

wives he had won by conquest. The dread consequences of his sin followed. The like result followed the successful son, for his wives drew his heart away from God and he perished as a foolish old man.

I thank you for the statement you quote from the history of Joseph Smith, of date of October 5, 1848.

In this statement my father urges that persons teaching, or preaching or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives should be tried. What for? Because, as Hyrum wrote in 1844, "No such doctrine is taught here" (Nauvoo).

This statement agrees perfectly with the one made by Elder Wm. Marke, that some time before my father's death, he told him to go before the High Council, and there prefer charges against such men and that he would go upon the stand and proclaim against the doctrine; as it was from the devil and would destroy the Church if it was not put down. This was either a piece of clerical duplicity and deceit, or was a genuine effort to put a stop to what was had in secret of which knowledge had come to him. Nor does it take on the form of implicating himself as one of the guilty ones. It does not warrant the conclusion that he was himself one of those to be proceeded against by President Marks before the Council. Nor is it common sense to say that Joseph Smith was so great a bungler as to go on the stand and publicly denounce what he was secretly practicing, if such practice was known.

The testimonies from the witnesses you offer I am familiar with; and many of them will not bear cross examination; as I could easily demonstrate if I had the witnesses in a court where hearsay, mental reservations and other men's statements can not be affirmed as knowledge.

It is unnecessary to attempt to prove that Joseph Smith secretly taught and practiced celestial or plural marriage, or polygamy. For when that is proved, the issue remains unchanged. All that could be effected by it, so far as I am concerned, would be to lessen my respect for him as a man, and give me one more heart pang to bear through life. And if it be proved that he dictated the alleged revelation, or the "copy" which is all that you can claim, it would not prove either the revelation, or the doctrine to be of God, or binding on Latter-day Saints. 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. sin is not made legal, or lovely in my eyes because my father did it.

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 teaching 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 heavens law in 1831 and that another and contrary thing is heavens law in 1843. I do not believe that the revelation, so called, came from God. But if it did, it is an unjust and cruel thing; so totally unlike the "new covenant," the Book of Mormon, that it makes God to exultify himself. The New Covenant, the everlasting gospel, has provisions for life and salvation open to all. This revelation has provisions for only a few. The gospel provides for all men, this revelation for a few only.

But, suppose that it be conceded that the revelation came from God and that Joseph Smith "had the keys of the power" to administer in the things named in it. That he was the "only one on earth" at the time authorized to receive revelations from God as to who might, and to say who should not receive wives under its privileges. Who authorized Brigham Young to do it? He did not receive it from Joseph Smith. It was not conferred in the revelation on any one but Joseph Smith. Brigham's appointment by the people to be the President did not confer it. He declared that he "was not a prophet, nor the son of one." Who gave Joseph Smith's wives to be Brigham Young's wives. What business had he to take them to himself?

The lodging of such a power in one man's hands—that of dictating that one here may, or shall take such and such a woman, or such woman to wife; and that one there may or shall not take any—is a most

dangerous thing to do. 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. That Brigham Young in the exercise of it for the twenty-five years between 1852 and 1857 was free from its baleful power, is more than I believe, and were the history of its workings fully known, I feel assured its own friends would be appalled.

I deny that Brigham Young was ever lawfully called and authorized to act under the provisions of that revelation. Joseph Smith did not designate him as his successor. The laws of the Church, as found in the Doctrine and Covenants, at Joseph Smith's death did not confer such authority. The revelation itself did not confer it, nor does it contain any provision for a successor: "And I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days." This is the precise language of the revelation itself and limits the power to Joseph Smith and him alone. The manner in which the document came to the people was irregular. The way Brigham Young became possessed of the "copy" is of doubtful propriety. From these and other reasons plainly to be deduced, it is safe to conclude that if the revelation did come from God, it became inoperative at the death of Joseph Smith.

As conclusive proof that the "copy" did not come legitimately into the Church rules, I quote section 28, paragraphs 12 and 13, Doctrine and Covenants, Utah edition of 1876:

For, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him, neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this Church contrary to the Church covenants. For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the Church, by the prayer of faith.

This revelation never passed the ordeal required. There is no pretence that it did. Orion Hyde quoted the language of Joseph Smith, at the trial of Sidney Rigdon in 1844. "Joseph gave us the plan. When all the quorums are assembled and organized in order, let the revelation be presented to the quorums. If it pass one, let it go to another, and if it pass that, to another, and so on, until it has passed all the quorums; and if it pass the whole without running against a snag, you may know it is of God." Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, pp 649, 665.

That Joseph Smith did not think that the Temple at Kirtland had filled the object of its building is seen by reading the prayer offered at its dedication. See Doctrine and Covenants, edition of 1876, Sec. 109. Hyrum Smith, writing from Nauvoo to a member in Kirtland, referred to it thus as the saying of the Lord, "that I may hide you from mine indignation that shall scourge the wicked, and then I will send forth and build up Kirtland, and it shall be polished and refined according to my word."

