

VARIOUS

EARLY SCENES IN
CHURCH HISTORY

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«Public Domain»

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Various Early Scenes in Church History / Eighth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series

PREFACE

Many deaths have occurred within the last few years among the veteran members of our Church. Numbers of persons have recently passed away who were connected with the Church during the early years of its existence, and whose lives were filled with scenes and incidents of the most interesting nature. Their wonderful experience so far as known is appreciated by their intimate friends, in whose memories it is embalmed, but it will hereafter only be known as tradition, for, as a rule, they have left no written testimony or record of their lives to show to future generations what they have seen or passed through. We have scarcely ever heard of the death of such a person without a feeling of regret that the important scenes of which he was a witness while living were not better known, and that a definite and accurate account of them had not been written before his death.

A short time since we conceived the idea of publishing a volume of the "Faith-Promoting Series," entitled EARLY SCENES IN CHURCH HISTORY, to be made up of such incidents of appropriate nature as we could obtain from early members of the Church.

Of course we were aware that a single volume of the size contemplated could not describe a tithe of the interesting scenes of a faith-promoting nature with which the early history of the Church abounded, but not until we had started the compilation did we realize to the full extent the vastness of the field which we had entered upon. We gathered the incidents contained in the present volume at random (mostly from verbal narratives), compiled them very hastily, with too little regard perhaps for variety, and feel that we have hardly made a commencement at recounting the early scenes of which a record should be perpetuated.

In compiling this volume no effort has been made at selecting scenes of a marvelous or sensational character; the aim has rather been to mention such incidents as would tend to show how the power of God was manifested in behalf of the Saints in those early days, and thereby promote faith among the young, for whose benefit this Series is published. Nor is it to be supposed that such scenes as are herein described have been confined to any particular period of our Church's history. As wonderful incidents of special providence could be related of the present age as of that which is past. The power of God is as manifest now in shaping the destiny of His Saints, in preserving their lives and in answering their prayers as it ever has been. The faithful never had greater cause to rejoice nor the wicked to tremble than they have at the present time. That the perusal of this volume may cause those into whose hands it may come to be more faithful and devoted to the cause of God, is the earnest desire of

THE PUBLISHER.

"SHOW US A SIGN."

BY B. F. JOHNSON

MY SISTER'S HIP BROKEN – NO HOPES OF EVER BEING ABLE TO WALK – OUR FAMILY EMBRACE THE GOSPEL – SCOFFERS DEMAND AS A SIGN THAT MY SISTER BE HEALED – ELDER BRACKINBURY'S DEATH – WARNED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE BODY-SNATCHERS' DESIGNS – CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ROBBING THE GRAVE – MY BROTHER'S DEATH – MY SISTER HEALED – THE HEALING FAILS TO CONVINCING THE UNBELIEVERS.

About the year 1830, when I was twelve years of age, Nancy, my eldest sister, was thrown from a horse, and had her hip broken.

The bone was broken so near the socket that it could not be set, and physicians all agreed that it would be impossible for her ever again to walk upon that leg, or in any degree to recover its use, as ossification had taken place without a connection of the bones and they had slipped past each other, making the broken limb nearly an inch shorter than the other. She walked upon two crutches, and for years was not able to bring upon the broken limb weight sufficient to hurt the finger of a small child, if placed under her foot.

In the year 1831, my brothers Joel H. and David received the gospel in Amherst, Ohio, and in the fall of the same year my brother David brought to us the Book of Mormon, near Fredonia, State of New York.

Soon afterwards my brother Joel, with A. W. Babbitt – then only a boy, came also, and was followed by Elders Brackinbury and Durfee. Elder Brackinbury was an earnest and powerful preacher, and all the Elders seemed filled with the spirit of the Lord. Many received their testimony, and my mother and Lyman R. Shearman, a brother-in-law, were the first to be baptized.

Priest and people came out to oppose the work, and would scoffingly ask, "Why, if miracles can be performed, do you not heal Sister Nancy?" Many would also say: "If they would only heal Sister Nancy we would all believe!"

My sister was a young woman of excellent mind and character. Having a good common education, she had for some years taught our district summer school, and, being religiously inclined, had joined the Freewill Baptist church. Like my mother, who was also a religious woman, she was not only respected, but was beloved by all who knew her. But, although she had obeyed the gospel, the time had not come for her release from her crutches by the healing power of God. The wicked were seeking it for a sign, as in the days of our Savior, when they followed Him even to His crucifixion, demanding that He come down from the cross, as a sign, to prove to them that He was the Son of God; yet no sign was given except that of their overthrow and destruction.

