

ists, nor Roman Catholics; but they were the people of God, governed by divine law, and were commanded to be polygamists; not merely suffered to be so, but actually commanded to be.

There are some Latter-day Saints who, perhaps, have not searched these things as they ought, hence we occasionally find some who will say that God suffered these things to be. I will go further, and say that He commanded them, and He pronounced a curse, to which all the people had to say amen, if they did not fulfil the commandment.

Coming down to the days of the prophets we find that they were polygamists; also to the days of the kings of Israel, whom God appointed himself, and approbated and blessed. This was especially the case with one of them, named David, who, the Lord said, was a man after His own heart. David was called when yet a youth, to reign over the whole twelve tribes of Israel; but Saul, the reigning king of Israel, persecuted him, and sought to take away his life. David fled from city to city throughout all the coasts of Judea in order to get beyond the reach of the relentless persecutions of Saul. While thus fleeing, the Lord was with him, hearing his prayers, answering his petitions, giving him line upon line, precept upon precept; permitting him to look into the Urim and Thummim and receive revelations, which enabled him to escape from his enemies.

In addition to all these blessings that God bestowed upon him in his youth, before he was exalted to the throne, the Lord gave him eight wives; and after exalting him to the throne, instead of denouncing him for having many wives, and pronouncing him worthy of fourteen or twenty-one years of imprisonment, the Lord was with His servant David, and, thinking he had not wives enough He gave to him all the wives of his master Saul, in addition to the eight he had previously given him. Was the Lord to be considered a criminal, and worthy of being tried in a court of justice and sent to prison for thus increasing the polygamic relations of David? No, certainly not; it was in accordance with His own righteous laws, and He was with His servant, David the King, and blessed him. By and by, when David transgressed, not in taking other wives, but in taking the wife of another man, the anger of the Lord was kindled against him and he chastened him and took away all the blessings He had given him. All the wives David had received from the hand of God were taken from him. Why? Because he had committed adultery. Here then is a great distinction between adultery and plurality of wives. One brings honor and blessing to those who engage in it, the other degradation and death.

After David had repented with all his heart of his crime with the wife of Uriah, he, notwithstanding the number of wives he had previously taken, took Bathsheba legally, and by that legal marriage Solomon was born; the child born of her unto David, begotten illegally, being a bastard, displeased the Lord and he struck it with death; but with Solomon, a legal issue from the same woman, the Lord was so pleased that He ordained Solomon and set him on the throne of his father David. This shows the difference between the two classes of posterity, the one begotten illegally, the other in the order of marriage. If Solomon had been a bastard, as this pious generation would have us suppose, instead of being blessed of the Lord and raised to the throne of his father, he would have been banished from the congregation of Israel and his seed after him for ten generations. But, notwithstanding that he was so highly blessed and honored of the Lord; there was room for him to transgress and fall, and in the end he did so. For a long time the Lord blessed Solomon, but eventually he violated that law which the Lord had given forbidding Israel to take wives from the idolatrous nations, and some of these wives succeeded in turning his heart from the Lord and induced him to worship the heathen gods, and the Lord was angry with him and, as it is recorded in the Book of Mormon, considered the acts of Solomon an abomination in His sight.

Let us now come to the record in the Book of Mormon, when the Lord led forth Lehi and Nephi, and Ishmael and his two sons and five daughters out of the land of Jerusalem to the land of America, the males and females were about equal in number. There were Nephi, Sam, Laman and Lemuel, the four sons of Lehi, and Zoram, brought out of Jerusalem. How many daughters of Ishmael were unmarried? Just five. Would it have been just under these circumstances, to ordain plurality among them? No. Why? Because the males and females were equal in number and they were all under the guidance of the Almighty, hence it would have been unjust, and the Lord gave a revelation,—the only one on record I believe—in which a command was ever given to any branch of Israel to be confined to the monogamic system. In this case the Lord through His servant Lehi, gave a command that they should have but one wife. The Lord had a perfect right to vary His commands in this respect according to circumstances as He did in others, as recorded in the Bible. There we find that the domestic relations were governed according to the mind and will of God, and were varied according to circumstances, as he thought proper.

