

## ARTICLE II.

## A STUDY OF MORMONISM.

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## II. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTER.

THE Mormon religion is essentially social; so that no adequate conception of Mormonism is possible without a consideration of its results, as manifested in the social, political, and industrial activities. Such an investigation is very much handicapped by the absence of reliable data. The Mormon representations are extravagant, and the Gentile accounts are never free from prejudice; making a scientific study of conditions very difficult.

*A Consideration of the General Social Life among the Mormons.*

Nearly every ward has its pleasure house, often in the same building as the meeting-place, and considered equally necessary. It is here that the common people find their greatest enjoyment in the social dance, which, strange to relate, is opened and closed with prayer. Perfect decorum is supposed to be observed, and a high moral tone preserved. But in a letter from a friend, who is not given to exaggeration, he says: "You can judge of the social conditions of a people who exalt animalism, teaching that the highest exaltation, in heaven, comes of the exercise of man's procreative powers, which are to continue in the next life, as in this. The social pleasures of the common people are found in the dance and the unmentionable excesses which follow."

The more cultivated, however, have their literary clubs

and social life of a higher order. There is in nearly every ward a young men's mutual improvement society, as well as one for young ladies, in which current topics are discussed. These clubs are supposedly literary, though the bishops use them primarily as feeders to the church. Both Mormons and non-Mormons can become members of the association.

The societies are under the direct supervision of the church hierarchy, to which regular reports must be made. From the office of this general superintendency, a set of instructions is sent to the stake officers of the associations; another to these superintendents; another to ward presidents; and still another to members. A study of these instructions has revealed the absence of any freedom to choose courses for study, or of any liberty as to methods employed. The entire program is outlined by the general superintendency, which insists on its being followed minutely. The various officers of these associations are to answer, in addition to many others, the following questions:—

“Did you examine the records of each association in your stake last year?”

“Did you confer freely and fully with the presidency of your stake, in superintending the M. I. A. work last year?”

“Are the programs for the joint meetings as per instructions to presidents in the manual?”

“Do your missionaries fill their appointments, and do other missionaries visit you regularly?”

“Is your civil government class progressing intelligently, as per instructions in the manual?”

“Have the records of the associations been inspected by ward presidents?”

“Do the officers all possess a copy of the manual, and are they following it?”<sup>1</sup>

The above is sufficient evidence for the conclusion that

<sup>1</sup> Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association.

these improvement associations are under the complete dominance of the church, being directed in every detail. Even in the selection of officers, the ward authorities are to be fully conferred with, and great care taken to choose such persons as are fitted for the position by ability, popularity, and inclination to do the work required.

The four basic studies of the course are Theology, History, Science, and Literature, with ever-recurring emphasis laid on Theology. "All intelligent students," says the Manual, "will agree that a theological foundation is essential, indispensable, imperative." A careful perusal of their course of study reveals the fact that this theological bias touches every other department of instruction; for, as a matter of fact, the ultimate purpose of these societies is not so much to instruct and give culture to the young people, as to make them intelligent expounders of the Mormon religion. And it follows, that their study of Science is limited accordingly to the most narrow channels.

Legitimate theatricals are believed in and encouraged by the church. One of the teachings of Brigham Young was, that the people must be amused; and so, in the very dawn of Salt Lake's history, the Home Dramatic Association, an association which lives to-day, was organized. Throughout the State are many of these dramatic clubs, in which the best plays are carefully studied and skillfully produced. All the best young people are deeply interested in this feature of social life. Ordinarily these clubs are local, but a few travel over the State, visiting the smaller cities. Nearly all the prominent Utah officials of to-day have been more or less proficient actors. The present governor was quite an adept. Maud Adams, the charming actress, was born in Utah, and began, when a child, her artistic career in the Salt Lake Theater. Every city of any size has a commodious opera house, properly equipped for the appearance of large companies.

The people of Utah are imbued, by long years of training and opportunity, with the desire for relaxation. This is evident by their enthusiastic patronage of their amusement houses, by the encouragement they give to societies organized for pleasure purposes, and by their daily visits, in season, to their lake and other resorts. In all social matters they are up to the standard in every way.

