

Church and Kingdom on the earth, to build up Zion in the mountains of Israel.

Now with regard to the Priesthood. We have been found fault with sometimes because we profess to have the Priesthood. Let me say in this congregation that our Heavenly Father performs all His works—the creation of worlds, the redemption of worlds—by the power of the Eternal Priesthood. And man on the earth, from the days of Father Adam to the present time, has ever had power to administer in any of the ordinances of God and salvation only by the power of the Holy Priesthood. You will find this to be the case in the whole history of the Prophets of God. When Aaron was given the Priesthood he was called by revelation. So man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God was Aaron. Jesus Christ himself had to be called of God. He was a High Priest. He left the Priesthood on the earth with His Apostles. They officiated in it until they were put to death. It is by that power that we administer in this day and generation. The Church and Kingdom of God has continued to grow from its first organization. It is true we have been called to pass through many afflictions in our day and time. Nevertheless, the Lord has preserved His people, and they still live here in the valleys of the mountains.

We have an anxiety to honor God and keep His commandments, and then our country and the constitution of our government. That constitution we believe was given by revelation, and whatever laws passed agreeable to it we desire to honor. It guarantees to all men the right to enjoy their religion, to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience.

But," says one, "I would like to know how many wives you have had. That is a matter you have not said anything about." Well, now, I will tell you a little anecdote in connection with Sidney Rigdon. The circumstance took place a great many years ago in Kirtland. A young Elder just come in met President Rigdon on the street one day in the vicinity of the Temple. Said the young man: "President Rigdon, if you please tell me the meaning of the horns of the beast John saw?"

President Rigdon, drawing himself up, looked at the young man, and replied: "My dear brother, there is a great deal between you and the beast that John saw," and walked away. Well, I sometimes think it is with this generation. There is a great deal between the people of this generation and the plurality of wives. There are a great many principles that God has revealed in the last days that it is necessary for us to understand before we come to that principle. But as I have thought the subject up I will say a few words upon it. The Lord has revealed to us that no kingdom, no king, no prince, no president, no ordinance of marriage, no ordinance performed by any man from the days of father Adam, will have any power or force after death, except those ordinances are performed by one holding the Eternal Priesthood.

Where a king, is there a prince, is there a queen,—will either when they pass the other side of the veil and a throne there? Would the Czar of Russia, who was assassinated by the hands of the ungouly not long ago, when he went into the Spirit world find a throne there? No. Why? Because the kingdom of the Czar of Russia belonged to time. When he went into the Spirit world that was the end of his kingdom and power. His kingdom had not been sealed upon his head by any man having the power and authority of the Eternal Priesthood. So in regard to all kingdoms and thrones. You may take Her Majesty Queen Victoria—who has reigned a long time, and who is perhaps as good a sovereign as has reigned since the days of William the Conqueror—when she passes behind the veil she will find her kingdom at an end, because it was not sealed upon her head for time and eternity by any man having the authority of the Holy Priesthood. So I will say to our friends here—the strangers within our gates—that any man that marries a wife by any other authority than the authority of the Holy Priesthood is simply married for time, or until death do you part.

When you go into the Spirit world you have no claim on your wife and children. The ordinance of having them sealed to you by one having the authority of the Holy Priesthood must be attended to in this

world. Father Abraham obeyed the law of the patriarchal order of marriage. His wives were sealed to him for time and all eternity, and so were the wives of all the Patriarchs and Prophets that obeyed that law.

