

CHAPTER XXI.

GOING THROUGH THE "ENDOWMENT-HOUSE."— I TAKE THE MYSTERIOUS BATHS.

No Physic among the Saints.—I am taken Sick.—Herber C. Kimball recommends "Endowments."—How Brigham Murdered his little Granddaughter.—The Prophet wants a Doctor.—Being "administered" To.—I am Re-baptized.—Receive my Endowments.—How Saintly Sins are Washed Away.—Undignified Conduct of Elders.—The Order of Melchisedec.—How I was "Confirmed."—To become a Celestial Queen.—I go down to the Endowment-House.—The Mysterious Ceremonies Described.—The Veil at last Lifted.—The secrets of the Endowment-House Exposed.—I enter the Bath.—Miss Snow Washes Me.—She Anoints Me All Over.—I dress in a Bed-gown.—The "Peculiar Garment" of the Saints.—What the Mormon Girls do about It.—"Going through" without a Husband.—"A Great Shouting for Sarah!"

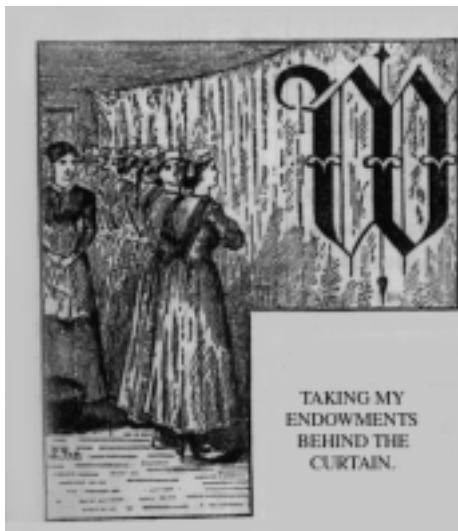
WHEN I was about sixteen years old, I was very ill, and my mother, her fears for the life and

welfare

of her only daughter always on the alert, became very anxious, and, indeed, almost ill herself in her concern for me.

According to Mormon custom, I was "administered to" by the anointing and laying on of hands, but all to no avail. Bishop

Taft, the one who had baptized my in my childhood, Isaac Groo, the Bishop's counselor, and Elder Samuel Hardy labored earnestly and long, and "wrestled in



prayer" over me, all to no avail. I grew worse, rather than better, and my family feared I should fall into pulmonary consumption.

The idea of employing a regular physician seemed never to occur to any of them. Indeed, at that time it was considered the surest sign of a weakening of faith to resort to medical aid, and no Mormon in good standing would ever entertain the suggestion for a moment. Latterly, however, a great deal of this nonsense has been done away with, under the subtle Gentile influence that is working throughout Utah, in Salt Lake City more especially, and some of the young Saints are actually studying for the medical profession. Brigham used to denounce physicians in the most wholesale manner in the Tabernacle, and declare that they should never enter heaven, but that he would himself close the doors against them.

He was so bitter at that time that he would allow none of his family to employ medical aid in any emergency. A little granddaughter of his, a child of one of his daughters, took some poison that her mother had prepared to exterminate rats with. Brigham was sent for, and when he arrived he found a physician there, preparing to administer to the child in the usual manner. Her rudely turned him out of doors, saying that he would care for the child himself; that no doctor should be allowed to worry her; and his "care," as usual, consisted of the laying on of hands—not a very energetic or efficacious mode of treating a poisoning case. The agonized parents dared not interfere, and in a few moments their child died before their very eyes, in the most terrible agony and distress, an innocent victim of the Prophet's egotism and bigotry.

That was Brigham Young well. Brigham Young ill is another person. In his variability of opinion he reminds one very forcibly of the dignitary treated of in the somewhat profane epigram—

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"The devil was sick;
The devil a monk would be:
The devil got well;
The devil a monk was he."

Whenever he has any ailment, a doctor is summoned at once; and during his illness, a little over a year since, he employed at least a half a dozen, keeping them in constant consultation, so great was his terror, and so absolute his horror of fatal consequences.

But when I was ill, the Prophet was in the best of health, and was indulging in the bitterest invectives against

physicians and all who employed them; and my mother, great and all-pervading as her affection was for me, and anxiously troubled as she was concerning my restoration to health, would have been shocked and grieved beyond measure, had any one proposed to her to seek medical advice concerning my condition. I was “in the hands of the Lord,” and I was to be left there, for Him to do with me as He would.

