples, the introduction of plural marriage tried their souls. In almost every account, both for men and women, initial presentation of the principle

RICHARD NEITZEL HOLZAPFEL is an Assistant Professor of Church History at Brigham Young University. He attended Brigham Young University for undergraduate and graduate studies and Hebrew Union College and California State University, Fullerton, for graduate studies. He is the author or coauthor of many books and articles pertaining to Church history and is a noted lecturer in his field.

Previous installments of this essay were published in *The Nauvoo Journal* 6 (Fall 1994): 55-61; 7 (Spring 1995): 19-34; 7 (Fall 1995): 3-16.

produced "shock, horror, disbelief, or general emotional confusion." For those who accepted it, they generally went through a "period of inner turmoil lasting from several days to several months." Many prayed and fasted that God would "reveal the truth of the new beliefs to them." They often reported "a compelling personal experience revealing the truth of the new standards."

In several installments of her recollections, Helen Mar Whitney tells the story of the introduction of plural marriage in Nauvoo and her family's reaction to it. These articles also open a window to other aspects of early Latter-day Saint history.²

Soon after the return of President Brigham Young and my father from Europe, they were appointed chaplains to the Nauvoo Legion. Their uniform was of black cloth, with chapeaus and pluses of the same color. After the Prophet's assassination, President Brigham Young was appointed in his stead as Lieut. General of the Legion.

We were living but a little distance from the training ground, where we witnessed many grand displays, as well as on the prairie, where they went to hold a three days' muster.

I can call to mind many a pleasing reminiscence in the midst of our journeyings, while others have grown dim in the lapse of years, that have brought their various and trying changes to all, more particularly to the Latter-day Saints, who have been driven and scourged for many years. The Lord has various ways of bringing His children to repentance, and in having to drink deep of the bitter cup, we know better than any other people how to sympathize with others when they are called to suffer in a similar manner; and it has also taught us how to enjoy the sweets as they come, and I believe that we have been and are still the happiest people living, for the Holy Spirit has assisted us, and that with a clear conscience is of more worth than the whole world without it.

In dwelling upon the early scenes in Nauvoo, my mind reverts back to a time in Kirtland when our brethren were in the habit of training every Saturday, and I can remember with what joy and childish delight we would welcome that day, and I remember too how I used to love to hear the old patriotic songs, and to read or listen to the tales rehearsed concerning what was then called "the late war" with Great Britain, and also the revolutionary war, where our liberty was bought with the blood of our patriots. We were believers in an unpopular religion; the founder was quite a young man, but was called an old gold digger. Our claims to the privileges guaranteed us by the Constitution, though gained through long years of hardships, suffering and privation, and the death of many of our heroic sires, were denied us, and my father and his brethren were obliged to arm themselves, and for weeks were not permitted to take off their clothes, and laid on the ground with their firelocks night after night to preserve the lives of the Prophet and their families from those wicked traitors who were threatening destruction upon them.

The place where they daily mustered was in a large meadow just behind our house, belonging to Brother Ira Bond, and oh! how much I enjoyed the training and music of their martial band; it seemed one continual holiday for us children, who had very little idea of the meaning of it.

Peace was restored for a little season, but we had been in Far West just three weeks when the brethren had to again rally together to defend themselves from the mobbers of Missouri.

We had moved into a portion of the public storehouse, where we remained until father built a small cabin, which he had intended for a stable when our dwelling house was finished. The storehouse stood on one side of the square where the Saints had dug the foundation for a Temple. This was the gathering place, where the brethren mustered; they often came to our door for a refreshing draught of water and to rest in the shade of the house, as the weather was extremely warm.

I well remember the morning when the first of the mobbers entered the city; we were attending school, which was taught by Brother Jesse Haven and his sister, who had lately come there from Massachusetts. She was a very sweet lady and greatly beloved by the scholars and finally by all who became acquainted with her. After we came to Nauvoo she was married to Brother Israel Barlow, who was among the first "Mormons," and they are now living in

Bountiful, Utah. The schoolhouse was a large, fine building, with an entry, which the Saints had built on the outskirts of the town. When the mobbers came in they passed by the schoolhouse, and at the sound of their bugle the excitement was so great that we were allowed to go to the windows to see them pass. Soon after this the school had to be closed, in consequence of the mobbing. During a portion of the next winter we attended one taught by William Huntington in a private dwelling house in the central part of the city. I never realized any danger, but, fired by the spirit of war, my eldest brother, with my assistance, prepared for it by making wooden guns, swords and flags, and the latter were hoisted to the topmost part of our fence or cabin, where they could be seen fluttering in the breeze, and at the martial sound of fife and drum we would start to our feet and march with as much enthusiasm as though we belonged to a regiment of soldiers. We realized no danger, were probably too young; besides, we were at headquarters. Many of the Saints had fled to Far West for protection; not even when the city was surrounded by the mob we never knew that we were conquered; nor that there were such fiends in a land that boasted of freedom, professing Christianity, but no consideration of justice or mercy could move their stony hearts. Polygamy did not cause that, as it had not been revealed.

After many of the Saints had been massacred, and others died through want and sickness occasioned by their brutal course in the dead of winter, the rest fled for their lives to the then hospitable State of Illinois, where for a little season they enjoyed peace and the privilege of organizing their men into a Legion.

Once more we could celebrate the glorious and never-to-be-forgotten day of our nation's Independence, the Fourth of July, which was ushered in by the welcome peals of artillery, and our martial and brass bands playing the soul-thrilling airs that will never cease to inspire the heart of every true son and daughter of freedom.

Every act of our people from their first organization until the present time--although they have been so cruelly persecuted and driven from their homes, and many sealed their testimony with their blood, and finally were driven from out of the United States--has proven our loyalty to the constitution, though opportunities for forming other ties were not wanting, which any other community under like circumstances would have accepted; but we had brought with us the beloved stars and stripes, which we had never deserted, no, not even when Governor J. W. Shaeffer, to

gratify his spleen, prohibited the mustering of the Nauvoo Legion. Our people considered it nothing more nor less than a silly farce, which was gracefully submitted to, as all other similar requirements have been, thereby taking their own weapons from out their hands; but when required to give up our right to "serve God according to the dictates of our own consciences," and to accept of others' notions and ideas of virtue and morality, that is quite another thing; and though they may howl and continue to heap upon us their contemptible falsehoods, and call us bad names, they need not flatter themselves that the "Mormon" women are so ignorant of the law, or so weak and simple-minded as to be hoodwinked by any man, not even a "Mormon." Our enemies know as well as we do that we have broken no law in practicing Polygamy, it being a Bible doctrine, and we revive it as coming from the Almighty, who sanctioned and honored it by bringing forth our Savior through polygamous lineage, and He declared that He was "the root and the offspring of David."

If people calling themselves Christians will persist in denying this part of the Scriptures, they had better burn up the whole. Before my father ever heard that such a principle had been revealed to Joseph Smith he said to some friends in my hearing that if "all things were to be restored again as they were in the beginning," as the Scriptures declare them, the principle of a plurality of wives must also be restored; and he was heard to repeat the same when on his second mission to Europe, but he said he hardly expected it would come in his day. And when he heard it taught by Joseph Smith, he said the shock was similar to that of an earthquake; and when he commanded him to take another wife, if it had been his death sentence he could not have felt worse, and there were others who felt similar; and if it could have been just as acceptable in the sight of God, they would have chosen death. The few humble Saints who heard the principle from the Prophet's lips knew that he was a true Prophet of God, for the Holy Spirit bore witness to them that the principle was from Him, and they knew too that Joseph Smith would never have had the courage to introduce such a doctrine, much less to command men to enter into it whose traditions made it so obnoxious to their natural feelings, if it had not been commanded by the Almighty, for he was fully aware of the jeopardy in which he placed his own life by doing it, and I know that life was very dear to him, as much so to any man living, and that he was a devoted husband to his first wife, Emma; and a more affectionate father never lived; but he also knew that if he disobeyed that command that he would be destroyed, and would also forfeit his eternal salvation.

If the few who believe this principle to be a righteous one can afford to endure it, certainly the stranger ought to leave us to ourselves to work out the "problem," for we know that with God's help we shall do it in spite of them. We realize the greatness of the undertaking, and also that many sad mistakes have been made because of the foolishness of fallen man, but that does not prove the principle to be incorrect. We have been commanded to "try all things and to hold fast that which is good," and we are trying to obey as far as it is possible in our sinful states, and if it affords any pleasure to our enemies to hurl their wicked darts, and continue to waste their ammunition upon us they are at liberty to do so. We have learned long ago to keep cool, which is the most aggravating of all, and believe that sensible people will in time become disgusted.

If those who call themselves Christians would come to us with a spirit more in accordance with their profession, if we could not all see alike, we might at least be friends; but the unrighteous and inhuman course taken to root out what they please to call "The Twin Relic," only arouses in our hearts a more determined spirit of opposition, and fills every virtuous and sincere "Mormon" woman with indignation, and we tell them with the same spirit that inspired the heroic defenders of liberty at Bunker Hill, when they said to the infatuated monarch of England, "We have chosen (religious) war in preference to voluntary slavery" to their false ideas and the humbuggeries of acknowledged Mormon-eaters and virtue and life destroyers.

The following narrative I write in words of soberness and truth, for the benefit of the Saints, particularly the youth in Zion, as well as those who have been so long seeking for the exposition of "Mormonism" or "Polygamy," but have failed, because they sought not the truth, but have preferred to believe the extravagant tales told by those who misrepresent us.

To such as believe "Mormon" women to be the dupes and slaves of men, I will relate the testimonies of my sainted mother and father, which I heard repeatedly from their own lips in days gone by. My mother said she could not doubt that the principle of plurality of wives was of divine origin, for the Lord had shown it to her in answer to prayer.

She was a very conscientious woman, and of such strong faith that she never doubted after once being convinced of the truth, but she had to be convinced before accepting any principle. It was three weeks after my father

was baptized into this Church before she saw the necessity of again submitting to that ordinance (they had both been previously baptized into the Baptist Church), and during that period my father mourned for her as one would mourn for the dead.

