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## JAMES LEWIS AND THE CHINA MISSION

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### Historical Introduction

“IN 1852 I WAS CALLED ON A MISSION TO CHINA with Hosea Stout and Chapman Duncan,” James Lewis reminisced in his closing years in the 1890s. “This was the great trial of my life, in poverty with three helpless children, another was expected any day. I felt my weakness like Sampson shorn of his locks, but my trust was in God my Heavenly Father.”<sup>1</sup> Leaving his young wife and three (almost four) children behind in the settlement of Parowan, Utah, was just the beginning of his “great trial.” Lewis, Stout, and Duncan spent only six weeks in their assigned mission of China. These missionaries were unable to effectively proselytize among the native Chinese, and the British and American people stationed in Hong Kong<sup>2</sup> would not heed their message. “The heat of the atmosphere

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1. “Autobiography of James Lewis,” 3.
  2. The ancient Chinese island of Hong Kong, on the coast of southeast China, came under British rule in 1842 as part of the Treaty of Nanking. It is separated from the



James Lewis. Courtesy of Hole in the Rock Foundation.

was very oppressive. Being reduced in bad health, owing to change of diet, the manner of preparing it, &c., our spirits were, becoming depressed, and not perceiving a cheering ray of hope in all our labors,” Lewis lamented.<sup>3</sup> The three returned to their homes in Utah a little more than a year after they had departed, earlier than most of their colleagues sent out in 1852.

### James Lewis’s Early Life, 1814–51

Born in Maine on January 12, 1814, James Lewis first heard of the Latter-day Saints and their persecutions after arriving in Missouri in 1840; believing in their doctrine, he was baptized and ordained an elder in February 1842 in Keokuk, Iowa.<sup>4</sup> In 1847, he married Emily Jennison Holman in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>5</sup> After the Saints relocated to the West, he traveled with the Silas Richards company in 1849; a year later, he was sent to southern Utah to help with the Iron Mission in Parowan.<sup>6</sup> As Iron County was being established, James Lewis was nominated and elected as county recorder,<sup>7</sup> and he also served as second lieutenant in the Iron County militia’s cavalry company.<sup>8</sup> A school was started in Parowan in 1851. Lewis was listed on the 1851 census as a teacher, but he apparently was not involved with the local school.<sup>9</sup>

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mainland by a harbor, known either as Hong Kong Harbour or Victoria Harbour. In 1860, Kowloon Peninsula, on the north side of the harbor, came under British rule, and more territory was leased to Britain in 1898. These territories of Hong Kong were not returned to Chinese rule until 1997. *Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, s.v. “Hong Kong.”

3. “Items of the China Mission,” *Deseret News*, January 4, 1855; p. 195 herein.
4. “Autobiography of James Lewis,” 2.
5. Swapp, “Biography of Emily Jennison Holman Lewis,” 7.
6. “Autobiography of James Lewis,” 1–3.
7. Shirts and Shirts, *Trial Furnace*, 74, 78.
8. Shirts and Shirts, *Trial Furnace*, 35.
9. Shirts and Shirts, *Trial Furnace*, 107.

## James Lewis and the Early Church Mission to China, 1852–53

President Brigham Young and other church leaders discussed sending missionaries to Asia soon after gold was discovered in California in 1848 and political revolutions were roiling Europe.<sup>10</sup> But it wasn't until 1852 that missionaries were called to the nation of China. James Lewis and the other three elders assigned to China that August—Hosea Stout, Chapman Duncan, and Walter Thompson (called shortly thereafter)—were as stunned at their assignment as the other newly called missionaries were at theirs. “To day was the Special Conference held for the purpose of sending Elders abroad. There was about 80 or 90 chosen to day to go forth to different parts of the world,” Stout noted in his diary that day. Stout had a long record of serving in Latter-day Saint defensive organizations. In 1838, he had been a member of the Danites,<sup>11</sup> a militant group of church members in Missouri, and in the 1840s, he was chief of police in Nauvoo, Illinois, and a leader in the Nauvoo Legion.<sup>12</sup> “Myself, James Lewis, Walter Thompson and Chapman Duncan were chosen to go to China. The brethren who were chosen all manifest a good spirit & seem to have the spirit of their Calling.”<sup>13</sup> Duncan had faced mob violence in Missouri in the 1830s, and like Stout, he had traveled to Utah in 1848.<sup>14</sup> Thompson, on the other hand, had arrived in Utah from his native Scotland only a year before.<sup>15</sup> Lewis and Duncan were then living in southern Utah's Parowan and were

10. See Livingston, “Eyes on ‘The Whole European World,’” 78–112.
11. Danites, or the Society of the Daughter of Zion, were a private military group organized to defend the Saints during volatile times in Missouri. Although the Danites existed for only a few months in 1838, folklore about murderous Danites followed the Saints even after they had settled in Utah, and fears of Danites showed up in antagonistic propaganda. Ashurst-McGee et al., *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 6*, 169–70, 687–88; Alexander L. Baugh, “Danites,” in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 275; David J. Whittaker, “Danites,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:356–57.
12. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:xiv–xix.
13. Stout, reminiscences and journals, August 28, 1852.
14. Duncan, “Biography of Chapman Duncan,” 3–11, 31–40.
15. “Thomson, Walter,” in appendix 2, p. 358 herein.

not at the conference.<sup>16</sup> All four men were willing to serve as missionaries at their prophet's request, although Thompson would only make it as far as Southern California due to health problems.

While the missionaries may have been enthusiastic while in Utah, they lost their evangelistic zeal once they arrived in China. This was seemingly due to their lack of preparation for extended missionary life in Asia. When the elders sailed into the Hong Kong harbor, they were struck by the foreignness of their new environment. "We arrived all well, in a strange land and among strange people," Lewis recounted. "We did not find a cordial welcome."<sup>17</sup> The three elders' biggest problem was that none of them spoke Cantonese, the Chinese dialect spoken in the Canton region of southern China, including Hong Kong. The elders assigned to labor in China were seemingly expected to evangelize the Chinese without any missionary training, including language acquisition.<sup>18</sup>

In their defense, it is unclear if Lewis and his missionary companions were actually planning on evangelizing the Chinese-speaking locals or if they instead hoped to convert English-speaking expatriates living in Hong Kong, a British colony. Regardless of their initial intentions, Lewis, Stout, and Duncan quickly realized their linguistic quandary and anguished over the prospect of learning any dialect of Chinese. There were other obstacles as well: whereas traveling without purse or scrip gave biblical legitimacy to the elders in Christian North America and Western Europe, the same Euro-American Latter-day Saint missionary practice proved to be a major liability in Asia. The three Latter-day Saints found the cost of living in Hong Kong prohibitive and the price of Chinese teachers beyond their meager funds. Additionally, traditional Latter-day Saint evangelistic practices added to the elders' lack of success among the residents of Hong

16. James Lewis had been a county recorder, and Chapman Duncan had been serving as a tithing clerk in Parowan. Elijah Elmer arrived in Parowan on September 12 from Salt Lake with news that they were going on missions. Godfrey and Martineau-McCarty, *Uncommon Common Pioneer*, 18; Lunt and Lunt, *Life of Henry Lunt and Family*, 54; Shirts and Shirts, *Trial Furnace*, 74, 244.