After a few weeks of successful preaching and baptizing, Elder Brackinbury was taken violently sick, and, within a few days, died of the bilious cholera.

To us, then young and inexperienced members of the Church, his death came as a trial to our faith, as well as a very great grief. To think that so good a man, in such a field of useful labor, and far away from his home and family, should be permitted to die, and that too so suddenly, was naturally a test to the faith and integrity of so young a branch.

Although the grave had closed over his body and we were in deep sorrow, our enemies were not satisfied, for while we were assembled in the evening after his burial, to talk and pray and mourn

together, the spirit of revelation said to my brother David that they were then digging up the body of Brother Brackinbury for dissection.

My brothers with others quickly started, and proceeding rapidly to the grave about one mile away, found three men there who had unearthed the coffin and were just dragging the corpse from under its lid. As our party approached they sprang out of the grave and fled.

David, then a stripling of about twenty years, pursued them, and like a young lion, grappled with, captured and brought back as a prisoner one of the most powerful young men of the country – not only much older but nearly double his size – a student of medicine in our native town.

The prisoner was afterwards committed by a magistrate, and put under bonds to appear at his trial.

These, with other unhappy events, caused us to desire to leave our native place and gather with the Saints at Kirtland, which we did in the spring of 1833. In the summer of that same year it was proposed to build the Kirtland Temple, and as it was designed at first to build it of brick, my three eldest brothers, with those of us who were younger, engaged in making the brick for that purpose; and there brother David, who was then about twenty-two years of age, became a martyr to the great and good cause. Through his ambition to perform more labor than he was able to endure, and by over-exertion in procuring the wood, he bled at the lungs and died the same fall. He bore a faithful testimony of the gospel being again revealed, and spoke with the gift of tongues with his latest breath, which was interpreted by Don Carlos Smith, the Prophet's brother, who was present at the time.

About this time the Spirit of the Lord seemed to be poured out upon the Saints in Kirtland. Their families often met together to "speak of the Lord," and the gifts of the gospel were enjoyed in rich abundance. As yet my sister Nancy had never, since her hip had been broken, taken one step unaided by her crutches; but the time had now come for her release.

She was commanded by Elder Jared Carter – then a man of mighty faith – to arise, leave her crutches and walk.

She arose in faith, full of joy, and was from that hour made whole, and never again did she walk upon crutches or lean upon a staff.

The same fall I returned on a visit to my native town, full of a desire that our old neighbors, as well as my young associates, should embrace the truth; for I felt sure that they would believe my testimony that my sister was healed, and, as they had promised, accept the gospel.

I was full of hope, although I was but a boy, that they would all be converted through my testimony; but alas! there were none to be converted – no one to accept the great truths of the gospel. They believed my statement that my sister had become well and was walking unaided upon her broken limb, yet, to their understanding, "some natural cause had produced the effect," and they were unbelievers still.

When again, as a missionary, I returned to the place of my birth and preached to those same persons the gospel, bearing a faithful testimony, they were glad to see me, and treated me with great kindness, yet no one was converted to the truth, for signs had failed to make them believe.

CONTEST WITH EVIL SPIRITS

BY H. G. B

THE SAVIOR'S PROMISE – SENT ON A MISSION WHEN A BOY –
CONFERENCE IN BURKE'S GARDEN – A GIRL APPARENTLY STRICKEN
WITH DEATH – MY FRIGHT AT BEING ASKED TO ADMINISTER TO HER
– PROMPTED BY THE SPIRIT TO CAST THE DEVIL OUT OF HER – THE
EVIL SPIRIT LEAVES HER AND ENTERS TWO OTHERS – SIX ELDERS
CONTEND WITH THE EVIL SPIRIT FOR THIRTY-SIX HOURS – ITS FINAL
BANISHMENT.

Just a few minutes before our Savior took His leave of the twelve apostles and ascended on high, He promised that certain gifts and blessings should be enjoyed by the believer.

You will find this promise recorded in the 16th chapter of the gospel according to St. Mark, 17th and 18th verses. It is of one of these gifts that I wish to speak.

When on my first mission (in the year 1844), in the State of Virginia, we were attending a conference in Burke's Garden, Tazewell County. There were some ten or twelve Elders in attendance, most of whom had just arrived a week or two previous from Nauvoo, where they had, during the April Conference, been called and set apart for missions in Virginia. It was Sunday evening, some time early in May. Our conference had just closed, the last services of which were the ordinances of baptism and confirmation administered to several persons.

