

JOSEPH SMITH'S SECOND  
REPLY.HE DECLARES PLURAL MARRIAGE  
WRONG EVEN THOUGH HIS  
FATHER DID TEACH AND  
PRACTICE IT.

Mr. L. O. Littlefield, Logan, Utah.

Sir—There were no ordinances of washing and anointing engaged in at the meeting at Kirtland; but the Spirit which testifies that Jesus is the Christ, was there; and the peace that Christ declared that he would give to His disciples, filled the hearts and controlled the minds of the worshippers.

In your first you stated positively that there were those women in Utah who had stated to me and my brother that they were wives to my father. This I have shown to be untrue. If your statement was correct, would it not have been better to get one or more of those women to name the time and place where such statement was made?

There was no need for me to go to Salt Lake City to find proof, if I were under the necessity to receive "universally accepted reports." Such reports are plentiful outside of Salt Lake City, and are no better there than abroad. If I am to receive "universally accepted reports," Joseph Smith was a mountebank, Brigham Young a thief and an abettor of murder, Salt Lake City a place where lust and debauchery are at home and run riot. You are too shrewd to hold that I am to be concluded by "universally accepted reports." The reach of such reports is too wide. The effect upon not only Utah and her men, but upon the origin of the Church and its founders, too wide-spread and ruinous for you to insist upon such an acceptance.

My course in Salt Lake City was this; I was upon the streets daily. I saw many of the men whom I had seen when a boy. I was introduced by Patriarch John Smith to many others of the citizens. I shunned no one. I declared publicly in the "Institute" in answer to the question whether my father did or did not have a revelation commanding or permitting his elders to have more than one wife, that I did not know. That the evidences I had so far received had failed to convince me that he had. That I did not know whether he had or had not practiced plural marriage. That I threw the burden of proof where it belonged, on those who affirmed that he had the revelation, and practiced the doctrine. This was done publicly, and there were members of your church present who heard me.

The denial of John Taylor at Boulogne-sur-Mer, was coupled with the reading of the article on marriage then published in the Doctrine and Covenants, but taken out by order of Pres. Brigham Young, without a vote of the Church, in 1876. The intent with which it was read was to deny the charge of having in practice in Utah a system by which men of the church had more wives (with all that the name implies) than one. The language of the book is clear. "We declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."

There is no mistaking the denial of Mr. Taylor's, taken with the article on marriage, and it is conclusive. If at that time there was in operation a system by which men were married, or sealed to women as wives, other than the one legal wife, of such a momentous character that I am fighting against truth in opposing that system, Mr. Taylor was guilty of falsehood. Technically, Mr. Taylor's denial was true; the law of the church, as he well knew, was against him and his compeers. It allowed of no such marriages. The formula given in the law, required the sanction of the marriages of the church to be "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the law of the country."

The reason given in the article on Marriage for the declaration of belief is that, "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and (the crime of) polygamy, we declare," etc.

I am thankful for your honesty in saying that the things of which the Church was then accused were "utterly opposed to its teachings." This, I and my co-workers have been studiously striving to show, and every admission such as yours is in keeping with our position.

The delay in my father to declare

the "principle" (plural marriage) was, and is by you attributed to the "consequence of the prejudices of the brethren, and the persecution which he well knew he would have to encounter from the outside world, wherein his life would be endangered." I do not construe this language. It is a plain declaration given as a reason why Joseph Smith did not make known the revelation if he had it. Was it for a like reason that Brigham Young took eight years and two months to get courage enough to make it known? You did not say that God commanded my father not to make it known, but that he delayed because he well knew that "his life would be endangered." Is not that charging him impliedly with being afraid? Whence came the prejudices of the brethren? What business had they to have prejudices against the word of the Lord? What gave rise to, or created these prejudices?

I was, as Elder Joseph F. Smith states, attentive to what Elder O. Pratt was saying in the discourse from which I quoted. I tried to conduct myself in a quiet, orderly and respectful way. I took notes of the entire sermon; and can give every important point in it from notes made at the time. I was intent to discover the talent and bent of the speaker; and was equally intent to "take advantage of anything that might be said to the profit of myself and the cause I represented." Is that a crime? If so, Elder L. O. Littlefield, and every other Elder ever sent out by the Utah Church, including Joseph F. Smith, are guilty of the same crime. It is precisely what the latter has done in so sharply denying what I asserted was said by Elder O. Pratt, respecting temples. I gave it as I heard it, from notes made at the time; and I remember wondering if the statement made would be noticed and their possible effect upon me counteracted by those in charge of the meeting. When told the next day that the sermon was preached for my benefit, and asked, "What do you think of it?" as the person wished to make report of my reply to admirers of Mr. Pratt, I replied that I was pleased with it. That I had, I thought, learned one thing, and that was, that "Orson Pratt, left to himself, would tell the truth." All I have further to add is this; I may have mistaken Elder Pratt's words. The desire to discover any possible advantage may have made me too critical and perverted his meaning. Are Elder Joseph F. Smith and the others who state that they did not hear such statement, free from such partisan bias, as he seems to think troubled me? Is his memory of a sermon to which his attention may not before have been called since the day it was delivered, likely to be any clearer of defect because of freedom from undue zeal for his cause than mine? The question of veracity may rest here.