When it was found that being “administered to” did no good in my case, Herber C. Kimball advised that I receive my “Endowments,” promising that then I should surely be fully restored to health. This was considered as a very great favor, since, outside of Brigham Young’s and one or two other official families, no young persons are given their Endowments. My mother was overjoyed, and considered the bestowal of this honor a special interposition of Providence on my behalf. As a matter of course, I shared her feelings most fully. I had always been taught to anticipate the time when I should receive my Endowments as the most important epoch of my religious life, when I should be taken fully into the bosom of the church.

It was necessary, in order to receive these rites, that I should be re-baptized. Remembering my childish experience, and the terror which I suffered, I must confess that I



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dreaded, in my weakened state of health, that portion of the ceremony, and I grew quite nervous over it before the day arrived on which that rite was to be performed. I was reassured on one point, however. The pond experience was not to be repeated, but I was to be baptized in the Twelfth Ward font, which made it seem much less formidable, and divested it of half its terror.

On the day appointed I was taken to the Twelfth Ward meeting-house by my mother, where we met Isaac Groo, who was to baptize me. I was half frightened, and wholly awed, and very nervous; but my ardent desire for the reestablishment of my health gave me a sort of bravery

and endurance, so that I was calm, and behaved myself very well, considering the unnaturally excited state which I was in.

The ordinance of baptism, as administered by the Mormons, does not differ very materially from that of the Baptist churches. It is always by immersion. Nothing else is ever considered efficacious. It must be a literal “watery burial,” and a resurrection therefrom. The officiating elder, with his candidate for the rite, repairs to some place which has been previously appointed, and where there is a sufficient quantity of water to immerse the entire person. Not

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the least portion of the body must be left above the purifying fluid, else it could not be termed a “perfect burial with Christ.” In the early days it was necessary to perform this ordinance in the open air, in some river or pond; but lately fonts have been built in most ward meeting-houses, so that it can all be done under cover, and there is less danger of suffering ill results from exposure.

The elder officiating takes the candidate by the hand and leads him—or her, as the case may be—down into the water, until a sufficient depth is attained; he then raises his hand, and, calling the person by name, commences the ceremony as follows: “Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.” He then plunges the candidate under the water, bringing him forth into the newness of life, and fully prepared to enter upon a series of ordinances, all of which are attended with covenants calculated to bind the person more strongly to the church.

Following the baptism come the confirmation, or the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. It is usually administered directly after the first rite, and at the same place; but I was so ill and weak that I was taken directly home, and the elders came there to confirm me. They were Bishop Taft and Isaac Groo, and they certainly gave me every cause to be thankful to them for the prodigality of their promises. I certainly never have had occasion to be grateful on account of their fulfillment.

In the Church of Latter-Day Saints the “Melchisedec” and “Aaronic” priesthood are authorized to perform the ordinance of baptism, but the latter has no power to administer in spiritual things. Hence only a priest after the holy order of the Son of God, or the order of Melchisedec, can perform the ordinance of confirmation, or laying on of hands for imparting the Holy Ghost, which is to lead the newborn Saint into all truth, and teach him the

things to come; thus protect him from all falsehood and imposition,

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and placing him in the most perfect state of progression which, if real, would be a state of the highest felicity and most assured salvation.



Two or three elders lay their hands upon the head of the person to be confirmed, one of whom acts as a mouth-piece for the rest, and pronounces the blessings and promises, generally exhausting his full list of mercies upon him whom they are receiving into full Sainthood. There are two essentials in this ordinance which are never omitted—"I confirm you a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," and, "I also confer upon you the Gift of the Holy Ghost."

Oftentimes the elder becomes so thoroughly filled with inspiration that he cannot cease his blessing until he has sealed the young Saint up to eternal life, with a perfect assurance that he shall "inherit all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with a fullness of the holy priesthood after the order of an endless life;" thus placing him beyond the possibility of falling from grace or missing the celestial gate: though he may wander from the fold and become bewildered in fogs and darkness, yet in the consummation of his mission to earth he will find his way back to

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the fold of Christ; and as it is supposed that the Word of God, spoken by the mouth of His servant, cannot fail, will inherit thrones, principalities, and dominions, by made King and Priest unto God and His Christ, and reign upon the earth.

The person, having reached this high plane in the kingdom of God on the earth, is considered properly pre-

pared to receive the higher and holier ordinance, which are to be kept entirely secret, and are accompanied by the strongest and most binding covenants, which cannot be broken without incurring the severest penalties.

I was promised everything that I could wish; indeed, I was quite overcome by the magnitude and number of special blessings that was promised me. First of all, as that was my most earnest desire, I was to have perfect health bestowed upon me at once. I was to go on "from grace to glory," in full saintship, and my last days were to be better than my first. I am glad to say that this portion of the blessing promises to be fulfilled, although by no means in the manner that was intended when the blessing was bestowed. I, of course, could not be a King or Priest, but I should be "Celestial Queen," with all the glory, emoluments [**payments**], and perquisites which attend that very exalted, but somewhat mythical, position. Having thus settled my future to their evident satisfaction, they left me fully prepared to receive my Endowments.

