



ONE DAY IN ZION.

For decades people have berated the Mormons, have persecuted them, in short have been wholesale in their denunciation and condemnation of Mormonism and all that it implies—and there has been ample cause. And yet Salt Lake, Zion's capital, is a Mecca for tourists to-day. And the fair minded visitor, though having no more unity with the religion and deprecating the acts of Mormon zealots, must perforce pay tribute to the consecration, the self-sacrifice, the devotion, the enthusiasm, the genius of the followers of Joseph Smith.

The tourist, on arriving at the picturesque city of Salt Lake, naturally wishes to see those features of the place which are peculiarly Mormon. With this end in view we take our way toward Temple Block, containing ten acres and enclosed by a very high stone and adobe wall which was completed in 1854. It is the wish of the younger and progressive element of the church that this ancient and exclusive barrier be torn down and succeeded by something less forbidding and more attractive, but the patriarchs do not look upon the suggestion with favor.

Within the block there are the three main buildings—the Temple, the Tabernacle and the Assembly Hall. Of this group the Temple is at the center of interest and attraction—especially on the part of the ladies, for Gentiles are not admitted within its sacred portals, and to woman, a mystery unexplorable is as enthralling as it is tantalizing. Above all else, this magnificent structure stands as a monument to the perseverance and self-sacrificing devotion of the Latter-day Saints. The corner stones were laid in 1853 and not until forty years after was the edifice completed and dedicated, the cost being about four million dollars. The Temple is built of granite, brought from a quarry about twenty miles distant. Before the advent of the railway to the quarry, in 1873, the huge blocks of stone were transported by ox teams. It took four yoke of oxen four days to transport a single large stone from the quarry to the Temple grounds.

The sacredness with which the Mormons look upon their Temple is impressive to say the least. For not only are Gentiles not admitted but also are those members of the church refused admission, so we are told, who are not living strictly up to the vows, or who have any objectionable habits, such even as the use of tobacco. Marriages are performed in the Temple, but only when the contracting parties are worthy in character. If the bride is irreproachable, but the groom in any way falls below the high standard set up, then must the ceremony be performed elsewhere. Here is food for reflection for members of orthodox churches, within the walls of which, any sort of a rake may be a principal in a swell church wedding, provided the bride is virtuous. It may be asserted in this connection that while the Mormons make pretensions to such a high standard, they do not maintain it. Even granting such to be the case, they have at least the virtue of upholding an ideal single standard of morals which their orthodox detractors often do not even recognize. We are not defending the Mormons, as we confess to a general antipathy against them. But there are elements of strength in Mormonism, to overlook which is foolish.

The large Tabernacle is little less interesting—a huge, unpretending structure from an architectural standpoint, the roof of which consists of a single wooden arch. The Tabernacle will seat comfortably some eight thousand people and its seating capacity is often taxed. Its acoustic properties are remarkable. The room is two hundred and fifty feet long, yet by an actual experiment, when in the gallery in one end of the Tabernacle, we heard the drop of a pin in the other end, and heard intelligibly a whispered sentence.

In this building is situated the famous Organ, which is held as the finest pipe organ in America if not in the world. It was originally constructed over thirty

years ago by Utah artisans and largely from native materials, but has since been worked over. It was our great regret that we did not get to hear the wonderful instrument.

The Assembly Hall is a more modern church built for assembly purposes when a smaller audience room than the Tabernacle is desired.

One thing which impresses the tourist is the zest and eagerness with which the church members show him about, carefully explaining everything from the construction of the Temple to their declaration of faith. They take him in charge as politely, and as resolutely as the colored gentleman who carries your suitcase on the car for you—and without the expected reward. It's a part of their religion.

On entering Temple Block the visitor is first ushered into the Bureau of Information, an elegant building erected at a cost of eight thousand dollars, fitted with reception rooms etc., and where volunteer committees greet you with literature and any information desirable. The lady members of the church seem to take turns or different days acting as guides for tourists. All of them are prepared to go into detail in telling of their history, beliefs and practices—and always with that characteristic enthusiasm. Here the writer found more material for thought in wondering as to what percentage of the lay membership of orthodox churches could likewise give reason for the hope that is within them.

The backbone of Mormonism is found in its rigid tithing system, which seems at once to be both voluntary and compulsory on the part of the members. Every Mormon, from the poor laborer to the captain of industry, gives a tenth of his income, as a result of which the church coffers are always full and the Latter-day Saints are the greatest evangelists in the world to-day. For twenty centuries the Christian church has been echoing the command of the Master, "Go ye," and yet if the orthodox Christians of America alone would heartily adopt the system of these deluded and despised Mormons in giving, the evangelization of the world in this generation would be a fact.

The members of the church are closely organized and clannish, in business as in religion—the two being in fact one and the same to them. One has but to walk about the city to see this. Z. C. M. I. are the bold letters which greet one not only in Salt Lake but in other Utah towns which stand for Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, established in 1868. The Desert News, the most widely circulated newspaper in Utah is the official church organ. Zion has its own banks and various other business enterprises.

As to the relations between the Mormons and the Gentiles, while much bitter feeling exists at times under the stress of political campaigns and occasional exposures, there seems not to be the deep seated antipathy of a

few decades ago when the memory of certain atrocities was still fresh with the people. In riding down from Ogden to Salt Lake the writer sat beside a grizzled civil war veteran who was on an extended trip through the West who seemed to have no desire to stop off at the lake city with his fellow passengers. In the course of conversation he later remarked that a near relative of his met death in the Mountain Meadow Massacre, which partly explained his willingness to pass by on the other side.

The fact is, in place of being strongly in the majority in Salt Lake, as formerly, the Mormons are now slightly in the minority, they constituting about forty-five per cent of the population, and they cannot rule with the high hand which once made the Gentiles their implacable enemies.

However, leave the Mormons out of consideration entirely, and Salt Lake, with its beautiful tree-lined avenues, its picturesque location, its fine residences and business blocks, and its natural advantages, to say nothing of its salt lake resort, is well worth the attention of the tourist.

We were naturally greatly interested in the elegant new, Y. M. C. A. building, the campaign for raising the funds for which was managed by the writer's classmate of Pacific College, Oscar L. Cox, general secretary of the city association. When it is considered that the purchase of the site and the erection of the building called for an outlay in the neighborhood of two hundred thousand dollars, something of the magnitude of the task and the executive ability for which it called, will be understood. In elegance of structure thorough and fine equipment in every particular, and adaptability to the work in hand, we have never seen its equal in an association building. As general supervisor of the work of the association in all its many departments, Mr. Cox is a busy man, but those who were acquainted with him of old know of his ability to turn off work with dispatch. Though our arrival was entirely unannounced, he gave us a very cordial welcome, showed us about the city and did much to make our short visit pleasant. As guests of Mr. and Mrs. Cox at the association home we were delightfully entertained.

W. C. W.
Haviland, Kansas, 12-9, '05.

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