I desire to testify as an individual and as a Latter-day Saint that I know that God has revealed this law unto this people. I know that if we had not obeyed that law we should have been damned; the judgments of God would have rested upon us; the Kingdom of God would have stopped right where we were when God revealed that law unto us. Why have we obeyed it? I obeyed it because I want my wife or wives with me after death; I want my wives and children with me in the morning of the resurrection; I want my wives and children organized in the family organization, that I may dwell with them and they with me throughout all eternity, as well as with Father Abraham and other men who honored and obeyed that law. This is the position we occupy. We have obeyed the law because God has commanded us, and I bear record of its truth; and so far as I am concerned, if I can have my wives and children with me in the morning of the resurrection, so that I can dwell with them and with those Patriarchs and Prophets who obeyed that law, it will amply repay me for the trials and tribulations I may have had to pass through in the course of my life here upon the earth. Many men suppose that we have obeyed that law to gratify the lusts of the flesh. Bless your soul, if that had been our object we might have followed the example of the people of the Christian world—committed whoredom and adultery—without bringing upon ourselves the cares, pains, and penalties that we have to bear by obeying his law. But let me tell you that the Latter-day Saints look upon adultery as one of the greatest crimes any man can commit in this world. It is next to murder. No, this people have not obeyed that law because of a desire to gratify the lusts of the flesh; they have obeyed it in obedience to the command of God, and because it will have power and effect after death.

I pray God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon us, that our ears may be open to hear and our hearts to understand the things of the Kingdom of God, which is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

JOSEPH SMITH'S THIRD LETTER.

HE DENIES THAT ABRAHAM AND MOSES WERE POLYGAMIST.

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

SIR.—You say in your last that you prefer the plain word of the Lord to any statement that I may make. Let me give you some plain words of the Lord:

"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord." * * "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; for I the Lord God delighteth in the chastity of women." B. of M., book of Jacob, 2: 6, "Behold, the Lamanites, your brethren, whom ye hate, because of their filthiness and the cursings which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you, for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our fathers, that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none." Book of Jacob, 2: 8.

"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." D. and Covenants, Sec. 4, par. 8, Liverpool Ed.

In none of your arguments have you attempted to answer these very "plain words." There is not a line of teaching from 1830 to June 27th, 1844, in the books of the church, the printed journals, or the published sermons or pamphlets of the Elders, that contains a reference to the marriage relation, but what contemplates it as monogamic.

You admit that you cannot prove from the Scriptures that Adam, Noah or Lehi had more than one wife. Of what weight in the scale of argument is your statement that you can find

other men named in the history who had. The Creator evidently knew just how he proposed to people the earth; and the fact that at the outset he formed but the two. Adam and Eve, should be conclusive evidence both as to the intention of Deity and the fact. How ignorantly you write, when you state that "God made man polygamic." The history of this world in all its generations proves it." With the ink scarcely dry in the sentence admitting that Adam was the creation of God and Eve formed for his one companion, and that you cannot prove that either he, or Noah, or Lehi had more than one you say "God created man polygamic." What new cosmos is this of which you write? Do you expect me to believe you sincere when you so pervert the very words of the history?

The very reason assigned for the destruction by the flood is a denunciation of polygamy. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they choose." Gen. 6: 2.

This is the opening count in the indictment. The Inspired Translation by Joseph Smith states that the Lord told Noah, "The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves, for behold mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice." Gen. 8: 3.

The voice (word) of the Lord was "they twain shall be one flesh," in direct accord with the creation. The revelation to the church through Joseph the Seer was in keeping with this; "that it, (the earth) might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation, before the world was made." B. of C., Sec. 45, par. 3, Liverpool Ed. This proves plainly that when God made man He made him monogamic. But man corrupted his way before the Lord. The Lord's spirit quit striving with them. The flood came and destroyed them, except Noah, a man "perfect in his generations," who "walked with God." The generations of Noah were monogamic. God saved them that he might establish his covenant with them and thus preserve a righteous seed to people the earth. This is to me, and I think should be to all who deal honestly with the Bible, a condemnation of plural marriage.

How can you, Mr. Littlefield, take these two examples in the history of the world before your eyes and say that God "created men polygamic?" The intent was to people the earth, and we are not to suppose that it was intended to people it with a corrupt seed. He chose the system and placed the two beings with whom he began the work upon the earth and instituted marriage. He repeated the warning by actual demonstration in the selection of a family of monogamists. Noah and his wife, his three sons and one wife each. He led Lehi out of the midst of a people whom you say was polygamic, with the purpose stated, that he might seek godly seed. He gave the rule first by example, Lehi and his wife, his sons and one wife each. He confirmed it, secondarily, by the command which I have quoted. And yet you have the hardihood to impugn the wisdom of such creation and such precept by declaring polygamy the rule. And you further say that God sanctioned polygamy.