In your first letter the inference was conveyed that the Reorganized Church was sadly derelict in duty or in goodness, because they had built no temples. And that those in Utah were necessarily the people of God because they were building temples. Let me repeat that no special revelation has commanded the erection of temples at Mantt, Logan, St. George and Salt Lake City. The authority claimed by you in your reply is said to be a general one. Whence came this general command? The rule was that whenever any house was to be built to the Lord it was first commanded. This was the case of the Tabernacle, Solomon's temple, the one at Kirtland, and the one at Nauvoo; and the command given in 1841 does not read, "my people are always commanded to build temples unto my name." The language of the command is special, and is of a similar nature to the one referred to by Jacob: "If I will raise up a righteous seed I will command my people," showing that the Lord purposes to be obeyed. This is seen by the text of Sec. 124, par. 39, of your edition of the Doctrine and Covenants for 1876. This shows that the washings, baptisms, statutes and judgments, etc., are "ordained by the ordinance of my holy house which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name."

The word house is singular, and in paragraph 40 the Lord said, "Let this house be built unto my name." This confines the command to the "house" at Nauvoo; and does not

warrant one at Salt Lake City, Mantt, St. George or Logan. It is not a general command to build Temples.

It is shown by the quotation that Elder Joseph F. Smith makes from Mr. Pratt for December 10th, 1876, that no one of the Temples in Utah is the one spoken of by the Prophet as the one to be built in Zion in the generation counting from 1832, or "while some are living who lived in that year." This shows that Utah is not Zion. But the law, the general one under which you claim to have been building declares that it is "in Zion and her stakes," that those places (houses) where baptisms for the dead, etc., are to be performed. The free and proper rendering of this statement, "which My people are always commanded to build," is that the people shall not attempt to build, without a command including place and manner of building. That God's people shall not presume to build a house, a Temple unto the Lord, unless such house shall first be ordered by Him. If it is at any time essential to His purposes that one should be built, He will command it to be done.

That you have built many does not prove that any one of them was commanded. If only one had been built it might be a possible presumption that it had been ordered. The building of more than one renders the presumption good that none was commanded.

Another thing that is indicative that the Temples in Utah are not accepted of God is this:

And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

The people were "moved out of their place." The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that they did not hearken; that there was something done that was not commanded, or something commanded that was left undone. You can take which of these horns you please. The fact of disobedience remains.

If you will look up the sayings of Pres. Young, you will find the report of a sermon delivered at St. George, January 1st, 1877. In that you will find something like this:

We that are here are enjoying a privilege that we have no knowledge of any other people enjoying since the days of Adam, that is to have a Temple completed, wherein all the ordinances of the House of God can be bestowed upon His people. We built one at Nauvoo. I could pick out several before me now that were there when it was built, and know just how much was finished and what was done. It was true we left brethren there with instructions to finish it, and they got it nearly completed before it was burned; but the Saints did not enjoy it.

Brigham Young knew that the Temple at Nauvoo was not finished. He knew that when it was burned it had been let to a company of men who proposed establishing a school of some sort in it. He knew that it had not been accepted according to the terms of the revelation by which it was authorized to be built. He knew also that no command to build Temples in Utah had been given. There is no general law by which the people were commanded to build Temples. Houses of worship they might erect. They were and are necessary for the spiritual well being of the people. In them the principles of the New Covenant, the Book of Mormon, the Gospel may be taught; but in them no secret endowments, nor oaths, nor vows, nor covenants, not provided for in the Gospel, are to be administered.

The people of Utah are entitled to credit for the energy and industry they have displayed in the erection of those places of worship. So are the members of the Re-organization for the building of the houses of worship they have built.

"The law of the Church is that if God can reveal one thing He can another."

This is another of your mistakes; there is no such law. The teaching of the Church and the tradition of the Elders was that if God ever had the power and did reveal Himself to His people in any age, He could do so in any and every other age and dispensation. But that whenever He does reveal Himself, such revelation will be in harmony with all former revelations on the same subject. That He will not contradict Himself; that later revelations of His mind will not be in conflict with those before given expressive of His will.

This is "common sense." Such a position permits men to build upon the revelations of the Scriptures, the Book of Mormon, and the revelations therein in the Book of Covenants, without fear that in a day or two God may change His mind, and

give a different and conflicting command making vain and void their work. If God can to-day reveal one thing as lawful and pleasing to Him and next week reveal the opposite as being lawful and pleasing, there is an end to trust and constancy. If He can and does to-day declare that certain things are displeasing to Him, that other things are "abominable before Him," and to-morrow or next week He can declare that these very things are lovely in His sight, what criterion is left to judge by in regard to what is pleasing to God. If He make certain things lawful to-day and next year make them unlawful, He can not justly hold man accountable for disregarding His edicts; as there can be no certainty respecting them.

It is because of this claim for the changeable character of God and His laws that you and your compeers make, that I oppose the plural marriage system. The books and teaching of the Church up to the death of my father give me good warrant to deny such claim for changeability on God's part. If my father did what you charge him with doing, he changed from what he was when he translated the Book of Mormon. If God gave the revelation on plural marriage, as you construe it, he changed from what he was in 1830-31.

