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The Lamanites

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Abstract: Richard writes that the wild imaginations of men have blinded them to the pure and simple truth. They have imagined all sorts of theories of the Indians' descent yet they do not believe the Book of Mormon, which tells the truth plainly. The LDS policy toward the Indians is to try to educate, elevate, and convert the Indians. He quotes from Mormon 5:19-20 that the gentiles will scatter the Lamanites after which the Lord will remember the covenant he has made with Abraham and all the house of Israel.

The Latter-day Saints'

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HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH
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THE LAMANITES.

From the first discovery of the American continent, conjecture has been busy in the brains of the curious endeavouring to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion as to how it became peopled, and from what land its marvellous race of inhabitants migrated. The wise of the earth have arrived at such perfection in originating sublime theories, having no other foundation than the spiritualizing heads of their authors, that they are little prepared to receive the simple statements of the origin of the Indian race, made in the Book of Mormon, which is a record of this interesting people, and which was hid up in the earth by Divine command fourteen centuries and a half ago, and has been brought forth by revelation through angels, in this age of the world, for the redemption and restitution of this down-trodden people.

From this narrative we learn that the father of this people, with his family, left Jerusalem, by commandment from the Lord, in the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah. Being led by the counsel and direction of the Lord in their travels, they arrived on the shores of the ocean, where they embarked in vessels of their own building. After a long voyage, through the special care and protection of the Lord, they landed on what is now called the American continent, consequently the Aborigines of that continent are a branch of the house of Israel, and therefore heirs to the blessings and promises of the "new and everlasting covenant."

It is not our intention here to enter into the details of the early history of the

Lamanites, which is so beautifully delineated in the Book of Mormon. We design merely to notice a few important events in their late history, and some principles involved therein. We look forward with deep interest to the fulfilment of many prophecies, of particular importance to them and all the inhabitants of the vast continent which they inhabit.

On the discovery of America, Europeans at once assumed the right to appropriate the country to their own use. They did this wholly regardless of the rights of those who had occupied it for generations, and who held it by the free gift of the God of heaven. The history of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico and South America has no parallel in the annals of the world, for blood-thirsty butcheries, wholesale robberies, and every species of cruelty that avarice, tyranny, and merciless religious bigotry, could invent to destroy an unoffending people, whose only crimes were that they had not received "the mark of the Beast," but that they possessed gold and silver, and endeavoured to defend their sacred rights against bands of lawless invaders. The following anecdote will illustrate, better than any ordinary comments, the relentless cruelty of the Spaniards—In the conquest of the island of Cuba, a brave chief, who had made a stubborn resistance to the whites, was condemned to be burned at the stake. When urged, at the point of death, to embrace Christianity, that his soul might go to heaven, he inquired if white men went there? On being answered in the

affirmative, he exclaimed, "Then I will not be a Christian, for I would not go to a place where I must find men so cruel!"

The course pursued in making and extending the settlements on that portion of the North American continent now comprised in the United States, has been but little more becoming the character of a Christian people than that of the Spaniards in South and Central America. The work of destruction, although slower, has been none the less sure.

The policy pursued by the Government of the United States towards the Indians, has, in practice, been based upon the principle that "might makes right," and the weak must make way for the strong. To remove to the western side of the Mississippi river the Indian tribes who were on the eastern side, has been the leading policy of that Government for a number of years. This, no doubt, has been honourably accomplished when a tribe has been united in making a treaty to that effect. In cases where the Indians have been too strongly attached to their native soil to dispose of it, the meanest duplicity and intrigue have sometimes been used to accomplish their removal. Instances are not wanting of treaties being made with a few of a tribe who could be influenced by bribes or strong drink, and then those treaties being forced upon the balance with the bayonet. A prominent instance of this kind occurred with the Seminole Indians of Florida. A treaty was made with a small and unauthorized party of this tribe, which treaty was opposed by the majority, who carried on a war with the United States for several years. Under the mere pretence of enforcing a compact made in good faith, the United States, after expending about thirty millions of dollars and many lives, finally subdued these Indians, and removed them from their native soil.