The Saints and strangers had dispersed to their homes, except some of the Saints who lived at a distance. A few of these had put up with Colonel Peter Litz, who, with his family, were members of the Church, and where also several of the Elders, myself included, were going to stay over night.

The time in the evening was what would be called early twilight. Some of the Elders had taken an evening stroll. At any rate, I was the only Elder that was about the house, when Sister Litz came to me (I was seated at the time out in the yard) very much excited, and said that one of the sisters who had come to stay over night, was taken suddenly and very severely sick, and she (Sister Litz) desired me to administer to her.

I was only a boy, yet in my teens, and with little or no experience, and had never been called upon, up to that time, to administer to the sick. I naturally shrank from the task, and would have given anything to have had some one to take it off my shoulders.

However, there was no escape for me – no other Elders were present, and she insisted that I should attend to the ordinance.

I followed Sister Litz into the house, and there lay the girl, stretched upon a bed, apparently lifeless, without breath or motion.

I asked Sister Litz what was the matter with the girl, but she could not tell.

"What can I do?" I thought. What could any one do? Nevertheless, I placed my hands upon her head, knowing full well if the Lord did not help me, that I would utterly fail in being able to say the first appropriate word, or exercise the least power.

As soon as I opened my mouth, I began to cast a devil out of her, which was farthest from my thoughts before I commenced. I commanded it, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her, and not to return again. The evil spirit immediately departed from her, she being restored to her normal condition, seemingly as well as ever.

Not ten minutes after, the same evil spirit entered another girl. But during this interval Elder Robert Hamilton had returned from a walk, and was present at the time of the second attack, and was mouth with myself in casting it out.

In about the same time it would take a person to walk from one room to another, a third young sister was attacked, and in the same way exactly that the two first had been taken; and our administration had the same effect in relieving her as in the first two cases.

This third one was no sooner rid of the evil spirit, than it returned and took possession the second time of the one last before relieved of its power; and when it was cast out from this one, it took possession of the third one again, and so on, alternately, as well as I can remember, for three or four times. But the spirit never returned the second time to the first sister that was attacked that evening.

However, at the end of three or four hours, we separated the two girls, by taking one of them up stairs and into a room at the west end of the house, leaving the other in a room on the first floor at the east end, making the distance between as far as we could for both to occupy the same house, which was a large one.

In the meantime one of the Elders from the house of one of the nearest neighbors had come in, so there were six of us in attendance, the names of whom were as follows: Robert Hamilton, James Park, Richard Kinnamon, Chapman Duncan, Alfred B. Lambson and myself.

A. B. Lambson, James Park and Richard Kinnamon, with the father of the two girls (for they were sisters), watched with the one in the room on the first floor, while Robert Hamilton, Chapman Duncan and myself, with the mother, watched with the other in the upper room.

While possessed with this evil spirit, the girls would sometimes lay in a trance, motionless, and apparently without breathing, till we were ready to conclude they were dead, then they would come to and speak and sing in tongues, and talk about Priesthood and the endowments. At other times, they would choke up, ceasing to breathe until they were black in the face, and we thought they would surely die. Sometimes they would froth at the mouth and act like they were in a fit. If standing upon their feet when taken, they would fall to the floor and act like they were struggling for life with some unseen power. Altogether, these cases reminded us of the one recorded in Mark, 8th chapter, 14th to 29th verse, and other cases recorded in the New Testament.

We never made a failure when attempting to cast out this evil spirit from either of the girls. But invariably as soon as one of them was dispossessed, in the length of time it would take a person to walk from one room to the other, the spirit would take possession of the other, but never both at the same time, and both were operated upon alike, so we knew there was but one evil spirit to deal with; yet it seemed impossible to get rid of it, for the girls were possessed with it alternately for some thirty-six hours.

However, we took advantage of the Savior's explanation in the 9th chapter of Mark, before referred to, and fasted and prayed. After which, while the three of us up stairs were administering (Robert Hamilton being mouth) and commanding the devil (for such we were from the first convinced it was) to come out of her and return to its own place, Elder Duncan immediately interrupted, and said to Elder Hamilton, "Name the place; name the place!" (See Matthew, 8th chapter and 31st verse.)

This somewhat confused Elder Hamilton, who hesitated, when Elder Duncan called the name of a family who were near neighbors, and of whom not one us had thought in connection with these cases. Elder Hamilton repeated this name, and immediately the evil spirit departed, not only from the girl it then had possession of, but from the house. And in a moment all in the house felt and knew that they were rid of its power and influence and that it would not again return.