If God designed plural marriage to be the rule why did he not so make them at the outset? You are the one who is indulging in sophistry, not I. I give you the plain word and the examples in history; and you evade them by sophistry that is as dark as it must be damaging.

If you still urge that plural marriage is the natural law governing man, it is but proper for me to urge that you have no Scriptural ground upon which to defend the marriage institution, and the right of a man to have more wives than one, should insure the right of a woman to have more husbands than one—and the step to the absence of any restriction as founded in Scripture is not far removed. It will puzzle you to trace from any history in your possession either sacred or profane, the exclusive right of man to choose his female companions to any direct revelation from God. If it is left to the decision of the natural appetites of man, promiscuity will be proven against you.

Your statement that "three quarters of the human family accept it (polygamy) as the natural law of marriage," is a singular one. Does that prove it right? The same proportion discards Jesus as the Christ

too; does that prove the statement that He is untrue? What nation accepting the Bible and Christ accept polygamy as the natural law of marriage?

Your charge upon the other quarter of the human family that they have "adopted in place of honorable polygamy, a vile, a damnable and a God-accursed substitute," is contemptible. You point to the exception in monogamic nations, and call it the rule. What you allude to, and what is known as "the social evil," is in monogamic nations the perversion of the rule, and opposed to law.

I quote from your letter: "You denounce celestial marriage as a crime against mankind and a sin against God. We assert that God never has so denounced it but has approved it, sanctioned it, encouraged it, legalized it and made special laws for its direction; that the polygamist child was always recognized as legitimate."

You certainly pervert the record. Take the instance of Abraham, one of your cases cited, in proof. No prophet gave Hagar to Abraham, Sarai, the patriarch's only wife grew jealous of her barrenness; she conceived the idea of obtaining a child by proxy, and so she took a slave, and put her in her place. Abraham listened to his wife (so did Adam) and when fruit resulted from his connection with Hagar, Sarai bewailed her wrong. What was this wrong? If God had restrained her from bearing was she in fault? No. Her wrong was in forgetting the sacredness of the marital relation. When the Lord speaks in regard to this son, he puts a very strange blessing upon him. To prevent the inheritance from going out in this fashion the Lord gave Sarah a son, Isaac. In him was the covenant established, though Ishmael was the first born. The Lord then speaks concerning this secondary wife, the slave-concubine, and tells Abraham to do as Sarah enjoined, "cast out this bondswoman," which he did. Ishmael dwelt away from his father's house, and was a wild man.

Abraham was not a polygamist. He had no wife by the institution of marriage, but Sarah while Sarah lived. Sarah was dead when Abraham married Keturah, by whom he also had children. But the history states that in order to put his evil example away from Isaac, Abraham sent the sons of his concubines he had away from his son to the east country, and they are not reckoned in his posterity. This disposal of the matter of Abraham's departure from the monogamic rule, is in favor of the thought that God did not approve of it. No prophet gave him a second wife while Sarah lived; nor does the record show that there had been a change from the rule as given at the first.

Isaac's life affords you no comfort. Rebecca must have ruled her house in respect to her husband's wives, as Joseph Smith's wife Emma, would have done, if he had not, as you assert, secretly sinned against her.

The case of Joseph is only favorable to your view in seeming. He was the son Rachel, the only legal wife Jacob had. In the 46th chapter of Genesis, where the enumeration of Israel's children takes place none is called Jacob's wife but Rachel. Gen. 46: 18. The blessing was with Joseph, Jacob's first born of his legal wife. No prophet gave Jacob his plural wives or sealed his concubines to him. Nor is any law cited by which any such connection was authorized.

You are well aware that all the laws of Moses were given under the code and were called the "carnal commandments, which the Lord, in His wrath, caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel till John." And Christ, speaking of the law of divorce, a part of your polygamic creed, said: "Moses, for the hardness of your hearts, wrote you this precept." It is equally clear from the traditions of the church that the law of carnal commandments, which you cite as regulating polygamy, was added "because of transgression." The hearts of Israel were hardened and God swore "in His wrath that they should not enter into his rest."