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 mind, 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 abomination in His sight. The Bible also tells us that they sinned in the sight of God; not in taking wives legally but only in those they took illegally, in doing which they brought wrath and condemnation upon their heads.

But because the Lord dealt thus with the small branch of the House of Israel that came to America, under their peculiar circumstances, there are those at the present day who will appeal to this passage in the Book of Mormon as something universally applicable in regard to man's domestic relations. The same God that commanded one branch of the House of Israel in America, to take but one wife when the numbers of the two sexes were about equal, gave a different command to the hosts of Israel in Palestine. But let us see the qualifying clause given in the Book of Mormon on this subject. After having reminded the people of the commandment delivered by Lehi in regard to monogamy, the Lord says, "for if I will raise up seed unto me I will command my people, otherwise they shall hearken unto these things;" that is, if I will raise up seed among my people of the House of Israel, according to the law that exists among the tribes of Israel I will give them a commandment on the subject, but if I do not give this commandment they shall hearken to the law which I give unto their father Lehi. That is the meaning of the passage, and this very passage goes to prove that plurality was a principle God did approve under circumstances when it was authorized by Him.

In the early rise of this Church, February, 1831, God gave a commandment to its members, recorded in the Book of Covenants, wherein he says "thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and to none else;" and then He gives a strict law against adultery. This you have, no doubt, all read; but let me ask whether the Lord had the privilege and the right to vary from this law. It was given in 1831, when the one-wife system alone prevailed among this people. I will tell you what the Prophet Joseph said in relation to this matter in 1831, also in 1832, the year in which the law commanding the members of this Church to cleave to one wife only was given. Joseph was then living in Portage county, in the town of Hiram, at the house of Father John Johnson. Joseph was very intimate with that family, and they were good people at that time, and enjoyed much of the spirit of the Lord. In the fore part of the year 1832, Joseph told individuals, then in the Church, that he had inquired of the Lord concerning the principle of plurality of wives, and he received for answer that the principle of taking more wives than one is a true principle, but the time had not yet come for it to be practiced. That was before the Church was two years old. The Lord has His own time to do all things pertaining to His purposes in the last dispensation. His own time for restoring all things that have been predicted by the ancient prophets. If they have predicted that the day would come when seven women would take hold of one man, saying "we will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach;" and that, in that day the branch of the Lord should be beautiful and glorious and the fruits of the earth should be excellent, and comely, the Lord has the right to say when that time shall be.

Now supposing the members of this Church had undertaken to vary from that law given in 1831, to love their one wife with all their hearts and to cleave to none other, they would have come under the curse and condemnation of God's holy law. Some twelve years after that time the revelation on Celestial Marriage was revealed. This is just republished at the DESERET NEWS office, in a pamphlet entitled "Answers to Questions," by President George A. Smith, and heretofore has been published in pamphlet form and in the *Millennial Star*, and sent throughout the length and breadth of our country, being included in our works and published in the works of our enemies. Then came the Lord's time for this holy and ennobling principle to be practiced again among His people.

We have not time to read the revelation this afternoon; suffice it to say that God revealed the principle through His servant Joseph in 1843. It was known by many individuals while the Church was yet in Illinois; and though it was not then printed, it was a familiar thing through all the streets of Nauvoo, and indeed throughout all Hancock county. Did I hear about it? I verily did. Did my brethren of the Twelve know about it? They certainly did. Were there any females who knew about it? There certainly were, for some received the revelation and entered into the practice of the principle. Some may say "Why was it not printed, and made known to the people generally, if it was of so much importance?" I reply by asking another question. Why did not the revelations in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants come to us in print years before they did? Why were they shut up in Joseph's cupboard years and years without being suffered to be printed and sent broadcast throughout the land? Because the Lord had His own time again to accomplish His purposes, and He suffered the revelations to be printed just when He saw proper. He did not suffer the