We all, by this time, knew something of the power of the adversary, for we had had an actual experience, indeed, a contest, that had left us weak and nearly worn out, to an extent that an actual corporal struggle with flesh and blood would not have so reduced us.

Why was the key to its departure given to Elder Duncan and not to Elder Hamilton, who was acting as mouthpiece at the time? is a question my young readers are ready to ask, as we asked one another at the time, and were not able to answer, and which I am unable to answer to this day.

And why was it necessary to give this demon the privilege to return to torment some other family?

This also I am unable to answer to my own satisfaction; but this much I can say: the family referred to was bitterly opposed to the gospel and its blessings, and to all those who taught, practiced, or enjoyed the same. A daughter of this family had been afflicted in a very singular way from her childhood. This girl had, in company with her parents and all the family (as they never left her alone), attended our baptismal meeting on Sunday evening, and her family spoke of her being and acting like a new person for two days after attending that meeting, often speaking of the good effect the witnessing of the ordinance of baptism had had upon her.

To all I have said in the foregoing, I was an eye and ear witness. All those who are living, who were present at the time this occurred, will remember the truth of what I have inscribed, though at the time we kept it from the world. I have written this experience for the benefit of the young Elders who are now abroad on missions, and for the benefit of the boys who may hereafter be called on to take missions, and any others who may glean any good from its perusal; and also as an evidence of the truth of the promise of Jesus to believers.

EARLY EXPERIENCE OF A. O. SMOOT

CHAPTER I

SICKLY CONDITION WHEN YOUNG – HEALED ACCORDING TO ELDER PATTEN'S PREDICTION – LABOR AS A MISSIONARY WITH ELDER WOODRUFF – SEVERE SICKNESS – HEALED UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF MY BRETHREN – A MISSION TO THE SOUTHERN STATES – REMOVAL TO FAR WEST – MISSION TO MISSOURI AND ARKANSAS – OPPOSED BY A BAPTIST DEACON – TERRIBLE JUDGMENT UPON HIMSELF AND FAMILY – JOHN HOUSTON, THE INFIDEL – FAR WEST BESIEGED – TAKEN PRISONER.

My life has been an exceedingly active, busy one, but when my experience is compared with that of many of my brethren there is perhaps nothing very extraordinary about it. I have seen the power of God manifested in various ways, and have had all the testimonies that I could ask for of the divine character of the work instituted through Joseph Smith, with which I have been connected for almost half a century. But I have never seen anything that I could call very miraculous, nor have I sought for anything of the kind as an evidence of the truth of God's work. To me everything has seemed to come along naturally. And yet when all things are considered, my whole life might be regarded as miraculous. When I reflect upon the precarious condition of my health when a boy, and the indulgence with which I was then treated, and then upon what I have been enabled to endure and accomplish, through the blessings of God since, there is something rather remarkable about it to me.

I was born on the 17th of February, 1815, in Owenton, Owen Co., Kentucky. Both the town and County in which I was born were named after my great-uncle, Abraham Owen, in whose honor I was named. He was killed in the battle of Tippecanoe, while serving under General Harrison, who was afterwards President of the United States. Abraham Owen's sister, my great-aunt, was Stonewall Jackson's mother, so that General Jackson and I were second-cousins.

From my early childhood, almost from my infancy, I was afflicted with a lung disease, and supposed to be in consumption. Indeed, I was so bad a great deal of the time that my life was despaired of. When I was about nine years old my death seemed so imminent that my burial clothes were made. However, I rallied somewhat, but not to be able to do any work. I had a great desire to live, and also to know if the Lord had a church upon the earth, and I investigated the various doctrines professed by those with whom I came in contact, but could never feel satisfied to join any of the religious sects.

When I attained my twentieth year, and while I was still very sickly, Elders David W. Patten and Warren Parrish visited the part where I resided, as missionaries, and I became convinced of the correctness of the doctrines which they taught and embraced the same, being baptized by Elder Parrish and confirmed by Elder Patten. Brother Patten, in confirming me, promised that I should be healed of my infirmity and become a strong and powerful man. This prediction was verified to the letter; I began to grow strong immediately.

The following spring I was ordained a deacon and placed to preside over a small branch of the Church raised up by Elders Patten and Parrish, and on the 7th of the next April I was ordained an Elder under the hands of Brother Woodruff and started out with him preaching. I traveled with him in Kentucky and Tennessee until the early part of the following winter, when we left the South and went to Kirtland, Ohio, where I attended school with him and studied Greek and Latin.