As to morality, the general level of Utah is not high. The conditions give indisputable proof of a moral retrogression, subtle yet effective. That sexual morality is low, is an assured fact. The sins of the fathers are being visited upon the children. An epidemic of sexual immorality, among the children, seems to be the resultant effect of the polygamy of the fathers. A short time ago, in conversation with a Mormon, he said to me, that the article on Mormonism recently published by Mr. Spahr in the *Outlook*, was a fair and just presentation. Referring to this matter of sexual purity, Spahr says, "On the cars and in the streets, the impressions received were less favorable in this regard, and the testimonies of scandal-hating people, without regard to creed, convinced me that sexual morality in Utah was much lower than in any other American community, and but little higher than in Continental Europe."

A further evidence of moral retrogression, at least in the cities, is gained by a study of prison records. In a comparison of all the States as to the number of prisoners in 1890 over 1880, I find that Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, and *Utah* show the greatest increase. It is hardly reasonable to believe that all of these culprits are of Gentile extraction; so that the following statement which is circulated, cannot be true: "The Mormon population hardly figures among those arrested for crime or disorder, or among those who minister for gain to criminal or vicious taste."

The consumption of liquor among the Mormons is far

less than in Gentile communities. A comparison of surrounding States will result favorably to Utah. The aggregate capital invested in malt-liquor establishments, according to the last census, was \$150,500; while Colorado, with twice the population, invested over ten times that capital, \$1,917,050.<sup>1</sup> All kinds of intoxicating beverages are forbidden by the Mormon Church. "The Word of Wisdom," a revelation received by Joseph Smith, says, "You should not use wine, liquor, tea, coffee, tobacco, or stimulants of any form, since these are not good for man." Of the three thousand missionaries scattered all over the world, none are supposed to violate the principle. But the fact remains, that, even in strictly Mormon sections, the coöperative stores keep a goodly stock of tea, coffee, tobacco, and various liquors.

As to Education, much can be said for Utah. It has been a common charge against Mormons for years, that they were ignorant, illiterate, and had no use for schools, save to teach their theological dogmas. This is true, to an extent, at the present time; but facts force a modification of the charge, though the increased interest is largely due to the Gentile influence. In 1870, only twenty-three years after the first Mormon immigration, the percentage of school attendance in Utah was higher than in Pennsylvania, New York, or Massachusetts. In 1881 the school population of Utah, from six to eighteen years of age, was 43,353, and the average daily attendance was forty-four per cent. There were then 395 schools. Seven years later, in 1888, the Commissioner of Schools reported 460 public schools, the number increasing to 657 by 1898. The school population of 1888 was 54,943, of which 47,371 were Mormons. In 1898 the school population was 81,812, with about the same proportion of Mormons. The district school property of 1888 was valued at \$542,755, and the

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Report, 1890.

amount paid for teachers was \$293,085. The property valuation for 1898 was \$2,524,988, and the funds paid teachers \$495,426.<sup>1</sup>

Another evidence as to rapid advance in education is the amount expended, per capita of the population, for educational purposes. In 1880 it was \$.92; 1890, \$1.90; 1897, \$3.47.<sup>2</sup> It must be remarked that education has not improved in proportion to its increase in costliness, owing to waste and misuse of funds.

The common schools complete the studies of the eighth grade, the high schools and academies supplementing the work at this point. The course of study for the high schools, according to the report of Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1899, shows Utah to be on a par with our best States in this respect. Here, too, we must give large credit to Gentile influence. The teachers, however, of the undergrads, are inefficient in knowledge, and deficient in general culture. This is due in part to the fact that the best teachers are always secured for the church schools. Nearly every stake in Utah has its Mormon academy. In addition, the various denominations have their academies and colleges.

It is a fair statement that the converts to Mormonism, with very few exceptions, are poor and uneducated; but, even among these, the children are encouraged to secure education. There are strong evidences of the desire for higher education among the young. In almost every town and hamlet in Utah, the people are spending large sums for the free education of the rising and future generations. This advance in learning, however carefully guarded, is undermining the faith of many Mormons; and, among those who abandon the religion of their fathers, almost all are infidels.