17. "Autobiography of James Lewis," 4.

18. Hosea Stout to Brigham Young, May 16, 1853, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Office Files.

Kong. Unlike other Euro-American Christian representatives in Asia, the Latter-day Saints did not try to set up schools or offer any social services.<sup>19</sup> To make matters worse, the Taiping Rebellion, which lasted from 1850 until 1864, was raging on mainland China.<sup>20</sup> Natural conditions such as the heat, humidity, and precipitation of Hong Kong added to the elders' discouragement; unaccustomed to the sticky humidity, scorching temperatures, and heavy rains, the elders found it difficult to hold outdoor meetings.

After about six weeks in China, the missionaries lost hope. They were discouraged and at a loss as to how to proceed.<sup>21</sup> "We feel that we have done all that God or man can require of us in this place," Stout lamented. "We have preached publicly and privately as long as any one would hear and often tried when no one would hear."<sup>22</sup> Before they reached their two-month mark in Hong Kong, they determined to pause their missionary labors in China. They returned to America on the *Rose of Sharon* and eventually made their way back to Utah.

Unaware of the linguistic, financial, and social challenges that Lewis and his companions faced in Hong Kong, church leaders in Utah called Cyrus Canfield and Edward Wade to join the missionaries in China during the April 1853 general conference.<sup>23</sup> Canfield and Wade traveled to California

19. See Neilson, "Early Mormon Missionary Work in Hong Kong," 7–11.
20. The Taiping Rebellion was a Chinese civil war that began in 1850. Hong Xiuquan had read some tracts left by Christian missionaries and had a vision that made him believe he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Hong established a religious community, the Taiping Tianguo, that forbade opium and alcohol and that pooled all resources into a community fund. He and his followers, known as God worshipers, spread throughout southeast China, preaching their unique form of Christianity, combatting Confucian ideas, and seeking to overthrow the Qing dynasty. Western societies initially favored the idea of a Christian group overthrowing Chinese traditions, but they became less enthusiastic when they realized how eccentric the Taiping group was. The Taiping Rebellion ended in 1864, when Hong Xiuquan died. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 171–80.
21. Hosea Stout, James Lewis, and Chapman Duncan to Brigham Young, August 27, 1853, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Office Files.
22. Stout, reminiscences and journals, June 7, 1853.
23. "Minutes of the General Conference," *Deseret News*, April 30, 1853. Later that month, on April 17, 1853 (eight months after they called the first four missionaries

on their way to China, but when they arrived on August 26, they learned that the previous missionaries had returned from Hong Kong to California that same month. (Lewis, Stout, and Duncan arrived in San Francisco<sup>24</sup> on August 23, 1853.) Stout recorded, “Elder Cyrus Canfield . . . & Elder E. Wade have been appointed to join us in our mission & had come thus far & meeting us thus returning are left in the same uncertainty that we are not knowing what to do.”<sup>25</sup> Stout arrived in San Bernardino, California, on September 11, and Lewis arrived there on October 25. Stout and Lewis left for Salt Lake City in early November and arrived in December.<sup>26</sup>

### Additional Church Service, 1853–98

After listening to the reports of Stout and his companions, church leaders decided against sending any elders back to China, and they released the five men from their missionary duties. James Lewis settled back into life in Parowan and served as probate judge in Iron County for ten years.<sup>27</sup> In 1857, Lewis was the major of the First Battalion in Iron County,<sup>28</sup> and on September 11 of that year, he accompanied William H. Dame to try to

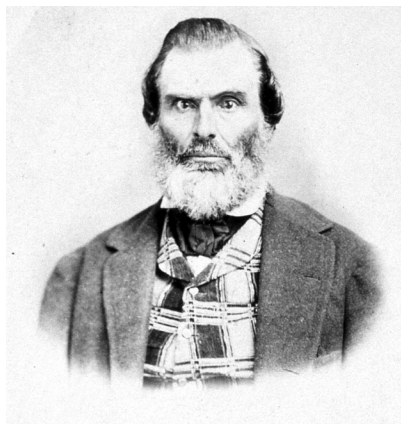
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to China), the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve met together and had a discussion about the role of the apostleship. They discussed if they could ordain other Apostles, in addition to the dozen men in the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Parley P. Pratt and President Brigham Young offered their opinions that there could be extra-quorum Apostles. President Young then explained, “We want to send a man to China and se[nd] him as an Apostle to build up the K[ingdo]m there and then go thro to the end.” Thomas Bullock Minutes (LaJean Carruth shorthand version), April 17, 1853; Historian’s Office general Church minutes.

24. Latter-day Saints had arrived in San Francisco in 1846 and built up the town, but most of them left in 1848. Beginning in 1849, thousands of Chinese immigrants arrived in San Francisco to work in the gold mines and elsewhere, inhabiting the communities that had previously been home to many Latter-day Saints. Twenty thousand Chinese arrived in 1852, and sixteen thousand arrived in 1854, but after that the number of immigrants decreased to a few thousand per year until the late 1860s. William E. Homer, “San Francisco, California,” in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 1066–67; Chinn, *History of the Chinese in California*, 22.
25. Stout, reminiscences and journals, August 26, 1853.
26. Stout, reminiscences and journals, August 23–December 8, 1853.
27. “Autobiography of James Lewis,” 5.
28. Shirts and Shirts, *Trial Furnace*, 386.

prevent the Mountain Meadows Massacre, but it was too late.<sup>29</sup> He spent the rest of his life around southern Utah: he moved to the settlement of Harrisburg in 1861 to raise cotton; he taught school in Panaca, Nevada, to support his family; and he moved to Kanab in 1871, becoming Kane County's commissioner. In 1882, he was called on a mission to San Juan County in southeast Utah, where he was supposed to once again serve as judge. He was part of the original group that made its way through Hole in the Rock,<sup>30</sup> saying, "The road had been made by the company with great labor and toil of months and was the most rugged I ever traveled."<sup>31</sup> He intended to take his family to the new settlement of Bluff in that county, but he was prevented from doing so because of Native American difficulties; instead, he was released from his mission and settled in Taylor, Arizona, with his family. He returned to Kanab in 1891, where he was called as a patriarch in 1896 and remained until his death in 1898.<sup>32</sup>

When Hosea Stout returned to America in August 1853, he learned that his wife, Louisa, and their baby son had died during his absence. He faced the harsh reality of his situation when he returned home that December: "I gazed upon the sad wreck of all my hopes in silence while my heart sank within me & those around could



Hosea Stout, mission companion to James Lewis. Courtesy of Church History Library.

29. Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, 211.
30. In 1879–80, a group of Latter-day Saints were sent to establish a settlement in San Juan County in southeast Utah. They traveled from the Parowan area, and rather than taking roundabout roads to reach the site of their new town, they opted to take a more direct route that included a harrowingly narrow and steep crevice. They had to construct a road in order to get their wagons through, a remarkable feat. See Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock*.
31. "Autobiography of James Lewis," 6.
32. "Autobiography of James Lewis," 5–6; Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel database, s.v. "James Lewis."

not refrain from mingling their tears with mine for a few moments when we all hastily withdrew from a place so full of sad recollections as my *HOME*.<sup>33</sup> Stout helped with the 1856 rescue of the handcart companies, was part of the Nauvoo Legion that resisted the US Army in 1857, became a United States district attorney in Utah, and served in other legal positions before dying in 1889.<sup>34</sup> Chapman Duncan worked for John M. Horner in California immediately after returning from China until 1854, and the rest of his life was spent pursuing various vocations all over Utah; he traded livestock, taught school, farmed, operated a fishery, and mined. He also served another mission to California in 1856 and 1857. He died in Caineville, Utah, in 1900.<sup>35</sup> Though Walter Thompson had been unable to serve in his call to China, he labored in the British Mission in 1875. He was a recorder in Weber County, Utah, where he died in 1877.<sup>36</sup>

### James Lewis's Family Life

Before learning of their unsolicited missionary callings, the men were barely eking out a living in pioneer Utah. A week after Lewis departed for his mission, twenty-year-old Emily Lewis gave birth to their fourth child.<sup>37</sup> When the missionaries arrived at the Pacific coast in the spring of 1853, they sent the proceeds from the sale of their wagons and horses to their destitute families back in Utah, thus "starting without purse or scrip as did the Apostles of Christ, to preach the restoration of the Gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith," in Lewis's words.<sup>38</sup> Later in life, Emily was a nurse and midwife. James and Emily had a total of fourteen children, with twelve living to maturity.<sup>39</sup> In 1857, he was sealed to his second wife, Emma Bateman, in Salt Lake City, and they had one son, but they were eventually divorced.

33. Stout, reminiscences and journals, August 23, 1853.

34. Prince, *Hosea Stout*, 223–340; Stout, *Hosea Stout*, 198–252.

35. Duncan, "Biography of Chapman Duncan," 14–20.

36. Early Mormon Missionaries database, s.v. "Walter Thomson"; "Thomson, Walter," in appendix 2, p. 358 herein.

37. Swapp, "Biography of Emily Jennison Holman Lewis," 9.

38. "Autobiography of James Lewis," 3.

39. Swapp, "Biography of Emily Jennison Holman Lewis," 11.



### Source Note

Of the three Latter-day Saints who traveled as missionaries all the way to Hong Kong in 1853, Hosea Stout was the only one to keep a journal of their experiences. Chapman Duncan, one of his two missionary companions, wrote very little about his time in China.<sup>40</sup> But James Lewis wrote a series of six letters to George A. Smith between 1853 and 1855, which describe their proselytizing experiences in some detail and add a perspective not found in Stout's own journal or letters. Lewis devotes much of his writing to summary observations about the Chinese as a people and as a civilization in revolution.

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## DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTS

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### James Lewis to the Editor of the *Deseret News*, February 28, 1853<sup>41</sup>

San Francisco Feb. 28th, 1853.  
Editor News,

The Elders arrived here about the 10th of January after a short sojourn at San Bernardino, in good health and spirits, having enjoyed the blessings of the Almighty with his Holy Spirit; being administered to by the saints wherever we have traveled, they being comforted, strengthened, and revived in the principles of the Gospel of Christ, which has caused our hearts to be made glad. Upon our arrival plans were adopted for gathering the

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40. In a letter to Brigham Young from Union City, California, Duncan said simply, "Bro [Hosea] Stouts information in relation to our mission will probably suffice." Chapman Duncan to Brigham Young, September 24, 1853, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Office Files.
41. James Lewis to *Deseret News*, "Elders Correspondence," *Deseret News*, April 30, 1853.

amount necessary to forward the different missionaries to their destinations.<sup>42</sup> The blessings pronounced upon our heads were not forgotten; still the way seemed dark but we realized that we were engaged in the work of our Father, and if faithful, those promises would not fail. This we have realized. After some exertion without effect among the citizens of this place, the Brethren stepped forward, and the amount freely donated, and our hearts were indeed made glad.<sup>43</sup> The several missionaries have left; the Calcutta and Siam missionaries sailed in ship *Monsoon*,<sup>44</sup> 29th Jan.; Sandwich Island missionaries ship *Huntress* 31st; Australian, *Barque Pacific*,<sup>45</sup> Feb. 2nd. How my heart rejoices in the work of the Lord, as I realize the way opening according to the predictions of the authorities for the Elders to go forth, that those who set in darkness might be made acquainted with the principles of life and salvation.

The China missionaries will leave March 1st for Hong Kong, and from information from that country, the way seems opening for the Gospel by the revolutions which are going on in some of the districts, overthrowing

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42. Thirty-eight missionaries left Utah for California in October 1852. They were going to China, India, Siam (Thailand), Hawaii, and Australia. Hosea Stout, who was president of the China Mission, was the captain of this missionary company. Britsch, "Church Beginnings in China," 162.
  43. The elders collectively needed more than \$6,000. For three weeks, they tried to get money from people of other faiths and raised only about \$150. T. S. Williams then gave them \$500, and wealthy California Latter-day Saint John M. Horner donated several thousand to make up the rest. Britsch, "Church Beginnings in China," 163–64.
  44. The *Monsoon*, a clipper ship piloted by Captain Zenas Winsor, was originally built in 1851 in Maine. When the thirteen missionaries bound for the India region sailed away on January 29, 1853, they were apparently the only passengers on-board. Levi Savage and Richard Ballantyne got smallpox but recovered. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 147–48.
  45. The ship *Pacific*, carrying ten missionaries to Australia, left California on February 2, 1853, under the direction of a Captain Matthews. Some passengers contracted smallpox on the voyage but recovered. The ship rescued some people who were shipwrecked at Christmas Island on February 20. The *Pacific* finally arrived in Sydney, Australia, on March 31, but it remained quarantined for another nine days because of the smallpox outbreak. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 163; Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 3:75.

