

THE "POST'S" ONLY ONE WAY.

The subjoined characteristic paragraph is taken from the San Francisco Post:

"The Edmunds bill, save as an expression of opinion, is a nullity. That is, it cannot be enforced in such a way as to accomplish its purpose. There is only one way in which the Mormon oligarchy can be destroyed, and that is, by prohibiting foreign immigration to Utah, depriving all professing Mormons of all rights, nominating by the Federal Government all judicial and officers in the Territory, compelling the attendance of all children in schools using the textbooks general use in the enlightened world. In this way alone can the Mormon blight be eradicated. The remedy is a desperate one, but the case needs heroic treatment."

That is the "only one way in which the Mormon oligarchy can be destroyed," admitting the existence of such a thing, it is likely to live for a great many years. The remedies proposed would be a thousand times more for the country than the alleged disease. They might do something—a very little in the direction of it, but they would be more destructive of our national institutions than of "Mormonism."

It is evident that the writer of the paragraph in the Post, like a great many other persons who touch on the "Mormon" question, is not properly posted. To begin with there is such a thing as a "Mormon oligarchy." The Territory of Utah governed by United States officials appointed from the seat of the Federal government. The local officials are elected by popular vote. There is no oligarchy about it. There is something more extreme than an oligarchy in Utah, but it is not "Mormon" in any sense. The Governor of the Territory is appointed without the people's consent, and he has power to annul all that the people's representatives enact, by simply withholding his signature to what they may pass. That is one-man-power. It is established by Federal authority; not by "Mormon" influence. It is the most extreme form of despotism outside of an absolute monarchy on the face of the earth. But it is not an oligarchy.

If the Post refers to the "Mormon" Church, in its remarks about an "oligarchy," it is equally in the wrong? All things in the Church are, according to its discipline, covenants and commandments, done by common consent. Its officers are submitted twice a year to the vote of the body, all members, male and female, having an equal vote. There is no aristocracy in it. There are no inherited offices in it. There are no family claims to position in it. Every person in it is amenable to the Church councils. It combines the word of the Lord and the will of the people. It is a mingling of the theocratic and democratic principles, but it is not an oligarchy.

Supposing that the "Mormon" Church were an oligarchy, what then? Its form of government would be ecclesiastical, not secular. If the Church chose to vest its authority in one man or in twelve men in any number of men or women, what would the State or the General Government have to do with it? So long as it kept from interference with the operations of secular government it would be independent in its sphere and beyond the interference of any secular power. It is therefore no part of the business of the Government to destroy a "Mormon" oligarchy any more than a Catholic hierarchy or a Protestant episcopacy.

There is no constitutional power in existence to "prohibit foreign immigration to Utah." This Territory is as free to new-comers from abroad as any other part of the Union, and cannot be lawfully singled out as an exception in that regard. And if all "foreign immigration to Utah" could be stopped, lawfully or unlawfully, it would not have the effect of destroying the "Mormon" Church. Let that be clearly understood. It would not accomplish anything toward the end desired.

The proposition to "deprive all professing Mormons of civil rights" is one that will recommend itself to a few rampant bigots, and a few scheming adventurers who are lust after power over "Mormon" life and property. But to others it will appear in its true light—as simply infamous. Every man has a right to his beliefs. That is sacred and inalienable. It makes no difference how absurd or wicked his views

may appear to others, he must be protected in that right or the foundations of human and national liberty will be destroyed. Only when he commits some act that is against public peace and good order, or subversive of the rights of another, can he be punished by the law, either by curtailment of liberty or deprivation of civil rights.

All the judicial and civil officers that can be appointed by the Federal Government are now so appointed, and nothing is left to the vote of the people but those local positions which, if removed from their control, would destroy the last shred of a republican form of government that the despotic policy pursued towards the Territories has left to them. Such a course would be in perfect keeping with the destruction of civil rights for unorthodox belief.

Compulsory attendance at the public schools is not yet part of the American system. If it is made universal Utah will not object; it is very doubtful, however, if it can be adopted as a national measure. The text books in general use in the enlightened States are now in use in the District Schools of Utah. This may be a surprise to the unposted Post, but it is a fact the truth of which can be easily determined, there is no need as there is no right to legislate to bring that about.