<sup>1</sup> United States Educational Report.

<sup>2</sup> Utah Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1899.

*A Consideration of the Political Status of Present-day Mormonism.*

The political conditions are shrouded in more or less mystery. There has been a long, bitter struggle between the Mormon Church and the Gentile population. Since the admittance of Utah to statehood, on January 4, 1896, the strife has, in some ways, been less embittered. The lines of partisanship have been those of the two great political parties; but how far the Mormon hierarchy has used its power, in determining elections, will never be thoroughly known. Strong inferences can be legitimately drawn as to the fact of church domination. No one who has studied the Mormon tendencies can doubt that there has been some ulterior motive which has led the Mormon Church to its many changes of political front.

By taking a retrospect, we are better able to judge present political conditions. How far the principle of divinely authorized priesthood is effective, is an open question; but there can be no doubt that it is explicitly taught, and assent to its validity demanded by all Mormon Churchmen. In an official document for 1900 are these words: "The Lord not only commanded the Church to give heed unto the words of the President, as if they were God's own words, but he added a promise, that the gates of hell should not prevail against the Church, if it sustained the President. The path of safety is obedience to the word of God, as given through the President of the Church. The Lord has placed himself under a pledge to disperse the powers of darkness."

In the regular course of instruction, in the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, a section of American history is thus tabulated, the Mormon Church "bringing an arrogant administration to terms of compromise."

Mormons at the present time look forward to a day when

their religion shall control the world. In the early eighties, a definite program was frankly avowed, and has been carried out with few changes. Bishop Lunt said at that time, "We look forward with perfect confidence to a day when we will hold the reins of the United States Government. That is our present temporal aim; after that we expect to control the continent." In reply to the statement that such a scheme seemed rather visionary, in view of the fact that Utah could not gain recognition as a State, Bishop Lunt said, "Do not be deceived. We are looking after that. We intend to have Utah recognized as a State. To-day we hold the balance of political power in Idaho; we rule Utah absolutely, and in a very short time we will hold the balance of power in Arizona and Wyoming. A few months ago President Snow, of St. George, set out, with a band of priests, for an extensive tour through Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Arizona to proselyte. We also expect to send missionaries to some parts of Nebraska, and we design to plant colonies in Washington Territory. In the past six months we have sent more than three thousand of our people down through the Sevier Valley, to settle in Arizona, and the movement still progresses. All this will build up for us a political power, which will in time compel the homage of the demagogues of the country. Our vote is solid and will remain so. It will be thrown where the most good will be accomplished for the church. Then in some political crisis, the two present political parties will bid for our support. Utah will then be admitted as a polygamous State, and the other territories, we have peacefully subjugated, will be admitted also. We will then hold the balance of power, and will dictate to the country. In time, our principles, which are of sacred origin, will spread throughout the United States. We possess the ability to turn the political scale in any particular community we desire. Our people

are obedient. When they are called by the church, they promptly obey. They sell their homes, lands, and stock, and remove to any part of the country the church may direct. You can imagine the results, which wisdom may bring about, with the assistance of a church organization like ours. It is the completest one the world has ever seen. We have another advantage: we are now, and shall always be, in favor of women suffrage. The women of Utah vote, and they never desert the colors of the church in a political contest. They vote for the tried friends of the church, and whatever they do here, they will do everywhere our principles and our institutions spread."

When we look at the facts to-day, the results of Bishop Lunt's prophecy are quite evident. The Mormon Church virtually controls Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Arizona, and sways the balance of power in other sections. They are growing rapidly, and with their growth the ecclesiastical dominion is extended. The power of the hierarchy could not be more strongly stated by an opponent, than in the words quoted from their Bishop. That the Mormons have used politics to further the interests of their church, we must accept as a fact, or nullify the declarations of the officials themselves.