The change of climate and a little carelessness on my part brought on an attack of typhoid fever and pleurisy, from which I suffered severely, and it was thought that I could not recover. Brother

Woodruff, however, who was waiting upon me, called in Elders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and Hyrum Smith, and the five laid their hands upon me and rebuked the disease and blessed me. While their hands were upon my head I fell into an easy sleep, and when I awoke my disease was entirely gone.

A few days after, I was advised by the Prophet Joseph to return to the Southern States and raise up a company of Saints and emigrate to Far West, Missouri. I accordingly went South, and in the month of May had succeeded in organizing a company of two hundred souls with about forty teams and started on our journey. The trip occupied about two months. We immediately set about making homes and soon began to get comfortable surroundings.

In January, 1838, I was called to fill a mission to the southern part of Missouri and throughout Arkansas. During this mission an incident occurred which I think worth relating. I was preaching one afternoon in the court-house at Yellsville, where I had also held meeting in the forenoon, when in the midst of my discourse I was interrupted by a Baptist deacon, who arose and exclaimed: "That young man is not quoting the scripture correctly."

I was speaking at the time upon the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I was also enjoying an unusual flow of the Holy Spirit, and felt more calm and collected at this interruption than I otherwise would have done. I deliberately opened the Bible and read therefrom the very passages which I had previously quoted verbatim, and cited the chapter and verse.

At this the Baptist took his seat, but I had not proceeded much farther with my remarks when I again had occasion to quote from the scriptures, and lest I again should be found fault with, I opened the Bible and read from it, when the deacon, a second time arose and declared that it was not from King James' translation of the Bible that I was quoting, but "Joe Smith's golden Bible," etc.

Several of the audience immediately ordered him to be still and let the young man proceed, as they wanted to hear the preaching.

Again he became quiet, but soon broke forth in a perfect rage, said I was lying, and denounced, in a rather incoherent manner, "Joe Smith" and his "golden bible," and the "Mormons" as "chicken thieves" and "hog stealers," etc.

A number of persons immediately surrounded him as if they intended to thrust him out, and lest they should use violence I began to plead for him, and requested them to allow him to retire quietly. I added, however, that I was there on my Father's business, commissioned to proclaim the gospel, and if he did not speedily repent the Lord would rebuke him and the judgment of God would overtake him. At this he turned and rushed from the room almost foaming with rage.

He had four drunken sons in the town and he proceeded to hunt them up to incite them to mob me. Just then a fire broke out in the Baptist meeting house, and on hearing the alarm I adjourned the meeting for one hour.

In the audience was a Major John Houston, a brother of the celebrated Sam Houston, who was in command of a military post near by. He had boarded a few days at the same place that I had, and had therefore become somewhat acquainted with me.

He followed the deacon and advised him against molesting me, telling him if he persisted in it he would have to take him in charge. The deacon concluded to desist but raged, and cursed "Joe Smith" and the "golden bible" and the young preacher, and everything connected with him as he proceeded home, and on entering his house, almost immediately fell dead and turned black.

In this condition he lay for two days, no one, not even his own sons, daring to go near him until, a Campbellite preacher, who also had happened to be one of my audience, and who had heard of his condition, came to me and informed me of it. I went with him to Major Houston, and through his influence some persons were employed to go and bury the dead man.

Within a week from the time of the deacon's death his wife also died, and his sons kept up their drunken spree until they had run through four thousand dollars of the money which their father had left and also other property.

Many of the people of the town regarded this series of calamities as the judgment of God, and even the Campbellite preacher admitted to me that it had very much the appearance of it.

Soon after these events transpired I returned to a place about twenty miles distant, to fill a previous appointment, and while there Major Houston was taken sick with the cholera. He felt that he was going to die, and wanted to have me sent for. I had conversed with him many times upon the subject of religion, and, though he professed to be an infidel, I could see that he was pricked in his heart but was too proud to acknowledge it. Shortly before he died he made a request that I should preach his funeral sermon, and on my return to Yellsville I did so, and I think I never had more of the Spirit of God in preaching in my life than I did on that occasion, infidel though he pretended to be.

I returned from this mission in the summer of 1838, and soon afterwards the troubles of the Saints with the Missouri mobocrats recommenced, in which I became earnestly engaged. After Far West had been besieged by the mob militia under General Clark and we had been compelled to surrender our arms, I was taken prisoner in company with many of my brethren.