idolatry and establishing the belief in God. This is going on independent of any missionary effort, and the results are in the future relative to the good it may produce to that people, and I judge with some degree of certainty that the Lord is preparing the way for the fullness of the Gospel to go forth among this strange, and till within a few years, comparatively unknown people. If ever there was a time, since the rise of this church, for the saints to rejoice, 'tis the present; for we realize the rapid spread of the gospel in all lands, whither the Elders have been sent; and although the powers of evil keep pace with the truth, yet the onward march of the power and work of God is felt in almost every land and clime beneath the sun. While I reflect that even in this land, where the corrupting influences of evil are spread over the length and breadth thereof; the few saints here feel the influence of the spirit of God which is breathed by their Brethren and Sisters in the Valleys of the Mountains, and many of them feel a deep anxiety to partake, with them, the blessings which they enjoy; feeling that what God has made them stewards over was on the altar for the spread of truth and building up the kingdom, realizing the reward promised to the faithful. The situation of those in this region, who have come here to get rich rather than remain in the Valley, is truly unpleasant, judging from their own statements; all tell of great losses, of their poverty, &c., and almost universally say "*that it would have been better to have remained at Salt Lake, that they are sick of California, that they desire to get back as soon as possible.*" I am going as soon as I get the means or can settle my business." In hearing these sayings I have been often reminded of the sayings of Brother Brigham Young, in his counsels to the saints, and from what I have seen and heard of this country, 'tis the last a saint of God would desire to live in, unless sent by authority to work for the upbuilding of his Kingdom.

If you can I should be glad for my family to have the "News" while I am absent and I will make it right the first opportunity; direct to my address, Iron County.<sup>46</sup>

Respectfully I remain your brother in the bonds of the Gospel,

James Lewis.

46. Iron County, in southwestern Utah, was formed in the early 1850s when pioneers went to the area to mine iron ore. It was originally called Little Salt Lake Valley County. The iron mining died out by 1857, but the settlements of Cedar City and Parowan remained. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 200; Ralph M. McAfee, "Iron Mission," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 552–53.

**James Lewis to Elder George A. Smith,  
February 18, 1854<sup>47</sup>**

Cedar, Feb. 18th, 1854.

Dear Brother:—

A leisure moment I improve to say a few words to you, and the pleasure it affords me to read a line from you is only known to myself, and I am willing to trespass upon my time to exchange what I have experienced while absent for those gems of intelligence which fall from your lips, or are expressed by or through the medium of the pen.

I have often reflected upon the sayings of those who oppose Mormonism, accusing us of wickedness, degradation, and corruption. A visit, however, to many of the eastern cities or California, would quite convince a beholder that there was wickedness, a little degradation, and a small sprinkling of corruption in some other places, besides among the Mormons.

If a person who had but little idea of the ways of the world, of the plans, schemes, and artifices of the different classes of business men, including, with but few exceptions, the clerical gentry, should be set down in San Francisco, and see with what success these different classes “subtract” from the pockets of others, and “add” to their own, by their cunning, their knavery, their villainy, and their religious trickery. In this place, he would suppose he was at least beyond civilization, if he did not hear the people speak in his own tongue. Should he step into some of the most fashionable and thronged buildings, perhaps among the most spacious (though there are many of the same stripe), and see crowds of men gathering and gathered around the different games, which are licensed by the city authorities; see the heaps of gold to tempt the ignorant, to ensnare the unwary, to destroy and blast the reputation of the young; see the eagerness of these licensed thieves to “add” to their already ill-gotten store, he would again say in his heart, “Are these people human, or have I stumbled upon hyenas in the shape of men?”

Passing from these scenes to the most magnificent buildings in the goodly city, and there are many of them, as well as many of other kinds

47. James Lewis to editor of *Deseret News*, “Letter,” *Deseret News*, March 16, 1854.

(many did I say, yes, whole streets) filled with public prostitutes, so common that many have doubted whether there was a virtuous woman among its inhabitants, so plain and manifest is their corruption. The lower order of this class are ready to assail the passer-by, and if possible taint him or them with their contaminating breath. Debauchery in all its forms is perceptible in all ranks and classes, from the grey-haired sinner to the beardless youth. Licentiousness stalks abroad at noon-day, and waits not for the curtain of night to hide its deformity.

Again is seen, both by day as well as night, the assassin who plunges his weapon into the body of his victim with apparent unconcern, feeling security for his release.

These with thousands of other and minor evils found here, with its political degeneracy truly astonishing, shows evidently that there is corruption in other places besides among the Mormons.<sup>48</sup>

The editors of this goodly city are so fond of this freedom, of these privileges, that one can hardly find a case of villainy, of corruption, or degradation, in all California, but they can find many a line regarding the wickedness and corruption of the Mormons.

This city is built upon made ground, by driving piles, and filling with earth, removed from the hills, by which many of them are entirely removed, and the city extended. Thousands of ships from all parts resort to this point; many of them from the States and England, laden for that

48. Hosea Stout did not have overly positive feelings about San Francisco either. In a letter to his wife (tragically not knowing that she had died), he wrote: "We are lonesome and tired of this scrimpt narrow streeeted hotch potch, fil[t]hy place; Not wishing to find fault, but it is certainly the most disagreeable place I was ever in, muddy crowded, planked & broken through the side walks, and the fil[t]h eternally sending up a stink offering, makes me think of Salt Lake city with her beautiful clean streets. Then the people, O what a contrast. . . . I believe that this is after all the most respectable city in the Union . . . having the most intelligent and enterprising and liberal people in it. Now I do believe that it would be a good way for us when anonymous letter writers from Utah throw their lying filth to Editors either here or East and they publish them with so much eclat and bombast, that if we had some one in their city who would write what they see 'thar' and we tell on them too, & truth at that it would silence them in a short time, even in a matter of self defence." Hosea Stout to Louisa Stout, February 20, 1853, Hosea Stout papers.

place; then go to India and China for the products of those climes, and return home to enrich their owners. This is become the great mart of the Pacific coast, having a fine harbor, with many advantages naturally, and will, if nothing obstructs its progress, outstrip the eastern cities for wealth and wickedness. Here are gathered thousands of almost every clime, and of course thousands of the vile and vicious.

In this place not long ago thirty-eight elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints landed, going to the different parts of the earth, without purse or scrip, to carry the gospel to those who sit in darkness, according to the word of the Lord. They visited the citizens in the name of their master for assistance to pursue their journey to carry joyful tidings to the hearts of the honest among the nations of the reorganization of the Church of Christ, of the revelations of God to man, and what was the reception they met with? They were abused, villified, their characters, and the characters of their leaders branded with wickedness, corruption, and degradation, cast out as evil, having nothing to give the servants of God, but plenty to sacrifice, to devote, to lay at the feet of the French, Spanish, Mexican, and American beauties, who form a large class of the aristocracy of San Francisco.

Did their refusal retard the progress of the men of God[?] No; to other and more noble spirits were reserved the high privilege of giving a portion of their means, to bring joy and comfort to the outcast, the down-trodden, and suffering sons of Abraham. There are many noble spirits in California, and their views of us are far different from the herd, the mass, the ignorant; but the days are fast passing away when ignorance will not shield any one regarding us as a people, or our doctrines.

