

THE MAKING OF A "MORMON"

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The Making of A "Mormon" by William A. Morton

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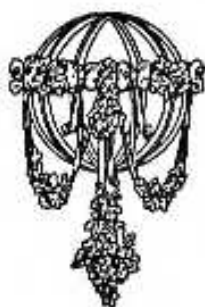


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Second Edition

THE DESERET NEWS
Salt Lake City, Utah
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CHAPTER I.

A MEETING IN THE MARKET PLACE.

It was a Saturday afternoon in August. Two young missionaries, Elders Smith and Harding, sat in the study-room of their lodge reading the letters they had penned to their parents and sweethearts, whom they had left in the fair vales of Utah a little over a year before. Opening his journal, Elder Smith took from between the leaves a tiny flower, a sweet Forget-me-not, which he had found by the wayside, and placed it in one of the letters. Then he walked over to the window and stood for a short time watching the crowds of humanity passing to and fro.

The little cuckoo clock announcing the hour of five turned his thoughts back into the room. He went to the table, and taking from the drawer a small bundle of tracts began stamping them with the name of the hall in which the Saints held their meetings and the time of devotional service. He little dreamed at that time of the wonderful mission which one of those simple leaflets would perform.

"Have you thought of a place at which to hold our meeting this evening?" asked his companion.

"No," he replied; "we will seek the guidance of the Lord in that matter." And then he began to sing in a soft, sweet, clear voice:

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord;
Over mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord;
I'll be what you want me to be."

A few minutes later Mrs. Thompson, the kind, motherly landlady, entered the room, carrying a tray on which was spread the missionaries' evening meal. With

thankful hearts the elders partook of the humble fare, and when the table was cleared they knelt down and invoked the blessing of the Lord upon the labors they were going to perform that evening. Then, donning their silk hats and frock coats, they went forth to proclaim the glorious principles of the everlasting Gospel.

On reaching the street, Elder Smith turned to his companion and said, "I feel a little nervous this evening. I have a premonition that we are going to encounter opposition."

"As if that were a strange thing. But why should we fear? Greater is He that is for us than he that is against us. Have you decided where to hold the meeting?" asked Elder Harding.

"I feel impressed to go to the market place," was the reply, and in that direction the young men turned their steps.

It was a beautiful evening. The streets were filled with people, dressed in their best attire. There were young men and maidens strolling leisurely along, arm in arm, all apparently light-hearted and happy. It was at this moment that the thoughts of Elder Smith flew back to home and the dear ones there. He thought of the pleasant Saturday afternoons he had spent with his companions on the baseball and football fields, and of the still more pleasant evenings he had spent in the company of one of the fair daughters of Zion, the one to whom he had sent the little flower, a dark-brown eyed, rosy-cheeked maiden, Miss Lenabel Graham.

On reaching the market place the elders opened their hymn books and began to sing:

"In ancient times a man of God
Came preaching in the wilderness;
He did baptize in Jordan's flood,
Requiring fruits of righteousness.

"He said, Repent, the time's fulfilled,
The Son of God will soon appear;
Make straight His paths as He hath willed,
For lo! His kingdom now is near.

- "With water I baptize you now
For the remission of your sin;
But He, the Spirit shall bestow,
To witness to your souls within.
- "Thus was Messiah's way prepared,
When first He came unto His own;
And by this means, when He appeared,
To His disciples He was known.
- "E'en so, in this, the latter day,
Before He comes on earth to reign,
His servants must prepare His way,
And all His paths make straight again.
- "Come, then, ye erring ones who stray,
Arise, return unto your fold;
Come, be baptized without delay,
And thus pursue the path of old."

The hymn was new to the people, and many stopped to listen. Prayer was offered by Elder Smith, and after another hymn had been sung, Elder Harding stepped forward and began to address the audience. He discoursed on the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel—faith in God, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the imparting of the Holy Ghost. He quoted much Scripture in support of the doctrine, and was pleased to see a number of people in the crowd nod their heads in approval of what he said.

He was followed by Elder Smith, who bore testimony to the truth of the doctrine advocated by his companion. Elder Smith then spoke on Divine authority, proving by the Scriptures that it is necessary for a man to possess authority from God, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. He cited instances in holy writ showing how certain men had incurred the displeasure of the Almighty by usurping authority and presuming to officiate in sacred ordinances without having first received the appointment of Heaven.

He next told of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Priesthood, and the re-establishing of the true Church of Christ on the earth in this dis-

penation, through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

As soon as he had ceased speaking, a man, pale and agitated, stepped forward, and was about to address the people when Elder Smith respectfully requested him to refrain from speaking until the service had been brought to a close in the proper manner—by the singing of a hymn and the pronouncing of the benediction.

The man, who was a local preacher, stepped back to his place. The word "Amen" had barely escaped the lips of Elder Harding when the voice of the local preacher was heard denouncing the testimony of Elder Smith with respect to the latter-day Prophet.

Just then a large, well-built man, pushed his way through the crowd, and going up to Elder Smith, put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Don't be afraid, young fellow, I'll see that you get fair play."

The crowd gathered closer about the missionaries and their opponent. Pointing to Elder Smith, the preacher said, "This fellow has stood here this evening and told a number of as diabolical falsehoods as ever came out of the mouth of mortal man. One of them is that God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son appeared to Joseph Smith."

At this point a humorist interrupted the speaker by saying, "Well, couldn't they appear to Joseph Smith if they wanted to?"

This brought forth a hearty laugh from the crowd, much to the discomfiture of the anti-Mormon. The latter proceeded: "The next falsehood he uttered was when he told us about the Book of Mormon, which he says is a record of the ancient inhabitants of America, and which he informed us was brought to light by the ministrations of an angel and translated by the gift and power of God. But where are the plates from which this record was translated? Can they be seen today? No, they can not. Smith's story is that after he had finished the work of translating, the angel took charge of the plates, and they have not been seen since."

"Well," said the humorist, "that's not a strange thing.