revelation on the great American war to be published until sometime after it was given. So in regard to the revelation on plurality, it was only a short time after Joseph's death that we published it, having a copy thereof. But what became of the original? An apostate destroyed it; you have heard her name. That same woman, in destroying the original, thought she had destroyed the revelation from the face of the earth. She was embittered against Joseph, her husband, and at times fought against him with all her heart; and then again she would break down in her feelings, and humble herself before God and call upon His holy name, and would then lead forth ladies and place their hands in the hands of Joseph, and they were married to him according to the law of God. That same woman has brought up her children to believe that no such thing as plurality of wives existed in the days of Joseph, and has instilled the bitterest principles of apostasy into their minds, to fight against the Church that has come to these mountains according to the predictions of Joseph.

In the year 1844, before his death, a large company was organized to come and search out a location, west of the Rocky Mountains. We have been fulfilling and carrying out his predictions in coming here and since our arrival. The course pursued by this woman shows what apostates can do, and how wicked they can become in their hearts. When they apostatize from the truth they can come out and swear before God and the heavens that such and such things never existed, when they know, as well as they know they exist themselves, that they are swearing falsely. Why do they do this? Because they have no fear of God before their eyes; because they have apostatized from the truth; because they have taken it upon themselves to destroy the revelations of the Most High, and to banish them from the face of the earth, and the Spirit of God withdraws from them. We have come here to these mountains, and have continued to practice the principle of celestial marriage from the day the revelation was given until the present time; and we are a polygamic people, and a great people, comparatively speaking, considering the difficult circumstances under which we came to this land.

Let us speak for a few moments upon another point connected with this subject—that is, the reason why God has established polygamy under the present circumstances among this people. If all the inhabitants of the earth, at the present time, were righteous before God, and both males and females were faithful in keeping His commandments, and the numbers of the sexes of a marriageable age were exactly equal, there would be no necessity for any such institution. Every righteous man could have his wife and there would be no surplus of females. But what are the facts in relation to this matter? Since old pagan Rome and Greece,—worshippers of idols,—passed a law confining a man to one wife, there has been a great surplus of females who have had no possible chance of getting married. You may think this a strange statement, but it is a fact that those nations were the founders of what is termed monogamy. All other nations, with few exceptions, had followed the scriptural plan of having more wives than one. These nations, however, were very powerful, and when Christianity came to them, especially the Roman nation, it had to bow to their mandates and customs, hence the Christians gradually adopted the monogamic system. The consequence was that a great many marriageable ladies of those days, and of all generations from that time to the present have not had the privilege of husbands, as the one-wife system has been established by law among the nations descended from the great Roman Empire,—namely, the nations of modern Europe and the American States. This law of monogamy, or the monogamic system, laid the foundation for prostitution and the evils and diseases of the most revolting nature and character under which modern Christendom groans, for as God has implanted, for a wise purpose, certain feelings in the breasts of females as well as males, the gratification of which is necessary to health and happiness, and which can only be accomplished legitimately in the married state, myriads of those who have been deprived of the privilege of entering that state, rather than be deprived of the gratification of those feelings altogether, have, in despair, given way to wickedness and licentiousness; hence the whoredoms and prostitution among the nations of the earth where the "Mother of Harlots" has her seat.

When the religious Reformers came out, some two or three centuries ago, they neglected to reform the marriage system,—a subject demanding their urgent attention. But leaving these Reformers and their doings, let us come down to our own times and see whether, as has been often said by many, the numbers of the sexes are equal; and let us take as a basis for our investigations on this part of our subject, the censuses taken by several of the States in the American Union.

