

Turnbull Writes Conclusion Of Interview History Series

Editor's note: Following is the fourth in a series of articles presented by the Emerald describing the history of interviewing. The material is based on articles written by George Turnbull, professor of journalism.

Now for a glimpse of the interview itself, Turnbull says. It starts right off with the newspaper man's question, followed by the answer of the news source.

H.G. Am I to regard Mormonism (so-called) as a new religion or as simply a new development of Christianity?

B.Y. We hold that there can be no true Christian church without a priesthood directly commissioned by an immediate communication with the Son of God and Savior of Mankind. Such a church is that of the Latter Day Saints, called by their enemies Mormons; we know no other that pretends to have present and direct revelations from God's will.

Greeley proceeds to develop this particular point with further questions, like the understanding newspaper man that he was. He has questions about the belief in "a personal devil, essentially malignant and evil" and about the doctrine of eternal punishment; about infant baptism, etc.

It was 1859, and it didn't take Greeley long to get down to the question of the hour. Thus:

H.G.—What is the position of the church with regard to slavery?

B.Y.—We consider it a Divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants.

H.G.—Are any slaves now held in this territory?

B.Y.—There are.

H.G.—Am I to infer that Utah, if admitted as a member of the federal Union, will be a slave state?

B.Y.—No; she will be a free state. Slavery here would prove useless and unprofitable. I regard it generally as a curse to the masters. I myself hire many laborers and pay them fair wages; I can do better than subject myself to an obligation to feed and clothe their families, to provide and care for them in sickness and health. Utah is not adapted to slave labor.

Greeley is frank and fearless in his questioning.

H.G.—Can you give me any rational explanation of the aversion and hatred with which your people are generally regarded by those among whom they have lived, and with whom they have been brought directly in contact?

B.Y.—No other explanation than is afforded by the crucifixion of Christ and the kindred treatment of God's ministers, prophets, and saints of all ages.

H.G.—How general is polygamy among you?

B.Y.—I could not say. Some of those present (heads of the church) have each but one wife; others have more; each determines what is his individual duty.

H.G.—What is the largest number of wives belonging to any one man?

B.Y.—I have fifteen; I know of no one who has more, but some of those who are sealed to me are old ladies, whom I regard more as mothers than as wives, but whom I have taken home to cherish and support.

Such (says Greeley) is, as nearly as I can recollect, the substance of nearly two hours conversation, wherein much was said incidentally that would not be worth reporting, even if I could remember and reproduce it, and wherein others bore a part; but as President Young is the first minister of the Mormon church and bore the principal part of the conversation, I have reported his answers alone to my questions and observations.

He spoke readily, not always with grammatical accuracy, but with no appearance of hesitation or reserve, and with no apparent desire to conceal anything, nor did he repel any of my questions as impertinent. He was very plainly dressed in thin summer clothing, and with no air of sanctimony or fanaticism. In appearance he is a portly, frank, good-natured, rather

thick-set man of fifty-five, seeming to enjoy life, and to be in no particular hurry to get to heaven. His associates are plain men, evidently born and reared to a life of labor, and looking as little like crafty hypocrites as any body of men I ever met. The absence of cant or snuff from their manner was marked and general, yet I think I may fairly say that their Mormonism has not impoverished them—that they are generally poor men when they embrace it and are now in very comfortable circumstances, as men averaging three or four wives apiece certainly need to be.

Here Mr. Greeley slips into his well-known editorial style and comments in conclusion on "the degradation . . . of women to the single office of child-bearing . . . I joyfully trust that the genius of the nineteenth century tends to a solution of the problem of women's sphere and destiny radically different from this. Not a strictly modern interview, certainly. But in its essentials—its accurate picture of the person and the scene and the times—are our interviewers doing much better today?

"I realize," said Turnbull, "that I have proved nothing, but I hope I have brought a neglected element into the discussion of the origins of the interview. My experience with other dips into beginnings makes me far from sure that some one will not bob up this week with a discovery that the old Peking Gazette beat all the moderns to it by publishing an interview with some Oriental sage centuries ago, or that recent diggings in Egypt or Assyria have uncovered . . .

"But, anyhow, Horace Greeley in person beat Mr. Bennett's interviewer to it by three months in those days of '59; and in all its essentials Greeley's work was not only an interview but a good one. Doubtless James Gordon Bennett had seen it before he decided to send his reporter after Gerrit Smith.

"It might be noted in passing that the latest thing apparently in interviewing goes right back to the form used by Horace Greeley in this pioneer interview with the Mormon prophet. Only a few weeks ago in a syndicated sports feature, a conversation between Chick Evans and Lawson Little, noted golfers, in which the 'colloquy,' as Vizzetti calls it, is reported in paragraphs beginning with the speaker's name; thus:

"Lawson—When did you start thinking about golf, Chick?"

"Chick—It was in Chicago in 1898 that I first walked upon a golf course . . .

"And so on through the whole 'colloquy.'"

"Finally, one is tempted to remind anyone who has been thinking of Horace Greeley as printer, editorial writer, and politician, but not as news man, that Mr. Seitz, his biographer, says in so many words: 'Greeley was a perfect reporter.' The kind of man who could blaze a new journalistic trail—and did."

OSEA Board

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many other creditors remain unpaid."

Rae advised publishers in code districts already organized to continue to cooperate with such parts of the graphic arts code as are considered worthwhile.

Quits N.E.A.

In a clean sweep the state association rescinded its action of June, 1934, when it joined the National Editorial association. It also resolved to lodge complaints against the national group. The NEA is national code authority.

The OSEA resolution scored the national code administration with headquarters at Chicago, charging that "unreasonable and exorbitant salaries, rentals and service fees are being paid to the National Editorial association and certain of its officers and employees at the expense of the regionals and their assessment paying members."

Defending the