There are things which God can not do and still be God. He cannot lie. He cannot be ignorant of what He does. If He knew what He was doing in 1830-31 He knew what was righteous and true. If He gave the revelation of 1843, He knew that it made the law of 1831 void and foolish. If He gave it He knew it was contradictory of the role given to Lehi and Joseph and to Northrup Sweet. If He did not know this, He was very forgetful of Himself, and unmindful of the "prejudices of the brethren," prejudices born of the law already given. If He did not forget He knew that Nauvoo, Far West, Jackson County, were all in territory where the "holy law" of the one wife for one man had obtained, under a constitution written by wise men "raised up by Him to do that very work." He knew if he had not forgotten it, that He had told the Church that "they had no need to break the law of the land" to keep the law of God. And I firmly believe that it was for the very purpose of defeating the treachery of the betrayal of the brethren that the protection of the United States was providentially thrown over the territory ceded by Mexico to the United States after the conquest of Scott, and the occupation of California by Commodore Stockton.

Your wishes that I might be brought to see the righteousness of the position you occupy, I reciprocate. I would to God that you and all others of scattered Israel might see that the revelation of God to me by which my courses of opinion and life have been opposed to those of the one time associates of my father, was and is in harmony with His will as revealed to that father, and the rule by which He proposes to people the earth with a righteous people.

Yours,

JOSEPH SMITH.

Lamoni, Iowa, June 15, 1883.

MORE STRONG EVIDENCE.

L. O. LITTLEFIELD MAKES ANOTHER REPLY TO JOSEPH SMITH.

Mr. Joseph Smith, Lamoni, Iowa:

Sir:—Your latest communication, though a long one, contains but few points that have not already been considered, and to my mind, satisfactorily disposed of. It reminds me of a lawyer's special plea in the ingenuity with which it "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge." I shall not attempt to reply to your paragraphs *separatim*, but will simply take up those that seem to require, from the manner in which they are presented, a passing consideration.

You claim that Adam, Noah and Lehi were each the husbands of but one wife. We grant that we cannot prove from the Scriptures that they had more than one, but we can prove that men equally beloved and favored of God, and bearing most important commissions to mankind, did observe the law of plural marriage, and further that the Lord never rebuked or found fault with them because of this practice. You mention the dispensation of Lehi as being monogamic; in contradistinction we refer to the parallel work commenced by the founders of the Jaredite Nation, who were poly-

gams. God made the polygamist Abraham the father of his peculiar chosen people and gave him a promise that in him and his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. He called the polygamist Moses to be its great leader and lawgiver, when He made Israel a nation; He conversed with both these men face to face, and never a word is to be found of condemnation from His divine lips because they had more than one wife. In fact, in the law of Moses, He sanctioned polygamy by express regulations. Think of it, ye who oppose polygamy of God regulating sin by law! What an outrage! What an absurdity! In one of his laws he says:

If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

God would not make a distinction with regard to polygamists; it is reserved for you to have the questionable honor of doing this thing.

I might go on citing you example to example of holy men of God, His chosen servants who practiced this law, but it is unnecessary, as you must be acquainted with these instances as well as I am; but I venture the assertion that I can produce a dozen instances where it can be directly proven that the Lord's favored servants had more than one wife, to every one whom you can positively demonstrate to have been a monogamist. Polygamy was the rule, not the exception in ancient Israel.

In your reference to Lamech you so word your sentence as to convey the idea that he was a murderer because he was a polygamist. If this was not the intent, why mention him at all? Or why mix up his bloodguiltiness and his polygamy? But you know better. The translation of the Holy Scriptures, published by yourselves, (you individually being one of the Publishing Committee) gives the true reason; and you are well aware it had nothing to do with polygamy. And now I ask, what about Cain, the first murderer? Why not ascribe the bloody death of Able to plural marriage? It would be quite as consistent as some of your other reasoning. Just as well make polygamy responsible for the death of Able as for that of Lamech's victim. Or would it not be as good reasoning to ascribe it to monogamy? I think so. Indeed one American writer—and he not a "Mormon"—argues that such was the case, that monogamy was directly answerable for Cain's bloodthirstiness and crime.

You strongly urge that God would be a changeable Being if the law of celestial marriage emanated from Him. I cannot admit it. Your reasoning is imperfect. God has given such laws to His people for their guidance as were best adapted to their circumstances. He has fed them with milk or strong food as they were able to receive it. The Savior in His sermon on the Mount contrasts the law of the old and new dispensations. Had God changed because of the difference in the spirit of these instructions? Jesus, amongst other things, on that occasion, said:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. * * * Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

Do these teachings show any duplicity in the Great Creator? You would scarcely assert such a thing, yet such would be the result of the position taken by you; neither do His instructions to different people, at different times, under different circumstances regarding the law of marriage make any change in Him. The eternal principle is not changed; simply more or less is revealed as the people are prepared for it. Let me also cite you to the word of the Lord to Eli, High Priest of Israel:

Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever; but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the day has come that I will cut off thy arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

There is a striking parallel between this word of the Lord to the