There is no doubt that the masses of the people are earnest and sincere in their Mormon faith, and are obedient to their superiors as a matter of conscience. A United States Chief Justice said of them, "Industry, frugality, temperance, honesty, and, in every respect but one, obedience to law, are with them the common practices of life." And this disobedience to law is, as I have remarked, due to their uncompromising fidelity to what they regard as the higher law of the church. The actions of the Saints after the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker law give us abundant evidence as to the treatment accorded a statute directed against the Mormon Church. To contract plural

marriages was by that law declared a felony, with a fine of not over five hundred dollars and imprisonment for not more than three years. The law was also a blow against Mormons who were at the time polygamists, making cohabitation with more than one wife a misdemeanor subject to a fine of not more than three hundred dollars, and imprisonment not to exceed six months. A Mormon missionary told me that great numbers who were adjudged to be guilty of the misdemeanor were fined six cents, and discharged, by Mormon courts. The officials regarded this evasion of law perfectly justifiable, since a man was far more honorable to continue faithful to his wives, than to abandon them because of an unrighteous statute. This is but typical of their method of interpreting law. No human statute is binding which supplants a higher law given through divine inspiration. Mormons, therefore, cannot but obsequiously follow their God-ordained leaders.

The Mormon doctrine of priestly infallibility, hence authority, when logically carried out, "binds the individual, destroys liberty, and comes into necessary conflict with republican institutions. This church is, in many particulars, a political menace; yet the influence of education, the ever-increasing contact with the Gentile population, and the growing interest in current affairs, is rapidly developing a spirit of personal independence among Mormons, which must, eventually, divorce church from state, and render the plans and prophecies, for temporal control, a dream of the past."

*A Consideration of the Economic Conditions which result from Mormonism.*

The investigation of economic conditions of Utah reveals remarkable facts. The people are truly bound ecclesiastically; but in the industrial world they enjoy a greater freedom than in any other State.

Utah occupies an important position in the trans-Mississippi group of States. It is 275 miles in width and 345 miles in length. The total area is 84,970 square miles: the land area being 82,190 square miles; the water area 2,780 square miles; nearly two million acres. It is formed of successive mountains and valleys. The soil produces every cereal, vegetable, tree fruit, grass, etc., which can be raised in the same degrees of latitude east and west, and of the most prolific production, growth, and flavor. They have the best kinds of horned stock, horses, sheep, poultry, etc., and a well-stocked fish farm, from which the different streams are being replenished.

It is well to consider the industrial conditions under four heads: Agriculture, Mining, Manufacture, and Mercantile.

*Agriculture.*—Of the entire acreage of the State (52,000,000) only 1,300,000 acres are used for improved or unimproved farm lands. The improved farms comprise but 548,223 acres, scarcely more than one-hundredth of the total land area. This small per cent of arable land which can be cultivated, is due to the water limit. There is but a small portion of cultivated land which is not under irrigation. Thousands of miles of canals and ditches lead the mountain streams over the earth's surface. Most of that western country is made tillable by a system of irrigation; but the largest proportion of irrigated farms, to the total number, is found in Utah. Of the total agricultural holdings, nine-tenths contain irrigated areas. This is one reason for the marvelous productivity of the land. A garden often produces the necessary sustenance for a whole household. One has remarked, that in this fact lies the economic secret of polygamy.

The average size of farms in Utah is smaller than in any other of the thirteen western States. The productivity, however, is greater, if we except California. The last census gives as the average value of products per acre in Utah \$18.03, in California \$19.00.

A comparison of mortgages in the different States shows that Utah has the lowest percentage. The real estate mortgage debt in Colorado is \$206, in California, \$200, in Nebraska and Washington \$126 respectively, in Oregon \$73, while in Utah it is only \$39. Colorado has twice the population of Utah, with nearly ten times the number of mortgages. Nebraska has a population five times as numerous as Utah, with over twenty-five times the number of mortgages. The encumbered farms in the United States that are cultivated by owners, are encumbered to the extent of 35.55 of their value, the percentage varying among the States and Territories, from the lowest, 24.93 in Utah, to the highest, 54.44, in Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> A good authority says, that "in the cities and towns in Utah, despite recent Gentile immigration to Salt Lake City, sixty per cent of the families own their homes, and in the rural districts, where the population is almost entirely Mormon, ninety-one per cent own their farms."<sup>2</sup> This condition is unparalleled in any other State of the Union.

