

JOSEPH SMITH WRONGLY CHARGED.

He Did Not Send Mr. Z. H. Gurley to Leonard Soby for the Affidavit—Six Prominent "Josephites" Secede.

EDITOR JOURNAL:—I have recently received two letters from Joseph Smith, President of the Reorganized Church, claiming from me, and other persons in Utah, exoneration from the charge of his having been a party to the procurement of the affidavit made some two years ago by Leonard Soby, relative to the revelation on celestial marriage having been read by Patriarch Hyrum Smith before the High Council at Nauvoo. Now, I am disposed to treat opponents fairly. I believe that to free them from any unpleasantness which facts do not warrant, not only just but calculated to strengthen the arguments of the party making such concession. That affidavit was procured by Mr. Z. H. Gurley, who, at that time, was a prominent leader in the "Josephite" faction. Mr. Smith claims that Mr. Gurley procured said affidavit upon his own motion, and that he (Smith) was ignorant of it until after Mr. Soby had been interviewed and his affidavit obtained. He also thinks it ungenerous and dishonorable in his Utah opponents to charge him with complicity in this matter, especially since he has published in *The Saints' Herald* a letter from Mr. Gurley taking upon himself that entire responsibility and declaring that Mr. Smith at the time had no knowledge as to what Gurley was transacting. Certainly, if he was not an abettor therein, and desires it, he should not be so charged. I have also a letter from Mr. Gurley in which he exempts Mr. Smith from exercising any agency in obtaining the affidavit in question. To aid the wishes of Mr. Smith to be freed from what he seems to consider a damaging charge, I think in justice to that gentleman, the letter should be published and I ask for it a place in the JOURNAL. The letter also contains other items which may not be void of interest upon which, of course, you are at liberty to comment editorially if you wish.

I do not for one moment believe that any party in Utah has had a wish that Mr. Smith should be placed in a false attitude in this or any other matter. That he may be induced to stand squarely upon his father's principles, we feel after him. It is unimportant to the merits of the main question in controversy as to who obtained the affidavit of Leonard Soby. It testifies of an eternal truth which is destined to prevail until bigotry and superstition are subdued in the hearts of the children of men. In spite of oppressors the good cause is advancing.

Respectfully,

L. O. LITTLEFIELD.

LOGAN, June 4, 1886.

[Z. H. Gurley's Letter.]

L. O. Littlefield, Esq.,

Dear Sir:—Your letter of no date directed to Z. H. Gurley (my brother) at Lamont, Ia., was forwarded to me for reply. I enclose you herewith a copy of Mr. Soby's affidavit as directed by him and requested by you in said letter.

The account of my visit to Mr. Soby, as given in the *Ogden Herald*, Jan. 5, 1886, contained in your tract on "Celestial Marriage," is in error relative to the facts:

1st. Joseph Smith of Lamont, Ia., had nothing to do with the matter in any sense whatsoever, being entirely ignorant of it until after I obtained the affidavit.

2nd. I did not present any affidavit to Mr. Soby but this one which he signed, neither did he refuse to sign any which I offered him, as this was the only one offered him for signature.

3rd. I did not "retire rather crestfallen" (because I did not receive his professed affidavit) but retired with his affidavit in my pocket, believing that the old man spoke the truth, of which I am now fully convinced, and it was the facts in the case, so far as Mr. Soby knew them, which I was after, willing to know the worst and to provide therefor.

You state that you would like my "views upon this question," &c., which to give in full would require far more labor than is possible to place in an ordinary letter; but from all evidence in my possession (some of which I regard as far more positive and direct than Mr. Soby's) and from all the information I have been able to gather upon this question of Joseph Smith's complicity in polygamy, I am free to say before God and man, I believe him guilty. I believe that he received the revelation on polygamy, that he was deceived and that he deceived the church, and to-day would ask God and the world to forgive him if he could speak. In this statement I recognize the inexorable law of repentance, the only one by which an individual can be cured of sin.

I disavow in this and other revelations, principles and doctrines at war with the teachings of Christ, which fact, as I view it, has led me, in company with Elder J. W. Briggs, my mother, my wife, my brother Edwin H. and wife, to reject the revelations of Joseph Smith as a rule of faith and practice, and to withdraw our membership from the Reorganized Church.

I believe in the Gospel as taught by the Savior and the original witnesses, and deny the right of Joseph Smith or any other man or angel to add a codicil to the last will and testament of Christ. Believing this to have been done, I make bold in saying that while I have hitherto opposed polygamy openly and boldly and shall so continue to do, I am determined that I will not knowingly make the Mormons of Utah the scape goats of Joseph Smith's errors.

Very truly yours, for truth and right,

Z. H. GURLEY²

PLEASANTON, Ia., April 13, 1886.