Those tribes which were removed from the east side of the Mississippi river to the west side, had their lands guaranteed to them in perpetuity by the Government of the United States, and might reasonably have expected to remain on them in peace. Instead of this, that restless spirit of enterprise, so characteristic of the American people, has again gathered the whites around the borders of the Lamanites, and is again forcing them to retire before that race which has unrelentingly wasted them away with vice, pestilence, and war.

The United States have recently succeeded in negotiating with several tribes, who have, during the last few years, been located west of the Mississippi, for their removal still further from the settlements of the whites. Treaties for the accomplishment of the same object will, no doubt, be made as soon as possible with many other tribes similarly situated.

In the history of this people, since the settlement of their country by Europeans, we see the literal fulfilment of many predictions of their Prophets, recorded in the Book of Mormon. We will refer to one where, after speaking of their falling away in idolatry and unbelief, it says—"And behold the Lord hath reserved their blessings, which they might have received in the land, for the Gentiles who shall possess the land. But behold, it shall come to pass, that they shall be driven and scattered by the Gentiles."—Mormon iii, 8. The query naturally arises, what will be the result of these things? Where will this persecuted race find a refuge from the destruction which pursues them? We find an answer to these queries in the continuation of the paragraph above quoted—"And after they have been driven and scattered by the Gentiles, behold, then will the Lord remember the covenant which he made unto Abraham and unto all the house of Israel." This, in connexion with many other promises of their restoration and redemption, unvails their future destiny to all who believe the sacred records.

The movements now being made are pregnant with important results. We record a few leading facts pertaining to the late treaties, and shall watch the future with increasing interest.

On the 3rd of March, 1853, the Congress of the United States passed an act, in which they authorized the president to enter into negotiations with the Indian tribes west of the States of Missouri and Iowa, for the ultimate object of purchasing their lands, that they might be open for settlement by the citizens of the United States, and for removing the present owners to new locations. To carry out the design of this act, on the 18th of August following, Mr. R. McClelland, Secretary of the Interior, issued a letter of instructions to Col. Geo. W. Manepenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to take the preliminary steps for the accomplishment of this object.

Mr. Manepenny, in his report to the

department of the Interior, of Nov. 9, 1853, states that, immediately on receiving his letter of instructions of the 18th of August, he left Washington for the Indian country, which he entered on the 2nd of September, and left on the 11th of October following. The intervening time was spent in obtaining information that might be useful in the future negotiation of treaties, and in meeting the Indians in council, in order to remove, if possible, their objections to selling their lands. This it appears he succeeded in doing only to a very limited extent.

He held councils with the following tribes — Omahas, Ottoes, and Missourians, Sacs and Foxes of Missouri, Kickapoos, Delawares, Wyandotts, Shawnees, Pottawatomies, Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi, Chippewas of Swan Creek and Black River, Ottawas, Peorias, Kaskaskias, Weas, Piankashaws, and Miamis. The total number of these tribes he estimates at 14,384, and the aggregate quantity of land held by them at 13,220,480 acres, or about 920 acres to each individual. According to the same data, the aggregate population of the Pawnees, Kansas, Osages, Quapaws, Senecas, and Shawnees and Senecas is 11,597 souls, and the quantity of land held by them 18,399,200 acres, or about 1,586 acres to each soul. Some of the tribes with whom he held councils, were willing to sell all or a portion of their lands, while many would not at first listen to his proposals.

Mr. Manepenny states what is certainly very natural—that these tribes have the most vivid recollection of the assurances given in the treaties made with them when they left their former homes, that their present locations should be permanent, and that the whites never should interfere with them again. He further says, that this point was prominently set forth by their speakers in their councils. It probably required considerable practical diplomacy in the way of presents, and special arguments, enforced by presenting to their minds, in glowing colours, their own weakness, and the increasing number of the whites around them, to induce them to concede to this point, which a few appear to have done.

With the keen sense of injury that the Indian possesses, he never can forget the many wrongs which have been heaped upon his race by the white man. They are indelibly stamped on the tablet of his

memory. There they will remain through life, and then be left as an heritage to his children, until their bow shall again abide in strength, and restitution come to these remnants of Jacob.

