

that volume with other records having been brought to Utah and carefully preserved.

That the original letter written in Liberty jail, March 20, 1839, had also been preserved, and was on file in the Historian's office, bearing the personal signatures of Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin and Alexander McRae.

That critical comparison of the original letter with the copy in the DESERET NEWS and Millennial Star showed them to be essentially the same, the only differences being in the spelling of a few words.

It was admitted that the letter as it appeared in the Times and Seasons of May, 1840, was abbreviated and edited, but it was not admitted that the editors of the Times and Seasons had a desire to "wilfully and maliciously" corrupt the words of Joseph Smith; that probably the changes were made for prudence' sake, and the abbreviations to save space in a small periodical. That, however, was a mere matter of conjecture.

But it appears that these proofs do not satisfy the editor of The Saints' Herald. In the issue of July 15, 1896, a lengthy response appears, in which it is argued that a sentiment in the original letter, as published in the Star, contains just eighteen words, while as it appeared in the Times and Seasons it has just nineteen words, and the objection indulges in an attempt at sarcasm over the great condensation exhibited in the change.

All that is necessary to say in reply to this small quibble, is that the abbreviation claimed was not in reference to a solitary sentiment, but in reference to the whole letter, which the editor of the Herald admits contains in the Star "about six hundred and sixty words more" than in the Times and Seasons.

He complains further that an important doctrinal point was also changed. He says:

In the Star, and if Mr. Richards is right, in the original letter, these words are used: "In the midst of the council of the Eternal God of all other Gods, before this world was," etc. In the Times and Seasons it is given thus: "In the midst of the council of heaven in the presence of the Eternal God before the world was."

Supposing that to be correct, the responsibility for the change does not rest upon the editor of the Star or the editor of the DESERET NEWS, who published the letter as it appeared in the original. Possibly it was one of the changes made for prudence' sake, at which the Herald editor jeers so flippantly, the doctrine of the plurality of Gods not being then so fully and publicly proclaimed as it was subsequently by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

At the April Conference of 1844, the minutes of which appear in volume 5 of the Times and Seasons, and at a meeting in the Grove, Nauvoo, June 16, 1844, Joseph Smith explained this doctrine, quoting from the Hebrew, and showing that the beginning of the Bible reads, "The bend one of the Gods brought forth the Gods." In the translation of the Book of Abraham, published in the Times and Seasons of March 15, 1842, the plurality of Gods is set forth in unmistakable language. This was published, not only in the lifetime of the Prophet Joseph, but

under his direct and personal editorship, as appears by the following in that paper, p. 710:

TIMES AND SEASONS.

City of Nauvoo.

Tuesday, March 15, 1842.

To subscribers.

This paper commences my editorial career. I alone stand responsible for it, and shall do for all papers having my signature henceforward. I am not responsible for the publication or arrangement of the former paper; the latter did not come under my supervision.

JOSEPH SMITH.

The editor of the Herald says the charge of "cowardice" is implied in the supposition that some things contained in the original letter from Joseph Smith, et al, were withheld for the time being for prudential reasons, declares "the very mention of it is contemptible," and further says, "we are not converts to the theory that prudential or other reasons justify the suppression of truth."

Is it not about time that the writer of those sentiments became converted, not only to the doctrine of the wisdom of withholding advanced truths till the time is ripe for their publication, but also to many other doctrines promulgated by Joseph the Seer?

Were not the first Elders of the Church commanded "to hold their peace" concerning many things that were revealed until the time should come when they could be safely proclaimed? For instance:

And I command you that you preach naught but repentance, and show not these things unto the world until it is wisdom in me, for they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore they must not know these things lest they perish. (Doc. and Cov. Sec. 19, v. 21, 22.)

Again:

Thou shalt ask and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety; and it is expedient that thou shouldst hold thy peace concerning them and not teach them until ye have received them in full. (Doc. and Cov. Sec. 42, v. 56, 57.)

And again:

And let all my people who dwell in the regions round about be very faithful and prayerful and humble before me, and reveal not the things which I have revealed unto them, until it is wisdom in me that they should be revealed. (Doc. and Cov. Sec. 125, v. 23.)

Does not everybody suppress the truth when prudence dictates? Do parents tell their children all the truth when asked questions not proper to answer in full?

The editor of the Saints' Herald offers another objection. He wants to know why Joseph Smith and his companions "would write from jail, where all documents written by them were subject to official inspection, things not prudent to make public?"

If we were more familiar with the history of the Church and of the times when the Prophet was in prison, he would perhaps understand that the communications sent to the Church and to friends at that period were not submitted to official inspection, but entrusted to safe hands for private conveyance.

There are some other puerilities in his article which require no attention, but he returns to his former spirit of accusation, and says:

In so far as the editor of the Millennial Star copied from the DESERET NEWS in good faith, supposing the NEWS to be correct, he is excusable, and can only be charged with carelessness.

That is to say, when the editor of a periodical copies an article, verbatim, in good faith, from another publication, supposing it is correct, he is to be charged with carelessness!

But changing his tone while maintaining the same spirit, he exclaims:

After the death of an author to go back of his published work and hunt up a manuscript that has subsequently been revised and corrected, is questionable journalistic courtesy, whether the Millennial Star or the DESERET NEWS is responsible.

On this theory it is a violation of journalistic courtesy, when publishing a letter written by a prominent Church leader and signed by himself and four others, to take the original document as copy instead of an abbreviated and modified version. The conception of "journalistic courtesy" with which the editor of the Saints' Herald appears to be pregnant, is so great that he rushes into print with an accusation against the editor of the Millennial Star, of changing and corrupting the words of Joseph Smith since his death; of wilfully and maliciously putting into the mouths of the martyred dead words never used by them; of using duplicity and deceit. When proofs are given that the editor of the Star simply copied from another periodical in good faith that which appeared absolutely correct, the accuser, instead of acknowledging that these charges were unfounded, continues his attack, and virtually repeats his charges, and then talks about "journalistic courtesy."

Respecting the original letter in dispute, the request is made that a committee, appointed by the editor of the Herald, shall examine the document and the signatures it bears. Without replying to his attorney-like queries, I will say, that I am willing to submit the document to the inspection of any gentleman possessed of ordinary courtesy, who may be appointed by the president of the "Re-organized" church for the purpose, if the object is to obtain information; the letter to be examined in the presence of others, and a faithful and correct report of the investigation to be made. This, however, is not to be considered as a precedent for the exhibition of historic documents and relics and records in the possession of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS,

Historian and General Church Recorder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

IF SPAIN, as a Havana paper asserts, is in the predicament of having to make war on the United States in order to save her honor and prevent a revolution at home, she may as well sacrifice her honor and accept the revolution without a disastrous foreign war. In such a contest Spain would be defeated and the revolution that now is only threatening would be certain to break out, and the government would be swept away before it as a haystack before a tornado. If the Spanish government contemplates committing suicide in order to save its honor, it should lead the country on in a brief contest with the United States.