In Nauvoo the Prophet's life was in constant jeopardy, not only from outside influences and enemies, who were seeking some plea to take him back to Missouri, but from false brethren, who had crept into his bosom and then betrayed him. Therefore, when he told my father to take a second wife he requested him to keep it a secret and not divulge it even to my mother, for fear that she would not receive the principle. Father realized the situation fully, and the love and reverence he felt for the Prophet was so great that he would rather have laid down his own life than have betrayed him. This was the greatest test of his faith he had ever experienced.

When first hearing the principle taught, believing that he would be called upon to enter it, he thought of the two Sisters Pitkin, who, as they were both elderly ladies and great friends of my mother's, he believed would cause her little if any unhappiness. The woman he was commanded to take, however, was an English lady nearer my mother's age, who came over with her husband and two little girls with a company of Saints in the same ship in which President Brigham Young and my father were returning from their second mission to Europe. She had been reared in luxury, but had the misfortune to be married to a man who, though of respectable and wealthy parents, and capable of carrying on a large business in the pottery line, was a very dissipated man and ran through his own means and all of hers that he could obtain. She had three wealthy brothers, who took charge of her property, to prevent her husband from squandering it. He loved his wife and children with all the affection of which he was capable, but was so brutal to them when under the influence of liquor, that twice she had been obliged to leave him and seek refuge in the homes of her brothers; but after many professions and promises of reform she was induced to return. This was previous to their hearing of "Mormonism," so they could not very well lay it to "Polygamy."

Upon hearing the Gospel she received it, as also her husband, but he was not sincere. Her brothers considered this step unpardonable, and thought they were more disgraced by her joining the awful people called "Mormons" than in living with a drunken and dissolute husband.

This first time I ever saw him was a few days after their arrival in Nauvoo; he was then half intoxicated. She was proud and very sensitive, and being among strangers in a strange land, it placed her under very peculiar and trying circumstances. My father and mother and the neighbors were very kind to her. They rented a log house of a Mr. Hibbard, an old settler in Commerce. While living in their house Mr. ---- came home so drunk that his abusive treatment of his wife and children outraged the feelings of Mr. Hibbard and family, and they interfered and drove him from the house. His wife could no longer live with him, and soon after he returned to England.

This, no doubt, was the cause of father's being told by the Prophet to take her and the children, to provide them with a home; but the thought of deceiving the kind and faithful wife of his youth, whom he loved with all his heart, and who with him had borne so patiently their separation and all the trials and sacrifices they had been called to endure, was more than he felt able to bear. He realized not only the addition of trouble and perplexities that such a step must bring upon him, but his sorrow and misery were increased by the thought of my mother hearing of it from some other source, which would no doubt separate them forever, and he shrank from the thought of such a thing, or of causing her any unhappiness. Finally he was so tried that he went to Joseph and told him how he felt--that he was fearful if he took such a step he could not stand, but would be overcome.

The Prophet went and inquired of the Lord; His answer was: "Tell him to go and do as he has been commanded, and if I see that there is any danger of his apostatizing, I will take him to myself."

Father was heard many a time to say that he had shed bushels of tears over this ORDER, the order of "Celestial or plural marriage."

The Prophet told him the third time before he obeyed the command. This shows that the trial must have been extraordinary, for he was a man who from the first had yielded implicit obedience to every requirement of the Prophet.

My mother had noticed a change in his looks and appearance, and when she enquired the cause he tried to evade her question, saying it was only her imagination, or that he was not feeling well, etc. But it so worked upon his mind that his anxious and haggard looks betrayed him daily

and hourly, and finally his misery became so unbearable that it was impossible to control his feelings. He became sick in body, but his mental wretchedness was too great to allow of his retiring at night, and instead of going to bed he would walk the floor; and the agony of his mind was so terrible that he would wring his hands and weep, beseeching the Lord with his whole soul to be merciful and reveal to his wife the cause of his great sorrow, for he himself could not break his vow of secrecy. His anguish, and my mother's, were indescribable, and when unable to endure it longer, she retired to her room, where, with a broken and contrite heart she poured out her grief to Him who hath said: "If any lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

My father's heart was raised at the same time in supplication, and while pleading as one would plead for life, the vision of her mind was opened, and as darkness fleeth before the morning sun, so did her sorrow and the groveling things of earth vanish away, and before her she saw the principle of Celestial Marriage illustrated in all its beauty and glory, together with the great exaltation and honor it would confer upon her in that immortal and celestial sphere if she would but accept it and stand in her place by her husband's side. She was also shown the woman he had taken to wife, and contemplated with joy the vast and boundless love and union which this order would bring about, as well as the increase of kingdoms, power and glory extending throughout the eternities, worlds without end.

Her soul was satisfied and filled with the Spirit of God. With a countenance beaming with joy she returned to my father, saying, "Heber, what you kept from me the Lord has shown to me."

She related the scene to me and to many others, and told me she never saw so happy a man as father was, when she described the vision and told him she was satisfied and knew that it was from God. She covenanted to stand by him and honor the principle, which covenant she faithfully kept, and though her trials were often heavy and grievous to bear, her integrity was unflinching to the end.³

Those who have grown up in these valleys, and have here practiced the principle of celestial marriage, have become accustomed to it, and having but little opposition to contend with, can have very little idea of the trial it was to those who first entered the school. They had to lean upon the arm of the Almighty, and in the face of persecution,

sorrow and death, took up the cross and bore it heroically for the sake of future generations, looking beyond this life for their reward. They understood it to be a principle instituted solely for the purpose of saving and exalting the human family, not only the living, but those who had died without a knowledge of the true plan of salvation. It was considered a sacred and holy duty, and the honest in heart who entered into it did it in the fear of God. What other motive than real faith and a firm conviction of the truth of this principle could have induced them to accept and practice a doctrine so opposite to their traditions and the rigid training received from their sectarian parents and ancestors? Who would wish to become objects of derision, to have their friends and associates turn the cold shoulder, and be subjected to the sneers and scoffs of persons prejudiced by the extravagant tales spread by certain ones who, while professing friendship and faith in the principle, were two-faced and treacherous to their brethren and sisters; the latter, though virtuous and modest in demeanor, and their motives as noble and pure as were those of Ruth and Naomi, had to silently bear the title of lewd women.

We may read the history of martyrs and mighty conquerors, and of many great and good men and women, but that of the noble women and fair daughters of Zion, whose faith in the promises of Israel's God enabled them to triumph over self and obey His higher law, and assist His servants to establish it upon the earth, though buried in the past, I feel sure there was kept by the angels an account of their works which will yet be found in the records of Eternity, written in letters of Gold.

The Prophet said that the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith. It was not his work, but that of the Almighty, and he said it would cause the damnation of all who entered into it with impure motives, and none who acted unrighteously could stand, the trial would be so great; and there would be but few men who would be capable of being saviors upon Mount Zion.

He taught the principle to his wife, Emma, who humbly received it and gave to him three young women to wife, who had been living with her in her family, and had been like adopted daughters. Until she lost the spirit and her heart became hardened, they lived happily together. They respected and loved her as though she had been their mother, and might have remained with her afterwards had they been willing to have severed the ties between themselves and the Prophet; but choosing to remain true

[to] their covenants, which they considered binding here and hereafter, they preferred to leave the Mansion. Emma deceived her children and denied to every one that the Prophet had ever received a revelation on Celestial marriage, or had ever practiced it, although she had heard the revelation and was an eye witness to the marriage of the three wives above mentioned. Besides, he told her of every one that had been sealed to him.

Some of those who apostatized from the Church, and knew more than she did about the practice of Polygamy, also denied it; but there are too many of the Prophet's wives still living in Utah--as well as hundreds of other witnesses--who can testify to the hypocrisy of those men who, like William Marks, apostatized because they could not manage matters pertaining to the Church as they desired, and who afterwards volunteered their services to help Emma Smith, she having, according to her own acknowledgment, founded the Josephite church to revenge herself upon Brigham Young.

How little the world who hate and persecute the Latter-day Saints know of the impelling motive which induced them to accept and carry out the principles taught by Joseph Smith, the great Prophet of the latter days.

It seems a little strange, too, so greatly despised and hated as "Mormonism" is, that many of its principles, revealed through the illiterate boy, Joseph Smith, and taught for fifty years or more by the Church (doctrines for which our people have been persecuted and driven, and many besides the Prophet and Patriarch slain for advocating) are now being proclaimed by sectarian ministers, who are applauded for thus advancing some new idea, never before thought of. Such blindness is certainly deplorable.

My father was often called a Prophet, and years ago in Nauvoo I heard him predict that it would yet become a law of this nation that men should marry a plurality of wives.

The Prophet Joseph was heard to say that in consequence of ways and disasters, men would become so scarce that when one was seen it would be said of him, "There goes a man."

The following we read in Isaiah: "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate, shall sit upon the ground. And in that day seven women shall take

hold of one man saying: We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away-our reproach."

If "coming events cast their shadows before," we certainly have no cause to doubt the speedy fulfillment of this prediction. The first great commandment given by the Creator has nearly become obsolete among professed Christians, who set themselves up as our judges, and assume to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, but instead, have departed from His precepts, choosing only such portions of the Scriptures as happen to suit their own ideas, and ignoring the rest; while the Latter-day Saints, whom they call heretics, accept it entirely, and believe it to be their duty to obey every requirement of the Gospel held forth by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Instead of spiritualizing it, we believe it means exactly what it says in both the Old and the New Testaments. As other sects have already followed in the footsteps of the "Mormons" in certain of their doctrines, we need not be surprised to eventually hear of their advocating and legalizing Polygamy.