The Indian character has not been properly understood, nor duly appreciated, by the American people. They have dealt with the Aborigines of the country as best suited their interest or convenience, without regard to equity or justice. The Bible and the sword have been presented to them together. Side by side with the principles of virtue and religion, have been introduced the detestable vices of intemperance and debasing prostitution, with all their attendant evils. And by that same race, professing to do them good, the Indians have been inoculated with the most destructive diseases, which have swept them off until there is indeed but a remnant left of what were powerful tribes before they came in contact with the whites. Under these considerations, why should Mr. Manepenny, as the Government agent, be surprised that so few should have fallen in love with that civilization which has so emphatically been productive of death and destruction to them?

We learn that, in July last, treaties with the following tribes were ratified by the Senate of the United States — the Omahas, Ottoes and Missouris, Sacs and Foxes of Missouri, Iowas, Kickapoos, and Delawares. By these treaties land was ceded to the United States, to the extent of about 11,500,000 acres. Should treaties, already concluded with other tribes, be ratified by the Senate, the amount of land ceded by them would be about 2,026,000 acres, making, with the treaties just named, a total of 13,374,500 acres. Thus we see this unfortunate people suffering a second removal from their homes, under the force of circumstances beyond their control, and the prestige of a power they dare not oppose.

The Aborigines of the American continent, like other branches of the great Abrahamic family, have been unrelentingly persecuted. Since the commencement of the great emigration to California across the continent, the whites have continually trespassed upon the lands and rights of the Indians, without license. No adequate remuneration has been made them for the thousands of their wild animals which have been slaughtered without even

the shadow of necessity. These animals are almost the only source of subsistence to the Indian, and are really as much his property as the horses and oxen with which the emigrants travel the plains are their property. The bloodthirsty propensities of some of the whites, not being satisfied with destroying property, have led them to shoot down the Indians in the same cold-blooded manner in which they have killed the wild beasts of the plain.

But little attention is paid to, and less is known of, these dark deeds of white men, beyond the mountain regions where they are committed. If the ignorant Indian, provoked by aggression upon his rights, takes a few horses for the damages he sustains, he is denounced as a thief. If perchance he kills some unwary trespasser, in retaliation for the murder of his brethren, in accordance with the law handed down from his fathers, which demands blood for blood, the deed is probably made a subject of special report to the Government, and heralded abroad as one of the most atrocious cruelty.

The course pursued by the whites towards the Indians has been one of the most glaring inconsistency. The whites have ever been forward in recommending good principles, but the last to practise them. None understand better than the Indians many of the principles of natural rights, and their plain honest reasonings might well put to shame the duplicity of white men.

The people of the United States have driven the Latter-day Saints, by mob violence, from their midst, to seek shelter in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, where alone they can enjoy that precious boon—liberty to worship God in their own way. There they are surrounded by powerful tribes of Indians; and the Government of the United States, by its policy, is likely to surround the rapidly increasing settlements of the Saints with thousands more. When to these circumstances is added our knowledge of the designs of the Lord concerning them, and the oppression they have suffered by many perfidious acts, similar to those of the forced treaties of New Euchota with the Cherokees, and Payne's Landing with the Seminoles, we find our sympathies united with our interests as incentives to win, if possible, the respect and confidence of the Indians, and bring them back to civilization and the religion of their fathers.

The conduct of the Government and people of the United States towards the Lamanites, can only be compared in reckless cruelty and infamous treachery, with the driving of the Saints from their homes in Missouri and Illinois, to find a home in the wilderness, or perish. The blood of innocence, shed on American soil, cries to Heaven for vengeance, and its call will not go unheeded. In these things we see the hand of the Lord at work, bringing about His purposes, and also the truth of that declaration of the Prophet Brigham—"By the wickedness of the wicked shall the righteous prosper."

When driven from our homes, our enemies expected us to perish of cold and starvation. Disappointed in that, they have fondly indulged the delusion that the Indians would do the deed which they had not the power to accomplish. It is true the Saints have had their Indian wars and troubles, but in these it has been their policy to avoid indiscriminate massacre. They have endeavoured to keep, if possible, that heavenly principle, never to shed blood except in self-defence. This principle, if observed, would give peace to the world. By following it, the Lord has blessed the Saints when they have gone forth to battle, and "Mormon" rifles have told on their enemies with an effect which will find but few parallels in the history of Indian warfare.