The anticipation of many there, is, that we are soon to explore and settle the Colorado, step over to Sonora, from thence to the capital (Mexico), revolutionize the country, and possess it;<sup>49</sup> and be ready to look Uncle Sam in the face, claiming our dues, &c., being assured that the Mormons will not long be shut up in the mountains, but will soon be rolling down the hills to the sea coast, spreading east, west, north, and south, with a rapidity truly astonishing. What the people fear, saith the prophet, will surely fall

49. In the 1880s, some Latter-day Saints built up settlements in the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua to escape federal prosecution of polygamists, but evidently

upon them.

Our regards with the blessing of the Lord upon his people.

[James Lewis]

### James Lewis to Elder George A. Smith, June 3, 1854<sup>50</sup>

Parowan, Iron County, Utah,

June 3, 1854.

A few reflections upon scenes and ideas gathered in other lands may not come amiss. In California there are about 75,000 Chinamen, generally in San Francisco and the mines.<sup>51</sup> They are called the best cooks, washers, and servants in that country. They are capable of performing, and enduring more labor and fatigue than any other people in that land;—have no spirit to retaliate for the many insults and injuries they receive. They, like the Jews, are a distinct people, and work in squads entirely by themselves in the mines, and save every farthing. Their living is brought from China by their own merchants; and all their trading is done among themselves, and they wear their own peculiar costume; few adopt the dress of this country.

In San Francisco whole streets are occupied by them. They have their own hotel keepers, wholesale and retail merchants, grocers, and physicians.

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the Saints had toyed with the idea of settling in Mexico long before then. When the US Army arrived in Utah in 1858, the Latter-day Saints vacated Salt Lake City and relocated to the settlement of Provo, but evidence suggests they considered going even farther south, all the way to Mexico. President James Buchanan privately relished the thought of the Latter-day Saints settling in Sonora, because with a sizable American presence there, he could potentially annex the region for the United States. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 178–86, 341–45; Shirley Taylor Robinson, “Mexico, Pioneer Settlements in,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:895–97.

50. James Lewis to George A. Smith, June 3, 1854, published as “Chinese in California,” *Deseret News*, June 22, 1854.
51. After rebellions and other problems in the nineteenth century, many Chinese left their country. Many of them moved to California for the gold rush. Most of them arrived too late for gold, but they found work in other areas, including helping to build the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 208–14.

In fact they do their own business, independent of others. After obtaining sufficient to make them independent at home, they usually return. They take little or no notice of strangers, only when for their interest; are greatly addicted to gambling, and have gaming establishments and houses of prostitution publicly open day and night, like their neighbors. Thousands of women are brought from China to this market, hired by the more wealthy of their own countrymen, for ten, and often three dollars per head for each year. On any money advanced for outfit or passage, if not paid the first year, it doubles the second on principal and interest. Young females of from 14 to 16, as well as children, are bought in China at from 30\$ to 50\$ each, and brought to California to swell the already enormous amount of crime, prostitution, degradation, and corruption.

Thousands of laborers are hired in China for the wages of that country, (a few cents per day) and their passage paid; and they work in the mines their term of service, (generally for years) after which they are sent home; thus one class preys upon another to enrich themselves. I was informed that thousands are thus in bondage, under their different overseers,—sent out for this purpose.

In California there are already large and extensive establishments for the sale of the fine and costly fabrics, as well as many manufactured articles, and paintings of rare workmanship, and of exceeding fine finish, which find their way into the houses, or are worn by the wealthy.

I visited many of their leading men, to ascertain if possible, the situation of their country, and gather books, to forward the work in which I was engaged; but I found they were not disposed to give any information, and seemed surprised that we were desirous of knowing anything about them, tho' few could speak English so as to be understood. They require a high price for information, and carry their distinctness to a great length. In their deal with others, they are very unscrupulous.

I found the Chinese in California with a prejudice of feeling, caused by their ill treatment from its citizens, which is not confined to miners, but includes their legislators. They are traduced, vilified, and abused on every hand. Yet they thrive, increase, and will ere long wield a powerful influence, particularly relating to trade. They are controlled by men of intelligence, and are far from being what Christians call them; for their ideas of the Supreme Being their Father, their government, the laws and obligations they



are under to each other, with their code of morals, are in advance of the sectarian world; and have their peculiarities, which seem truly strange to us.

They are rapidly increasing, as many of the barriers are being broken down, which have so long deprived them of associating with other, and neighboring nations. Undoubtedly, upon their return to their own land, they will carry more liberal principles, which, with the extension of the spirit of liberty and reform pervading almost every land, will shortly, under the directing hand of the Almighty, who has said by his servants that when the gospel, the re-organization of his kingdom in the last days, should commence, then his work should begin among all nations. This is truly the case with that people.

After completing our arrangements, we left San Francisco in the barque San Van Hoorne,<sup>52</sup> March 9th, and arrived at Hong Kong after a passage of 49 days.

By letters of same date, we learn that the Indians around Parowan continue friendly, and the inhabitants prosperous; and that they are enclosing the old fort, which was fifty six rods square, with a wall around 112 rods square, to be 12 feet high, and 6 feet thick.

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52. The ship *Jan Van Hoorn* (not "*San Van Hoorne*") was a Dutch vessel piloted by Captain Jacob Bouten, who offered to take Stout, Lewis, and Duncan to Hong Kong for eighty dollars each. They had previously almost traveled on the ships *Graf Van Hogendorf* and *Invincible*, but the *Graf Van Hogendorf* was expensive, and the *Invincible* was condemned. The missionaries left San Francisco on March 8, 1853, and arrived in China on April 27. Sonne, *Ships, Saints, and Mariners*, 113–14; Stout, reminiscences and journals, January 25–April 27, 1853.

Lewis later explained this experience: "The different missions were forwarded as fast as passage could be found for them. The China mission was the last, and our passage was \$160 each. Our first engagement for passage failed for the vessel could not be insured. Our second effort proved the same. Our third was successful. We obtained passage in the merchant vessel to Hong Kong for \$50. apiece, saving \$110 each." "Autobiography of James Lewis," 4.

## James Lewis to Elder George A. Smith, November 25, 1854<sup>53</sup>

Parowan, Nov. 25, 1854.

I will give a few extracts from our journal of the Chinese Mission.

We landed at Hong Kong on the 28th of April, having arrived in the harbor the day before. After considerable search, we found a room to occupy which had formerly been used for stowing treasure, double barred and bolts, with privilege of eating with the owner, at the rate of one dollar per day each. This being the only chance, our luggage was moved ashore.