How much better is your plea, against the meeting at Kirtland, and those who met there; and your defence of the temples you are building in Utah, is the statement of Joseph F. Smith as to what Elder Pratt did say? "That the temple which we are building in Salt Lake City, was not the Temple on which we expected the cloud would rest. Nor did we expect these glorious events to transpire in any of the temples which we were now building, or would build in Utah; but, that the temple in which these promises should be fulfilled should yet be built in Jackson County, Missouri."

And that not all that were living in 1832 should pass away until that Temple should be built," etc., etc. Some one of those present will remember that after the services I met Elder Pratt with two or three others and was presented to him on the street near to the meeting house, and remarked to him that having been born near the close of 1832, I could hope to be one of those that might be living when the Temple to which he had referred should be built. To this he replied, that to have a part in it would depend on qualifications as well as age. Is this also a mistake of memory?

The question between us is the one of plurality of wives. Is the doctrine and the practice in accordance with the principles of the Church of Christ, as such principles were revealed, and said Church founded by Joseph Smith?

This question is not decided by the statement that Joseph Smith taught and practiced such doctrine, or one similar to it, in secret. Nor am I concluded as a heretic and a fighter against God or his word, when it is proven that he did secretly so teach

to a few chosen ones, and secretly so practice.

The Elders used to teach that if our forefathers, or our fathers, did "once carry their corn to mill in one end of the bag, with a stone in the other end to balance it," it was no reason that we should do the same. That we were to do our own thinking, and whatever of doctrine was not in accord with the word of God, we were to discard. Just so.

The Bible gives the origin of the institution of marriage thus:

And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.

In the history of the life and generation of Adam as given in Genesis, there is no hint, or reference to but the one companion, one woman, one wife for him. Malachi seems to have referred to it in the language of the 14th and 15th verses of his second chapter:

Yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.

Lamech departed from this rule and took two wives, and he became a murderer.

The commandment to Noah was completed in the saving of the means by which the earth was to be re-peopled—Noah and his wife; his three sons and one wife each—no more. The New Testament shows a full endorsement of this by Christ:

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh—Matt. 19, 15. Mark 10, 8. Eph. 5, 31.

The Book of Mormon history shows that when Lehi and his family left their land at the command of God, they went out prepared to keep his command; Lehi and his sons and Zoram having one wife each, and that only.

Here are three occasions when God has proposed to people, or re-people a land—twice the earth, and once a distant land from the old world—and each time he shows the pattern to be one man, one woman, one husband, one wife; twain and twain only, one flesh.

The Lord stated to Ezra Thayer and Northrop Sweet, October, 1830, that the Book of Mormon and the Holy Scriptures, were given for the instruction of his people. D. & C., p. 208, Liverpool Edition, 1854.

In section 2 of the same work, the Lord states that the Book of Mormon "contains the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and to the Jews also, which was given by inspiration."

In section 4, paragraph 8, it is declared that because of light treatment of things that had been received, condemnation rested upon the Church. The language is as follows:

And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the New Covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their father's kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a curse and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, nay.—(Liverpool Edition.)

The date of the revelation from which this is quoted, is given as September, 1832. Going back to find some of the former commandments we discover the following: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else."

Elder Orson Pratt stated in a discourse delivered in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, October, 1869, which was published in pamphlet form, "In the early rise of this Church, February, 1831, God gave a commandment to its members \* \* wherein he says, thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. It was given in 1831, when the one wife system prevailed among this people."

In March, 1831, following, the word of the Lord came through the same man, and is as follows:

And again I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God; wherefore, (for this reason,) it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation, and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to its creation before the world was.

These are the former commandments, the disregard of which brought condemnation.

The fact that the revelation was given to men about to visit the Shakers, which body forbade to marry, does not prove that what is

revealed is not to be taken in universal sense. And it is simply astonishing that you can so glibly dispose of its provisions. "It is lawful that he shall have one wife; and they twain." Can you make more than one out of this lawful provision? The revelation was given to the elders to go and preach to men who did not believe in marriage. In preparing them God declares two facts; one is that marriage was ordained of Him; the other, that it is lawful for man to have one wife. This is qualified and made plain, so that no one, not blinded can fail to see, by the words, "and they twain," the man and his one wife, "shall be one flesh."

The men to whom it came so understood it. So will any one to whom the book is handed, upon whom the blindness has not come by reason of having treated the commandments lightly. Farther than this, the same revelation warrants the belief that such was the order according to the creation of man. The words, "unless death intervene," obtained from section 109, paragraph 4: "except in case of death, when either is set at liberty to marry again." This shows that at the time the revelation on marriage was written, the understanding derived from the revelations as I have stated "one only." The word "either" is in the single number and means one of the two contracting parties. I did not interpolate the words "one only." I quoted those portions that I took from the revelations and the church articles and covenants, and gave the sense of what was evidently conveyed as being the will of God.

You write: "What a pity it is that the Lord did not take the same view of the matter that you do."

He did, Mr. Littlefield, he did beyond question. He did at that time take precisely that view. Let us see.