Thus far, as a people, the Saints have proved themselves equal to every emergency. This shows that the wisdom of Heaven has guided the counsels of those they sustain as their rulers. One remarkable fact is demonstrated in the history of the Saints, and that is, that while the kings of the earth are continually involving their people in war and trouble, the counsels of President Young, if followed, would keep the people of Utah out of such calamities. A few of the leading items in the Indian policy of Governor Young are—to feed them when suffering with hunger; never condescend to be their equals by too familiar intercourse; take no advantage of their ignorance or necessities in trading, but pay the value of their articles in something practically beneficial to them; rather let the guilty go free than injure the innocent; teach them the principles of the Gospel as fast as they can comprehend them; induce them to work, which many are doing, for a living; make no contracts with them, only with the inten-

tion of strict fulfilment; and finally, command their respect by being ever ready for self-defence.

It is difficult to find a better practical illustration of the principle of overcoming evil with good, than the manner in which the affairs of Utah were conducted during the Indian difficulties of 1853. Important results to Latter-day Saints have been brought about by mild measures, which would have cost the United States, under the policy they have so far adopted, an immense sacrifice of blood and treasure.

As soon as the first hostile shot had killed Kiel at his post, the people expected a tragedy had commenced, in which the best blood of the country must flow before it ended. In fact, the time had come which reflecting men had been expecting with some anxiety, when the Saints must measure their strength with that of the most warlike band of Indians in the mountains. The people looked with anxiety to the President of the Church, who was also the Executive of the territory, for such orders and instructions as would bring final deliverance from their enemies, and give them the mastery of the mountains. General orders and instructions were soon circulated and enforced throughout the territory. But were they

what the world might have expected, from the numerous examples of the United States under similar circumstances—to leave the ripened grain to waste, the scythe to rest in the swath, the plough in the furrow, and the hammer at the anvil, and, thirsting for blood, make an indiscriminate slaughter of the innocent with the transgressor, and rush madly on to death themselves? No, the dictates of the spirit of revelation, through the Prophet, to the people, were—Prepare yourselves and be ready for self-defence at all times, by fortifying your settlements, and going continually armed, and then pursue with double diligence the avocations of peace. That the principles of forbearance and kindness might not be wanting a prominent example of their force and power, the people were instructed to treat their enemies with kindness, and not shed their blood except in self-defence. The result of this policy is, that peace and prosperity again reigns in the valleys of Utah. This affords a beautiful illustration of the benefits arising from following the "Mormon" proverb—"Mind your own business." Ye kings and princes of the earth, go and do likewise. Overcome evil with good, then the din of war will cease, and your thrones be established in peace.

HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

(Continued from page 629.)

[December, 1838.]

This day Elder David H. Redfield arrived at Jefferson City, and on Monday, 17th, presented the petition of the brethren to General D. R. Atchison and others, who were very anxious to hear from Caldwell, as there were many reports in circulation, such as "the Mormons kept up the Danite system," "were going to build the Lord's house," and "more blood would be spilled before they left the State," &c.; which created a hardness in the minds of the people.

In the afternoon, brother Redfield had an interview with Governor Boggs, who inquired about our people and property with as much apparent interest as though his whole soul was engaged for our welfare; and said that he had heard that "the citizens were committing depreda-

tions on the Mormons, and driving off their stock," &c.

Brother Redfield informed him that armed forces came in the place and abused men, women and children, stole horses, drove off cattle, and plundered houses of everything that pleased their fancy.

Governor Boggs said that he would write Judge King and Colonel Price, to go to Far West, and put down every hostile appearance. He also stated that "the stipulations entered into by the Mormons to leave the State, and sign the deed of trust, were unconstitutional, and not valid."

Brother Redfield replied, "We want the Legislature to pass a law to that effect, showing that the stipulations and deeds of trust are not valid and are unconstitutional; and unless you do pass such a law, we shall not consider ourselves safe