Great exertions have been made by them to enlighten the minds of the awfully ignorant and depraved "Mormons," who have rightly appreciated the same and also realize how much more interest they have taken in our behalf since they found that instead of perishing, as they had hoped we would, we were still living and increasing in wealth, power and influence away off here in the valleys of the Rocky mountains. They send their Bible agents for the purpose, as we suppose, of convincing us of our errors by the Scriptures, for which we are thankful, as we are more than anxious that the rising generation in Zion should understand the Scriptures, as our doctrine is founded upon that sacred record.⁴

Although the Lord had revealed the principle of Celestial Marriage to Joseph Smith in an early day, the astounding revelation and command to proclaim it was not given until after the Saints had settled in Nauvoo. Joseph put off the dreaded day as long as he dared. I recollect on a certain Sabbath, previous to the Apostles' return from Europe, of hearing my mother and others expressing their wonder and astonishment at what they had heard uttered that day by the Prophet, upon the restoration of all things, etc. His wife as well as others was quite excited over it. Seeing the effect that his sermon had upon his hearers in the afternoon, he consoled them by saying that the time which he had spoken of might be further off than he had viewed it; at all events the Lord would help them and carry them safely

through it, if they were faithful.

No wonder that this duty weighed so heavily upon his mind, nor that he should manifest such anxiety to again behold his brethren, the Apostles, to deliver into their hands the keys of the kingdom. The great joy and affection which he manifested at once more meeting and clasping them by the hand proved the confidence which he felt in them as men of God. Those were days of peril, and the tried and faithful few were I believe, among the master spirits appointed, or reserved, by the Almighty to come forth in the day in which He began to restore the ancient order of His kingdom, to prepare for the winding up scene.

The humiliation of the Saints only increased their union. Abuse never injured a cause, and persecution has never stopped the progress of this work, but only added fuel to the flame and attracted the attention of the world, and caused thousands to join the standard of truth. As to our religious principles, we have nothing to disguise, but on the contrary wish them to be known, that they may be judged of correctly.

The Latter-day Saints have always been accused by the world of denying the Old Bible and substituting a new one, which they were pleased to call "Joe Smith's Golden Bible." I will here mention one circumstance: a cousin who lately paid me a visit from the States, seemed very much surprised at seeing upon my table the old family Bible, which happened to be her "Uncle Heber's." I merely speak of this to show how little the Gentile world know about us, or can understand the faith and doctrines of the people whom they are so ready to judge.



*Joseph Smith, Jr.
Courtesy of LDS Church Archives*

Notwithstanding the life of the Prophet was sought and his enemies were ready to cut him off, yet he always had some warm-hearted friends who pled his cause. The following extract from a letter written by James Arlington Bennett to the *N. Y. Herald*, dated Arlington House N. Y., Oct. 16, 1842, concerning the Mormons, I am sure will be read with interest by the Saints. His words were prophetic:

Why should I not be Joseph Smith's friend? He has done nothing, to injure me, nor do I believe he had

done anything to injure ex-Governor Boggs of Missouri. The Governor, no doubt, under strong feelings may have thought and believed that Smith had preconcerted the plan for his assassination, but there is no legal evidence whatever of that fact, none by which an unprejudiced jury would convict any man; yet to send this man into Missouri, under the present requisition, would be an act of great injustice, as his ruin would be certain. How could any man, against whom there is a bitter religious prejudice, escape ruin, being in the circumstances of Joseph Smith? . . . Look at the history of past ages--see the force of fanaticism and bigotry in bringing to the stake some of the best of men; and in all these cases the persecutors had their pretexts, as well as in the case of the Mormon chief. .

. . . Smith, I conceive, has just as good a right to establish a church, if he can do it, as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Fox, or even King Henry the Eighth. All these chiefs in religion had their opponents, and their people their persecutors. . . Just so it will be with the Mormons. They may kill one prophet, and confine in chains half of his followers, but another will take his place, and the Mormons will still go

ahead.

One of their Elders said to me, when conversing on this subject, that they were like a mustard plant--“if you don't disturb it the seed will fall and multiply; and if you kick it about, you only give the seed more soil, and it will multiply the more.”

From what I know of the people, I fully believe that all the really sincere Mormons would die sooner than abandon their faith and religion.

Gen. J. C. Bennett has stated that, to conquer the Mormon Legion it would require five to one against them, all things taken into consideration, and that they will die to a man sooner than give up their Prophet. Now, is the arrest of this man worth such a sacrifice of life as must necessarily follow an open war with his people? The loss of from one to three thousand lives will no doubt follow in the attempt to accomplish an object not in the end worth a button.

Persecute them, and you are sure to multiply them. This is fully proved since the Missouri persecution, as, since that affair they have increased one hundred fold. It is the best policy, both of Missouri and Illinois, to let them alone; for if they are driven farther west, they may set up an independent government, under which they can worship the Almighty as may suit their taste. Indeed, I would recommend to the Prophet to pull up stakes and take possession of the Oregon Territory in his own right, and establish an independent empire. In one hundred years from this time no nation on earth could conquer such a people. Let not the history of David be forgotten.

If the Prophet Joseph would do this, millions would flock to his standard and join his cause. He could then make his own laws by the voice of revelation, and have them executed like the act of one man.

With respect to myself, I would just repeat that I am the Prophet's friend, and a friend of his people, merely from sympathy, as my arm has ever been lifted on the side of the persecuted and oppressed. . . . By inserting this communication, it is presumed that no one will hold the Herald responsible for the sentiments it contains; yet I have no doubt that there are thousands of independent, liberal-minded men in

this country who think as I do.

Neither the Mormon Prophet nor his people can add anything to my fortune or reputation. I expect nothing from them; they are a poor and industrious people, and have nothing to give. I am influenced in my conduct towards them by a spirit of benevolence and mercy, and hope the Governor and State of Illinois will act in like manner. It is true, I was commissioned in their Legion, through the instrumentality of their enemy, Gen. J. C. Bennett--an act entirely of their own, without my agency; but I was as such their friend before as since. The Missouri persecution fixed my attention and commiseration on the people.

It must be recollected, too, that the Mormon Prophet and his people are the most ardent friends and promoters of literature and science. These are elementary principles in their social system; and this, certainly, is contrary to everything like despotism. I hope, therefore, . . . that ex-Governor Boggs will withdraw his demand for the Prophet, and let these poor people rest in peace. Both he and Governor Carlin will feel much more at peace with themselves by quashing the whole proceeding.

The following historical incident of the Prophet's life, which I distinctly remember, cannot fail to be of interest to many,-- particularly the ones who witnessed the scene:

Saturday, April 7, 1842, the Nauvoo Legion was on parade, by virtue of an order of the 25th of January, 1842, and was reviewed by Lieutenant-General Joseph Smith, who commanded through the day.-- The weather was very fine.--In the afternoon the Legion was divided into cohorts, and fought an animated sham battle. At the close of the parade Gen. Smith delivered a most animating and appropriate address, in which he remarked that his soul was never better satisfied than on this occasion. It will be remembered that on that day Gen. John C. Bennett betrayed his designs upon the life of the Prophet, by requesting him repeatedly to take part in the sham battle, and even urging him to command the first cohort in person, without his staff.

Dr. Bennett's treachery, it seems, was made known to Joseph by the Spirit, for he said: “If General Bennett's true feelings towards me are not made manifest to the world

in a very short time, then it may be possible that the gentle breathings of that spirit, which whispered me on parade that there was mischief concealed in that sham battle, were false. A short time will determine the point. Let John C. Bennett answer at the day of Judgment--Why did you request me to command one of the cohorts, and also to take my position without my staff, during the sham battle on the 7th of April, 1842, where my life might have been the forfeit, and no man have known who did the deed?"

Shortly after this circumstance, the true feelings of John C. Bennett were made manifest to the world, as the Prophet had predicted. According to Joseph's own words, his time had not yet come; for said he, "I understand my mission . . . God Almighty is my shield; I shall not be sacrificed until my time comes; then I shall be offered freely."

Dr. John C. Bennett was expelled from the Church in the following July for unvirtuous conduct. It was well known that he was a notorious hypocrite, and by his artful cunning, under the cloak of religion, deceived and led captive artless and unwary women. . . . It should be explained to the reader that James Arlington Bennett and Dr. John C. Bennett were not in the least related, except they bore the same name.⁵

A thousand and one opinions are being daily expressed concerning the polygamous "Mormons" and their destiny, but the more they try to solve the problem the harder and more intricate it becomes, which is the natural consequence of ignorance. The results which they predict would be inevitable were it the work or scheme of men, but as it is the work of the great God, who will not behold iniquity with any degree of allowance, and having promised that--the kingdom shall not be given to any other people; if we sin He will punish, and if we go astray He will chasten us. Every principle which the Lord reveals for the exaltation of mankind may be perverted, which leads to degradation, and even to everlasting damnation. There always has been and always will be those who pervert the ways of the Lord. The tares must grow with the wheat until the harvest.

"Mormonism," so-called, would have died a natural death years ago if it had been the "fraud" which the world represents it.

The schemes and threats of men have but little weight with those who have been made familiar with them from their earliest remembrance, and have become

accustomed to the sound, as we do to the idle winds or the barking of a few curs. The conflict is between them and our God, who has never forsaken His people; but He does not expect us to sit quietly down and fold our hands in idleness, while our enemies are publishing their outrageous falsehoods to blind the eyes of the weak or credulous to the most glorious truths of heaven, and to throw ignominy and dishonor upon our people, more especially the women and innocent children, who are as much farther advanced in the ways of God and the order of heaven, as our slanderers are in the road to perdition, but to use every honorable means to defend ourselves against their vile attacks.

The following truthful description of the Prophet Joseph and his brother, Hyrum, I think very appropriate at the present time, and it is quite a treat to read the sentiments of unbiased and liberal-minded men, who could afford to give due credit even to "Mormons." It was written to James Gordon Bennett by a correspondent of the New York Herald, who was stopping in the city of the Saints, which he designated as the nucleus of a Western Empire:

Joseph Smith, the President of the Church, Prophet, Seer and Revelator, is thirty-six years of age, six feet high in pumps, weighing two hundred and twelve pounds. He is a man of the highest order of talent and great independence of character--firm in integrity, and devoted to his religion; In fact, he is a per-se, as President Tyler would say. As a public speaker he is bold, powerful and convincing, possessing both the suaviter in modo and the fortiter in re; as a leader, wise and prudent, yet fearless as a military commander; brave and determined as a citizen, worthy, affable and kind; bland in his manners, and of noble bearing. His amiable lady, too, the electa curia is a woman of superior intellect and exemplary piety--in every respect suited to her situation in society, as the wife of one of the most accomplished and powerful chiefs of the age.

Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch of the Church and brother of Joseph, is forty-two years of age, five feet, eleven and a half inches high, weighing one hundred and ninety-three pounds. He, too, is a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and is one of the most pious and devout Christians in the world. He is a man of great wisdom and superior excellence, possessing great energy of character and originality of thought.

The following interesting extracts are taken from a

letter addressed to the Editor of the New York Herald by an officer of the U.S. Artillery, dated City of Nauvoo, Ill., May 8, 1842:

Yesterday was a great day with the "Mormons." Their legion, to the number of two thousand men, was paraded by Gen. Smith, Bennett and others, and certainly made a very noble and imposing appearance. The evolutions of the troops would do honor to any body of armed militia in any States, and approximates very closely to the regular forces. . . . Before many years this legion will be twenty, and perhaps fifty thousand strong, and still augmenting. A fearful host, filled with religious enthusiasm, and led on by ambitious and talented officers, what may not be effected by them? Perhaps the subversion of the Constitution of the United States; and if this should be considered too great a task, foreign conquests will most certainly follow. Mexico will fall into their hands, even if Texas should first take it.

These "Mormons" are accumulating like a snowball rolling down an inclined plane, which in the end becomes an avalanche. They are enrolling among their officers some of the finest talent in the country. . . . Only a part of their officers, regents and professors, however, are "Mormons," but they are all united by a common interest and will act together on main points to a man. Those who are not "Mormons" when they come here, very soon become so. . .

The Smiths are not without talent, and are said to be as brave as lions. Joseph, the chief, is a noble-looking fellow, a Mahomet every inch of him. The postmaster, Sidney Rigdon, is a lawyer, philosopher and Saint. Their other Generals are also men of talent, and some of them men of learning. I have no doubt that they are all brave, as they are most unquestionably ambitious, and the tendency of their religious creed is to annihilate all other sects; you may therefore see that the time will come when this gathering host of religious fanatics will make this country shake to the centre. A western empire is certain. Ecclesiastical history presents no parallel to this people, inasmuch as they are establishing their religion on a learned footing. All the sciences are taught, and to be taught in the college with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, etc., etc.

The mathematical sciences, pure and mixed, are now in successful operation, under an extremely able professor of the name of Pratt (Prof. Orson Pratt); and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, is President of their University.

Now, sir, what do you think of Joseph, the modern Mahomet? Who will say that the "Mormon" Prophet is not among the great spirits of the age?"

The following, dated June 17, 1842, is also from the N. Y. Herald, and is headed: "Wonderful Progress of Joe Smith, the Modern Mahomet.--Spread of the Mormon Faith, and a New Religious Revolution at Hand."

By the mails last evening we received a variety of letters and papers from Nauvoo, the capital of the new religious revolutionary empire, established by Joe Smith; and also from other towns of Illinois, exhibiting the extraordinary progress of this most extraordinary people, who call themselves the "Latter day Saints." These letters and papers are as follows: First, a letter from a United States artillery officer traveling through Nauvoo, who gives an original glimpse of the Mormon movement there. Second, an extract from the Sangamo Journal of the 3d of June--a newspaper in favor of the Whig party, and opposed to the Mormons on account of their locofoco tendency, requiring a review of their military organization. Third, a law of the Mormon city of Nauvoo extending toleration towards all religions; even Mahometan, and assuming power to legislate for all with imperial nonchalance. Fourth, a public meeting of Mormons in Nauvoo, developing their sentiments and position in the elections in Illinois. Fifth, a letter to Mrs. Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet, from a lady in Edwardsville, exhibiting the singular mixture of piety, politics, tact and shrewdness of those who believe in Mormonism. All these letters and documents disclose a most extraordinary movement in human affairs. What they mean we can hardly tell, but is it not time for some great religious revolution, as radical as Luther's, to take place in the Christian world?

In the early ages of antiquity, before the dates of the monuments of Egypt, we have distinguished names handed down to us by tradition--Brama, Vishnu, Confucius, Zoroaster, Isis, Osiris, including Adam,

Seth, Noah, Abraham, were the master spirits of great antiquity throughout the ancient world. In later times, Moses and the Prophets, Peter and Paul and the Apostles of Christ, and even Mahomet, who acknowledged the truth of Christianity. Each of these movements was a religious revolution, but that which followed the time of Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ and the Apostles, has developed the only true system of morals, of belief, of revelation, of prophecy, of man., of God, of eternity. When the Christian Church was overwhelmed with follies and superstitions of Rome, and the thousand quarreling sects of monks and idlers, a fresh spirit arose in the world--a spark came down from heaven--Luther lifted up his voice, and a religious revolution started at his word, and renovated Christianity. But a new age has come, a fresh infusion of faith is required, a strong impulse is rendered necessary.

May not this wonderful Mormon movement be the signal for a new religious revolution? Is not Joe Smith its master spirit, and General Bennett its military spirit? The vast progress of the last century in art and science, through steam and type, has changed the nature of man and society. Is it not necessary that a new religion and a new faith should come down from heaven, to carry out the destiny of the race under its present condition?

It is very evident that the Mormons exhibit a remarkable degree of tact, skill, shrewdness, energy and enthusiasm. The particular features of their faith are nothing against their success. Do they believe their new bible, their virgin revelation, their singular creed? If they do so with enthusiasm and practice their shrewd precepts, the other sects will fall before them. This is certain--this is human nature. In Illinois they have already shown how to acquire power and influence, by holding the balance of power between both the great parties. They can already dictate to the State of Illinois, and if they pursue the same policy in other States, will they not soon dictate to Congress and decide the presidency? In all matters of public concernment they act as one man, with one soul, one mind and one purpose.

Their religious and moral principles bind them together firmly. They may be, and have been abused and calumniated--partly true, partly false--

but whether true or false, these attacks only increase their popularity and influence. Unlike all other Christian sects, they adopt at once all the modern improvements of society, in art and literature; and from their singular religious faith give the highest enthusiasm to the movement at large. There is nothing odd, or singular, or absurd about them.

Verily, verily, we are truly living in the "latter days," and we should not be surprised to see that the Mormon religion is the real Millennium already commenced. One thing is certain--the Mormons are so constituted that in these temperance times they will swallow up all the other lukewarm Protestant sects, and the moral and religious world will be divided between the Pope and the Catholics on one side and Joe Smith and Mormons on the others. The oyster is opening and soon will be equally divided.

The writers of the above, though rather extravagant in some of their ideas, spoke more truths than we have been accustomed to hear for a long time, and many more than the opponents of "Mormonism" would be willing to admit, though they oftentimes do so unwittingly.

We are entirely too clannish to suit the agents of his Satanic majesty, who knows as well as we that "union is strength" and power, and that his craft is in danger; he therefore abhors it. But as the religion of Jesus Christ, whose ways are pleasantness, whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy, teaches us to become one, and as we choose to obey the Almighty, who, I would ask, among His groveling subjects, should claim the right of saying, "Why do ye so?" This is the last religious revolution, and our faith and enthusiasm have been equal to every emergency. In all that we undertake we are in earnest, because we know that we are fighting under the bright and glorious banner of Truth, and though the lot of man is trouble, and we are looking and preparing for it, and for the time when the whole world will unite to fight against this work, we have nothing to fear, for truth, though crushed to earth, will rise again.

If those not of our faith, who visit our cities, came with a determination to lay aside their prejudices, to learn the facts concerning us, or our religion, nothing would give more pleasure than to tell it them; but too many who have come here, after being treated with every politeness and escorted to seats in our Tabernacle which are reserved for the stranger, sit there, under the very altar of the Lord's

Supper, in the hearing of Saints who assemble to worship God, and spit out their venom, or make ridicule of every thing that we hold sacred.

But the most despicable characters are the overly righteous souls, who are filled with such holy horror at the mention of "Mormon" polygamy, and are the ones whom we look upon with suspicion, and set them down as among the most corrupt of hypocrites. It is through their paintings and misrepresentations that those at a distance join in the cry of the hunters and the hounds, for no other reason only because they see others do it.

Many who are among us (for self-interest or jealousy) keep up the hue and cry about the dreaded "Mormons" who are spreading over these Territories, etc., till their ignorant dupes might easily suppose that this people, who sought refuge in the Rocky Mountains, were preparing to swallow them up at one mouthful; and more than likely take in the whole planet.

