

**Henry Caswall**



*The City  
of the Mormons;  
or, Three Days  
at Nauvoo, in 1842*

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# The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842



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"

O merciful God,  
who hast made  
all men, and  
hatest nothing  
that thou hast  
made: have

mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and  
HERETICS,

and take from them all ignorance, hardness of  
heart,

and contempt of thy word; and so fetch them  
home,

blessed Lord, TO THY FLOCK, that they may  
be

saved among  
the remnant of  
true Israelites,  
and be made  
one fold under  
one Shepherd,  
Jesus Christ

our Lord, who  
liveth and  
reigneth with  
thee and the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, world  
without end.  
AMEN.

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## PREFACE.

The following narrative, the result of a few weeks' leisure on shipboard, is presented to the Christian public, with a deep sense, on the Author's part, of the iniquity of an imposture, which, under the name of religion, is spreading extensively in America and in Great Britain. Mormonism needs but to be seen in its true light to be hated; and if the following pages, consisting almost exclusively of the personal testimony of the Author, should assist in awakening public indignation against a cruel delusion and a preposterous heresy, he will consider himself amply rewarded. A History of Mormonism, from its commencement to the present time, may perhaps form the subject of a future publication.

Liverpool, June 19, 1842.

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THE  
CITY OF THE MORMONS,  
&c.

The rise and progress of a new religion afford a subject of the highest interest to the philosophical observer. Under these circumstances human nature may be seen in a novel aspect. We behold the mind grasping at an ideal form of perfection, exulting in the imaginary possession of revelations, and rejoicing in its fancied intercourse with the Supreme Being. A new religion must, of necessity, be regarded by Christians as a mere imposture. Painful, however, as it is to contemplate our fellow-beings deceiving and deceived, it is instructive, on the one hand, to watch the demeanour of those who have succeeded in establishing a spiritual dominion, and, on the other hand, to notice the conduct of those who believe themselves surrounded by the full blaze of prophecy and miracle.

Nor is the growth of a new religion a subject merely of philosophical curiosity. In a historical point of view it is worthy of all the light which careful investigation can bestow. The cause of truth imperatively demands that the progress of error should be diligently noted. How gladly should we receive the testimony of one who had been a witness of the early growth of the religion of Mahomet! How highly should we esteem an authentic account of the process by which the corrupt Christian of the seventh century was gradually alienated from the faith of his fathers,

and induced to accept as divine the "revelations" of the Arabian impostor!

To give such a testimony, to describe such a process, is within the power of the traveller at the present day. In Western America, amid countless forms of schism, a new religion has arisen, as if in punishment for the sins of Christendom. Like Mahometanism, it possesses many features in common with the religion of Christ. It professes to admit the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, it even acknowledges the Trinity, the Atonement and Divinity of the Messiah. But it has cast away that Church which Christ erected upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, and has substituted a false church in its stead. It has introduced a new book as a depository of the revelations of God, which in practice has almost superseded the sacred Scriptures. It teaches men to regard a profane and ignorant impostor as a special prophet of the Almighty, and to consider themselves as saints while in the practice of impiety. It robs them sometimes of their substance, and too often of their honesty; and finally sends them, beneath a shade of deep spiritual darkness, into the presence of that God of truth whose holy faith they have denied.

At the first preaching of Mormonism, sensible and religious persons, both in Europe and in America, rather ridiculed than seriously opposed it. They imagined it to be an absurd delusion, which would shortly overturn itself. But system and discipline, almost equal to those of Rome, have been brought to its aid. What was at first crude and undigested, has been gradually reduced to shape and proportion. At the present moment Mormonism numbers

more than a hundred thousand adherents, a large portion of whom are natives of Christian and enlightened England.

The immediate cause of my visit to Nauvoo was the following. Early in April, 1842, business took me to St. Louis, a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, situated on the western bank of the Mississippi, from which Kemper College is six miles distant. Curiosity led me to the river's side, where about forty steam-boats were busily engaged in receiving or discharging their various cargoes. The spectacle was truly exciting. The landing-place (or *levée*, as it is denominated) was literally swarming with life. Here a ponderous consignment of lead had arrived from Galena, four hundred miles to the north, and the crew were piling it upon the shore in regular and well-constructed layers. There a quantity of ploughs, scythes, and other agricultural implements, crowded the decks of a steamer which had just finished a westward voyage of fourteen hundred miles from Pittsburg. In another place, a vessel that had descended the rapid current of the Missouri for many hundred miles in an easterly direction, was landing pork and other produce of the fertile West; while farther down a large steam-boat from New Orleans, crowded with passengers from the South, having completed her voyage of twelve hundred miles, was blowing off the steam from her high pressure engines with a noise like thunder.

Desiring to know something respecting the passengers in the last boat, I proceeded on board; and as soon as the stoppage of the steam permitted me to be heard, I inquired of the clerk of the boat how many persons he had brought from New Orleans. "Plenty of live stock," was his reply,