After looking over all its recommendations for the "eradicating of the Mormon blight," with the brief review which we have made of them, we think the Post, if it has not gone too far in the anti-"Mormon" mania, will see that they are not the essence of statesmanship, of American republicanism, or of journalistic wisdom. If we were disposed to use blunt language we would say they are as stupid as a Post.

REPLY TO MR. SMITH'S SOPHISTRIES.

We publish to-day a letter received from Joseph Smith, of Lamoni, Iowa, purporting to be a reply to an editorial in the DESERET NEWS, which appeared in our daily issue of August 4th, and the semi-weekly of August 7th. Mr. Smith's letter should be examined before this article is read.

Reference to the editorial in question shows that we considered the position taken by Brother Lyman O. Littlefield in his correspondence with Mr. Smith, which we reproduced from the columns of the Utah Journal, giving both sides of the controversy, had been established beyond reasonable doubt, namely, that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, both taught and practised the system of plural marriage which has become one of the permanent institutions of this Church. We gave reasons for this conclusion, and stated that there was no dispute about the fact among the Saints in Utah.

Mr. Smith argues that the Church cannot know that his father taught and practised plural marriage because it was taught secretly, and that Mr. Littlefield's testimony is better than ours because ours is "only hearsay." Does he mean to say that no one can know of a thing that he has not seen? Is it true that it is impossible for any one to know that Joseph Smith the Prophet taught plural marriage without having heard him teach it? How then does he know that his father received visits from the angel who revealed the gospel, that he translated the Book of Mormon, was ministered to by Peter, James and John and other ancient worthies, and that he accomplished the great work entrusted to him by the Almighty? Did Mr. Smith see his father receive these manifestations? Did he hear the angels instruct his father? Can he testify to an eye or ear knowledge of anything in his father's history? Do not thousands who never saw the Prophet bear witness that they know Joseph Smith received the gospel from the angel spoken of in Revelations xiv, 6, 7? Is their testimony of no value because they were not blest with his acquaintance?

Can Mr. Smith be a lawyer and not know better than to use such logic? Does he not know that there is such a city as Melbourne in Australia without having seen it? Has he ever looked down the crater of Vesuvius, and yet does he not know that it exists and sometimes belches forth fire? Can not a jury reach a sure and definite conclusion, without a shadow of doubt, from unimpeachable evidence, without being eye-witness to a single oc-

currence of being cognizant of a single fact connected with the case? Is knowledge never arrived at except through seeing and hearing the thing or person whose existence is to be known?

This Church has among its leaders many men to whom the Prophet taught the doctrine of plural marriage, and who entered into its practice under his directions and his personal administration of the ceremony. We have been familiar for many years with ladies who claim to have been married to the Prophet Joseph, and many others who testify that he sealed them to their husbands as plural wives. We have the affidavits of both men and women to these and other facts, proving that Joseph the Prophet, both taught and practised plural marriage. A number of these affidavits were published in the DESERET EVENING NEWS of Oct. 18th, 1879. The ladies and gentlemen referred to are known to be in all things reliable. They are worthy Latter-day Saints, living their religion and devoted to the truth and to the mission and memory of the martyred Seer. Added to countless evidences from Nauvoo Saints, male and female who were familiar with the facts, we have the testimony of a host that they know by the same spirit and in the same way by which they know the first principles of the Gospel are true, that the revelation on Celestial Marriage was given by the Lord to Joseph Smith, and that it is true and for the exaltation of those who receive it in the spirit thereof. If it is possible for people who never saw Joseph the Prophet to know that he received the gospel from the angel, it is equally possible for them to know that he received the revelation on Celestial Marriage without ever seeing him or hearing him speak. Mr. Smith's logic would nullify his own testimony concerning the divine mission of his father, and exclude all knowledge of anything in heaven or on earth but that which the eye has seen or the ear has heard.