If everybody had been as much concerned and interested in their own affairs, and attended as strictly to

them, as have their far off peaceable neighbors (who believe in and practice the principle of "minding their own business"), they might possibly have kept their own gardens from being overrun with those rank weeds and briars, the thorns of which will yet tear and pierce their tender flesh till they are reminded of the innocent blood which they have shed, and of the tears of the widow and the fatherless and the oppressed exiles, who patiently endured long years of poverty and suffering, brought upon us in consequence of their cruel and wicked and falsehoods. It would be well for them if they would stop and reflect a little, and instead of shutting their eyes and ears listen to the voice of truth, and let common sense and reason govern them instead of that "green-eyed monster," that fills their mouths with lying words, and "Slander, the foulest whelp of sin." It was this that caused Cain to slay his righteous brother, Abel, and the Jews to hate and crucify the Savior, and to kill the Apostles and Prophets, because they would not forsake their religion; and as have severely felt the result of it, so is this nation now feeling the scourging hand of the Almighty.⁶

As Rogers (author of "Pleasures of Memory") says, "He who feels the infirmities of age, dwells most on



*Heber C. Kimball Home, Nauvoo, Illinois
Courtesy LDS Church Historical Department*

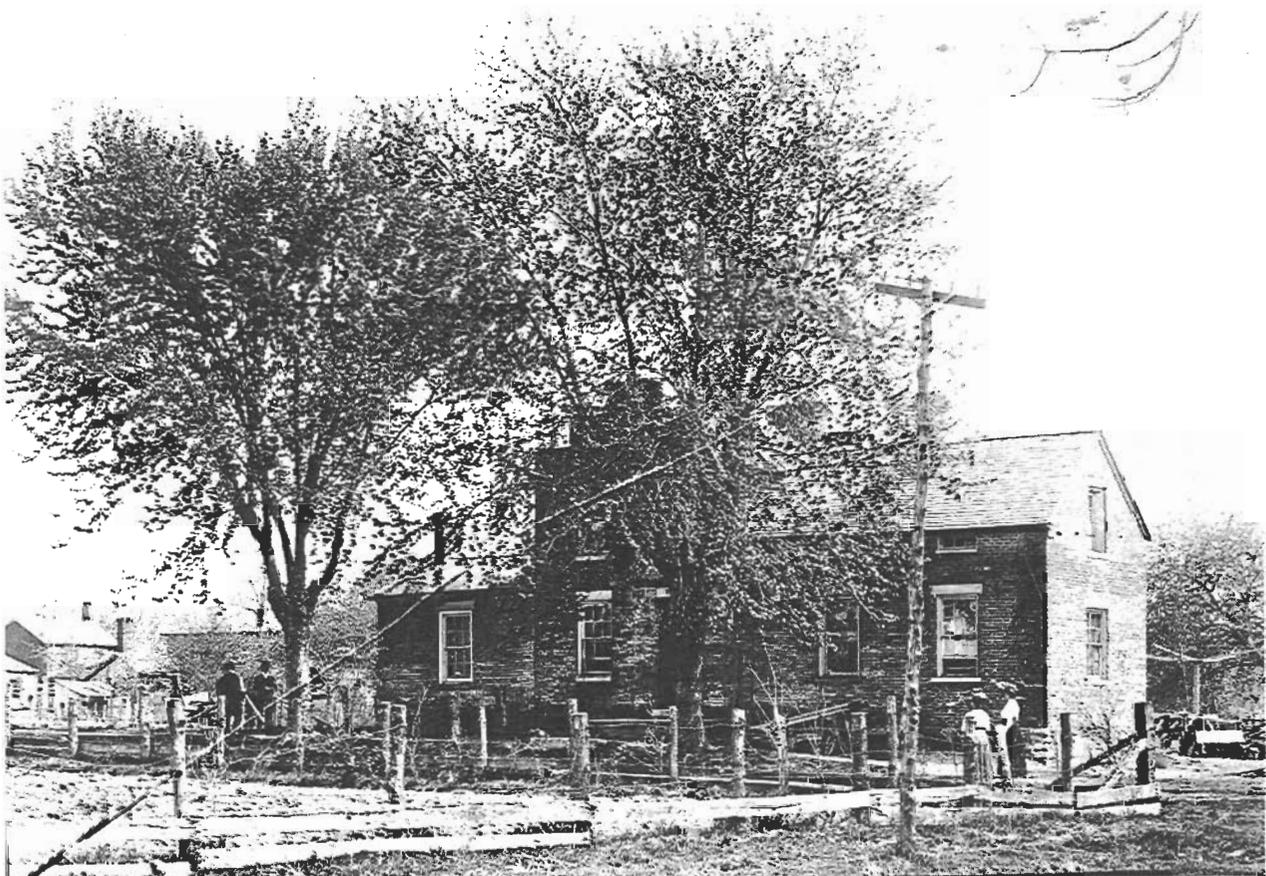
whatever reminds him of the vigor and vivacity of his youth." We know this to be true; and there is a tender and pleasant melancholy which arises in the mind of every one in the decline of life. He continues: "Nor are we pleased only with a review of the brighter passages of life. Events, the most distressing in their immediate consequences, are often cherished in remembrance with a degree of enthusiasm. This," he says, "is the language of the heart, and will remind the reader of that good-humored remark in one of Pope's letters, 'I should hardly care to have an old post pulled up, that I remembered ever since I was a child.'"

These words come home to the heart, and remind us of similar attachment to the place of our birth and objects and associations familiar to us in early youth.

Though pleasing the task, I often find it a very difficult one to gather up the many broken threads of the

almost forgotten past, and weave them into a shape for the perusal of others, and it is a pleasant relief, like a cooling draught to the thirsty traveler, to find here and there a scrap of our history interwoven with that of others, bringing before us objects and scenes which were once familiar, but had become dim and nearly effaced from our memory by the hand of time, which has been to me unsparing in its ravages. How forcibly I am here reminded of my father's request, in a letter written me in 1844, while upon his last mission to the Eastern States, urging me to commence then to write my life as far back as I could remember, and to tell my brother William to do the same; "And then," said he, "you can put all the letters I write you in their proper places, and when I write my history yours shall go in with it, to be handed down to our children for them to read." I neglected to do so, and can only look back with regret at not heeding his wishes.

In the Spring of 1842 father, with my brother



*Brigham Young Home, Nauvoo, Illinois
Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Department*

William's assistance, plowed and planted us a garden. This he did every season, but never had the privilege of reaping the fruits of his labor until after he came to this valley. It was a common thing for the Elders, who left all to go forth to other lands to preach the Gospel without purse or scrip, to return empty handed and go to work chopping wood, building houses, planting, or any kind of labor to support and provide food and raiment for themselves and families. They never thought of complaining, but rejoiced in the knowledge that they had been faithful in declaring the truth to the honest in heart, and thought no sacrifice too great in such a cause; and this they have continued to do until the present time. But where in all Christendom can there be found any other class of men who would willingly go forth, with no other source to look to for assistance, but to Him Who commanded that His Apostles should go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned; and these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak in new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Peter said, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord," etc.

These are among the doctrines which have been taught and practised by the Latter-day Saints, and for which they were persecuted, murdered, robbed and driven from State to State and finally out of the Union, and the majority of its inhabitants rejoiced at our calamities.

On the 10th of September my father left us to go on a mission through the southern part of Illinois, in company with Prest. Brigham Young, Elders George A. Smith and Amasa Lyman. The following is from my father's journal:

We proceeded to Quincy, and preached at that place several times. The indifference of the people and the little regard they appeared to have for the Gospel, led me to reflect considerably upon the hardness of their hearts and situation. I went to bed and dreamed the following dream:

I thought I went out on a fishing excursion, and whilst traveling up and down the stream to find a good fishing place, I was astonished to see so very few fish in the stream, and they were small and very shy. After traveling a while, I discovered some large

fish lying across the stream, dead, and which smelled exceedingly bad. I then saw the reason why so few fish went up stream, and why they were so small and shy; it was in consequence of those dead ones lying across the stream.

This is the dream; and in the morning the following interpretation was strongly impressed upon my mind. These dead fish represent the dead members scattered abroad, hither and thither, who are considered as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but are in fact but dead branches; they are not complying with the revelations of God, which command them to gather together to the body. And as the branch of the vine cannot gather sap and nourishment from the body when separated from it, so the members of the Church abroad, when commanded to gather to the body, cannot receive life and intelligence away from it, nor grow in the things of the Kingdom of God, as is their privilege; and such characters stand in the way of the Gospel, and prevent many from obeying the Gospel, through their neglect. I further thought that it was not impossible that the bad smell of the dead fish represented those people who are to be met with, some with a chew of tobacco in their mouths, and some a pipe, and others whose breath smells sufficiently strong of whiskey to sicken a sober man when he comes near them.

Much of our time was spent in endeavoring to remove these obstacles, by persuading the members to comply with the commandments given on the subject, that the channel might be cleared and a way opened for more live fish to pass up the stream; and we hoped that we should yet see the stream full of live fish, and the fishing places become exceedingly good and live fish plentiful.

The following interesting incident happened in the family of Elder Sidney Rigdon, and I heard him relate it upon the stand in the little grove by the Temple. It was printed in the Nauvoo Times and Seasons, where I read it a short time since. It created quite a sensation at the time among both old and young. Elder Rigdon and family had been greatly afflicted, and his body had become considerably emaciated. For some time previous to this he had been slackening in his duty and his faith accordingly had weakened. His presence in the congregation, sitting once more in his place by the Prophet and his brethren,

caused great rejoicing among the Saints.

He came, he said, not to renounce his faith in Mormonism, as had been stated by enemies and licentious presses, but to bear his testimony of its truth, and add another to the many miraculous evidences of the power of God, and unfold unto the audience a scene of deep interest which had occurred in his own family. He had witnessed many instances of the power of God in this Church, but never before had seen the dead raised; yet this was a thing that had actually taken place in his own family. His youngest daughter, Eliza, who had been very sick for a time, died. The doctor told them that she was dead. After she had lain in this state for a certain length of time, she rose up in the bed, and in a very powerful and supernatural tone spoke to the family to the following effect: said she was going to leave them, and had only come back to deliver her message, and then depart again. The Lord had said to her the very words she was about to relate. She was so particular in relating it that she would not allow them to leave out or add one word. Before dying she had expressed a great desire to live; but after her return to earth she expressed as strong a desire to go back. She called her family around her and bade them farewell. To her eldest sister she said: "Nancy, it is in your heart to deny this work; and if you do, the Lord says it will be the damnation of your soul." To her sister Sarah she said, "Sarah, we have but once to die, and I would rather die now than wait for another time." She told her sisters that the Lord had great blessings in store for them if they continued in the faith; and after delivering her message she swooned, but recovered again. During this time she was cold, and the only appearance of life was the power of speech. She continued in this state till the following evening--for the space of thirty-six hours--when she called her father and told him that the Lord had said to her, if he would cease weeping for his sick daughter, and dry up his tears, that he should have all the desires of his heart; and that if he would go to bed and rest, he should be comforted over his sick daughter, for in the morning she should be getting better and should get well. That the Lord had said unto her, because that her father had dedicated her to God and prayed to Him for her, that He would give her back again. This ceremony of dedicating and praying took place when she was struggling in death, and continued to the very moment of her departure; and she said the Lord told her that it was because of this that she must go back again, though she desired to stay.

