

record of courage and fidelity in the past, we have no hesitancy in heartily commending to the women of Utah the Woman's Exponent as a journal that in every way merits their support, and that would be a valuable addition to the reading matter of any family circle wherein it may not already have a place. Long life and prosperity to the Woman's Exponent!

AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT "UN-CHANGED."

The following remarkable effusion appears in a publication called The Saints' Herald, bearing date June 3, 1896. It is the official paper of the so-called "Reorganized" or "Josephite" church, and bears the name of Joseph Smith of Lamoni, Iowa, as the editor:

AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT CHANGED.

Below we publish an epistle written by Joseph the Seer and his fellow prisoners while in Liberty jail, Missouri, as it is found in the Times and Seasons, vol. 1, pages 99-104, and as it is found in the Millennial Star, vol. 17, pages 52-58. We publish these in parallel columns that the reader may more readily see the differences and mark the liberty that has been taken by some parties in changing and corrupting the words of Joseph Smith since his death. You will notice the kind and Christianlike spirit of the one in contrast with the boasting, railing spirit of the other. Especial attention is called to the fact that a plurality of gods is taught in the one where no mention of such a thing is found in the other. But the differences are so glaring and important that it is useless to point them out further. That found in Times and Seasons was published in May, 1840, when E. Robinson and Don C. Smith were editors, and in the lifetime of Joseph Smith and the other signers of the document; and hence open to their inspection, and doubtless received their endorsement. That in the Millennial Star was published in January, 1855, when F. D. Richards was editor, and purports to be a portion of the history of Joseph Smith, written by himself. This was published over ten years after the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and when others of the signers were not in fellowship with the publisher.

Now will Mr. F. D. Richards please arise and explain by what authority these changes were made, and produce the evidence to sustain his explanation? We think it is due to Mr. Richards to give him an opportunity to explain; and if there exists sufficient authority for these changes it would be a satisfaction to us to know it; for we dislike to think that any man, especially one professing the high and holy calling which Mr. Franklin D. Richards does, would wilfully and maliciously put into the mouth of our martyred dead words which were never used by them.

Should he now fail to explain, and furnish proof, can the Church in Utah sustain him as "Church Historian," and expect us to accept his work as such? If you are innocent of duplicity and deceit in this matter, please step forward and let us hear from you.

The insinuations and impertinences contained in the foregoing would justify entire silence on the part of those who are directly or indirectly assailed. Such attacks deserve only the most profound contempt. But seeing that

doubts are cast upon the correctness of historic documents, it is necessary for the public benefit to present the facts in the case.

The letter as published in the Times and Seasons of May, 1840, and that published in the Millennial Star in January, 1855, are correctly copied into the Herald. There is much in the latter which does not appear in the former. But it does not follow from those facts that anybody has been guilty of "corrupting the words of Joseph Smith since his death." In making that rash and serious charge it seems probable that "the wish was father to the thought," and it is certainly preferred in a most uncharitable and reckless spirit.

Is it not quite as reasonable to suppose that the letter as it appeared in the Times and Seasons was abbreviated to suit the limited size of that periodical, and also to suit those times and seasons when many things for prudence's sake were not fully made public? Did not the Lord command in some other cases that His servants should "hold their peace" concerning certain revelations until it became wise to declare them?

As to the necessity for condensation, that appears from an examination of the number of the Times and Seasons which contains the letter. It consists of sixteen pages. Four and a half pages are filled with the letter, one page is taken up with notices, leaving but ten and a half for other matter, and compelling the curtailment to a little more than two pages of the serial "History of the Persecution of the Church," the chief feature of the periodical.

But now as to the facts concerning the letter as it appeared in the Millennial Star: It was taken verbatim from the DESERET NEWS of January 26, 1854. By careful comparison, that has been definitely established. The unnecessary and ungenerous accusation against the then editor and publisher of the Millennial Star are thus shown to be as groundless as they are gratuitous.

But how did the editor and publisher of the DESERET NEWS obtain the matter as it appeared in that paper? It was taken, literally, from the History of Joseph Smith, written in Nauvoo, the volume containing it being that for the years 1838-39-40-41 and 42, dating from November 2, 1838, and closing with July 30, 1842. It is to that volume that we are indebted for the various items of history and the text of the revelations of that period which are contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, and are accepted by the "Reorganized" church, as well as by the Church which has continued from April, 1830, to the present day. That volume with other Church records was brought to Utah, and they have been religiously preserved under the care of the several successive General Church Historians and Recorders. Elder Willard Richards, who was editor of the DESERET NEWS when the letter in dispute was published, was also the Church Historian.

But there is something more in evidence. The original letter, written in Liberty jail, has also been preserved with other important Church documents, and is now on file in the Historian's Office. Though somewhat

yellow with age, it is complete and in good condition, and bears the personal signatures of Joseph Smith Jun., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae. The following affidavit should settle the matter in controversy:

STATE OF UTAH, } ss.
County of Salt Lake. }

Charles W. Penrose and Daniel F. Collett, being first duly sworn, on oath say: We are over the age of 21 years; that we have carefully compared the copy of a letter written in Liberty jail, Clay county, Missouri, March 20, 1839, and signed Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae, as published in the Millennial Star of January 27, 1855, and in the DESERET NEWS of January 26, 1854, with the original manuscript letter of March 20, 1839, bearing the signatures of the said Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae, and find the printed copy and the original manuscript letter to be identically alike, except here and there a word which is incorrectly spelled in the original, but correctly in the printed copy. They are to all intents and purposes the same.

Witness our hands this 25th day of June, 1896.

CHARLES W. PENROSE,
Assistant Church Historian.
DANIEL F. COLLETT, Clerk.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 25th day of June, A. D. 1896.

JAMES JACK, Notary Public.

Instead, therefore, of the letter having been changed as charged ten years after the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, it was copied into the current history of the Prophet during their lifetime and presumably under his direction and supervision.

By further investigation and comparison it will be seen that the letter written from Liberty jail at a later date and signed by the same persons, which appears in the Times and Seasons of July, 1840, and in the Millennial Star of Feb. 10, 1855, was abbreviated and edited for that periodical in a similar manner to the preparation of the first letter for that purpose. In the Millennial Star it is given in full as it stands in the manuscript history. In the July Times and Seasons the word "Extract" is used in the heading, which does not appear in the May number. But critical comparison shows that similar work was done on both letters for publication in the Times and Seasons, and that if one may be properly called an extract the term is equally applicable to the other.

This explanation conveys no imputation against the editors, Messrs. E. Robinson and Don C. Smith. They doubtless acted with the full sanction of President Joseph Smith in giving out portions of both letters to the public at that time. There was not then, nor has there been since, any desire to "corrupt" the words of Joseph Smith. In the publication of the history of the Prophet, care has been taken both in the Millennial Star and in the DESERET NEWS to follow strictly the authentic records, and many important things previously published only in part appear for that reason in full in the DESERET NEWS and the Millennial Star.

Before rushing into print again as an abuser of the brethren, it is hoped that the parallel of the Saints'