Many will tell us that the number of males and the number of females born are just about equal, and because they are so it is not reasonable to suppose that God ever intended the nations to practice plurality of wives. Let me say a few words on that. Supposing we should admit, for the sake of argument, that the sexes are born in equal numbers, does that prove that the same equality exists when they come to a marriageable age? By no means. There may

be about equal numbers born, but what do the statistics of our country show in regard to the deaths? Do as many females as males die during the first year of their existence? If you go to the published statistics you will find, almost without exception, that in every State a greater number of males die the first year of their existence than females. The same holds good from one year to five years, from five years to ten, from ten to fifteen, and from fifteen to twenty. This shows that the number of females is greatly in excess of the males when they come to a marriageable age. Let us elucidate still further, in proof of the position here assumed. Let us take, for instance, the census of the State of Pennsylvania in the year 1860, and we shall find that there were 17588, more females than males between the age of twenty and thirty years, which may strictly be termed a marriageable age. Says one, "Probably the great war made that difference." No, this was before the war. Now let us go to the statistics of the State of New York, before the war, and we find according to the official tables of the census taken in 1860, that there were 45,104 more females than males in that one State, between the ages of 20 and thirty years,—a marriageable age recollect! Now let us go to the State of Massachusetts, and look at the statistics there. In the year 1865, there were 33,452 more females than males between the age of twenty and thirty. We might go on from State to State and then to the census taken by the United States, and a vast surplus would be shown of females over males of a marriageable age. What is to be done with them? I will tell you what Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New York say: they say, virtually, "we will pass a law so strict, that if these females undertake to marry a man who has another wife, both they and the men they marry shall be subject to a term of imprisonment in the penitentiary." Indeed! Then what are you going to do with these hundreds of thousands of females of a marriageable age? "We are going to make them either old maids or prostitutes, and we would a little rather have them prostitutes, then we men would have no need to marry." That is the conclusion many of these marriageable males, between twenty and thirty years of age have come to. They will not marry because the laws of the land have a tendency to make prostitutes, and they can purchase all the animal gratification they desire without being bound to any woman; hence many of them have mistresses, by whom they raise children, and, when they get tired of them, turn both mother and children into the street, with nothing to support them, the law allowing them to do so, because the women are not wives. Thus the poor creatures are plunged into the depths of misery wretchedness, and degradation, because at all risks they have followed the instincts implanted within them by their Creator, and not having the opportunity to do so legally have done so unlawfully. There are hundreds and thousands of females in this boasted land of liberty, through the narrow, contracted, bigoted State laws, preventing them from ever getting husbands. That is what the Lord is fighting against; we, also, are fighting against it, and for the re-establishment of the Bible religion and the celestial or Patriarchal order of marriage.

It is no matter according to the Constitution whether we believe in the patriarchal part of the Bible, in the Mosiac or in the Christian part; whether we believe in one-half, two-thirds, or in the whole of it; that is nobody's business. The Constitution never granted power to Congress to prescribe what part of the Bible any people should believe in or reject; it never intended any such thing.

Much more might be said, but the congregation is large, and a speaker, of course, will weary. Though my voice is tolerably good, I feel weary in attempting to make a congregation of from eight to ten thousand people hear me. I have tried to do so. May God bless you, and may he pour out His Spirit upon the rising generation among us, and upon the missionaries who are about to be sent to the United States, and elsewhere, that the great principles, political, religious and domestic, that God has ordained and established, may be made known to all people.

In this land of liberty in religious worship, let us boldly proclaim our rights, to believe in and practice any Bible precept, command or doctrine, whether in the Old or New Testament, whether relating to ceremonies, ordinances, domestic relations, or anything else, not incompatible with the rights of others, and the great revelations of Almighty God manifested in ancient and modern times. Amen.

ESTRAYS.

I HAVE in my possession the following animals—
One Pale Red 3-year old STEER, some white on forehead, branded J V on left hip, underbit on right and swallow fork on left ear.
One Brindle HEIFER, 3 years old, branded CO on left hip, underbit in left ear, bush of tail white.
If the above animals are not claimed within 20 days, they will be sold at public auction.
JOSEPH EGBERT,
Kaysville City Poundkeeper.
Oct. 20, 1868. s35-2w17-1