She said concerning G. W. Robinson, her brother-in-law, as he had denied the faith the Lord had taken away one

of his eye teeth; and unless he repented He would take away another. And concerning Dr. Bennett, that he was a wicked man, and that the Lord would tread him under His feet.

This is but a small portion of what she related. It aroused Elder Rigdon from his morbid state for a little season, but he soon sank again into the same lethargy, from which he never awoke until he heard of the martyrdom of the Prophet, when he hurried back to Nauvoo to claim the leadership of the Church. Previous to this having become weary in well-doing, and having suffered enough, as he thought, he had left his post and moved with his family to Pittsburg.⁷

For a long time there has been a secret something whispering, "Publish to the world not only the principles of your faith, but a true history of facts concerning the injustice done to an innocent people, and the trials and sufferings which they have endured from the world, because they would not deny their faith in revelation. Publish them upon the housetops, that they may reach the ears of the just and the honest in heart in all nations." And I ask, is this not a duty devolving upon the sisters in Zion as well as the brethren, who were partakers of their injustice, and therefore living witnesses against them? Should we not write them, to be handed down to our children and all future generations, that they may know the true history of those who endured all things which their enemies saw fit to place upon them, for the sake of establishing this work upon the earth.

Having lately enjoyed the privilege of looking over my father's papers and journals, which had lain undisturbed ever since his death, I cannot express the joy I felt in finding among them the long-desired treasures--my father's and mother's letters--which I had feared were no longer in existence. Many of them were written when I was very young and during the deepest trials of their faith, the reading of which has awakened the memory of a thousand scenes and associations that would have remained buried in oblivion, had it not been for these records, which, to me, are more precious than gold.

A letter written by the Prophet Joseph and his brethren while in Liberty Jail, Missouri, was among my father's papers. And a portion of it being as appropriate today as then, I will copy a few lines:

LIBERTY JAIL, Jan. 10, 1839
BROTHERS H. C. KIMBALL AND B. YOUNG:
Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith,
prisoners for Jesus' sake, send greeting. . . .

Brethren, fear not, but be strong in the Lord and in the favor of his might. What is man, that the servant of God should fear him? Or the son of man, that he should tremble at him? Neither think strange concerning the fiery trials with which we are tried, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. Remember that all have been partakers of like afflictions. Therefore rejoice in our afflictions, by which we are perfected, and through which the Captain of our salvation was perfected also. Let your hearts and the hearts of all the Saints be comforted with you, and let them rejoice exceedingly, for great is our reward in heaven; for so persecuted the wicked, the Prophets which were before us.

America will be a Zion to all that choose to come to it, and if the churches in foreign countries wish to come, let them do so. . . .

Brethren, pray for us, and cease not till our deliverance comes, which we hope may come. We hope, we say, for our families' sake. Let the Elders preach nothing but the first principles of the Gospel, and let them publish our afflictions, the injustice and cruelty thereof, upon the hilltops. Let them write it, and publish it in all the papers where they go; charge them particularly upon this point.

Brethren, we remain yours in hope of eternal life,

JOSEPH SMITH, SIDNEY RIGDON, HYRUM SMITH.

Where is there any other people who would endure tribulation, or think it needful to make such sacrifices through this life, for the sake of the life to come? Ministers of different creeds have picked out just such passages as they could turn into a proper shape to suit themselves, or their hearers--preaching more to their heads than to their hearts--pandering to popular feeling, to bring popularity and dollars, though the Bible (which they profess to believe) lays down but one rule for mankind to walk in, points out but one road to heaven, and these are laid down so plain by our Savior, that "a man, though a fool, need not err therein."

The prejudice of the various sects against the Mormons was the same then as it is to-day. Hundreds were heard to say that they had never known Joseph Smith, but he was a false Prophet and ought to die, and if they could come across him they would kill him as soon as they would a rattlesnake; and if the Mormons did not renounce their doctrine they would exterminate or drive them from the country. When asked what they had against the Mormons, the answer was, with an oath, "They believe in Joe Smith and the Book of Mormon, and" with another oath, "we believe Joe Smith to be a d --- d rascal." This is a sample of the present toleration and inhuman conduct towards a little handful of people under a Republican government, and by professors of Christianity who pre-judge and enjoy listening to every falsehood against the Latter-day Saints, and would like to again drive us from our homes; but they will find it a more difficult task, as it happens (this time) that we are the first settlers and have a prior right, which we intend to hold and maintain. The majority of the world seem to have chosen to walk in the broad road which leadeth to destruction. The gate is too straight for them, and the way too narrow, and for this reason but few find eternal life.

When my father left us to go on his second mission, he made mother promise to write to him every particular concerning our situation, and I feel prompted to copy a portion of her first letter, which was dated Sept. 21, 1839. It gives a fair description of our condition and of the families of the Elders who left them in Commerce, Illinois, to go forth in obedience to the command of the Almighty, to preach the Gospel to foreign nations.

MY DEAR HUSBAND:

With a weak and trembling hand I attempt to write a few lines, agreeable to your request, to let you know how we do, which is very poorly, I assure you. As to my feelings, I don't know but I am perfectly reconciled to your going away, but I must say I have a trial of my faith such as I never had before. The day you left home was as sick a one as I ever experienced. The pain in my back and head was almost intolerable--no doubt the pain in my head was worse on account of my much weeping; but I did not weep after you left, for my distress was so great that I could not think of much else. William mourned and cried about all day, and had a chill in the evening. Sister Bentley stayed with me through the day; she was sick, but did all she could for me. Fanny Dort came over and stayed all night with me. I was alone a little while before she came. I then

crawled out of bed and bowed before the Lord, and pled with Him to give us a good night's rest, and He did so; and be assured I did not forget to pray for you.

The next morning I felt free from pain, but was so weak and dizzy-headed that I could not walk without staggering. William and Helen were not able to do anything, so I was obliged to crawl around and do my chores and wash a little for the babe. No one to help me but little Heber, and I was soon overdone and brought on another chill, so that I had a very sick afternoon, and rested but little last night; have not been able to do anything to-day. I was taken this morning with a shake, and shook for an hour and a half as hard as I ever saw any body in my life, and then weltered under a fever and extreme pain until almost night. William has just had the hardest chill that he has had in a number of days. Brother Rogers has been here and left more medicine, but it has done us no good, and what to do I don't know. I have no one to get anything for me, or to do anything for my comfort. Brother Bentley has moved here, but Sister Bentley is very feeble, hardly able to do her own work. She is very kind, and would be glad to doctor us if she was able. Helen is not well any of the time, but is able to do some chores today.

Now, I have given you a statement of our situation, not to make you feel bad, but because you requested it of me. . . .

Thus you see, as I said before, I have a trial of my weak faith; but all that I can ask of you is, to pray that I may have patience to endure to the end, whether it be long or short. I feel as though if you ever see your family all alive again; it will be through your faith.

Saturday Morning.

Dear Heber, we are all alive and tolerably comfortable this morning--would to God we could remain so through the day. We will hope for the best. Unless my health should improve I shall not be able to write you next week, as you requested, for I am growing weak every day. So farewell, my dear Heber; I pray that it may be well with you. VILATE KIMBALL.⁸

If being truths instead of fiction that I am writing, I

hope to be pardoned for wandering back again to gather up life incidents. The history of the Apostles, or the Latter-day Saints in Commerce, might be read with profit, particularly by those who, in these days, may possibly think their lot the hardest. Then the world might well have called the "Mormons" wretched, and a decrepit and dying-out people; but their spirits were generally buoyant--even in the darkest hour the Comforter was with them. Though left as our mothers were, struggling with poverty, disease and death, it was no wonder that, at times, their faith should almost fail them. The husband and father called to leave them in this sad and helpless condition, not knowing whether they would ever meet again on this earth; taking their lives in their hands, with no worldly compensation offered them for their sufferings and the sacrifice of their beloved wives, children and homes, they went forth without purse or scrip to carry glad tidings to the nations of the earth, where they would have to combat all the evils, the prejudices and difficulties with which the world was filled. What more could they do to prove their integrity, their zeal and sublime devotion to the work which they had espoused? Truly "they went forth weeping, bearing precious seed; but returned rejoicing, bearing their sheaves with them."

The following lines are from a letter written by my father after a very narrow escape from death, occasioned by an overdose of morphine, administered by a drunken doctor to give him relief. It is dated:

PLEASANT GARDEN, Oct. 24, 1837.

MY DEAR COMPANION:

Through the goodness of God I am permitted this morning to sit down to write a few lines to you, that you may know how I get along upon my journey. I assure you that it is with trembling limbs that I do it, but to fulfil my word that I made to you I proceed.

After giving the particulars concerning his suffering and miraculous escape (which have been published) he continues:

My courage is good, and has been ever since I left home. Do not feel concerned about me, for I am in the hands of God. Never in my life have I undergone more in my feelings than since I left home about you and the children. Tell me all about them; how they get along. Tell William and Helen I think of them all the time; that I pray for them, and that I want them to pray for me. Tell little Heber to be a good boy, and kiss little David for me. Be prudent, and take care of

yourself. . . . Give my love to all my friends. And now I bid you farewell for a little season.

HEBER C. KIMBALL

His next letter is dated Kirtland, Nov. 16, 1839; but being too feeble to sit up, Brother Dean Gould wrote the most of it for him. He says:

I have arrived safe in Kirtland, but at the present time I am confined to my bed; have been quite low for several days, but through the grace of God I shall be able to go forth on my way rejoicing to do the will of my heavenly Master. . . . I have made it my home at Bro. John Young's, Brother Bond's and Dean Gould's, and have received the best of care. Last Sabbath Bro. John Taylor spoke in the forenoon, and I in the afternoon; had very good liberty. I spoke in parables generally, and some of them being so applicable to those that were before me; and judge came to me and wanted to know to whom I referred; I told him to no one in particular, but if the coat fitted any one they might put it on.