If Mr. Littlefield's testimony is better than ours—and we have not pretended to the contrary, therefore Mr. Smith's remark is superfluous—it must be because he is an eye witness to the fact under dispute. And this should settle the controversy. If he was not personally cognizant of the fact, his testimony is no better than ours; if his testimony is better than ours, it is because he was so cognizant, and thus the fact is established. When Mr. Smith attempts to be hypercritical he should use more caution; his logic amounts to a practical admission of the point in dispute.

As to the matter of record, we have Mr. Smith now on our record, where we can refer to his statements and sophistries when we so desire, and having him there unequivocally, we all know just where he stands; that is the value of his letters in response to Mr. Littlefield.

His attempt to shift the charge of hypocrisy and cowardice against his father and of the same things as well as changeability against God, from his own lips to ours or Mr. Littlefield's, cannot be properly characterized in kind language. Was there ever greater impudence or plainer falsehood? He denied a certain fact alleged by Mr. Littlefield that is, that his father taught and practised plural marriage, and he went on to say that if it was true it proved his father was a "hypocrite," a "deceiver" and that if he taught in secret it was because he was "afraid." He said further:

"I am not so particularly strenuous to assert my father's innocence. He may have been guilty, I prefer not to believe it. But if he was I shall not evade the issue nor my duty as I know it because of that guilt."

Speaking of the power conferred upon one man in the revelation on Celestial Marriage he declared:

"It offers to such a man an opportunity and an inducement to prostitute his prophetic character to greed, love of power and the lust of the flesh, that may not be resisted. Joseph Smith may not long have been free from such influences; and it is possible that the eleven months that he exercised it, if your theory is a true one, witnessed his corruption."

In regard to the Almighty and his right to give a different law at a late date to one given at a former period, he remarked:

"I admit God's power to change. I do not admit His right to change His law, without reserving to myself the right to declare him changeable against the teachings of his own word. I do not believe that

God has the right to lie. I do not believe that Jesus Christ, His Son has the right to lie. I do not believe that either has the right to say that one thing is heaven's law in 1831 and that another and contrary thing is heaven's law in 1843.

Now, observe that "all these epithets and charges are his. None of them are made or admitted by Bro. Littlefield or the DESERET NEWS. We do not entertain the idea for a moment that there was any guilt, hypocrisy, cowardice or duplicity in the Prophet's teaching and practice of plural marriage, nor any changeableness in the Almighty in giving one law at one time and a different law at another time. The charges are Mr. Smith's. The language is his. No one but he has applied it to his father or to the Great Eternal Father. The evidences are such that we are positively certain of the facts claimed, and he maintains that if they are true his father was guilty and God is changeable. We deny that his charges are correct and he tries to make us responsible for them and the shameful language he used against his father and against the Almighty.

We proved by copious quotations from the Bible and Doctrine and Covenants that God, at various times, has changed his laws to suit the conditions of his people, just exactly as He did in regard to the marriage law. He commanded the Nephites to have no more than one wife, but at the same time intimated to them that in a certain contingency He would command them otherwise. In the rise of this Church only one wife was permitted, but afterwards the Lord revealed through His servant Joseph the law under which his servants should marry more wives than one. Mr. Smith insists that this makes God a changeable being. We deny it. God does not change because he adapts his laws to changing conditions. To all our citations proving that God has always acted on this principle, Mr. Smith says not a word. He is silent on the Lord's own declaration in the Doctrine and Covenants which he professes to believe in, "I the Lord command and revoke as it seemeth me good." According to his theory the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants all make God a changeable being. The fault is not in the books, but in Mr. Smith's extremely foolish and highly blasphemous notion and expressions. The Mosaic code was the law of God at one time, and at another and later date it was in many important respects entirely changed. Paul, in Hebrews vii v. 12, says: "For the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Circumcision was commanded of God at one time, but Paul said: "If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." Jesus himself told the Nephites: "And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away." (iii Nephi ix, 19.) Yet the law of Moses, which Jesus said He revealed, required such sacrifices. Now, hear Mr. Smith: "I do not believe that either [God or Jesus Christ His Son] has the right to say that one thing is heaven's law in 1831 and that another and contrary thing is heaven's law in 1843."