Utah, undoubtedly, owes her greatest debt of gratitude to her farmers, and four reasons have been suggested why agriculture has been so successful.

1. The people are industrious.

2. Land holdings are small. It was Brigham Young's idea that all lands should be utilized for raising crops, and the farmer possess no more ground than he can make thoroughly productive. Few farms are larger than forty acres, and thousands do not exceed five or ten acres in size. Pasturage is always secured on the mountain sides where farming is impracticable.

3. The employing of irrigation methods and the impartiality with which the waters of the State are divided among the people encourage agriculture. The water rights

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Report, Real Estate and Mortgages.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Spahr in Outlook.

are generally held in coöperation; a safeguard against monopoly, since the holder of these rights could virtually control large sections of land owned by other parties.

4. The presence of a home market for most of the products of the soil, makes farming more profitable; the home market, including surrounding mining States. The total value of agricultural and fruit products for the year 1894 was \$5,569,642.

*Mining.*—In mining industries Utah has made a creditable showing. This advance, however, was originally due to Gentile enterprise. The mountains contain iron, coal, copper, lead, salt, etc., besides being rich in the precious metals. Perhaps there is no county in the State wherein some mining is not carried on. Among the silver-producing States, Utah ranks third, her product in 1897 being 7,561,971 ounces. The output of gold for the same year was 80,467 ounces. The total valuation of the mineral products for 1897 was \$14,489,126.83, eight of the States taking higher rank. The dividends paid were \$1,998,000, averaging \$166,500 per month, most of which went to the home people.

*Manufacturing.*—One of the fundamental tenets of Brigham Young's industrial creed was to develop home industries. The Mormons were to become self-sustaining to such an extent, that, if the State should ever come into conflict with the United States government, the people would be independent, able to supply themselves with every necessity. As a consequence of this policy, numerous manufactures have been fostered, which utilize most of the raw material produced by the farmers. Among others may be named, woolen mills, boot and shoe, clothing, and silk manufactures, soap works, and sugar factories. As early as 1850 the industrial products of Utah amounted to \$291,220. In 1860 this amount had increased to \$900,153. Ten years later, according to census returns, it was \$2,343,019.

During the decade of 1880-90 the number of establishments decreased from 640 to 531. Results seem to point toward the fact of increase in capacity, and quality of output, rather than in the multiplication of industries. The capital invested in 1880 was \$2,656,657, as against \$6,583,022 in 1890. The number of employees in 1880 was 2,495, against 4,980 in 1890. The amount of wages paid in 1880 was \$858,863, as against \$2,715,805 in 1890. On the basis of the number employed and the amount paid in wages, we find the average for each employee in 1880 to be \$344 per year, as against \$545 in 1890; \$1.12 per day in 1880, as against \$1.80 per day in 1890. This is cited as evidence of the fact that the laborer receives his proportion of gain, which is due to the increased productivity.

The largest manufacturing establishment is that of beet sugar, the factory being at Lehi, with a branch at Ogden. It is under the management of a Mormon bishop, and is run in the interests of the people, being coöperative. It was established in 1891, netting a considerable loss during the first year, by reason of the low percentage of sugar in the beets; but, during the past few years, it has paid an average dividend of ten per cent to stockholders.

The employees work twelve hours per day, receiving \$1.80, plus a ten-per-cent bonus whenever the mill's product exceeds four hundred tons a day, which is, at the present time, the rule. The workers are thus directly benefited by the increased productivity of the plant.

The beets are furnished by the farmers, most of whom own their little farms. One man can tend ten acres, which will yield an average of fifteen tons to the acre, receiving for them from \$4.25 to \$4.40 per ton, according to the distance from the factory. By reason of this industry, land in the vicinity has increased in value from fifty dollars per acre in 1892 to one hundred dollars per acre in 1898. The entire demand of Utah for sugar in 1898 was 18,000,000

pounds, of which the Lehi and Ogden factories furnished 14,000,000 pounds.