Some others of the brethren have preached and gave good satisfaction; but as a general thing there cannot be a meeting without some dispute, yet there are some few who stand firm in the faith. I am greatly disappointed; I expected to find the brethren united and enjoying the blessings of the people of God, but found them broken up, and divided into several parties. . . . Brother Taylor has been sick several days with the ague, and the rest of the brethren have been quite unwell, but are now on the gain. We still, God being our helper, feel determined to press our way onward. We have but little means to prosecute our journey, but still we think that some of us will be able to start within a few days."

He closes the letter with his own hand. He says:

You see that this letter is written by a strange hand. Bro. Bond and wife are true and steadfast; are much pleased that you are coming here. I have seen but few of the brethren, only in public; they have had several evening meetings. I have not been able to attend but one, and that was last Sabbath. I have got a very bad cough; took cold riding nights. I think I came near the time of my release when at Pleasant Garden. But be of good cheer, my dear Vilate, for this is only one more trial above the rest, so we have

gained one more victory over the devil.

In the suffering condition of the Saints who had sought refuge from the Christian mobbers of Missouri, and were lying sick and dying in Commerce, it looked impossible for their families to exist in their absence and under their impoverished circumstances. My father, Brigham Young and others felt that there would be no objections raised to their visiting among kindred and friends during their missionary labors in Europe. According to the following letter from father, dated "Victor, State of New York, Dec. 27," he and brethren left Kirtland on the 22d of November for Fairport, where they were detained until the 26th by a tremendous snow storm; took steamer and landed at Buffalo on the morning of the 27th. Took stage the same day and went to Batavia; stayed there till the next day, and in the afternoon took the cars for Rochester. Father says:

When we got to Byron I got out and left the brethren, supposing Hall (his sister Eliza's husband) was living there; had not more than got out before I was told that he had gone to Rochester. I think I never felt worse in my life--my anticipations were so great to see them; but I could not get away until the next night. Just at evening got aboard the cars and got to Hall's at eight o'clock in the evening; found them well and rejoiced to see me. I stayed there one week, and was confined to my bed part of the time. I took cold on board the steam boat; had to take deck fare for want of means. The cold settled in my right side, and was so bad I could hardly draw my breath. Brother Thayre carried me to brother Solomon's; found them well and glad enough to see me. Your letter got to Mendon about three weeks before I did. Sister Hall was at Solomon's, and advised him to take it out. He did so; they broke it open, but could not tell where I was, supposed that I was dead, and had many bad feelings about me. There seems to be a great feeling of sympathy for us here. I have received great kindness from our friends in Victor. Several strangers have called to see me, and Lucretia (my mother's sister) introduced me as her "Mormon" brother. They appeared to take a great interest in our sufferings. This seems to be the feeling of all candid people. When I presented the presents you sent Lucretia, she wept over them, desiring to see your dear face once more. They wept over some of your letters, and laughed at the rest. . . . All of our friends want you to come here next Spring and make them a visit. Caroline (his brother Solomon's wife)

says she will keep you three months or more, and all our friends seem to have the same feeling. They want me to go after you, which would be a pleasure for me to do, but this will not do; for my face is turned thitherward, for he that looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven, and you would consider yourself disgraced in the sight of, God and man.

My dear Vilate, you know what we are called to do; we will press forward to the mark which is laid before us at the expense of all things. I was thankful to God to hear of your health, for I believe it is He who has raised you and the children up, for when I was in the town of Winchester, at Father Murray's, I had such a travail of soul for you as I never had before. I would go into the woods four and five times a day to call on the Father in the name of Jesus for you. I saw you in a dream in a sickly state, almost dead; I clasped my hands on each side of your face and raised you upon your feet. And since that I have felt contented about you and the children; but once in a while, being among our kindred, it brings home back to me, and I feel a little homesick. They are all pleading with me to stay till warm weather, on account of my poor health. A little fatigue brings me down again. . . .

Dear Vilate, I hardly know how to express my joy, but suffice it to say, on the first day of the year one thousand eight hundred and forty I went into the water and baptized William E. Murray and wife, and they are rejoicing in God. The weather was as cold as it was when we joined ourselves to the Baptist church. They are very faithful, and remember you in their prayers. Your father says Gould can't begin to pray like them; says it beats all that he ever saw. He has become firm in the faith and preaches it wherever he goes. He said to me one day, "Heber, I am as good a 'Mormon' as you are." He is a great advocate for this work, and seems uneasy here, and wants to go back to the West. Says he would not stay here if he could have all the town of Victor, for the people don't seem to him as they did. Your brother Gould and wife are about the same as ever, very proud. . . .

Bring all the little chickens with you. Sister Eliza would like to have one of them come there and go to school. Sister Malvina would take one, and I will pay them for it. Now, my dear Vilate, you know this

would be better than to have them strolling around the country. Take counsel of some of our fathers in Israel, and see what they think best to do, for in much counsel there is safety. As for going to Kirtland to live, as things are now it is against my will; for I had rather live in a cave, or be driven with the Saints every year while I live, and be one with them, than to have all the good things of the earth and be at variance one with the other as they are there. I had rather go forth amongst the unbelieving Gentiles, and suffer by them than be among such people as those who have named the name of Mormon. I pray my heavenly Father to deliver me from such while I live. If it be possible let the cup pass from me. Amen.

My Grandfather Murray, though a believer in this Gospel, had not obeyed the ordinance of baptism; but when he went back with father to visit his family and friends, he could see the beauties of "Mormonism," which made him a strong advocate; but he died there in Victor not long after father left him, and on his deathbed he expressed his sorrow at not rendering obedience to its requirements.⁹

The following correspondence between my father and mother may prove interesting to others, more particularly to the ones who were connected with the Church in an early day and know something of its history. The first, written by my mother, is in answer to father's, and it expresses the joy and consolation which nothing but this Gospel brings; and this is enjoyed by every true Latter-day Saint.

in every condition, in sickness in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding In wealth,
At home or abroad, on the land or the sea,
As thy days may demand so thy succor shall be.

COMMERCE, Feb. 2, 1840.

My Dear Husband: I have received your letter of January 27, which gave me great joy; not to hear of your sickness, for that pains my heart, but that you have been an instrument in the hands of God of converting some of my dear kindred to a knowledge of the truth. Yea, I feel that this is a recompense for all my privations in having you gone from me; for how great in the sight of God is the worth of one soul. Is it possible that my dear brother has become a praying man? Do you think he has got the root of the matter in him, so that he will hold out to the end? If so, what an unspeakable blessing!

You have very kindly offered me the privilege of visiting my friends the coming summer, at the first thought my heart leaped for joy, but upon more mature consideration, I think perhaps it would not be wisdom. I should have to sell everything we have to bear our expenses, and then to be visiting so long with the children, it would be quite a task; and if I should get ever so tired of it, I should have no home, nor anything to keep house with. I feel as you do about settling in Kirtland; I cannot think of changing my good neighbors here for the society of those who are at variance one with the others. There is a perfect union here, and we have meetings at our house twice a week. But I cannot make up my mind what I shall do until Joseph gets home from Washington; I shall take counsel from him. It will then be time enough to let you know.

You will be so long getting to your journey's end, I very much fear that you will not get home next fall. The time seems long, and I want to hear from you often. I feel more anxious about your poor health; I long to get one letter that will not give the painful intelligence that you have been sick again.

William is very anxious to go East, and no wonder, for he has not been able to do a day's work this winter, and thinks he never shall if he stays here. I have been sorely afflicted with a cancer wart in the palm of my hand, but thank the Lord it is now as well as ever. I often think that the hand of affliction is not taken from you, or we should all be well, for your faith would be stronger; but I have great cause to be thankful, for through the kindness and generosity of our neighbors we are made comfortable for food and wood.

Brother Don C. Smith called in and saw me writing, and wished me to give you his respects; also Bro. Charles C. Rich. He and family have been very kind to me; I think they are the best of neighbors. . . . our children talk much about their poor father, and long to see him. They join with me in love.

From your affectionate wife,
VILATE KIMBALL

The next received from father was dated New York, Feb. 19, 1840. He says:

My health is much better and my spirits good. I feel to press forward in the name of Jesus Christ. I am sensible that the Lord will try His Saints to the uttermost, for it seems as though the devil was determined to destroy my life and the lives of my brethren, the Twelve; but they all seem to have good courage as yet. Brother Brigham fell and hurt himself quite bad, but is getting better, and his health is improving. Brother George A. Smith has the chills yet and is quite poorly. Brothers Orson and Parley enjoy good health. . . .

While in Mendon I preached four times, and had many calls to go and preach in other towns and places. Brother Solomon did not go to hear me; I think I never saw him more set against this work; I did not stay with him but four or five nights. The Son of Peace did not abide there, and I felt greatly distressed while with him. In Victor I had several calls to go to Pike to preach. After being much wrought upon I consented; William and Mary went with me. We got to Adolphus Hewet's the first day of February; I never saw a person more pleased than his wife was to see me; said she had been calling on the Lord that He would send me there. Sunday morning we went to the Christian Chapel. . . . They gave out an appointment for me to preach Monday evening; said they were willing that I should preach, because they were in such a cold state I could have no effect upon them. The house was crowded. My text was the Second Epistle of John, the 9th and 10th verses. When I was almost through speaking, two of the ministers came crawling into the pulpit. I gave them permission to speak. One (a Baptist priest) rose up and found fault with me for preaching from the Bible. When he had set down I rose and answered him. Then one of the others rose up, till four of the ministers spoke. I answered all of them, and they were confounded and began rather to make ridicule. My speaking once, caused such an excitement that it took four to put it down; and their rising made it worse, for it opened the eyes of the people. I baptized Hewet's wife, and many believed. . . .

We returned to Victor on the 7th, and I left there on the 10th, arriving in Albany on the 12th. Found Wheeler there (a brother-in-law), and stayed with him that night at the Hotel; he paid my fare and said if I would stay one week he would pay my bills. He

thought me very unwise to go any further. . . .