I was now all eagerness to receive my Endowments. If the first step could have so sudden and marked an effect on me, what would not the greatest, the most important step of all, do for me! My faith in it and its virtues was almost sublime. I could scarcely wait for the next day to come—the day that had been appointed for me to enter into the full fellowship of the church, the full glory of the Lord, and the eternal heirship to heavenly things.

The morning came, however, and, with a heart filled with hopeful anticipation, I took my way to the Endowment-House [carrying a lunch and my Temple-ropes, which had



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to be specially prepared for this occasion], where, in the absence of a regular Temple, the rites were performed. I expected something solemn and awful; something elevat-

ing to the spirit, and ennobling to the mind. How I was disappointed, everyone who has entered the Endowment-House with feelings similar to my own will understand. In place of the awe, which I expected to find the rites endowed with, they were ridiculous and farcical in the extreme.

I have heard persons speak of the solemnity of their feelings on the occasion of taking their Endowments, but, with all respect to their truthfulness, I am always incredulous in the extreme. I think either their imagination must have got the better of their common sense, or they could have had very little of the latter commodity to begin with, else they would have seen through the very thin tissue of absurdities which they are obliged to witness with unmoved features, for to laugh in the Endowment-House would be the most fearful sacrilege. For my own part, I was in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. I wanted to laugh; everything seemed so ridiculous; and yet all the while I was conscience-stricken at my own levity. I thought it must be my own wicked heart, and not the rites themselves, and

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I was constantly upbraiding myself for lack of spiritual grace; and yet I could not alter my feelings in the least. The only thing that in any degree overcame my disposition to laugh, was the horror at the oaths which I was obliged to take. They were fairly blood-curdling, they were so awful; and even now a shudder runs through my whole frame as I recall them.

The Endowment rites are nothing more nor less than a drama, founded partially upon the Bible, but more upon Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It represents the Creation, the Fall, and the final Restoration of Man to his first glory. To speak in stage parlance, the "different lines of business" are taken by the leaders of the church, who always sustain the same characters. The following is a list of the *dramatis personae* at the time that I took my Endowments: —

- ELOHIM *or Head God*—Brigham Young.
- JEHOVAH—Herber C. Kimball.
- JESUS—Daniel H. Wells.
- MICHAEL *or Adam*—W. C. Staines.
- SATA—W. W. Phelps.
- APOSTLE PETER—Orson Pratt.
- APOSTLE JAMES—John Taylor.
- WASHER—Erastus Snow.
- CLERK—David O. Calder.
- EVE—Miss Eliza R. Snow.
- TIMOTHY BROADBRIM *a Quaker*—Wilfred Woodruff.
- DEACON SMITH *a Methodist*—Orson Hyde.
- PARSON PEABODY *a Presbyterian*—Franklin D. Richards.
- ELDER SMOOTH-TONGUE *a Baptist*—Phineas H. Young.

FATHER BONIFACE *a Catholic*—George A. Smith.

When I entered the Endowment-House, I was made, first of all, to take off my shoes, for the place was too holy to be desecrated by outside dust. Having done this, I gave my name and age, the names of my parents, and date of baptism and confirmation, to the officiating clerk, who entered them all in a large book. Several other persons of both

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sexes were present, and after all had been similarly catechized, and their answers noted, we were asked to produce our bottles of oil—for we had been instructed, among other things, to bring with us a bottle of the best olive-oil: these were taken from us; our bundles of clothing were handed to us again, and we were told to "pass on."

We entered a large bath-room, which was separated in the middle by a heavy curtain, for the purpose of dividing the men from the women. The men passed to one side of the curtain, the women to the other. In our room were several large tubs filled with water, and Miss Eliza R. Snow and two or three other women were in attendance. I was received by Miss Snow, who placed me in one of the tubs, and washed me from my head to my feet, repeating certain formulae to the effect that I was washed clean from the blood of this generation, and if I remained firm in the faith, should never be harmed by any of the ills that beset the world, and which soon were to be showered in terrible profusion upon the earth. Plagues, pestilence and famine should cover the earth, and be let loose in its every corner, but I should be passed by unscathed, if I was true to my religion—the only revealed religion of God. After I had been wiped dry, she proceeded to anoint me with olive-oil. As she did so, she repeated, solemnly—