The Elders shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the book of Mormon, in which is the fullness of the gospel; and they shall observe the covenants and Church articles to do them.

But the word of God burthens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord, this people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the Scriptures; for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon, his son. Behold David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord; wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph. Wherefore, I the Lord God, will not suffer this people to do like unto them of old. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none.

Jacob's warrant for making this declaration is this: "Jacob, get thou up into the Temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee unto this people."

This shows conclusively, that in 1830, when the Lord revealed the Book of Mormon, which was to become a part of the "law" of God, to "govern" His church; and in 1830 and 1831, when the revelations I have quoted were given, He did take the same view that I do. And from what you have stated, if it be correct, He did not change His view until 1843.

You quote the revelation of God in which His will is set forth, and then immediately turn and justify the plural wife system "because of the things which were written of David," the very thing reprobated by the Lord as declared by Jacob.

Let us reverse the reasoning. You quote the language of Nathan:

And I gave thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

You then say: "From the foregoing it is not evident that to assert that plural marriage is a sin, is to say that God is a sinner?"

How much wiser and better is it; or how much more consistent to charge God with using duplicity and deceit." This you certainly do when you say, or intimate that the revelation "it is lawful that a man shall have one wife," was not intended as a restriction, as in the case of the woman, "but one husband." In the same way you charge God with duplicity, in evading the force of Jacob's declaration:

Wherefore if I will raise up a righteous seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise, they shall hearken unto these things.

In this there is no hint that God will change the rule then established. For my part, when you prove that God has dealt deceitfully with the Church, as such construction of implied, reserved and double meanings would certainly do if they were correct, you have proved Him

to be a hypocrite, which you practically charge Him with being—and in such case He is no better than a sinner—of the two, a hypocrite is more despicable than a sinner.

I do not need to say that plural marriage is a sin on unjust or unfair ground. God, through Jacob, declares positively that it is an abomination. "Truly, David and Solomon had many wives and concubines which thing was abominable before me." Jacob called it a "grosser crime." That section on marriage adopted by the assembled quorums of the Church in 1833, called it a "crime."

If he who commits a crime is not a sinner, pray tell me what is he? He who commands a crime is as guilty as he who commits it, if the command is obeyed. If God commanded Joseph Smith to take more wives than Emma, while she lived, He commanded a thing that He had forbidden by a revelation called by Orson Pratt in 1869, a "holy law." Mr. Pratt said:

If the members of the Church had taken to vary from the law given in 1833, to love their one wife with all their heart, to cleave to none other, they would have been under the curse and condemnation of God's holy law.

This holy law given of God was the exact counterpart of the one given to Lehi.

Mr. Pratt (a Daniel come to judgment), said in 1869:

The Lord, through His servant Lehi, gave a commandment that they should have but one wife. By and by, after the death of Lehi, some of his posterity began to disregard the strict law that God had given to their father, and took more wives than one, and the Lord put them in and through His servant Jacob, one of the sons of Lehi, of this law, and told them that they were transgressing it, and then referred to David and Solomon as having committed abominations in this sight.

History repeats itself, for now, I, the son of Joseph Smith, through whom the "holy law" cited by Mr. Pratt came from God, which commanded the men of the Church to have but one wife each, now call the attention of a people claiming to be of that Church, and remind them that they are transgressing that law by taking more wives than one. I further declare to that people, in the language of the Book of Mormon, which that people are commanded to hear, the taking of more wives than one is "abominable" before God.

It is proved beyond question that this monogamic rule prevailed in the Church from 1830 to 1843, (at any rate) by command of God. Hence, if he acted like himself and is unchangeable, he could not in 1843 give a law contrary to it. If he did he must be changeable. This destroys his character as God. Besides this the history shows that three separate times did God in starting the peopling of the world fix the status "one man, one woman, one husband, one wife." Christ, the lawgiver of this dispensation, sanctioned it in the New Testament, and in the Doctrine and Covenants; and hence is not a party to this new revelation that brands his Father with being a changeable Jehovah.

Joseph F. Smith, yourself and others are alarmed and indignant at me when I put words into Elder O. Pratt's mouth that indicate a change of sentiment in him, and you argue that he could not have said what stated that he did say, because it was not like him. Please be as consistent in your argument respecting God. "I am God, and change not," is His own language concerning Himself. Nor am I in fault if I hold this argument back at you that was the rallying cry of the Elders in my father's day: "God is unchangeable, the Gospel is now what it was in Christ's day."

The history shows that the wives of David's master fell into his hands by the fortunes of war. As a conqueror he slept in the bed of their seats of power. Nathan did not give them to David as President Young gave wives to his faithful adherents. The record does not show that any such giving took place. The house of Israel and the house of Judah with the wives of the captive kings were given in a similar sense, as were the house of Saul and his wives. But how fatal the gift. The same God before whom he had done abominable things would not permit that he should build a house unto him. His wives forsook him. His son betrayed him and debauched his wives. The same Nathan who you state gave the wives of David's master to the king, took the same wives and gave them to David's neighbor, Shimei, the son of Gera, cursed him at the command of God on account of the "blood of the house of Saul" whose