Next day I took coach for New York; the fare was nine dollars. Went upon the east side of the river, crossed the Catskill Mountains; took three days to get to Jersey City. When I got there I had not one penny left, and they would not let me pass without paying twenty-five cents. I told them I was out of money, and there was a gentleman gave me a quarter, and I crossed the river into New York at nine o'clock in the evening. Went to the Western Hotel and pawned my trunk for my stopping over night. Next morning went and found old Mr. Fordham, who directed me to Brother Parley's, where I found Orson and Brigham; were all glad to see me. This was Sunday, and in the afternoon I met and preached to one hundred and fifty of the Saints. It was a great pleasure to meet with them; they were very kind to me, and gave me money to redeem my trunk. . . .

I ate but one meal a day on my way to New York--this was for the want of money--but I neither went hungry nor athirst.

I received your letter of Nov. 4, which had lain in the office for a long time. It was a great comfort to learn that you and the children were so much better. May God grant the blessing of health to rest upon you and the children forever. Brother Orson Pratt and myself were called upon to visit a very sick woman; she could not turn herself in bed. We anointed her with oil in the name of the Lord, and she was healed and made whole. She did not belong to the Church, nor her husband; but in two days after she and husband were baptized, and fourteen others.

Brothers Woodruff, Taylor, Clark, Mulner, White and Turley have sailed for England. Tell my dear little children that I am glad to hear that they are faithful to pray for their father.

The following is from his last letter before crossing the ocean:

NEW YORK, March 5, 1840.

My Dear Companion--This day I received your letter of Feb. 2, with feelings of joy. I went to the office every day, and had nearly given up the chase. I feel thankful that you and the children are alive. My

health is improving; is much better than when I wrote last. My labor is quite hard; I have to go to meeting every night, and don't get to bed till twelve or one o'clock; this overcomes me once in a while. The Lord is here in this city, and the honest in heart are enquiring the way to heaven; there are calls on all sides to come and preach. We are to sail next Saturday for England, on the Patrick Henry, if the Lord will. We were disappointed in not going aboard the Garrick; they would not take any passengers, could make more to carry freight. Owing to being detained, we have Parley to go with us.

I have received great kindness since I came to this city, and also my brethren. You wanted to know if your brother William had the root of the matter in him. I can say, yes; I never saw one more so. You know that he is a go-ahead man and has a mind of his own. He has a great desire to see you and have you teach him of the things of the kingdom. . . . I want you to come and visit with our friends, but I don't want to settle in the East unless times change.

You did not say anything about that little black-eyed girl that lives with you. Tell William to be a good boy, for the Lord will heal him. I feel that He will bless you all with health. Give my love to our little ones, and to Brothers Joseph and Hyrum, and all others who love the Lord.

Your affectionate husband,
HEBER C. KIMBALL

Witness the sacrifice and continuous self-denial of the servants of God, resisting and turning away from every temptation, and the allurements of a worldly nature; struggling with poverty, disease and death, and all the other untoward circumstances; traveling without purse or scrip to the nations and islands of the sea, to preach the faith and doctrines of an unpopular sect. Where (except the Mormons) are the ministers who have professed Christianity that have ever manifested such indomitable courage, perseverance and endurance for the sole purpose of preaching salvation to the honest in heart? The Twelve Apostles understood their grand and glorious mission, which had been given them by revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith; and though conscious of their weakness, they feared nothing, for their strength lay in the arm of Jehovah; though they were often brought to death's

door, He was their refuge, and they rejoiced notwithstanding their afflictions. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" and as Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the Gospel, but he shall receive a hundred fold now, and in the world to come eternal life." "Blessed is he that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised them that love Him."¹⁰

We had known little but sickness and want in Commerce, and the thought of leaving there and returning to our early home and kindred was indeed a delightful one to us children, who laid out many a plan for future pleasures and enjoyment with our little friends and cousins, in roaming over Mendon and Victor soil; but, alas! we were doomed to disappointment.

Sister Young, we heard, had received a letter from Uncle Brigham, telling her to come to Kirtland; and my brother William, who had been down to see them, returned with the news that they were packing up. Sister Orson Pratt who was living with us, met Bro. Hyrum Smith that day and spoke of Sister Young's going East he said he should advise her, by all means, to stay where she was.

My mother had taken no decided step, nor did she intend to until Joseph returned from Washington; but when she heard Brother Hyrum's mind upon the subject, she gave up all thought of going back, and this [sic] all the airy castles which we had built were thrown to the ground.

Joseph had gone to Washington to lay the case of the Missouri persecutions before Congress, and was accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, Judge Elias Higbee and O. P. Rockwell. The feeling of injustice manifested towards him and his people was no less then than it is today, though at that time polygamy had not been revealed; and when we hear people say that that is all that is offensive in "Mormonism," the only feeling we can express is pity and contempt, for they are wilfully ignorant.

The Prophet Joseph's last interview with President Van Buren and John C. Calhoun are worthy of note, as the feeling then was quite in keeping with the present generous and magnanimous spirit manifested by the sectarian world towards an innocent and inoffensive people. The Prophet says:

During my stay I had an interview with Martin Van Buren, the President, who treated me very insolently, and it was with the greatest reluctance he listened to our message, which when he had heard he said, "Gentlemen, Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you; and if I take up for you, I shall lose the vote of Missouri." . . . I also had an interview with Mr. John C. Calhoun, whose conduct towards me very ill became his position. I became satisfied there was little use for me to tarry to press the just claims of the Saints on the protection of the President.

When Joseph returned to his people it must have been with a feeling of relief, knowing that he had done his duty, and therefore cleared his skirts. The God of heaven had overruled it so, and His Prophet and Saints felt to say, Amen; for they knew as well then as they know to-day that "No weapon that is formed against His people shall prosper."

Soon after his return, Joseph wrote a letter to General Bennet, from which we take the following, showing there was no spirit of discouragement. He says:

It is our intention to commence the erection of some public buildings next spring. We have purchased twenty thousand acres of land in Iowa Territory, opposite this place, which is fast filling up with our people. I desire all the Saints, as well as all lovers of the truth and correct principles, to come to this place as fast as possible, or their circumstances will permit, and endeavor, by energy of action and concentration of talent, to effect those objects that are so dear to us. Therefore, my general invitation is, let all that will come, and partake of the poverty of Nauvoo freely.

My father's first letter from England, dated April 6, 1840, was received on the last day of May, bringing the welcome news that they had landed in England, though they had had a very rough voyage, it being March, which was considered the worst month in the year upon the ocean.

I copy the following extracts from my mother's letter, for the benefit of those who were connected with her during her earthly pilgrimage. They will no doubt bring back many a forgotten scene and incident to their recollection. She writes:

We are thankful to hear that you and your brethren's

lives were preserved amidst the dangers of the ocean; that you have safely landed on Europe's shore, and are enjoying once more the blessing of health. . . . The Lord is able to preserve whom He will, and I trust He will preserve you and bring you safe home; for it seems an age since you left us. . . . I have had another attack of the ague this Spring; yesterday I was very sick, but feel better to-day. Our babe has been quite sick ever since I had the ague; he took it from me. William has worn it out fairly; has got so he can work and not bring it on.

The brethren have fenced and ploughed my land, and William has planted it. He has been to school some, and I intend he shall go more. Truman Barlow keeps school in this neighborhood; Helen goes when I can spare her. I teach Heber at home, for I know of no way that I can pay their schooling. It is very annoying to my feelings to be dependent on the Church when the Saints are so poor. . . .

I have no reason to complain, for I do not suffer for anything, and often I wish I could know that you were as comfortable. We hear of the distress and trouble in England, and I feel for the Saints there; but the Lord will provide for those that put their trust in Him. Brothers Hyde and Page started over two months ago for Jerusalem, and are preaching their way through with great success. . . .

I have just heard that there has been a request sent by the people of Iowa, to Joseph to preach next Sunday. There are between two and three hundred people coming down the river to hear him. He has requested the brethren to give them seats near the stand. Joseph has preached several times of late, and told many of the mysteries of the kingdom. There are more or less baptisms every week. The Saints are gathering here very fast, and the place is being built up with great rapidity.

I attended a party last Thursday at Bro. Robert Thompson's; it was three years that day since they were married. They celebrated the day by preparing a feast for the wives of all the Elders that had gone to England. They were all present but Sisters Hadlock and Woodruff. Brother Hyrum Smith and wife and Brother William Law and wife took supper with us, after which we had singing. Bro. Thompson then offered up a very appropriate prayer for us and our

husbands. We then parted. . . . Sister Woodruff is here on a visit; she has little Wilford, three months old, with her. Sends her love, and wishes you to inform her husband that she and children are tolerably well. The brethren have a bee to-day to put up houses for the families of the Twelve that have none. . . .

In another letter I find an interesting item concerning the Prophet Joseph's receiving a visit from one of the Nephites, who told him he had been through England, Ireland and that the work of the Lord would be short and powerful in those places. He also told him many things about this land (America), many of which have been fulfilled.

Mother, fearing her letter might be miscarried, refrained from telling all that she had heard Joseph relate, but said: "Suffice it to say, trouble is to begin at the election (which is the first day of the coming February), and great and wonderful things are to be brought about."¹¹

NOTES

1. See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1992), pp. 86-103.

2. The writings of Helen Mar Whitney found in this account were taken from the published version found in the *Women's Exponent* and not from her original writings. Some minor editing has been done here where there were obvious printer's mistakes.

3. Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," *Women's Exponent* 10 (15 October 1881): 74.

4. *Ibid.*, (1 November 1881): 83.

5. *Ibid.*, (15 November 1881): 93-94.

6. *Ibid.*, (1 December 1881): 97-99.

7. *Ibid.*, (15 December 1881): 106.

8. *Ibid.*, (1 January 1882): 114.

9. *Ibid.*, (15 January 1882): 122.

10. *Ibid.*, (1 February 1882): 130.

11. *Ibid.*, (15 February 1882): 138.