The harbor seems little more than an open roadstead, where vessels remain a short time and proceed up the river<sup>54</sup> to Canton,<sup>55</sup> which is 90 miles from this point. From the harbor the city presents quite a handsome appearance, as it is situated at the base of a high mountain,<sup>56</sup> which protects it from a strong south west wind which prevails the most of the year. This is the new city, as a few years ago old Hong [Kong] was abandoned, being situated on the other side of the mountain island, subject to the prevailing winds. The present location is far preferable to the former, on account of improvement in the harbor, &c.

Upon our arrival, the vessel was immediately covered with Chinese either for one pretence or another, designing, however, to steal everything

53. James Lewis to George A. Smith, November 25, 1854, published as “Chinese Mission,” *Deseret News*, December 14, 1854.

54. This is the Zhu or Pearl River, which drains into the South China Sea. *Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, s.v. “Zhu.”

55. Canton, known today as Guangzhou, is the capital of Guangdong Province in southeast China and was the first Chinese seaport opened to foreigners. The British began trading opium at Canton, a practice that worried Chinese officials and led to the First Opium War between 1839 and 1842. The 1842 Treaty of Nanking allowed British trade and residence in Canton and four other cities. *Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, s.v. “Guangzhou”; Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 150–66.

56. This “high mountain” is Victoria Peak, which stands at about 1,800 feet above sea level. In 1949, church leaders dedicated Hong Kong on this mountain for the preaching of the gospel. *Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, s.v. “Victoria Peak”; Britsch, “Asia, the Church in,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:75–81.

they could carry away, for they have the character of being the most skilful thieves in the world, or at least a portion of them. This place is of considerable importance in many respects. The island was ceded to the English at the time peace was ratified after the war.<sup>57</sup> Here is the residence of the governor general of China, and is the great military post in China, and is the terminus of the line of steamers which bring the overland mail from the home government, monthly. To show the rapidity of information, I saw the *New York Herald*<sup>58</sup> 29 days after its issue, and had the pleasure of reading the President's message.<sup>59</sup> I was informed that this line of steamers would in a few months be continued to Australia and San Francisco.

The British Government affords every facility to their own transmission of intelligence within themselves on matters pertaining to governmental affairs, having war steamers plying from this point along the coast to any point which affords trade or traffic, which in one article within a few years has greatly, and I should say fearfully increased, viz: the opium trade. This drug has spread its deleterious influence over the whole country, and tens of thousands of the inhabitants find a grave through its use yearly.<sup>60</sup>

57. As part of the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, which ended the First Opium War, the British took possession of Hong Kong Island to rule it as they "shall see fit." This treaty was the first of several unequal treaties with China, unequal because China had to agree to Britain's terms but Britain did not have to agree to China's terms. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 158–62; *Oxford Dictionary of World History*, s.v. "Nanjing, Treaty of."
58. The *New York Herald* was an influential newspaper founded in 1835 by James Gordon Bennett, who published it for thirty years. It published sensational stories and became widely popular beginning in the 1840s. It was bought by the *New York Tribune* in 1924. See Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press*.
59. This message is most likely the inaugural address of President Franklin D. Pierce, which Pierce recited from memory on March 4, 1853. It was published in the *New York Herald* as "Inaugural Address" on March 5, 1853.
60. Opium is a drug derived from poppies that has been used for centuries. It has medicinal properties but is addictive and has numerous negative health effects. In the eighteenth century, smoking opium became popular in China, and Chinese officials recognized that it was addictive and had many undesirable consequences. They began making increasingly strict laws against the drug, and in 1813, smoking opium was completely banned. The British objected to these laws

Here are quartered about 1,000 or 1,200 troops of the lower order of English regiments made up of Irish and Scotch, though mostly Irish, with a regiment from the island of Ceylon<sup>61</sup> (blacks). Owing to the heat of the climate, they are only allowed out of barracks in the evening from six to eight o'clock, when they throng the places of prostitution, made so easy of access by license from authority.<sup>62</sup> The city of Hong Kong has probably 10,000 inhabitants of a motley mixture of all nations; of these, it is said, 6,000 are licensed prostitutes. There are about 250 English aside from the troops stationed here; they are the aristocratic nabobs,<sup>63</sup> who reside in that country to make a fortune, and retire from business as soon as this is accomplished.

The vessels in the harbor show that every nation is engaged in the China trade; from this point many ships are clearing; their loading principally consists of smuggled goods brought from other places to be shipped, and within a few years quite a trade has sprung up in granite,<sup>64</sup> found here

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because they had an economic interest in opium transports. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 130–32.

61. Ceylon is the nineteenth-century British name for the island nation of Sri Lanka, located off the southeast coast of India. It was a British colony from the beginning of the nineteenth century until 1948. Chauncey W. West and Benjamin F. Dewey spent a few weeks there in 1853, but they were not well received, and Latter-day Saint missionaries would not return until the 1970s. See chapter 7, “Chauncey West and the Siam and Hindoostan Missions,” herein. *Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, s.v. “Sri Lanka”; Britsch, *From the East*, 555; Britsch, “East India Mission of 1851–56,” 157.
62. The three missionaries sent a letter to Brigham Young from San Francisco, mentioning the loose morals of the soldiers: “There are about one thousand soldiers, the most of whom are Irish & Scotch some English some Blacks, from Ceylon. They are closely kept in Barracks, having only from 5 to 8 O’[c]lock P.M. for recess. They are so fond of the Licensed priviledges formed among the Chinese women that they are as corrupt as vicious habits can make them.” Hosea Stout, James Lewis, and Chapman Duncan to Brigham Young, August 27, 1853.
63. The word “nabob” refers to high-ranking people, especially British aristocrats who acquired wealth in eastern nations, usually India. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “nabob.”
64. Most of Hong Kong’s rocks are igneous, either from volcanoes or from cooled magma underground. During the Mesozoic Era, a convergent boundary formed, where one tectonic plate subducts beneath another. Subduction zones melt the rock underground, forming large magma chambers. Magma chambers feed volca-

in great abundance, shipped to San Francisco to beautify that city. Orders of exact breadth[,] length, and thickness are sent to build a building of any dimensions, which are finished by the Chinese so exact as to fit in every part without sound of hammer.

Here are consuls from all countries, though there are some of them more merchants than consuls, generally doing that business which pays the best. The buildings are built of stone, covered with tile, many of them large and commodious.

[James Lewis]

**James Lewis to Elder George A. Smith,  
December 12, 1854<sup>65</sup>**

Parowan, Dec. 12th, 1854.  
Brother Geo. A. Smith,

I will again trespass upon your time, with a few further glimpses of scenes in Asia. After our arrival, we spent a few days in trying to find a location, making our business known; for great enquiries were made regarding our business, because it was not usual for persons to visit that country for other purposes than speculation. In a short time the curiosity of the people was satisfied, and we were ranked with other missionaries. We sought a plan to live, or stay; for we found that unless a man had wherewith to pay his way at quite a high price, he could have the exquisite pleasure of starving. This we were told in plain and positive language. Our only chance was to find some liberal-minded person who cared little for popularity. One came forward, and offered us a room, and gave us much useful information regarding the usages of that country. Our room was in the third story of an old decayed mansion, a portion of which had fallen down; but, as this was

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noes, but they can also cool over time, forming granite. In the 1850s, following the gold rush, Hong Kong began exporting many products to California, including its abundant granite, which was used for buildings and curbs. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 142, 147–49.