*Mercantile.*—In accordance with the principle of fostering home industries, coöperative institutions have arisen among the Mormons. They were primarily due, however, to the exorbitant prices in those early days, for even the ordinary commodities. The establishment of the institutions was to give consumers cheaper rates. Wheat that was bought in one place for seventy-five cents per bushel was turned into flour, and sold in isolated mining-camps for twenty-five dollars per hundred weight.

In 1864 merchants had risen to opulence, and commerce was gradually, but surely, throwing all money into a few hands. Early in 1868, says Lum, "the merchants were startled by the announcement, that it was advisable that the people of Utah territory should become their own merchants, and that an organization should be created for them, expressly for importing and distributing merchandise on a comprehensive plan. Although in the prosecution of this work the church was threatened with a formidable schism, yet Brigham Young never faltered. It was an economic, rather than a religious, heresy which he had to confront. In Mormon society the two elements of organization—the social and the religious—have ever been combined, and it was to prevent their threatened divorce that this step became necessary."

Then followed the organization of the "Zion Coöperative Mercantile Institution," the intention being that it should be the supreme importing-house of the people, for the territory, and that auxiliaries of local organization, for distribution, should be formed in every colony or settlement.

By reason of the funds needed for the local institution, few Mormons were financially able to join the parent organization, which, therefore, fell into the control of a very few individuals. When, in 1870, the company was incor-

porated, there were but twenty-one stockholders, and, of the \$199,000 of stock then taken, four men held \$177,200' worth, and these, the President of the Church, Brigham Young, and one associate, held \$156,200—almost three-fourths of the entire stock.

Some individuals have referred to Mormonism as an exemplification of the principle of coöperation. But "the institution critically considered is not coöperative, but an ordinary joint stock company, with the tremendous leverage of church authority." "Trade with and sustain your friends," said Young in preaching. "Let your enemies have none of your substance with which to work your downfall." This coöperative organization, therefore, has proved itself to be but another bond by which the Mormon hierarchy has held in subjection the people. It can be shown that its offices have been continuously held by the same men that filled the offices of the Mormon Church.

As to the financial success of the institution, there can be no question. Its annual sales now reach a figure somewhere between four and five millions; the pay-roll averages \$20,000 per month; the freight-bill is nearly \$300,000 per annum. During twenty-one years of its existence, including the year 1891, the sales aggregated \$69,146,881.06, and up to May, 1892, it had paid in cash dividends, \$2,059,874.07.

"Many of the local coöperative stores have limited their dividends," writes a Mormon, "retaining a part of the profits made each six months, in order to extend by coöperation industrial and manufacturing facilities; so that furniture, lumber, shoe factories, tanneries, butcher shops, dairies, grist mills, and other industries, have been inaugurated and built up slowly, but effectually, from the nucleus of the original store."

It would be misleading to leave the impression that the people do not profit by this coöperation. They do gain an

advantage; "but it is so far out of proportion that the amazing success of the Mormon enterprises is no criterion of what free, industrial coöperation can accomplish. It does, however, furnish a field wherein the economic value of religion and morality may be studied." These stores could never have achieved their success had there not been confidence, on the part of the people, as to the trustworthiness of their leaders. The entire Mormon mercantile system is really dependent upon that larger religious system, which gives the peculiar character to the Mormon people.

Mormonism is thus seen to be essentially a social religion, and in this fact we find a great part of its strength. Divorced from the practical affairs of everyday living, Mormonism could never gain many adherents. The peculiar doctrines and beliefs are repellant, rather than convincing, to the human reason. But when these doctrines and beliefs apparently bear fruit in social conditions wherein brotherly love is supposedly practiced to a greater extent than in average Christian communities, the crude theological statements lose their repulsive character. The promise of better economic conditions is a potent factor in the argument which persuades the poor and ignorant classes to adopt Mormonism. Proselytes among intelligent people are rare. How the intelligent class of Mormons retain their faith in the sensual conceptions of Mormonism can be explained only by the fact of the almost inexorable character of early teaching and training on the human mind. Men are but children of a larger growth; and, so long as children are thoroughly indoctrinated with the tenets of the Mormon faith, so long will this religion have adherents. The only effective means for the overthrow of this unwholesome sect is the wider diffusion of education.