That is the difference between Mr. Smith's views and those of Paul, the Savior and this Church. Will Mr. Smith say that it is Paul and Jesus that make God a changeable being, or will he see his error and confess it? If God can change His law so that what was heaven's law up to the time Jesus went into the ministry, was not heaven's law when He began to preach the Gospel, and yet not be a changeable being, then he can give one law in 1831 and another and different law in 1843, and not be a changeable being. As we showed in the article that Mr. Smith pretends to review, but about a part of which he merely quibbles, God does not change in His nature or essence because He changes His requirements.

Mr. Smith does not attempt to rebut the charge of quibbling, but asks us to get rid of evasions resorted to in regard to the saying of Jacob about David and Solomon. We are not aware of any such evasions. Who has resorted to them? He does not say. Let us look at the matter a little. In Jacob's discourse to the Nephites, reference is made to things done by David and Solomon which were an abomination before the Lord. The Bible (1 Kings xv, 5) says:

"David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

Here is an apparent discrepancy between the Book of Mormon and the Bible. The revelation on Celestial marriage makes the matter clear: it shows that David, Solomon and other servants of God who had wives and concubines, sinned only in those things which they received not of God; David sinned only in the case of Uriah and his wife. Take scripture with scripture, revelation with revelation, and everything is plain except to those who do not wish to see, and who, like Mr. Smith, "prefer not to believe."

The questions asked by Mr. Smith in regard to keeping the revelation on Celestial Marriage secret for a time have been answered repeatedly. Until the due time of the Lord came to make public his word and law the old rule and law prevailed and none other was known in the Church. John Taylor did not make any specific statement on the matter in 1850 nor say what has been attributed to him by Mr. Smith. This also has been clearly explained. The change in the conditions about which Mr. Smith makes further quibbles, were in the people to whom the law was given. They were not prepared to receive the greater law before it was revealed. Even then it was only explained to those who, it was considered, were able to bear it. Joseph the Seer declared publicly at the very time of its manifestation that if he were to tell what God had revealed to him some who professed to be his best friends would seek his life. Joseph proceeded on the rule that God gave as early as 1830, to keep from the world those things which it was not wise to declare, and give "milk" to those who were not able to bear "meat" "lest they perish" (Doc. and Cov. sec xix 21, 22.)

As to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, that was in favor of a community of wives, or having all wives in common which is as hateful to us as to the Lord, and is as far from the sacred doctrine of plural marriage as debauchery is from perfect chastity.

Mr. Smith's childish remark about an *ex post facto* law, which has no bearing on the question, is too frivolous to notice. And if he will take the trouble to read carefully our advice to him about "antipathies and convictions," he will see that his remarks and query are entirely out of place. As he wishes to know if bias or prejudice has nothing to do with our defense of plurality of wives, we say we believe it has not anything to do with it. Our bias and prejudice, like those of the Apostles and leading Elders to whom Joseph the Seer taught that doctrine, were, through tradition and early training, opposed to it. Our advocacy, then, comes through thorough conviction of its truth and divinity, in spite of former bias and prejudice. But if we were led by bias or prejudice, that would not justify Mr. Smith in giving way to it and shutting his eyes to evidence that no unprejudiced mind could resist.

We are well aware that whether Joseph Smith did or did not teach and practice plurality of wives, that does not settle the question of the divine origin of the doctrine. But that was the point of controversy on which all the correspondence has turned, and upon which charges of wilful falsehood and deception have been made by Mr. Smith against President Young, President Taylor and other men of God. It was therefore a proper thing that this question should be put right before the public, although it is not a matter of doubt among the members of this Church, who are as well satisfied that the revelation on Celestial Marriage came from God, through Joseph Smith the Prophet, as they are that he received the plates from the angel Moroni, and translated them by the gift and power of God. And from the shifts and sophistries to which Mr. Smith, of Lamoni, has resorted in the argument, we have good reason to think that he is convinced himself of the fact that his father taught and practised plural marriage, although as he says, he "prefers not to believe it." We are sorry for his position, and regret that he has so poor a comprehension of God's dealings with man, the spirit and methods of divine revelation, and the great plan of exaltation unto thrones, dominions, principalities and powers and eternal lives, wherein God is glorified and His crowned sons and heirs have eternal increase and dominion in His presence.