CHAPTER II

MARRIED WHILE A PRISONER OF WAR – PROPERTY CONFISCATED – REMOVAL TO QUINCY – FIRST HARD WORK – REMOVAL TO MONTROSE – MISSION TO TENNESSEE – SHOT AT – CAMP, MY CHAMPION – A LAWYER AND HIS MOB – APPEAL TO MASONS FOR HELP – READY RESPONSE – CAMP'S VENGEANCE ON THE LAWYER – NEWS OF MARTYRDOM – RETURN TO NAUVOO – BRIGHAM YOUNG INSPIRED – ANOTHER MISSION SOUTH – BLESSINGS IN THE TEMPLE – JOURNEY TO SALT LAKE VALLEY.

On the 11th of November, while still a prisoner of war, I was married, which might be considered as a proof that I had not lost hope. I was fortunate in securing a wife who was zealous and devoted to her religion and ready to sacrifice or endure anything to further its interests.

After the troops were withdrawn from Far West I visited my farm two miles south of the town, to look after my stock which I had left there, and found that all my earthly possessions save my real estate had been confiscated by the army.

On visiting the late camp-ground of the army I found the heads of eleven of my oxen which had been butchered, and there was no trace left of my sheep, swine, etc.

Brother John Butler, who had been obliged to flee to the north to save his life, had left his family in my charge. He had a span of very poor horses and an old wagon. I loaded the wagon up with his wife and five children and what few goods I had left, which consisted of one trunk full of clothes besides what my wife and I wore. I managed to find one of my horses which the mob had taken and used in such a shocking manner that his back was skinned almost from his withers to his tail. This animal I hitched on ahead of Brother Butler's horses, and by those of us walking who were able to do so, we slowly made our way to Quincy, Illinois, in the depth of winter. On arriving there I went to work carrying the hod up a four-story building – really the first hard work I had ever done, to make another start in life, while my wife assisted by taking in sewing.

In the month of July I removed to Montrose, opposite Commerce. In May of the following year I went on a mission to Tennessee, from which I returned the following October, and again the next year, I went to Charleston, South Carolina, being instructed to introduce the gospel there. I spent all the money I had in renting halls and publishing placards announcing my meetings, but although I had large audiences, and numbers of persons came to me, Nicodemus-like – by night, to inquire about the gospel, I failed to make one convert. I returned to Nauvoo from this mission in 1842.

In the summer of 1843, I took a trip through southern Illinois and north-western Kentucky, in the interest of the Nauvoo House, and in May, 1844, I again went south to Tennessee to electioneer for Joseph Smith as candidate for the Presidency of the United States. On arriving at Dresden, Tenn., I rented the court-house to hold meeting in, and while in the act of preaching to a good-sized audience, a mob gathered outside and a shot was fired at me through the window. The bullet passed near my head and lodged in the ceiling, and immediately afterwards a few brickbats were also thrown through the window. Considerable excitement followed and the audience began to scatter, when a man by the name of Camp, somewhat noted as a fighting character, arose and called on the fleeing people to stop. He told them if they would only sit and listen to the preaching, he would go out and look after the persons who were creating the disturbance. About two-thirds of the audience again became seated and he went outside and procured a shot-gun, with which he patrolled around the courthouse the remainder of the evening, and there was no further trouble.

Another meeting was announced for the following day, but before it commenced a lawyer of the town laid his plans to break it up. I had not long been speaking when he, at the head of a mob of

two hundred men, marched into the room and demanded that I should cease speaking, as they had come to attend to my case.

In this emergency, and for the only time in my life in public, I made use of a masonic sign calling for help, when lo! a number of persons sprang up to assist me. The lawyer was commanded to give his reasons for interfering with me, which he proceeded to do by delivering a most abusive and slanderous speech. I finally commanded him to sit down and he did so very suddenly, and the masons who were present, who were very numerous and influential, gave him to understand that he would not be allowed to molest me. I continued my remarks, and at the close of the meeting Mr. Camp took vengeance on the lawyer by knocking him down and kicking him around the court-house yard.

From Dresden I proceeded to Paris, in the same State, where I contracted for the publication of 1,000 copies of Joseph Smith's "Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States." After the printing had been done and paid for, the printer informed me that if I attempted to circulate the pamphlets it would be likely to land me in the penitentiary, as the views expressed therein, in regard to freeing the slaves, would be considered treasonable and contrary to law. On consulting a lawyer of the place, a boyhood friend of mine, I found that he held the same opinion, and I therefore suppressed the whole edition.

I was at Father Church's, on Duck river, in Hickman Co., Tenn., when I received the news of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, six days after the consummation of that bloody deed. I immediately proceeded down Duck river to the Tennessee river, by canoe, and, on arriving there, in company with three other Elders, purchased a skiff, and made my way to Paducah on the Ohio river, from which place I took steamer to Nauvoo.