65. James Lewis to George A. Smith, December 12, 1854, published as “Items of the China Mission,” *Deseret News*, January 4, 1855.

our only chance, we felt quite at home after our removal, and thanked our benefactor, Mr. [George] Dudell, for he proved friendly to us while we remained in that land.<sup>66</sup> The next business was to find a place to preach; after trying, we found our only chance was the street. Previous to this, we had visited the American consul, Mr. Anthony, who treated us respectfully, saying he knew our principles, and presumed we should have poor success in China; yet he would extend to us all the protection he could; thought we should not be molested, should have to preach in the streets; did not seem to desire we should renew our visit. We visited a number of clergymen of the Baptist and Methodist order,<sup>67</sup> but aside from courtesy it was a mere blank. Our only dependance was in the God of Israel, who sent us; for, thus far, nothing presented any encouragement. The weather was intensely hot.<sup>68</sup> In the middle of the day, the streets were deserted. The soldiers were not allowed out of barracks[,] only from 6 to 8 o'clock p.m. This was the time we fixed upon to preach, and the spot selected was the parade ground.<sup>69</sup> Our appointment being advertized, we began to deliver

66. George Duddell (1821–87) was a prominent English auctioneer and landowner in Hong Kong, living there for about thirty years. In 1845, he held a monopoly on the opium trade, and he later also ran a bakery, an icehouse, and other business endeavors. Duddell Street in Hong Kong is named after him. Endacott, *Biographical Sketch-Book of Early Hong Kong*, 152–54; Cameron, *Hong Kong*, 68–70.

Hosea Stout said this about Mr. Duddell: “Here let me make honorable mention of Mr. George Duddell who furnishes us a house gratis with an ample suit of rooms, where we are happily keeping bachelors hall. He can emphatically be called the first disinterested friend of the China mission, found here.” Hosea Stout to Brigham Young, May 16, 1853.

67. The Treaty of Nanking opened up China to Protestant missionaries, who had only been present in limited numbers before then. Baptists opened chapels in Hong Kong as early as 1842, and other churches followed. The Church of England became a prominent church since it was the state church of the British. Welsh, *History of Hong Kong*, 219.
68. During the month of May (when the missionaries spent most of their time proselytizing), Hong Kong currently has high temperatures in the 80s to 90s Fahrenheit (20s to 30s Celsius) with more than 80 percent humidity. The climate was likely slightly different in 1853.
69. The Murray Parade Ground was named after Sir George Murray. It was located next to the army barracks in northern Hong Kong Island. The parade ground is

our message to them; our meetings at first were well attended for that country, where it is not expected that a congregation in the finest chapels will be over fifteen or twenty at most. The people seemed satisfied, yet they said it was not what they expected to hear, for they anticipated an expose of spiritual wives, &c. When they heard the first principles of the gospel, of the re-organization of the church and kingdom of God, they felt disappointed. Our appointments extended to three evenings per week; a few came to our room to inquire more fully into our doctrines, they said, but intending to convince us of our errors; few came oftener than once.

Our object now was to gather all the information we could concerning the language of the Chinese, of their manners and customs, and the extent of the revolution going on in the interior;<sup>70</sup> for this purpose we visited many of them, who could speak a little English. They seemed anxious to know why we came to that country to teach them, when those who could understand and speak our language would not believe us. What reason we had to expect them to believe what we told them, when they could not understand

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occupied by a Hilton hotel today. Bard, *Voices of the Past*, 210; Snow, *Fall of Hong Kong*, 132.

70. In a letter to Brigham Young, Hosea Stout had this to say about why they didn't preach in China's interior: "Taking all things into consideration, the whole country is in quite a state of excitement, and is considered unsafe to penetrate the interior and even here [in Hong Kong] they say they do not feel very secure." Hosea Stout to Brigham Young, May 16, 1853.

The three missionaries gave this explanation: "We looked to the other parts of China, true we had the privilege of visiting them but what the chance of success? The only safe place was Hong Kong owing to the Revolution spreading through that country. At many of these places the whites were preparing to leave or going on board vessels in the harbor for protection. To go among the Chinese we could not, not being able [to] speak their Language. Thus things continued till we felt that nothing more could be done at present. We could neither turn to the right or left, and having scanty means to remain and no possible resource perceivable for subsistence and the way opened for us to return to this point, where we could wait the counsel of the Presidency regarding our future movements. The Language is only obtained from a living tongue as it cannot be expressed in English owing to the intonations and inflexion of the voice in the same word, for upon the sounds depends the meaning." Hosea Stout, James Lewis, and Chapman Duncan to Brigham Young, August 27, 1853.

us. They seemed to wonder that we did not come as other missionaries, with plenty of money to sustain ourselves, and not become a burden.

In the meantime the editors began an attack upon us, by telling the stories of the Judges,<sup>71</sup> copying from the *Tribune*, *N. Y. Advocate*, &c., while other editors stood aloof.<sup>72</sup> The people cared so little for anything in

71. These “stories of the Judges” refer to the publications of the “runaway officials” of 1851. When President Millard Fillmore created Utah Territory in 1850, he appointed Brigham Young governor, but he appointed a few non-Latter-day Saints in other positions in Utah: Lemuel G. Brandebury as chief justice of the Supreme Court, Perry E. Brocchus as associate justice of the Supreme Court, and Broughton D. Harris as territorial secretary. Six weeks after the last of these three arrived in Utah, they abandoned their positions and addressed a letter to President Fillmore, claiming the Latter-day Saints in Utah were seditious. They also publicized the practice of polygamy, even before the Latter-day Saints publicly acknowledged it. The officials’ claims were published in many newspapers. “Report of Messrs. Brandebury, Brocchus, and Harris, to the President of the United States,” in *Utah*, 8–22; Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering,” 117–18.
72. Hosea Stout recorded this in his journal: “Went to see Mr. Dixon, who showed me this morning paper (Friend of china) containing three lengthy bursts against ‘Mormonism.’ The first in substance was the stale and discarded account of the celebrated fugitive U. S. officers.

“The Second was a fresh *estampede* from the ‘N. Y. Tribune’ who had worked himself up into a strange state of excitement least the Mormons should overthrow the U. S. Government by the dangerous & as he says, the newly developed doctrine of Patriarchal Matrimony, and loudly calling on the U. S. to look out and take immediate measures to put a stop to our successful career which is taking deep root in the four quarters of the world.