In reply to your question respecting the Lord's portion of the spoils named in Numbers chapter thirty-five, I am quite willing that the portion that went to Eleazar should be "a heave offering to the Lord," if you know what a "heave offering" was. Of the part that went to the Levites, the record is silent as to what the Levites did with them; but the inference that they were used as wives is far-fetched. They were

slaves taken in war, and the thought that they could only be used as wives, or as concubines shows the lustful tendency of the polygamic mind.

I do not mean to tell you or the world, that God ever used polygamy in any sense to raise up seed unto Him; but that in every instance where He attempted to raise up seed unto Him the rule adopted by Him was one man one wife. It is because of that that he calls polygamy abominable. I do not consent that He ever used that means for that object and fully believe that you cannot show a single instance, or command in proof except the so-called revelation of 1843, and that is of such doubtful parentage that I do not accept it as evidence in point.

Moses was not a polygamist. There is nothing in the history to show that Moses had any other wife than Zipporah. She was not of the Israelitish host, for he had obtained her of Jethro, the prince of Midian, a Cushite, or Ethiopian, and supposed to be a descendant of Abraham by Keturah. The presumption is fair that Zipporah and the Ethiopian woman are one and the same.

There is no question but what when you persistently cite David and Solomon as polygamic examples, that you do so for an excuse, whatever you may pretend to the contrary. And to show you how superficial has been the reading, in regard to David, let me detail a little of his history.

Saul was jealous of the praise bestowed upon David for slaying the Philistine, and made an attempt on his life with a javelin before he had yet become a married man. 1 Sam. 18: 7-11. Saul offered him his elder daughter Merab to wife; but cheated him out of her, giving her to Adriel. Then Michael, another of Saul's daughters, loved David, and was his first wife, for whom he paid an hundred trophies taken from the Philistines. Notwithstanding this marriage Saul became more and more David's enemy. 1 Sam. 18: 29. This hatred of Saul continued until Saul's death, before which David had twice spared Saul's life, when the fortunes of war had placed him in his power, David having gathered numbers to his standard. Saul had taken Michal from David and given her to Phaltiel, and then David took Nabal's widow and Ahinoam; but there is no proof that Samuel, or Nathan had been the agent through whom he took these wives. David was crowned king of Judah and reigned seven years at Hebron. During this time war ensued between the armies of David and Saul's son Ishbosheth; Abner the general of Israel, Joab for David or Judah. The war between the house of David and the house of Saul was a long one. See 2 Sam. 3: 1 and 6. More than this the war between these hosts did not cease until Ishbosheth was slain; then the tribes were united under the conqueror, and as such he reigned in Hebron seven years over Judah and in Jerusalem over Judah and Israel for thirty three years. David would not treat with Abner until Michal the daughter of Saul, married first to him, then to Phaltiel, had been re-delivered to him. Phaltiel, her second husband, followed the troop crying after his wife until Abner made him return. Here was one woman in Israel that had two husbands; and it was not Samuel or Nathan that gave them in either case.

Again: is it in proof that Abner had one of Saul's concubinal wives as his. Her name was Rizpah. The record further states David gave unto Mephishosheth "all that pertained to Saul and to all his house." He did this in pursuance of his oath to Saul that he would not "cut off his seed," and Mephishosheth was the son of Jonathan the grandson of Saul. 2 Sam. 9: 9, 13. Ziba "the servant of Saul," was doubtless the steward of his house; and as such was in charge of all that belonged to Saul; and he was made the witness of the transfer of the house (family and possessions, slaves, wives, concubines and all) of Saul to his legal representative. There is no evidence to show that David had any of the family of Saul as his wives, except Michal, Saul's daughter. I did not use the words "conqueror" and "fortunes of war" without good warrant; as any man among you not a polygamist in grain will acknowledge, if he will read the record for himself.

If the example of David is good permit me to enquire, who succeeded to the house of Pres. B. Young? He left houses, lands, wives and children. He did not die fighting