On arriving in Nauvoo I found that Sidney Rigdon was striving to establish his claim to the leadership of the Church, and proffering various unheard-of offices to such persons as would rally around his standard. However, on the arrival of President Young and the other Apostles from their missions, his claims were soon set aside.

I was present at the meeting held in Nauvoo on the occasion when President Young assumed the leadership of the Church, and can testify with hundreds of others that he spoke by the power of God on that occasion and that he had the very voice and appearance of Joseph Smith.

The following autumn I was sent by President Young to Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi to raise means for the building of the Temple and also to induce the Saints scattered through that region to migrate to Nauvoo and make preparations to journey westward. I returned to Nauvoo in the summer of 1845, bringing a large number of the Saints with me. I also left many others partially prepared to follow, who were subsequently gathered up by Elders John Brown and Wm. Crosby and led westward, by way of Arkansas, to Salt Lake Valley.

After my return to Nauvoo I labored on the Temple until it was so far completed as to admit of the ordinances being performed in it, when I had the blessed privilege of entering it and receiving my endowments and having wives sealed to me. I also at that time had the son of my first wife (who, I should have mentioned, was a widow when I married her) adopted to me by the Priesthood, and he has ever since borne my name and been recognized and treated as one of my own sons.

I labored about three months in the temple in administering the ordinances of the house of God to others, and in April, 1846, I left Nauvoo and started westward with quite a large company of my southern friends. On arriving at Winter Quarters I was ordained a Bishop and appointed to preside over a Ward, and spent the winter in building cabins to shelter the people and in looking after the wants of the poor. In the spring of 1847 I was appointed to organize and lead westward a company of Saints having one hundred and twenty wagons. I chose as my assistants Major Russell and Geo. B. Wallace. We arrived in Salt Lake Valley on the 24th day of September.

Thus passed the first twelve years of my connection with the Church – twelve years of rough but not unprofitable experience for me, considering the many lessons I learned and the satisfaction I enjoyed in contemplating my labors. During that period I had become strong and healthy, and through

the blessings of God, had been enabled, with the help of my wife and boy, to earn a subsistence and accumulate some property, notwithstanding the many missions I had filled and the losses of property I had sustained.

Since that time I never have performed a regular preaching mission abroad, although in 1851, I was sent to England, for that purpose; but on arriving there it was decided to have me return to lead the first company emigrated by the Perpetual Emigration Fund across the plains, and after a stay of thirty days in that country I did so. I filled various business missions, however, in which I crossed the plains thirteen times with ox and mule teams.

CHAPTER III

ALMOST LOST IN THE ATLANTIC – NARROWLY ESCAPE THE "SALUDA" DISASTER – NEARLY DEAD WITH THE CHOLERA – HEALED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER – BLOWN UP WITH A KEG OF POWDER – A SICK WOMAN HEALED – ELDER PATTEN'S REMARKABLE PREDICTION FULFILLED – A MAN ALMOST DEAD RECOVERS ON BEING BAPTIZED.

During my experience I have seen the power of God manifested upon various occasions in preserving my life; indeed, considering the many narrow escapes I have had, it might be almost thought that I have had a charmed life.

On my return from England in 1853, on board the new steamer *Pacific*, we encountered a severe storm, in which the deck was swept clear of rigging, the deck cabin, one of the wheels, both wheel houses and the bulwarks. The steamer was entirely submerged in the sea at one time, and had she not been very well built she would never have come to the surface again. It looked like a precarious time, but I felt an assurance that the vessel would be saved, and in the midst of all the excitement which prevailed among the crew and passengers I felt quite calm. I had seventeen thousand dollars in gold in my possession, and I did not even fear that I would lose that. Our preservation, however, was certainly providential, for the vessel was in a terribly dilapidated condition, but we finally arrived safely in New York with the wrecked vessel, after a voyage of sixteen days.