“The third is from a Religious paper (Advocate & Reflector) which quotes from O. Pratts paper at Washington (The seer) showing the *modus operandi* of a ‘Mormon second marriage.’ He is also awfully alarmed and denounces us most unmeasuredly but produces no argument to expose our errors. . . .

“Attended the Theatre at 8 p.m. with C. Duncan while there a singular circumstance occurred: a few Persians some of whom was present at our last lecture, were there. One of them came to me and introducing himself, enquired when we would have another lecture. . . . He then spake to the rest of his countrymen in their own language after which he said to me that he was telling them that we were the men who lectured and that we believed in having more than one wife, and they desired to know more about it.

“We never had mentioned the subject but it has been humbuged to day through



the shape of religion, that seldom anything respecting it was allowed. They told us, when speaking upon the subject, that they did not want to hear anything of the system. Our congregations in the meantime were reduced to a cipher—no one attending. We then began to visit the people individually, so that we might clear our garments,<sup>73</sup> and bear a faithful testimony, after having travelled so far. The heat of the atmosphere was very oppressive. Being reduced in bad health, owing to change of diet, the manner of preparing it, &c., our spirits were, becoming depressed, and not perceiving a cheering ray of hope in all our labors. Our books were loaned, and returned without thanks; our endeavors to teach the way of life and salvation was unheeded by the Americans and English. The soldiers turned away because of their officers, and we seemed alone; yet, our hearts were comforted, that bread cast upon the waters might be found after many days.<sup>74</sup>

Health, peace, and happiness are with, and around us. My regards to yourself and family, and my prayer for the faithful in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Respectfully, &c.,  
James Lewis.

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this city in consequence of what came out in the papers as above and to day the Persians has been informed on the subject by those who are opposed to us which has had the effect to make them believe we are correct.” Hosea Stout, *reminiscences and journals*, May 21, 1853.

73. This idea is one that is exemplified in the Book of Mormon. Jacob 1:19 says, “And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.”
74. This phrase comes from Ecclesiastes 11:1: “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.”

### James Lewis to George A. Smith, February 16, 1855<sup>75</sup>

Parowan, Feb. 16, 1855.

Bro. Geo. A. Smith:—

After having visited the people, and, as far as possible, introduced the subject of our mission, we were politely informed, in most instances, that they did not wish to hear of our religion, and desired no reference to the subject. Upon other topics they were free and sociable, but felt to wonder at our presumption in endeavoring to establish our doctrines in Asia under the circumstances in which we placed ourselves; for they looked upon any person in a dependent position as worthy of no regard whatever, & beneath their notice. The other missionaries presented themselves backed by the God of this world,<sup>76</sup> and were received with courtesy and respect, as desirable acquisitions to society; but the servants of the Lord were despised, their company not desired, and their doctrine unheeded by even the lowest caste of the English and American population.

China contains a population of 367 millions, and connect Japan and other countries contiguous to China, and though they have different dialects, about 500 millions of the human race have the same written language.<sup>77</sup> The government of China is Patriarchal, and the religion of their leaders or officers of government is observed by all classes, and the presumption is, that when their leaders change the lower classes will change also. The religion of China is Buddhism,<sup>78</sup> and was introduced by

75. James Lewis to George A. Smith, February 16, 1855, published as “China Mission,” *Deseret News*, March 14, 1855.

76. In the 1850s, the expression “God of this world” referred either to Satan, as used in 2 Corinthians 4:4, or to money. Davies, *Corpus of LDS General Conference Talks*, s.v. “god of this world.”

77. There are many varieties of Chinese that are very different in their spoken form but that use the same writing system. The Japanese borrowed the Chinese *kanji* or characters and modified them to their own use.

78. Buddhism began in India around the fifth century BC and was brought to China by monks about five centuries later. It became very popular after about another five centuries, starting in the 600s AD. It grew continually as monks traveled between India and China, translating sacred texts and spreading ideas. *Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, s.vv. “Buddhism,” “Buddhism in China.”

the Tartars<sup>79</sup> at the time the Dynasty was changed, and they became masters of the country, and required the Chinese to wear “tails” as a token of submission;<sup>80</sup> this transpired about 180 years ago. The present revolution is to throw off the Tartar yoke, and return to the religion of their Fathers, (however upon this point there is much speculation.) Yet it is confidently asserted that the present leader of the rebel party claims to be inspired by his Father, (the Almighty) with revelation to rid his country of the Tartars; and it is reported by the missionaries that he believes in visions, dreams, &c. They hold that we are of the same family of spirits, are brethren and sisters, and that Jesus Christ was our brother, and was sent forth to do good to his brethren, and to do what his Father commanded him; so they believe that the present leader is sent forth by his Father to do a great work. They are far from being an ignorant people; the arts and sciences flourish in their way, and their paintings, and mechanical ingenuity in the manufacture of articles more various perhaps than any other country will rank them not behind many nations who boast of their superiority. Their great skill is displayed in imitation which they can accomplish to perfection. The country is not of greater extent than the United States, and to support such a vast population farming must be admirably conducted. They have a mountainous country, and the surface is tilled to their very tops. Much of the soil is irrigated, and produces in great abundance. The principal diet is rice, and other vegetables. They are a quiet and harmless people, and do not interfere with their neighbors. A short time ago the ruins of a church, or synagog[u]e, were discovered near the centre of the empire, in which the books of Moses were found, and sent to England by the missionaries.<sup>81</sup>

79. The Tartars mentioned here are the Manchus, a nomadic group who invaded the Ming dynasty during the seventeenth century and overthrew it, establishing the Qing dynasty. They enforced many of their Manchu customs on the Chinese, but over the centuries the Manchus merged with the Chinese. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 21–48; *Oxford Dictionary of World History*, s.v. “Manchus.”
80. These “tails” are queues, long braids worn on the back of the head. They were part of Manchurian culture, and the Manchus imposed the practice on the Chinese when they established the Qing dynasty. The queue was abandoned in the twentieth century. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 29, 252–53.
81. Judaism had a presence in the city of Kaifeng, China, at least since the twelfth century AD. In 1850 and 1851, some Christian Chinese missionaries traveled to

Chinese history shows that their religion was formerly so much like that of the Jews, that they say the Jews took the form of religion from them.

When I reflect that this vast portion of the human race have the same characters for a language, with a history for so many years back, and comparatively so little known, I am led to wonder, and acknowledge the hand of God in this for some wise purpose.

Respectfully,  
James Lewis.

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Kaifeng to preach to the Jews there, and they purchased many sacred texts, as well as documents relating to the history of the Kaifeng synagogues. The Torah scrolls that those missionaries acquired might have been copied in the seventeenth century; these writings ended up in various locations. Tokayer and Rodman, *Pepper, Silk & Ivory*, 69–75.