"*Sister*, I anoint your head, that it may be prepared for that crown of glory awaiting you as a faithful Saint, and the fruitful wife of a priest of the Lord; your forehead, that your brain may be quick of discernment; your eyes, that they may be quick to perceive the truth, and to avoid the snares of the enemy; your ears, that they may be quick to hear the word of the Lord; your mouth, that you may with wisdom speak the words of eternal life, and show forth the praise of the immortal gods; your tongue, to pronounce the true name which will admit you hereafter behind the veil, and by which you will be known in the celestial kingdom. I anoint your arms to labor in the cause of righteousness, and your hands

to be strong in building up the kingdom of God by all manner of profitable works. I anoint your breasts, that you may prove a fruitful vine to nourish a strong race of swift witnesses, earnest in the defense of Zion; your body, to present it an acceptable tabernacle when you come to pass behind the veil; your loins, that you may bring forth a numerous race to crown you with eternal glory, and strengthen the heavenly kingdom of your husband, your master, and crown in the Lord. I anoint your knees, on which to prostrate yourself, and humbly receive the truth from God's holy priesthood; your feet, to run swiftly in the ways of righteousness, and stand firm upon the appointed place. And now I pronounce your body an acceptable temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit."

As may be imagined, I was literally besmeared with oil from my head to my feet. I breathed it, smelled it, tasted it; it ran into my eyes, and made them smart fearfully, and dripped in any but an agreeable manner from my hair. I was fairly saturated with it; was cognizant of nothing else; and I was so nauseated from it that I could scarcely go on with the ceremonies. I got a distaste for it than that I have never got over, and to this day even the sight of it makes me ill.

After washing and anointing, I was given a garment which I was told to put on, and charged, after once assuming it, that I must never leave it off. When it became necessary to change, I must take off one side, then put the fresh one in its place; then I could drop the soiled one altogether, and get the fresh one on as soon as possible. So long as I wore it, I was free from danger, and even from death. Disease should not assail me, and neither shot nor the assassin's knife should have power to harm me; all should be turned one side. Every good Mormon wears this garment, and is very superstitious about allowing it off. It is said that Smith never would have been killed had it not been that he left off this charmed garment when he went to

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Carthage. Had he allowed it to remain of, the balls of the murderers would have been utterly powerless to harm him.

There is nothing elegant about this garment; on the contrary, it is quite ugly, and the young Saints who assume it dislike it terribly for its plainness and awkwardness. In shape, it is like a child's sleeping-robe, with the waist and drawers combined, and reaches from the neck to the feet. It is of white, bleached muslin, and untrimmed. Latterly, some of the younger daughters of Brigham Young, and other young ladies of the Mormon *bon ton*, have instituted a reform, and, to the horror of the older ones—who are not

given over to the "pomps and vanities," &c.,—have had their garments cut shorter, low in the neck, and short-sleeved, and elaborately trimmed. Of course the majority of the people, who have known of this innovation, have been terrible scandalized; but all to no avail. Mormon girls, like girls of the world, object to making guys of themselves; and neither "counsel" nor ridicule can affect them when once their minds are made up on the subject of dress. They will suffer for that what they will not for their religion.

Mine, of course, was made after the true orthodox fashion. Over it I wore a white night-gown and skirt, and on my feet white stockings and white linen shoes. My Temple robe was the last to be donned. It is a long, loose, flowing robe of homespun linen, falling to the ankle, and at the top plaited into a band, which passes over the right shoulder, and is fastened under the left arm; it was girdled by a white linen belt: the cap, which accompanies it, is a simple square of linen, or muslin, gathered in one corner to fit the head; the remainder falls down over the back of the head, like a veil.

While all this washing and robing was going on, on one side of the curtain, the same things were being done on the opposite side. I suppose we could hear the murmur of

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voices and the splash of water; but everything was quiet and subdued, and the most perfect order reigned.

When we were all ready, a name was secretly given to each one of us, which was the name by which we were to be known in the celestial world, and which was to be told only to the man who should take us through the veil. If a woman was married, her husband took her through; if not, some brother kindly performed the office for her, and he was rewarded for his kindness by having the young Saint's celestial name whispered confidingly in his ear. I was not married; so Elder Samuel Richards took me though, and I told him my name—and, by the way, he was the only person who ever knew it until after my apostasy, as I never told it to either of my husbands.

It is believed that as the husband has to "resurrect" his wife by her Endowment name, so it is rather necessary that he should know it. Consequently, when he is sealed to her, she is permitted to whisper her name to him though the veil, and after that it must be spoken no more between them until he shall call her by it on the morning of the final resurrection. If the Mormon doctrine were true, there would be a mighty shouting for "Sarah" at that time, as every person whose name I have heard was always called the same. It was the name that was given me, and I have known many others who received it. It certainly will make the husband's work at that time much lighter, since he need call but once to summon his entire family.