I subsequently had a very narrow escape on the occasion of the *Saluda* disaster. I had purchased the supplies for my company to make its overland journey with, except cattle, at St. Louis, and had decided to go farther up the river to buy the stock, when Eli B. Kelsey came to me to consult me in regard to chartering the *Saluda* to convey an independent company of Saints up the river. I went with him to examine the boat, and on finding that it was an old hulk of a freight boat, fitted up with a single engine, I strongly advised him against having anything to do with it. He seemed to be influenced in making choice of it entirely by the fact that he could get it cheaper than a better one; but in my opinion it seemed folly, for in addition to the danger of accident, the length of time likely to be occupied in making the journey would more than counterbalance what might be saved in the charge for transit. However, he decided to charter it, and then both he and the captain urged me strongly to take passage with them, offering to carry me free of cost if I would only go, but I could not feel satisfied to do so. I followed a few days afterwards on the *Isabella*, and overtook them at Lexington, where the *Saluda* was stopped by the float-ice and was unable to proceed farther. I went on board of her to visit the Saints (who were in charge of D. J. Ross, Eli B. Kelsey having gone ashore to purchase cattle), and left just before the last plank was drawn in, preparatory to attempting to start. I had not walked to exceed two hundred yards after leaving the *Saluda* before the explosion occurred, and on turning to look in the direction of the the ill-fated boat I saw the bodies of many of the unfortunate passengers and various parts of the boat flying in the air in every direction. Fortunately for the Saints on board, they were mostly on the deck of the boat and pretty well towards the stern, and they consequently fared better than those who were below, or on the forepart of the boat, which was blown entirely to pieces. As it was, however, upwards of twenty of the Saints were lost or subsequently died of their wounds. My own preservation I can only attribute to the providence of the Almighty, for if I had remained a moment on the wharf to see the boat start, as would have been very natural for a person to do, I would have been blown into eternity as those were who stood there.

I shall never forget the kindness of the citizens of Lexington in caring for the living and burying the dead. The Lord certainly inspired them to do all that sympathy and benevolence could suggest in aid of the afflicted. The city council set apart a piece of ground in which to bury the Saints who had died, and William H. Russell, the great government freighter, and many other prominent citizens

did all they could to comfort and help the afflicted survivors. Besides their devoted attention, their contributions in aid of the Saints amounted to thousands of dollars.

The disaster described is really the only accident of any consequence by water that has befallen a company of Latter-day Saints in emigrating from the old countries, and there was much reason to believe that Providence was in their favor to a great extent even in that case, or a much greater number would certainly have lost their lives.

I remained at Lexington about eight days looking after the interests of the Saints and purchasing stock, after which I returned to St. Louis, where I met the company of Saints I was to conduct across the plains. On reaching Atchison, our starting point for the overland journey, the company was stricken with the cholera. There were over forty cases, and of these some fifteen proved fatal. Numbers were healed instantaneously through the prayer of faith when the Elders laid their hands upon them, although apparently near death's door; others gave way entirely to fear, failed to exercise faith and soon died. After we had started upon our journey and when the last person who had been afflicted had recovered, I was prostrated with the same dread disease. The train was stopped and the whole company fasted and prayed for two days for my recovery, but I continued growing worse until my limbs and the lower portion of my body were apparently dead, but then the faith of the Saints and the power of the Almighty prevailed in my behalf and I recovered. I had, however, lost seventy-five pounds in weight within a few days.

Another remarkable instance in which the providence of the Almighty was manifest in my preservation occurred in the following May. I was emptying a small keg of powder and standing in a stooping position right over it, and as it did not run out very freely I shook the keg, when it exploded. The staves and pieces of hoops were scattered in every direction, some pieces being afterwards found at least eight rods distant. I was blown into the air and my face and hands most terribly burned. It was a marvel that the staves of the keg were not driven through my body, but it did not appear that a single one had struck me. The whole of the skin came from my face and hands, yet, wonderful to relate, there is not now a mark of powder about my face, and my eyesight, the loss of which I was most fearful of, was not at all impaired by it.

This series of narrow escapes which I have related I passed through within a little over a year; and it really seemed to me that Satan was bent upon my destruction. The fact that my life was preserved through them was an evidence to me of the power of God and that He had a purpose in allowing me to live.

I have witnessed the power of God displayed in the healing of persons who were sick in hundreds of instances, in some cases that would probably be considered by the world as very wonderful, but to which the Saints, whose experience has been similar to my own, had become accustomed. I think Elder David W. Patten possessed the gift of healing to a greater degree than any man I ever associated with. I remember on one occasion when I was laboring with him as a missionary in Tennessee, he was sent for to administer to a woman who had been sick for five years and bed-ridden for one year and not able to help herself. Brother Patten stepped to her bedside and asked her if she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. She replied that she did. He then took her by the hand and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, arise!"

She immediately sat up in bed, when he placed his hands upon her head and rebuked her disease, pronounced blessings upon her head and promised that she should bear children. She had been married for seven years and had never had any children, and this promise seemed very unlikely ever to be fulfilled. But she arose from her bed immediately, walked half a mile to be baptized and back again in her wet clothes. She was healed from that time, and within one year became a mother, and afterwards bore several children.

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